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RESTAURANT

HOSPITALITY

IDEAS FOR FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANTS

Looking for ways to boost your bottom line? *By Megan Rowe*

10 TIPS TO TRIM THE FAT

If you're reading this, good news: Chances are you've weathered a brutal economic storm. Business may not be back to prerecession levels, but you've kept solvent in part by scrutinizing your expenses. We've collected some ideas that may help you get through the recovery and beyond.

1 Shop around for online reservations services.

OpenTable has been the subject of much debate in the last year. Many operators object to the business model, which requires them to foot the bill for the service, but say they can't live without it. Still, OpenTable is not the only game in town. Applications that allow guests to book directly on a restaurant's website are one way to bypass this juggernaut, and there are alternative websites that provide one-stop shopping and booking with less downside risk for the operator.

If you'd like to see a well-considered discussion of the subject from an operator's point of view, visit <http://insidescoops.sfgate.com/blog/2010/10/18/is-opentable-worth-it/>.

2 Use it or lose it.

Yep, this is Foodservice 101, but it's easy enough to stray from some basic good practices: create an efficient menu, order carefully and make the most of the product you bring in. "One third of the items on the menu should be signature dishes and one-third of the items should be popular/traditional dishes. The inventory and by-products of the ingredients used to create both the signature and popular dishes need to be used to create the final one-third of the items, so there is little or no waste," says **Arlene Spiegel**, a New York City-based restaurant and hospitality consultant. Such a plan can save five to seven percent of food costs, she estimates.

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