

Yes We're Open! (But Should We Be?)

Determining Your Hours of Operation

By Howard Riell and Barry Shuster

A decision that should be one of the first questions on every startup operator's mind is the hours of operation. As long as there are guests ready to dine, you want to stay open. That said, you want to optimize your space, equipment and staff to turn a reasonable profit by the close of business.

Can Your Operations Keep Up With the New Hours?

"Based on the concept, including menu offerings, price point and neighborhood or trade-area dynamics, the operator should be open the hours and days that serve the community," says Arlene Spiegel, FCSI, president of Arlene Spiegel & Associates in New York City. When a new restaurant launches, she says, it should be open as many hours as possible to gauge the neighborhood's response.



Read full article at rsgmag.com

"After a few months, any one daypart may catch on or be a loser," Spiegel says. "Many operators are surprised that breakfast can be a profitable meal period and create loyal customers in the neighborhood."

She says, "Only time will tell," but one thing is certain, "if the doors are shut, for sure there will be no business."

It Doesn't Have to Be Complicated, Just Profitable

Of course, you don't have to "reinvent the wheel." Look at the similarly positioned competitors and follow their lead.

"Or, do the complete opposite and be the only restaurant open in the neighborhood," Spiegel says. If you are opening in a suburban center, where the proverbial sidewalks are "rolled up at night" or there is no place to dine on holidays, "with robust early promotion, the restaurant can be a gift to the neighborhood," she says.

Regardless of your hours of operation, you need to maintain financial objectivity. An operator needs to make sure all their dayparts are profitable. **RS&G**

✓ CHECKLIST:

4 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN ESTABLISHING OPERATING HOURS

- ✓ When do your target customers want you to be open?
- ✓ Whatever the hours, make sure they are posted.
- ✓ Remain consistent.
- ✓ Open time.