

HOW TO OPEN A FOOD TRUCK



From ideation to opening, this infographic explains the process of opening a food truck and gaining a following (online and offline), step-by-step.

#1 OFFER FOOD CUSTOMERS CAN'T GET FROM ANOTHER TRUCK



Research the food trucks in your area and study their menus.

EXAMPLES:

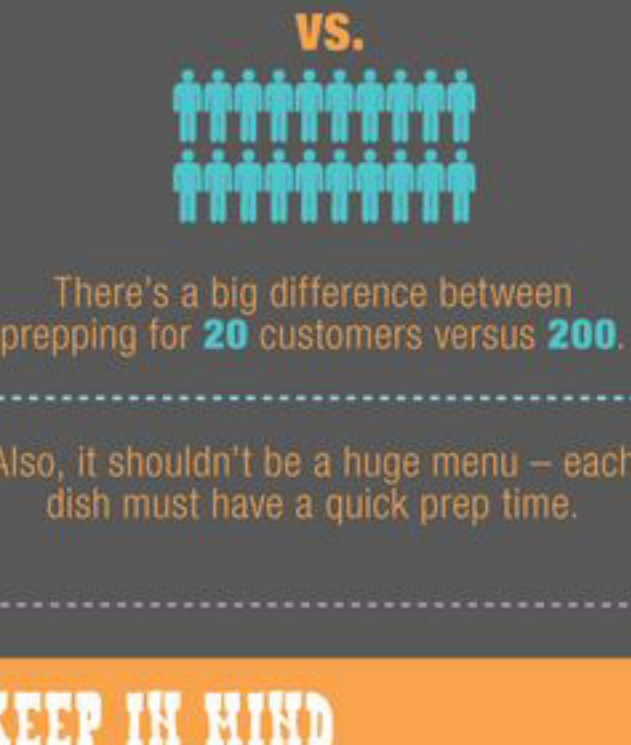
Kimchi quesadillas, real po boys 2,500 miles from New Orleans, marshmallow crepes, and cheeseburger sushi.

#2 DEVELOP A MENU

KEEP IN MIND



Hire a chef to help with menu creation (unless you are one).



vs.



There's a big difference between prepping for 20 customers versus 200.

Also, it shouldn't be a huge menu – each dish must have a quick prep time.

#3 GET A TRUCK

KEEP IN MIND



LA is the homeland for food truck building.



Price online first, but plan a trip to wherever you get your truck from to see it in person before you buy.

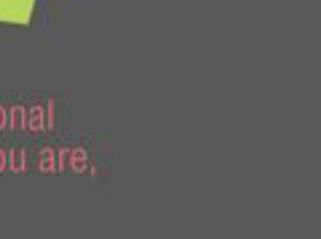
Make sure the company builds trucks to your state's specifications – they differ from state to state.



#4 GET READY TO DEAL WITH SERIOUS BUREAUCRACY

KEEP IN MIND

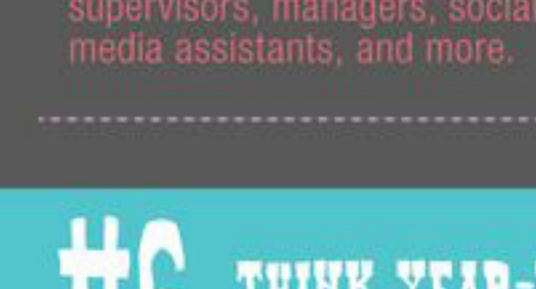
Start at your city hall to research food safety regulations.



Some states are stricter than others when it comes to food truck regulation.

#5 HIRE A STAFF

KEEP IN MIND



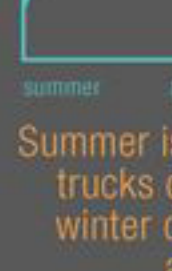
If you aren't a professional chef, hire one (and if you are, hire one anyway).



It can take over 4 hours to break down and clean a food truck after one shift.



Plan on hiring a staff of 20 as your truck gains popularity. Employees may include cooks, servers, drivers, cashiers, supervisors, managers, social media assistants, and more.



Imagine tearing down and rebuilding your kitchen every single day.

#6 THINK YEAR-ROUND

KEEP IN MIND:



Consider the average weather in your city in all four seasons.



Summer is peak season, but food trucks can still do well in the winter depending on location and marketing.



If your truck is seasonal, you'll be hiring seasonal employees.

TIPS:



Change up your menu to fit the season.

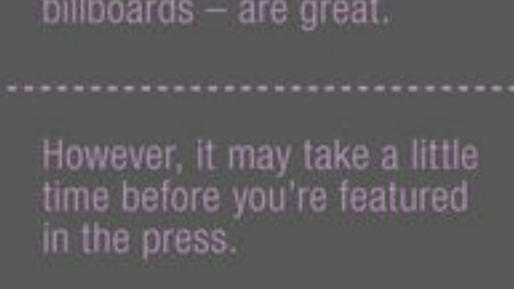


Closing for a season means less opportunity to build relationships with customers.

specials!

Offer specials in off-seasons.

TIPS:



Traditional methods – newspapers, magazines, billboards – are great.

#7 CHOOSE LOCATIONS



Find out what areas in your city food trucks frequent, and which they avoid.



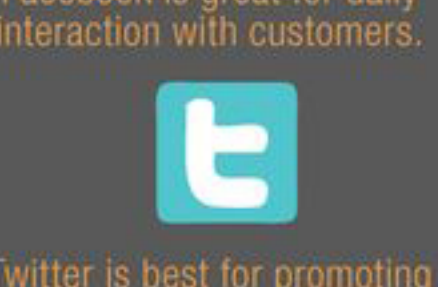
Look for places with clubs and heavy nightlife for nighttime hours.

#8 SPREAD THE WORD

KEEP IN MIND:



If you aren't knowledgeable with advertising and marketing, find someone who is.



The more the better – each account will have different types of followers.

#9 GET DOWN WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

KEEP IN MIND:



Create FREE accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and Foursquare. Social media accounts are great for marketing, but don't underestimate the time it takes to maintain them!

Facebook is great for daily interaction with customers.

Twitter is best for promoting big events.



FourSquare is ideal for offering promotions and encouraging regulars.

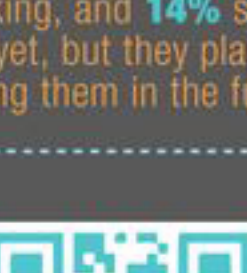
#10 GO HIGH TECH

KEEP IN MIND:



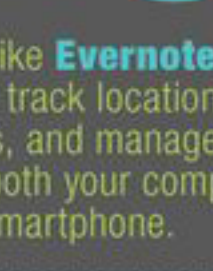
Advances in technology are making it easier to run a mobile business.

"Food trucks are the most high tech of all the elements of the local food economy." ~ Venkatesh Rao (Forbes)

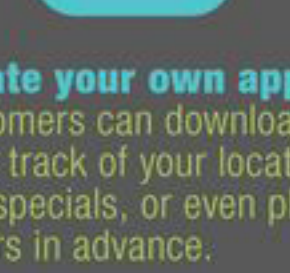


In a Mobile Cuisine Magazine poll, 28% of vendors said they accept credit cards, 58% said cash is king, and 14% said no cards yet, but they plan on accepting them in the future.

EXAMPLES:



Apps like Square allow you to accept cash and credit cards on your iPhone, iPad, or iPod Touch.



QR Code apps allow customers to quickly locate you on your social media networks.



Apps like Evernote allow you to track locations, plan menus, and manage a budget from both your computer and your smartphone.



Create your own app customers can download to keep track of your location and specials, or even place orders in advance.



Sites like Groupon and Living Social help you gain new customers by offering deals.



Apps like Tapviva allow customers to order and pay ahead of time.



The iPad app Isispos allows you to take orders through a 3G card a few hundred feet away and wirelessly transmit the order straight to the kitchen printer.



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