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Overwhelmed managing social media for your restaurant?

MilkBar Digital Shares top tips for busy restaurant owners.

By Maida Pineda July 2 2026 3 min read



If [social media](#) feels like one more thing on an already overwhelming plate, you're not alone. Sam Sidney, Founder and Director of MilkBar Digital, has spent more than 20 years in digital marketing, working with clients including Simplot, Lactalis, San Remo Group, Nando's and Tibaldi, and she has the strategies to help busy [restaurant operators](#) get on top of it.

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Sidney has four rules for social media success:

- **“Be adaptable, be willing to evolve.”** It's easy to get comfortable with the apps and content formats you know are working. But that's how you get left behind, especially when something new comes along. TikTok rewrote the way brands create content, and it won't be the last platform to do so.
- **“Don't be afraid to test and learn.”** One of the greatest advantages of social media is the volume of data available. Use it to test, analyse and constantly re-evaluate what's working. That discipline is critical to any brand or social strategy.
- **“Measure and analyse everything you can.”**
- **“The internet has a lot of crap in it — don't try to add to that.”**

Sidney outlines four reasons why social media is an essential tool for [restaurants](#): “First, it is incredibly affordable compared to most marketing channels, and you have access to valuable data and insights — you can see exactly where your marketing investment is returning results. Second, there's the DIY nature of social media. You don't need a full production house. You can create amazing content using nothing but your mobile phone. Third, you can meet your customer where they are, which is often on their mobile device. Fourth, food is a natural fit for social media. People eat with their eyes, so you can use that to your advantage.”

The numbers back it up. Australians now spend an average of two hours and 27 minutes a day on social media. TikTok leads the way at one hour 14 minutes of daily use, followed by Instagram at one hour three minutes, and Facebook at 46 minutes. Sidney notes that younger Australians in particular are now using TikTok and Instagram as search tools. “They'll type something like ‘restaurant in Melbourne’ into TikTok to find their next dining experience, then turn to Google for the details.” And the pressure to produce glossy, high-production content? Gone. “People are seeking authenticity, reliability and entertainment from brands,” she says.

7 essential ingredients for a strong social media presence

Sidney recommends building your social media strategy around seven core principles: know your audience; know yourself and what's sustainable for you to create; be consistent; be strategic; be measurable; be inspired; and be willing to learn.

5 fast tips for busy restaurant operators

For those with limited time, which is most people running a restaurant, Sidney's five go-to tips are:

1. **Video is (still) king.** Create compelling video content and use trending audio.
2. **TikTok works best with real people.** Employee-generated content and user-generated content perform strongly. Having a team member show their face gives audiences an authentic glimpse into the story of your business.
3. **Hook them fast.** Make sure viewers have a reason to keep watching within the first few seconds.
4. **If you've got budget, invest in Meta ads.** The difference in results can be game-changing.
5. **Connect the on and offline experience.** Make sure the experience customers have when they walk into your restaurant matches what they see when they visit your social channels.

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