

# 7 TIPS FOR CREATING AN OUTDOOR PATIO SPACE

For restaurant and bar owners, making the most of every Spring day and Summer night is a priority. Adding a functional patio space to accommodate for additional seating and dining options requires more than just access to square footage. Adequate preparation, design and planning for the unexpected should be a part of that recipe for success.

**Here are 7 tips to attract and bring back first-time guests and regulars.**



## #1 UNRAVEL THE RED TAPE

- Follow the letter of the law and abide by city ordinance regulations
- Inform your landlord of the planned modifications
- Research insurance liability risks due to increased property value
- Ensure construction permits are properly completed before breaking ground
- Consult with the health department about outdoor tobacco use and pet allowance
- Verify that the new outdoor space is covered by your liquor license



## #2 DESIGN FOR SUCCESS

- Increase business with well-designed seating options and accommodations
- Provide attractive features – go beyond a concrete slab, tables and chairs
- Understand how the entrances to the building will affect your design
- Ensure serving outdoor customers is simplified for your employees
- Avoid overcrowding if the plans include an outdoor bar or grill



## #3 MAKE IT COMFORTABLE AND INVITING

- Always maintain a high degree of comfort for your customers
- Make sure your patio aligns with the rest of your branding
- Provide consistent ambiance for both your indoor and outdoor customers
- Use appropriate lighting at night to enhance the experience
- Consider greater privacy – use dividers, planters or a well-made wood fence
- Include umbrellas for shade, and to send an inviting message



## #4 **PREPARE FOR INCONSISTENT WEATHER**

- Provide patio heaters or a fire pit for unseasonably cool temperatures
- Install additional awnings or a large canopy to keep things dry
- Keep an eye on local weather reports and always be prepared
- Always ensure your guests are safe when the weather changes



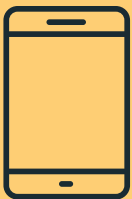
## #5 **DON'T FORGET ABOUT PEST CONTROL**

- Be mindful of birds, insects and the occasional squirrel or chipmunk
- Maintain a consistent and rigid cleaning routine
- Clear the tables of food and drinks as soon as the customers leave
- Hire a service that specializes in pest control and removal
- Offer indoor seating to customers bothered by nature's uninvited guests



## #6 **CONSIDER YOUR SERVING OPTIONS**

- Know the options when stocking your patio dinner and glassware
- Consider replacing fine china with melamine dishes
- Use durable, yet nicely designed plastic glassware to serve drinks
- Include quality silverware, linen tablecloths and a classy centerpiece



## #7 **SPREAD THE WORD AND CREATE A BUZZ**

- Develop a strong marketing plan
- Educate your regulars and first time guests about the updates
- Create a buzz leading up to the new patio's unveiling
- Engage with your customers often through social media
- Post regular pictures of the work in progress
- Have a contest with your customers to name the new space
- Designate a craft beer in honor of the new patio

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