

10 Email Marketing Ideas for Restaurants to Drive Sales



If your restaurant isn't using email marketing, now is the ideal time to start. It may seem like a big undertaking—especially given everything else you're probably managing—but it'll be worth your while. **Restaurant email marketing** is one of the most cost-effective ideas to stay top of mind, engage with your customers, and increase sales.

Online ordering has become extremely popular, so much so that digital sales will account for **more than half** of limited-service and quick-service sales by 2024. Moreover, many people have grown accustomed to mostly interacting with each other digitally, via video chat, texting, social media, and yes, email. It only makes sense to communicate with your guests virtually too.

We recommend emailing your guests on a regular basis to establish consistency. Try sending out messages once a month, once every two weeks, or once a week.

If you're a ChowNow restaurant partner, you can set your email on autopilot by signing up for our automated email marketing service. If you'd prefer to create your own content and send emails, there are many low-cost email marketing platforms available, like GoDaddy, MailChimp, and Emma.

To make it easy, we've rounded up 10 ideas to fuel your restaurant's email marketing.

10 Email Marketing Ideas for Restaurants

1. Profile a special dish.

Have you updated your menu recently with a seasonal treat? Is there a longtime standout that makes you proud? Tell your guests about it! Feature a mouthwatering photo in your

email, describe what makes the dish special, and tell your guests how to order it. If you use an online ordering system, make sure to link to it within the email, too.

2. Feature a staff member.

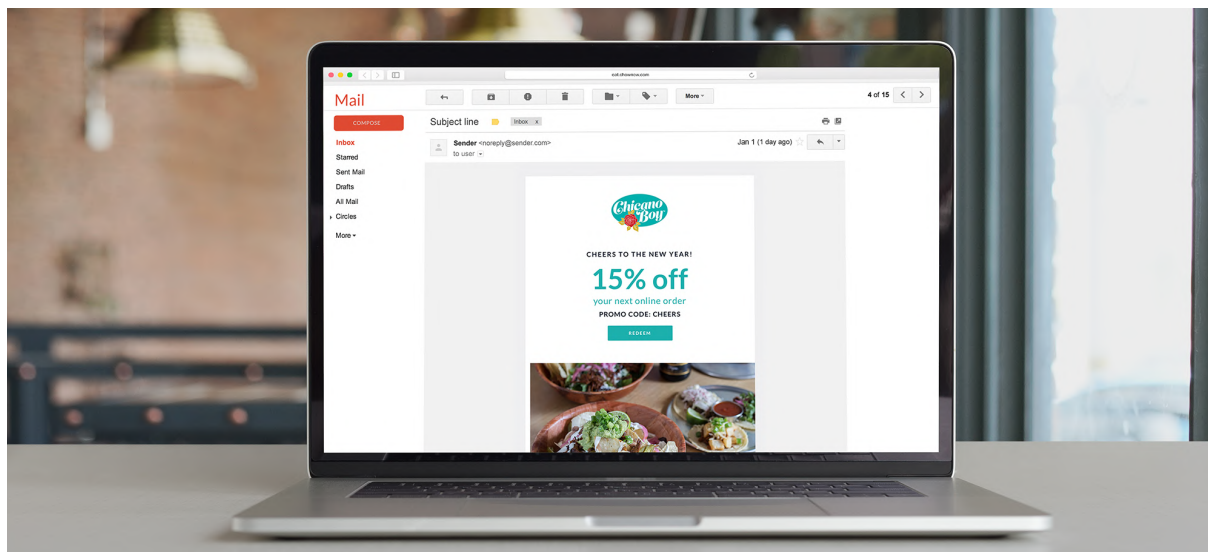
Everyone on staff works hard to create a great dining experience. Give both the front-of-house and back-of-house their due by highlighting them in emails. Share their insights, favorite dishes, or fun facts with your customers. Don't forget to include photos to really tell your teammate's story.

Add a call-to-action to follow your restaurant on social media, so your audience can keep up with your whole crew.

3. Offer a small discount off online orders.

With email marketing, it's a wise idea for your restaurant to occasionally offer guests a discount for their loyalty. Make it easy for them to use the deal and order from you as soon as possible by linking to your online ordering.

If you use direct, commission-free ordering, you may be able to swing a promotion for ten or fifteen percent off online orders while not giving up too much of your margins.



4. Create a secret menu item.

Make your email subscribers feel special by giving them exclusive access to a secret menu item. Create a new twist on an old favorite or use the opportunity to test something totally different. You'll create buzz, get feedback on a new dish, and get your guests excited.

5. Promote a discount or special dish for a holiday.

Help your email audience celebrate properly by giving them discounts or special meals on

different holidays. Here's a list of festive dates in 2021 to give your restaurant more email marketing ideas:

Winter and Early Spring:

- The Super Bowl: February 7
- National Pizza Day: February 9
- Lunar New Year: February 12
- Valentine's Day: February 14
- Mardi Gras: February 16
- Purim: February 26
- NCAA Basketball March Madness: March 14 to April 5
- Vernal Equinox: March 20

Spring and Early Summer:

- Easter: April 4
- Cinco de Mayo: May 5
- Mother's Day: May 9
- Eid al-Fitr: May 12 to May 13
- Memorial Day: May 31
- National Donut Day: June 5
- Father's Day: June 20
- Summer Solstice: June 20

Summer and Early Fall:

- Independence Day: July 4
- National Ice Cream Day: July 18
- National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day: August 4
- Labor Day: September 6
- Rosh Hashanah: September 7
- Fall Equinox: September 22

Fall and Winter:

- National Coffee Day: October 1
- National Pasta Day: October 17
- Halloween: October 31
- National Sandwich Day: November 3
- Thanksgiving: November 25
- Hanukkah: November 28 to December 6
- National Brownie Day: December 8
- Winter Solstice: December 21
- Christmas: December 25

6. Highlight a local or online event.

While in-person events are rare in many places right now, you can easily create and promote digital events. Consider offering a ticketed wine tasting class conducted on Zoom, or do a cooking class on Instagram Live.

In the future, send emails about fundraisers, local food festivals, town celebrations, or sports games—anything your restaurant is participating in, or an event that’s truly meaningful to you.

7. Share a popular recipe.

No chef wants to give away all of their secrets, but your guests may appreciate a taste. Consider giving your email audience exclusive access to one of your recipes, especially if it’s easy to make at home.

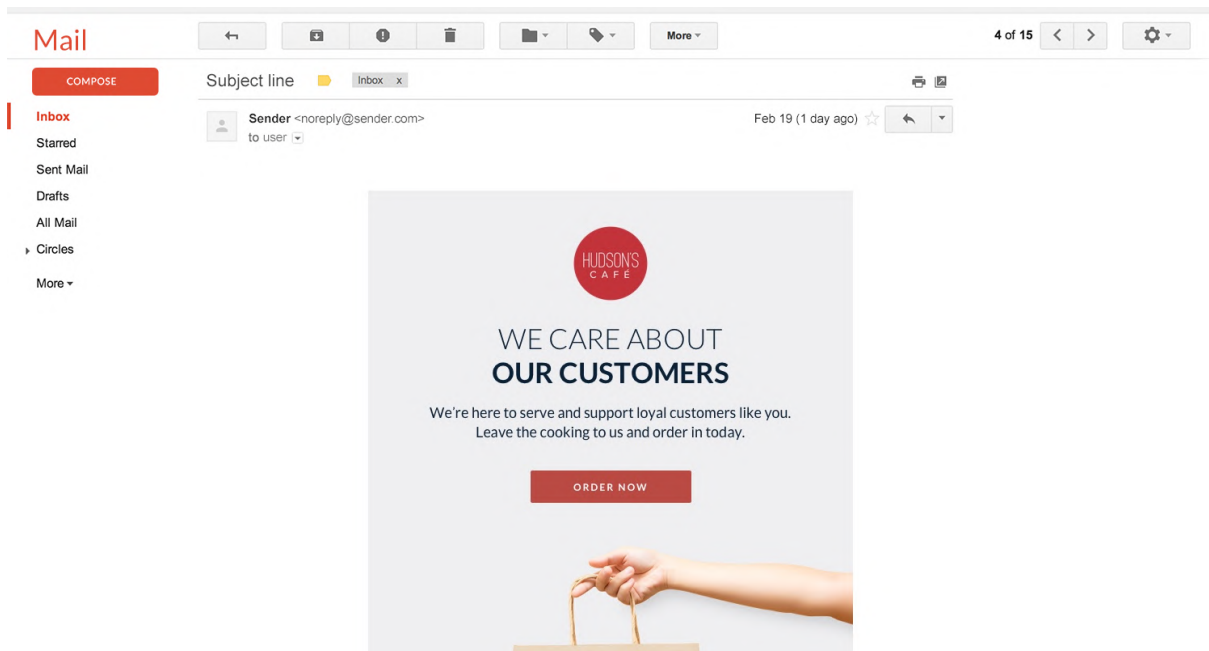
Go a step further and sell the ingredients on your [online ordering menu](#), so customers can buy from you and follow along at home.

8. Do a question and answer session with your chef.

Help your guests better understand and appreciate your restaurant’s work. Use your marketing emails to share your chef’s ideas, story, and passion in a written question and answer format.

9. Ask for guest feedback.

Gather your guests’ thoughts and suggestions by sending a survey in an email. Use a free or low-cost survey platform like [Google Forms](#) or [Survey Monkey](#) to get your customers’ opinion on your menu, food quality, service, or anything else.



10. Announce specials to drive orders when things are slow.

It’s a common practice for operators to incentivize orders during non-peak days and times. Whether your restaurant does lunch specials, weekday happy hours, or anything else, make

sure you share these promotions via your restaurant's email marketing program. It's a good idea to link to your online ordering if your specials are valid for takeout or delivery. That way, guests can quickly act on an appealing, well-timed offer.

Hopefully these restaurant email marketing ideas have inspired you to reach out to your guests. Remember, if you need to build a list of email addresses, [direct, commission-free online ordering](#) is one of the best ways to start.

With ChowNow, you'll be able to offer takeout and delivery online—without breaking the bank—while gathering valuable marketing data like emails. Find out more by [scheduling a demo with our online ordering experts](#).

Want to explore more on your own? Check out these resources: [Restaurant Email Marketing in 3 Easy Steps](#), [Why Third-Party Marketplaces Want Your Customer Data](#), and [Why Your Restaurant Needs to Take Advantage of Your Database](#).



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Learn how ChowNow can help your restaurant thrive.