

Faridabad Food Courts Wage War on Prices

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AJAY JOHRI further added, "This has become possible because of the constant innovations and sincere efforts that some of us have made to popularise the food court format for eating out amongst the Faridabad residents. For a mall it is very important to offer hygienic food and extend customer service. SRS fulfills all these criteria and thus is one of the hottest joints in Faridabad that people like to visit frequently."

According to Garg, manager, Nitya food court at Crown Interiorz Mall, "Out of the approximately 10,000 people who visit the mall daily, 1,800 people come to eat at Nitya. We serve around 15-20 percent of customers per day here. The growth rate of this food court has been 10 percent over the past few years and currently generating a turnover of over ₹14 lakh per month."

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

According to industry experts, no business can sustain itself without a carefully drafted and well-executed marketing strategy that evolves according to tastes and preferences of its customers. "Our marketing strategy is to create excitement among our customers by serving signature dishes or having food festivals on holidays, occasions and themes. We dish out event-specific cuisines and combos as well," emphasised Johri.

Similarly, Crown Interiorz has put together its marketing strategies to increase sales in Nitya. "We have adopted a debit card system for hassle free payments and to keep a track of money spent. We proudly claim that you will not find this any other mall in the town. Customers just need to recharge the card for desirable amount and don't need to carry

money every time they visit food court." informed Garg. He also informed about the ala-carte system that the food court has come up with. "Customers can now decide their menu on a given price. At Nitya, we also arrange birthday parties at free service and space charges."

ISSUES TO TACKLE

Food courts business has also been facing major problems. "One of the worrying issues is the cost. We have to take up a large area between 4,000-13,000 square feet depending upon the mall. This is quite in contrast to smaller operators who operate in areas of just about 200 sq ft or even less through kiosks and carts. This incurs huge rentals and maintenance charges is significantly impacting our turnovers," lamented Johri, VP, SRS Mall. "We cannot entirely pass this cost on to customers. It can deter them from these hangouts. Also, putting a tab on food prices due to high inflation has become a huge challenge for us."

He wants customers to come again, enjoy, and not worry about the high prices, at the same time not compromising on profits is giving him sleepless nights. Ashutosh Garg gave another dimension to the problem. "The limited sale or profit due to lack of connectivity with Delhi/NCR is also playing a spoilsport. This is again the reason of why we still lag behind when compared to other malls in NCR." He said, "Another cause of this low sale and profit is the absence of business spaces, unlike other satellite towns in NCR. This is one of the reasons that young working people, who prefer eating in food courts, hardly get to visit them in Faridabad malls."

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