

10 Things you should do before opening your restaurant

- 1. Do your homework on the location:** We have all heard it: location, location, location. Location will make or break your business. Get as much information on your location as you possibly can before signing the lease!
- 2. Get clear on your why:** The gastro industry is hard. There will be sleepless nights and days where everything seems to be going wrong. The only thing that will help you in this situation is knowing your why and your why being bigger than yourself and bigger than the need or will to make money.
- 3. Know your customer:** Being as specific as you can in creating your customer avatar is key. This will serve as a basis for your communication and marketing strategies.
- 4. Know your competition:** I am not a fan of following your competition's every move. This is not conducive to your own creativity. However, knowing what the competition offers and how you might be different from them is one of the keys to success.
- 5. Make a business plan:** Although much of the business plan will be speculation on your part, it does offer you a framework from which to operate once you launch. Having a solid business plan and really investing time in the financial part of it will help you in the long run. However, don't get bogged down in the nitty gritty. Done is sometimes better than perfect.
- 6. Have enough cash for 12 months:** We all dream of a business that is an overnight success. The reality of it is that it takes a lot of time, money and energy into growing a restaurant business that is profitable. Make sure you have enough cash on hand to cover the first years running costs so that you are not only relying on the cash coming in from sales.
- 7. Talk to the experts:** The industry is full of experts from gastro brokers, to legal experts to coaches to mentors. Each of them is carrying with them an arsenal of knowledge that will save you time and money in the long run. Cash might be tight at the beginning but investing in acquiring the knowledge from experienced professionals will save you years and thousands of franks worth of mistakes you will inevitably make along the way.
- 8. Start small:** One of the fun parts of starting a restaurant is planning the menu. It's easy to get carried away with all the dishes you want to create and try to make the menu appeal to everyone. But, remember if you are appealing to everyone, you are satisfying no one.
- 9. Invest in the right employees:** It is worth to pay more for staff and get knowledgeable and experienced personnel than pay less and struggle with your first hires, in the middle of your first year of business, where the challenges will be many and of different kind.
- 10. Call up the Lebensmittelinspektorat:** If you already have your location and you want to refurbish it, call up the responsible Lebensmittelinspektor and ask him for a site visit. Switzerland has very strict laws and procedures when it comes to dealing with food in a hygienic, professional way, she/he will help you with this complicated world.