



Small Business Case Study



Montezumas Avenge



How operational excellence can create customer retention and new business

Previously, *Let's Talk Business* explored the importance of a systemised approach to business through a branded business model called SOMFAT.

This month's feature will examine the O in the SOMFAT model representing Operational Excellence and how it can positively impact sales, customer retention and marketing.

Get ready to enjoy a behind the scenes glimpse of Montezuma's Mexican Restaurant in Miranda NSW. We will examine their business systems and strategies that have increased sales and retain customers.

Business Case Study

Established in 1978, Australian owned Montezuma's Mexican Restaurants have expanded slowly but surely to have a strong presence along the Australian Eastern seaboard.

From Cairns to the bottom of South Australia in Adelaide, Montezuma's is a successful chain of small to medium size business proprietors who operate nineteen restaurants. Two more will open in the near future with business systems that are tailored to their specific needs.

While franchises are normally much larger than micro businesses, they face the same day-to-day challenges of most business operators.

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Atmosphere and experience

After my first Montezuma's experience in 1994 at Bondi Beach, I have returned on many occasions with family and friends. More

recently, my dinner was on the house and something you can enjoy yourself – let me explain.

I recently received a birthday card with a free meal voucher as part of Montezuma's client retention follow up. Planning my next visit for this article, my dining experience was going to be viewed through a different pair of consumer eyes.

Paying attention to the atmosphere and clientele of the Miranda Montezuma's, I asked owners Barbara and Alan Box the secret to their operational excellence.

Clearly, they were doing things right as the atmosphere was buzzing with people at every table enjoying drinks and meals while staying longer for desserts and coffees.

The food

The secret of Montezuma's success is in part, the result of their fine food; indeed at a local level, their reputation is unsurpassed.

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One of the healthiest diets in the world today, Mexico's corn based cuisine enjoys a history that dates back to the Aztecs, followed by the rice based Chinese diet and finally, the sauce based French cuisine.

Indeed, my own preference for Mexican food goes back to my years of living in Arizona and traveling the southwestern United States.

Pleasantly, I have been surprised each time at Montezuma's in exceeding my dining expectations.

Client retention systems

The Miranda operation is a marriage of experience with Barbara having worked in the Mt Gravatt Montezuma's for over four years and Alan's background in small business.

Having operated small businesses throughout his working life, Alan brought a strong managerial background to the business mixed with an understanding of sales and marketing plus the acumen offered by the franchise system.

Employing a casual staff of seven, their week is a day-to-day round of preparation in serving lunch and dinner meals seven days a week.

In talking with Alan, he expanded on the three success systems and business building habits to which he attributes to their Miranda operations.



NEXT MONTH'S CASE STUDY

Expanding on our SOMFAT business model, next month we will examine another case study and lessons to learn from established and successful Australasian business operators.

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1. Gold Card Club membership

Customers, who eat five meals, enjoy the sixth meal free and can become Gold Card Members.

With over 2000 customers in the Sutherland Shire area, Alan and Barbara's members use their Gold Cards often and the club is growing week by week.

2. The Birthday Club

A month prior to a customer's birthday, a card is sent in the post to remind customers to visit their local Montezuma's for a free second meal with the purchase of one of equal value.

Alan and Barbara have over 2500 customers on this system and again, it is growing daily.

3. Kid's Corner

Designed to bring children and their families back to Montezuma's, Kids Corner is a big hit for both parents and children alike. Kids are provided with an A-4 sheet of paper and asked to colour it in to match the restaurant's impression logo.

As you can imagine, parents are a bit more relaxed when they are enjoying Margarita's, beers, sodas, corn chips and salsa while their children are busy colouring in paper masks.

When completed, the children enter their picture into a competition to win a complimentary main meal and dessert from Montezuma's Kids Menu. All winning entries take pride of place on the restaurant walls for all patrons to enjoy.

Thousands of children enjoy this Montezuma's loyalty system and it brings families back in to enjoy the restaurant on many an occasion.

Give it a go

Next time you have a thought for Mexican food, check out Montezuma's cuisine and personally experience first hand their simple, but specialized customer service.

You may own the type of business that can learn from Montezuma's and as a result, reap the rewards of Gold Card Members and birthday celebrations along the way.



Alan & Barbara Box
Franchisees, Montezumas, Miranda

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About the Writer

An accredited professional speaker, Rob Salisbury recently served two years as President of the NSW National Speakers Association of Australia.

He is a USA certified Tom Hopkins Sales Trainer who specialises in field-tested sales, marketing and promotions methods that clients bank on.