

Business

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Johnny and Sebastiano Cicciarella of Elite Restaurant & Lounge. Photo by Riziero Vertolli

Restaurant banking future on authentic Italian fare

By Nancy Alexander
SPECIAL TO THE BEAVER

Great food and warm hospitality are two ingredients we've come to expect from a good Italian restaurant. Add a third element—an elegant dining room complete with dance floor—and you have the recipe for Oakville's newest Italian eatery, *Elite Restaurant & Lounge*.

Although located in a somewhat out of the way location on Speers Road, the Cicciarella family is hoping their new restaurant will become a destination of choice for anyone wishing to combine good food with a special atmosphere.

Restaurant manager Johnny Cicciarella, along with his parents Sebastiano and Carmela, have created a dining room with an elegant and romantic setting, complete with faux stone walls, gilt mirrors and stately columns leading into the dance floor.

But of course, the most important element of any restaurant is the kitchen and that's where you'll find the Cicciarella's chef Salvatore Muccio from Italy and Mike Papa, former owner/chef at Il Timone in Oakville.

"Our food is real Italian food," says Johnny. "Everyone says that, but a lot of places are really Italian-Canadian."

At Elite Restaurant, for instance, there will be no raised eyebrows if the customer wishes to have the salad after the pasta—in the traditional Italian way.

"In Italy, the salad always comes after so it doesn't fill you up before the pasta," explains Johnny.

In addition to authentic Italian food, "and great coffee", Johnny insists, Elite also offers a pool room and elegantly-appointed cigar lounge where customers can relax in privacy for a meeting or a special party.

Elite Restaurant & Lounge is located at 407 Speers Road, Unit 4.

Package yourself for success

Dear Shannon:

I'm a small business owner and need to compete with large companies for contracts. I'm doing something wrong because I'm not getting enough of them. How can I be more successful and win more contracts?

Puzzled

Dear Puzzled:

Did you know that YOUR GREATEST INVESTMENT IS YOU! Perhaps it's your packaging that is the problem.

According to Tom Peters "You create a brand that is distinct....or you become extinct".

AND A UCLA study proves it.....85% of all decisions are made with our eyes. Humans think visually. Since you are a small business owner, it is crucial to your success to understand the power and the impact that "personal packaging" or "your brand" has. Whether we like it or not, people noticeAND they immediately place you somewhere on a scale. You rank only as others perceive you. Before you sell anything, your product, company or service you sell yourself and you had better be good at it. How you've packaged your brand affects other's decisions as to your intelligence, character and ability and to whether or not your clients want to do business with you.

If your packaging (your brand) is not attractive, professional and congruent you will be passed over - guaranteed. Therefore, to rule out the competition and win more contracts, it's more important than ever that greater emphasis and attention be placed on appearance, grooming, presence and manner.

Take large, successful companies for instance. They understand the power of "branding" a product and spend a lot of time, money and energy in creating "a brand" or package that is eye catching and appealing enough to sell the product. It has to be the same with us.

If the mere word "image" (that's really what we are talking about) conjures up a defensive attitude, or if the words make believe, fake, phone or expensive enters your mind - stop and think.

Creating a "personal brand" that is unique to you alone is where it's at and yes, there are some areas that can cost mega bucks but there are other areas that you can work on that cost absolutely zero but simply take time and attention.

Here is a simple but necessary starting point.



SHANNON SMITH
Lasting Impressions

This quiz will only take a few minutes - check it out - and be honest!

Do you look as if you want to succeed? Are you worth a second glance...a promotion...a new job...that big contract? When was the last time you took stock... changed your personal style... your hair style....your habits....or treated yourself? Is your posture erect? Do you stand in a natural, confident, relaxed way? Do you fidget or have any nervous gestures? Do you smile readily? Are your teeth well cared for? Are you in shape? Is your weight where it should be? Are your clothes current and well maintained or out of date and shabby? Would you BUY from YOU!

AND Do you approach your client confidently or shyly? Do you enjoy meeting and interacting with others? Do you pronounce your words clearly, or do you mumble or slur them? Is your voice pleasant, natural and clear? Do you use correct grammar or slang? Do you avoid "profane" language? Are you able to maintain eye contact when communicating with others?

Taking a look at these areas and paying closer attention to personal details, image, grooming and how you communicate can make the difference between success and failure.

We all know that when we look good ...we feel good! We project more confidence, become more attractive and professional. As well, we attract more of what we want in our lives, become more competitive and gain the edge. Be a smarter marketer ...to attract the best, you need to be the best!

Remember... it's the packaging that helps sell the Porsche!

Shannon Smith is President of Premiere Image International Inc., Canada's leading image institute offering training in image mastery, presentation skills, manners, business/social etiquette, dining, protocol. For more information and to take the Modern Image and Manners Quiz please visit www.premiereimageintl.com or call 416 324 8955.

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