Profitable Menu Design

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The Menu: Backbone of the Operation

- A Gallop Poll found that the average customer spends only 109 seconds studying a menu

- During that time, they scan the menu, read descriptions and check prices before making a decision
  - What does this mean for us as owner/operators?
  - We need a simple, concise, well laid out, and streamlined menu
  - Focus on those signature items that sell best and have the most profit built in

Menu Design

- What does the menu do for your operation?
  - Backbone of business, informational, begins to tell the story or theme of your operation, inventory control, ordering guide
- A thoughtfully designed menu can make a significant impact on revenue by drawing attention profitable menu items and leaving a lasting impression with the guest.
- These tips should be only implemented with your restaurant's individual brand and personality in mind.

The Menu is the Digital Age

- Most guests (especially first timers) are accessing our menus online before ever stepping foot in the restaurant
  - Is your menu easily accessible online? What about on mobile devices?
  - Are you the first hit on Google when searched?
    - If not look at building SEO
- A menu can improve the entire dining experience, boost the perceived value of your brand, strategically drive customer buying decisions, and increase profits
  - But only if it can be *easily* found online
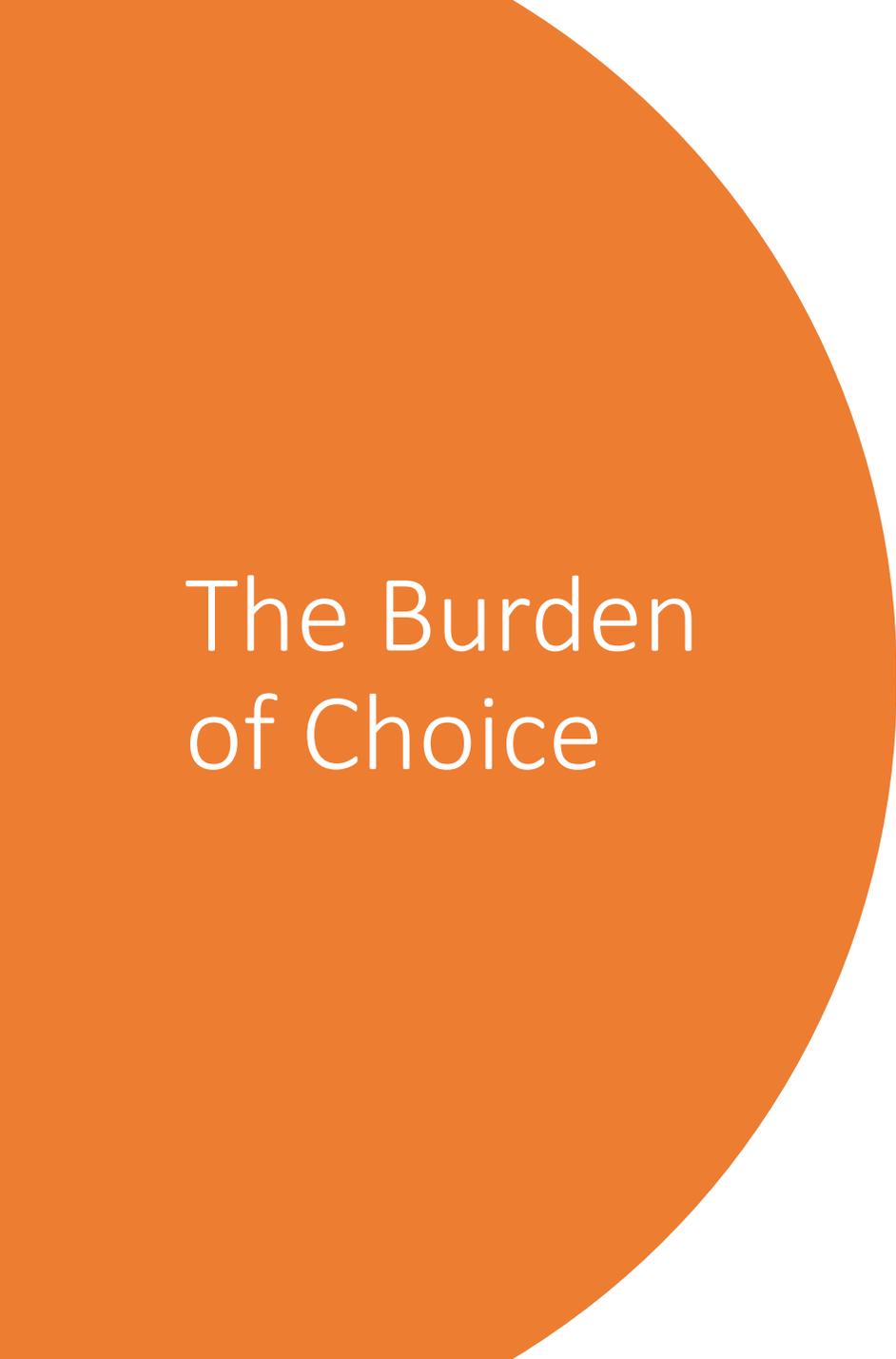
The Burden of Choice

A study at Bournemouth University found that there is a "sweet spot" between too few and too many menu choices.

Customers like to see 6 items per category in fast food shops and and 7-10 items for fine dining restaurants.

Match the length and options on your menu to match your customers' expectations.

7 Tips for Menu Design

1. The Golden Triangle
2. Use White Space
3. Give Visual Direction
4. Use Price Strategically
5. The Burden of Choice
6. Carefully Select Pictures
7. No Pictures? Use Imagery in Words
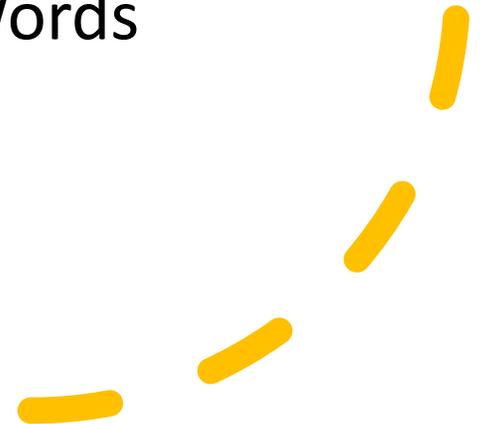
The Golden Triangle

- Menu engineering specialists say that our eyes typically start in the middle of a page, then move to the top right, then top left.
- Consider putting high-margin dishes at the center and upper right corner of your menu.

Use White Space

- Studies show that use of white space improves reader comprehension by up to 30%. If you want your menu to leave a lasting impression, plan to incorporate some negative space into menu design.
- Leave some negative space to improve aesthetics and to ensure that the guest isn't overwhelmed.

Give Visual Direction

- If something's important – highlight it! The same principle of underlining important words in a sentence also applies to menu design.

- Use boxes, lines, and color to attract attention to your high- margin menu items.

Use Price Strategically

A study at Cornell found that diners who ordered from a menu without dollar signs ($) spent significantly more than those who ordered from a traditionally priced menu.

If menu items are more expensive but quality is a focus, use menu design to downplay cost.

Consider removing dollar signs and don't list prices in a single column

Don't lose site of the fact that your menu is a direct reflection of your restaurant's pricing strategy and brand.

Use Price Strategically

If low prices and good value are an important part of your brand, use your menu to convey that message.

Highlight economic value by enlarging prices and strategically packaging menu item

Carefully Select Pictures

NICE LOOKING PICTURES
ALONGSIDE A FOOD ITEM
INCREASE SALES BY 30%

ESPECIALLY ON DIGITAL BOARDS
THIS IS EFFECTIVE

USE THIS TO POINT GUESTS
TOWARDS HIGH MARGIN ITEMS

Use menu item descriptions to communicate the deliciousness of a dish. Words like "savory," "buttery," and "crisp" elicit a visceral reaction. Have fun with it! Use descriptions to convey the restaurant's personality.

Use highly descriptive language when copywriting your menu – make your guests feel something when they read i

Use Imagery In Words

Suggestions for Streamlining Menus and Lowering Profit

- Less is more
- Effective operations focus on several dishes that they execute perfectly rather than trying to be "all things to all people"
- Reduce the amount of text, be descriptive, but if items can be combined do so
- Be careful of choice
- More choices become confusing and can drive up costs
- Cross utilize products on menu