



Catching Some Zs

How Startup Restaurants Can Appeal to the Generation Z Market

By Howard Riell

Reality Check

1. Members of Gen Z (those born after 1997) do not know a world without smartphones, high speed Internet, and high-resolution graphics. If they cannot locate you, they may just move on.

2. Smartphones allow anyone to take a picture of food and quickly share it. For pictures to be shared organically, the restaurant has to have good lighting and visually appealing food.

Veteran restaurant operator and consultant Arlene Spiegel, president of Arlene Spiegel & Associates in New York City, has found that the best way to capture these young consumers' attention is on social media sites, which they access from their mobile phones. "Find out who they follow on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and the Apps they have on their phones."

Adventurous Eaters

"Gen Z's are now 73.6 million, love to share, so many of my clients are increasing their big sharing plates for groups," Spiegel reports. "At the same time, the appetizer/small-plate selection has grown to allow the guests to customize their own meals. There has never been more pressure for dishes to come out 'photo worthy' and 'architectural.'" **RS&G**



FACE TIME

Generation Z's prefer to dine with others so creating in-house special events, tastings, game nights, karaoke, and pop-up events gets them in the door.

Often, what operators don't do can be as important as what they do do. "Do not talk down to them," says Arlene Spiegel, president of Arlene Spiegel & Associates in New York City. "Treat them with respect and remember their names."

Indeed, assuming that all Gen Z's are the same can prove a costly miscalculation. "They may be from the same age group, but their experiences and values are unique to them."