



MOOD: MEDIA

# RESTAURANT AV HOW TO GET THE MOST FOR YOUR MONEY

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**YOUR AV SYSTEM MAY NOT BE QUITE AS IMPORTANT AS YOUR GRILL OR OVENS, BUT IT'S NOTHING TO NEGLECT.**

**AFTER ALL, GREAT DESIGN, QUALITY SPEAKERS AND HIGH-PERFORMANCE SCREENS ARE KEY INGREDIENTS IN CREATING A MEMORABLE AND ENGAGING DINING EXPERIENCE**

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But just as your restaurant is unlike any other, no two AV systems are exactly alike. Even when it comes to restaurant chains there are slight variations in the design and function of each system, and there are a number of considerations you'll need to work through if you want to get the best system for your needs and your budget. We'll break them all down below and provide some insights from our in-house AV specialists.

### **1 DEFINE YOUR "PRIME TIME" - WHAT IT LOOKS AND SOUNDS LIKE**

Every restaurant thrives off of a unique prime time. For example, sports bars thrive the most on Saturdays and Sundays when all the big games are on. On the other hand, fine dining establishments are typically at their busiest Thursday-Saturday evenings.

Gib Harris, Director of Systems Sales for Mood Media, emphasizes the importance of understanding the experience you're trying to create during your busiest times. "I'll always ask my clients - 'what does the experience look and sound like during your prime times?'," says Gib. "Is music front and center to the experience, or is it in the background to create a specific ambiance? Are you trying to make customers feel like they're at the big game? At a minimum, your audiovisual system needs to provide adequate performance to support that prime time experience."

### **2 DEFINE YOUR CLIENTELE**

Before you invest in your restaurant AV system, you should consider your clientele and what type of experience they expect at your business.

For example, the middle to upper class gen X'ers aren't looking for screens all over the dining room and blaring music at their favorite Italian restaurant. They want to have casual conversation while they sip wine and enjoy great meals. However, the millennials who frequent your late night sushi place will likely appreciate loud dance music overhead and ambient visuals on the walls. If they're sitting at the sushi bar, then they'll also want to watch some TV while they talk. Remember - your clientele is just as unique as your brand, and the experience you create is all about catering to their preferences so that they're more likely to return.

### **3 KNOW YOUR COVERAGE**

When we talk about coverage, we're referencing how much space and what areas are being covered by audiovisual. You may not need speakers in every area of your restaurant, and you may only want screens at the entrance and by the bar. Go through your building and make a list of the rooms and areas of each room where audiovisual will have a presence. Factor in outdoor dining areas as well, and be sure to consider different variations for speaker and screen placement. Coverage determines design, placement and the specific hardware required to meet your needs.

### **4 KNOW YOUR FUNCTION**

Simply put, function refers to what your solutions will do. For example, do you want your screens to play TV or display digital signage? Do you want them to do both? Do you want PA functionality in your kitchen? Or maybe you're looking to create a theater-like experience at your sports bar for game days. As mentioned by Greg Gershon, VP of System Sales at Mood Media, understanding the functionality you need will help you get the best value.

"The importance of knowing how you want your AV system to function can't be understated," says Greg. "If you have a vision of the functionality you need, your AV provider will be better equipped to guide you towards the right components and quality for your needs and your budget."

### **5 DEMAND COMMERCIAL-GRADE**

There's an important difference between commercial-grade equipment and home AV, and you'll want to go with the former if you really want to get the most bang for your buck.

Commercial-grade screens, speakers and amps are designed to run reliably for several hours a day, 365 days a year.





Additionally, commercial-grade screens have protective casing that ensure high performance even in a restaurant environment.

A crackling speaker or a fuzzy display on your flat screens isn't going to have guests slamming their napkins on the table and storming out. However, this type of quality will give your guests a poor impression of your restaurant – regardless of whether or not your food is good.

Make sure you invest in high-quality, **commercial-grade** equipment from brands such as Bose, Klipsch, LG, Samsung and others who focus on commercial applications. These manufacturers understand how to design their professional lines of products for maximum performance and reliability in a restaurant environment.

Additionally, if you have multiple locations, going with a commercial-grade manufacturer may provide you with an opportunity to receive discounts by purchasing or leasing equipment in bulk.

## **6 BRING IN A QUALIFIED RESTAURANT AV EXPERT**

This point probably goes without saying, but it's still important to mention. The AV industry is filled with great designers and installers, but it's in your best interest to find a company that's specifically experienced in providing AV solutions for restaurants because they understand how to properly design a system with respect to the demands of a restaurant environment. They'll ask you the right questions, and consequently, they'll recommend the right equipment for your needs, space and budget.

Remember – your AV provider should also act as a consultant. If you've taken the time to work through the previous five steps before your consultation, then you'll further empower the AV expert to design and install a system that brings your vision to life.

## **7 HAVE AN OPEN MIND**

No matter how specific your vision may be, it's important to keep an open mind during the consultation. Propose your vision, and let the AV professional share their expertise and ask additional questions. These people live and breathe audiovisual, and they understand exactly how to help you create an experience that your guests will want to repeat – again and again.

**Contact us today** to set up a free consultation with one of our Restaurant AV pros. We've installed more audiovisual systems for restaurants than any other provider in the world, and we'll help you find the right components for your needs and budget.