



# DESIGNING A RESTAURANT ATMOSPHERE

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# Designing a Restaurant Atmosphere

- Importance of a Good Atmosphere
- Sight, Smell & Hearing
- Temperature, Tempo & Landscaping
- Exterior Design
- Signs
- Exterior Lighting
- Entrance Way
- Lighting
- Colors

- Tables & Chairs
- Table Settings
- Curtains and Window Shades
- Plants and Flowers
- Walls, Ceilings, Floors
- Acoustics, Music
- Menu
- Human Factors
- Restaurant Design Guidelines
- Size & Shape of Dining Rooms
- Exercise

# Importance of a Good Atmosphere

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- People are attracted to a restaurant by more than just good food. It is a place to see and be seen, not just a place to eat. Equally important is the way people feel while in the restaurant.
- Atmosphere is made up of everything that makes an impression on people. The building design, decor, interior color scheme, texture of the walls, service, and the food create the atmosphere.
- People want a dining experience, an escape from problems and everyday routine. The atmosphere should project a feeling of friendliness and comfort, be attractive and interestingly different. The atmosphere is remembered long after the meal is finished. For the restaurant owner this means repeat customers and, hopefully, a profitable operation.

# Sight, Smell & Hearing

- The perception of sight is a question of acceptability to the eye. Sight perception involves color, lighting, harmony, contrast, order, and space. A waitress with a dirty uniform and grease smears on the menu are sights unacceptable to the customer's eye
- Smell involves both pleasant and unpleasant odors. Smells can positively contribute to the atmosphere. The aroma of fresh brewed coffee, oven-baked bread, fresh cut flowers, and a pine scented breeze can heighten the appetite.
- Negative smells involve kitchen odors, body odor, garbage.
- The noise level of conversations, serving staff, kitchen sounds, and music affect the atmosphere. The level of noise acceptable to the ears is a function of age. The older the age group, the less the intensity of noise which is acceptable.

# Temperature, Tempo & Landscaping

- A comfortably warm room and hot food portrays a feeling of high quality, elegance and a slow leisurely meal. Fast-food restaurants needing high turnover to earn a profit usually keep the dining room temperatures cooler in the winter to encourage people to eat faster.
- Atmosphere is affected by the tempo of service, length of time to produce the meal, and the time given to eat the meal. The tempo of the dining experience should correspond to the image of the restaurant. Normally, the tempo in a luxury restaurant is more leisurely than the tempo in a fast-food restaurant
- Landscaping helps provide the setting and atmosphere for the total dining experience. A well maintained and landscaped exterior attracts customers.

# Table Settings

- The silverware, dishes, glasses, napkins, tablecloths, and salt and pepper shakers must enhance the dining room atmosphere and show the overall quality of the operation. (Napkins Linen can still give the feel of fine dining without the extra expense of table cloth).
- An old fashioned silverware pattern would destroy the atmosphere created by modern decor. The silverware should feel and look right when held in the hand.
- Remember, while sitting at the table the customer comes into the closest contact with the feel of the atmosphere. Remember, while sitting at the table the customer comes into the closest contact with the feel of the atmosphere.

# Menu

- The menu cover and contents should reflect the design and style of the restaurant. The design of the menu, its details, the style of type used, and the impression it creates all set the atmosphere.
- A small, simple menu in a color that harmonizes with the decor is desirable. It should set the feeling of the restaurant. Customers are not impressed by dirty, dog-eared menus stuck together with adhesive tape.
- Menus should be simple and easy to read. They should carefully describe the food served. A short but descriptive statement about major items served can stimulate the appetite and measurably increase the guest check.

# Human Factors

- Architecture and decor are only part of the elements making a successful restaurant atmosphere. A warm, friendly atmosphere calls for warm, friendly service.
- The age and sex of customers contributes to the atmosphere. People like to be served by people their own age. A restaurant with predominantly male customers would be advised to employ mostly female service personnel. Likewise, female customers usually prefer male service personnel.
- The dress and appearance of customers and staff are also important elements of atmosphere. Luxury restaurants may require customers to conform to a "coat and tie" dress code. This maintains a high quality of visual appearance and formality to the atmosphere. Staff uniform should continue the theme of the restaurant. (it also help to distinguish staff from customers and is a symbols of staff hierarchy in the restaurant).