



## BUSINESS SUPPORT GUIDANCE SHEET

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Author	Max Lawrence

Menu writing is an art and should radiate a personality, a well curated menu is a tool for persuasion, influence and upsell. Whether casual or fine dining, effective menu design mixes a planned layout, well written content and correct pricing whilst communicating the concept, ethos, location, theme and brand voice of your business. The menu should reflect your organisational values and speak to your intended audience or customer profile. Consumers are pretty savvy and a encyclopedic menu with lots of dishes is likely to convey to the diner a lifeless menu, where a lot of this is pre-prepared and sourced from a national food wholesaler. So if your concept is quality locally sourced produce, restrict the menu to what you can realistically produce in house on a busy service. Keep market price items to a minimum as these have the greatest fluctuation in prices, and have a fair balance of lower and higher priced dishes. Menu descriptions should be enticing but not be overly wordy, and explain the main ingredients adding authenticity and flair. The rule of thumb is to keep it short and simple. Give diners a sense of place, using local produce allows you to change with the seasons, suggests quality and also supports a local supply chain for mutual benefit. A study has concluded that the following factors can influence purchase decisions, local sourcing, organic ingredients and a good description of the dish, so emphasise the source of your provenence.

On average we read at around 200-250 words a minute and diners spend an average of 109 seconds reading a menu. So you have under two minutes so endeavour to keep the content contained to one page without flaps and folds. Our eyes automatically start in the middle of the page then they move to the top right corner before focusing on the top left, this is known as the golden triangle (ideal for your most profitable dishes) and then read horizontally from the top decreasing how far we go into each line as we progress, so the first few words on the left onf each line receives more attantion than the rest. Your guests will usually be drawn to either the top two or the bottom two dishes in any section of your menu. Make sure you position your star dishes in those prime spots on your menu.



Make things simple for diners consider identifying a suitable pairing glass of wine for each dish. A separate dessert/cheese menu can offer the potential to suggest ports, dessert wines, after dinner drinks and hot beverages and don't be afraid to introduce a bit of fun into the text such as "Life is short, eat dessert first".

When naming the dish, the title should clearly identify what the dish is. Starting with the most expensive ingredient focus on the core ingredients, then sell copy emphasising the quality of your provenance. Talk about the appearance, texture and taste of the dish to bring it alive words such as vibrant, leafy, buttered, tender (see some suggestions for words below) and remember to include waiting time for dishes that require special preparation. Remember allergen identification should be included the key 14 allergens celery, cereals (containing gluten), crustaceans, eggs, fish, lupin, milk, molluscs, mustard, peanuts, sesame, soybeans, sulphur dioxide and sulphites and tree nuts (almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nut) and make a clear note to inform your server of any known allergens. Under new government legislation businesses employing more than 250 must display a calorie count clearly and prominently at the point of choice along with a statement that adults need around 2,000 kcal a day.

### Some inspiration

Some words to describe taste

Bitter	Robust
Bittersweet	Sharp
Citrusy	Smoky
Cooling	Spicy
Earthy	Tangy
Fiery	Tart
Fresh	Woody
Fruity	Zesty
Rich bodied	

Some words to describe texture

Airy	Fluffy
Buttery	Gooey
Creamy	Hearty
Crisp	Juicy
Crumbly	Silky
Crunchy	Sticky
Crusty	Smooth
Delicate	Succulent
Fizzy	Tender
Flaky	Velvety

Some words to describe preparation

Baked	Glazed
Blanched	Infused
Blackened	Marinated
Braised	Poached
Breaded	Roasted
Broiled	Sauteed
Caramelised	Seared
Charred	Smoked
Fermented	Whipped
Fried	Wood fired

Finally, always get at least two people to proofread your menu.

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