

# Menu Engineering

**WHAT IS MENU PSYCHOLOGY?** Menu psychology is the study of how a restaurant’s menu organization affects customer spending. Restaurants use the principles of menu psychology to influence their menu design. The goal is to create menus that prompt customers to choose their order immediately without considering the price.

TIPS:

Limit choices.

The “paradox of choice” states that the more options we have, the more anxiety we feel. Psychologists suggest that you limit options per category to around 7 items.

Make your menu scannable.

Avoid crowded layouts; choose an easy-to-read font and font size. Include clear section headings and visible dish titles. Even if your menu is more than one or two pages, menu engineers would agree that if your menu is scannable with fewer choices per category, guests will still feel at ease when ordering.

Use appetite-stimulating colors.

Capture attention and trigger appetite with bright colors like red, yellow, and orange. You can use this to attract attention to specific areas of your menu and create a hierarchy for the layout.

Invoke nostalgia or humanize dishes.

These menu items are attractive because customers feel like they’re ordering something special, and they induce happy memories of childhood or feelings of comfort and closeness. Examples: “Grandma’s Chocolate Chip Cookie,” or references to the chef or restaurant owner, such as “Chef Mike’s Charbroiled Steak."

Include a unique signature item.

If guests see an eye-catching unique item, they are more likely to give it a try.

Use photos sparingly.

Excessive photos are associated with low-end, cheap venues, so high-end restaurants usually avoid photos. However, one or two photos per page has been shown to increase sales by up to 30%, especially at casual eateries. Use your Instagram and Facebook pages to share more photos of your food.

Select an ergonomic menu.

Physically oversized menus can be uncomfortable for guests to maneuver. Select a menu that is easy to handle and will fit comfortably on tables, but are not too small.

HOW TO ENGINEER A MENU

Studies show that customers are likely to order one of the first items that draw their attention. Since guests only spend an average of 109 seconds looking at your menu, it must be designed for guests to easily find key items. Follow these steps to engineer your menu and increase your profits.

Apply the Menu Matrix.

Analyze your menu items to figure out which ones are the most popular and profitable. Plot your menu items on the *Menu Matrix* to discern their ranking. You will construct your menu around high-ranking items.

Evaluate Pricing.

Based on your *Menu Matrix* findings, adjust your menu prices to maximize your profits.

Highlight Profitable Items.

Include a photo, graphic, colored or shaded box. Only highlight one or two items per section.

Arrange Menu Sections.

Place the items you want to sell in the center, the top right corner, and the top left corner. Psychologists fittingly call these three areas “The Golden Triangle," and it refers to the way our eyes tend to move when first looking at a menu.

Arrange Lists.

In each section, place your most profitable items at the top of the list and one at the bottom.

Make Expensive Items More Appealing.

Include a “decoy” menu item that would seem overly expensive to guests. Place this near your high-profit margin items. They may already have a reasonable price, but when compared to the “decoy” item, they will appear even more attractive. Or, put a “decoy” item next to your high-profit, pricey items that would seem more reasonable when compared to the “decoy” item(s).

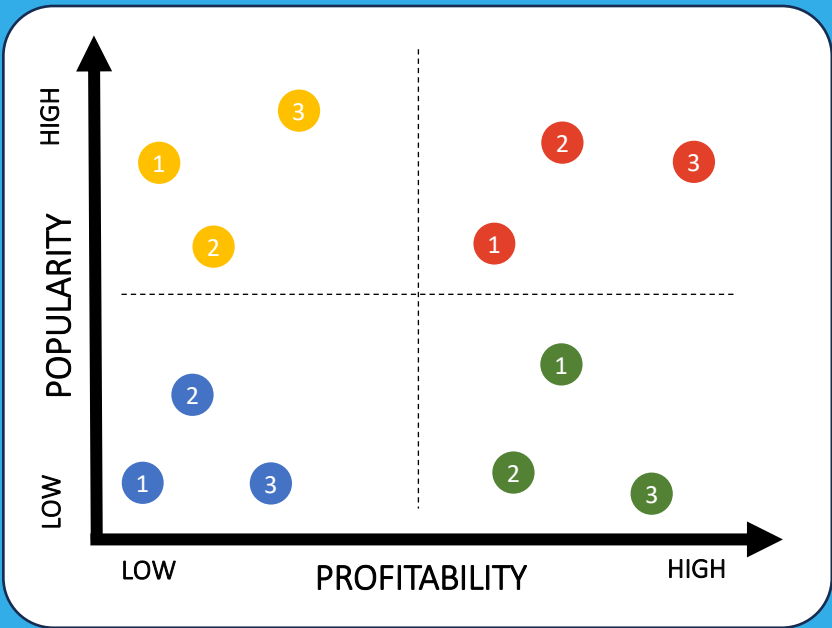
Bracket Menu Items.

“Bracketing" is including two portion options for one dish without including the exact size. The “larger” size will have a steeper price (ex. \$31), while the “smaller” size will have a cheaper price (ex. \$22). The customer won’t know exactly how much smaller the small portion is, but it will appear to offer better value since it costs less. The “smaller” portion can be the one you wanted to sell the whole time, but this tactic makes the meal item more attractive by making guests believe they're choosing a dish with good value.

Use the Price Nesting Method.

List the price discreetly after each meal description in the same size font, so customers can focus on your engaging meal description.

MENU MATRIX



PLOW HORSES

- 1 Wings
- 2 Crab Cakes
- 3 Candied Bacon

STARS

- 1 Pizza
- 2 Tacos
- 3 Chicken & Waffles

DOGS

- 1 Veggie Burger
- 2 Kids Burger
- 3 Fish Sandwich

PUZZLES

- 1 Avocado Rolls
- 2 Pasta Bowls
- 3 Desserts

- 1 **PLOW HORSES: Low Profitability and High Popularity** - Items that do not have a high-profit margin but are crowd-pleasers, making them essential to your menu. A classic example are wings. Consider using less expensive ingredients or decreasing the portion size to make it more profitable. If the item continues to have a small profit margin, avoid upselling or featuring it on your menu.
- 2 **DOGS : Low Profitability and Low Popularity** - Items that are ordered infrequently and have a low-profit margin. Consider removing these items from your menu. In some cases, you may want to keep Dogs on your menu. Kids' options such as a grilled cheese or kiddie burger may not sell often but are important to keep on your menu for families. If continuing to offer items in this category, avoid upselling or accentuating them on your menu.
- 3 **STARS: High Profitability and High Popularity** - Items that have a high-profit margin, and customers order frequently. Examples include pizza, tacos or your signature item. You should showcase Stars the most on your menu, promote them, and avoid drastically changing their ingredients or price.
- 4 **PUZZLES: High Profitability and Low Popularity** - Items that have a high-profit margin but are hard to sell. The recipes of these items may need to be tweaked to appeal to guests. Additionally, servers should upsell these menu items, and menu engineers recommend highlighting them on your menu.



## Appetizers

### MOZZARELLA STICKS

Crispy, golden outside with melty cheese inside, served with tangy marinara sauce or house made ranch **7.99**

### CHIPS & SALSA

Freshly baked white corn tortilla chips served with our house made chipotle lime salsa **5.99**

### FRENCH FRIES

Crispy outside yet light and fluffy on the inside  
Small **4.99** • Large **6.99**

### CRAB CAKES

Golden crust full of crab meat served with choice of house made cocktail or tartar sauce **13.99**

### WINGS (6) **12.99** • (12) **19.99**

Bone-In Wings fried to a golden crisp tossed in sauce  
(Served with celery and ranch or bleu cheese)

**SAUCES:** BBQ • Buffalo • Cajun BBQ • Garlic Parmesan  
Lemon Pepper • Honey BBQ • Nashville Hot

## Burgers & Handhelds

### CLASSIC BURGER

½ lb angus beef cooked to perfections with lettuce, tomato, onion, pickles and tangy dressing; served with fries **11.99** Add Cheese or Bacon **1.00** each

### REUBEN SANDWICH

Slow cooked corned beef brisket thinly shaved and piled high, sauerkraut, Swiss cheese, and house made dressing; served with fries **11.99**

### GRILLED CHEESE

American cheese melted on sourdough packed with crispy bacon and juicy tomatoes; served with fries **9.99**

### HOT DOG

All beef hot dog served with fries **9.99**



## Kids Meals

Served with small french fries and a small drink

**KIDS BURGER 5.99**

**CHICKEN TENDERS 5.99**



## Pizza

Piping hot, hand-tossed  
16 inch pies.

### CLASSIC CHEESE PIZZA

Classic cheese with fresh mozzarella **17.99**

**Add Toppings: \$1 each**

Pepperoni, ham, pineapple, canadian bacon, extra cheese, olives, green pepper, red onions, mushrooms, onions

### BBQ PIZZA

Choice of steak, chicken or ham with zesty BBQ sauce, provolone cheese and red onions **18.99**

### HAWAIIAN PIZZA

Ham, pineapple, bacon and provolone cheese **18.99**

### MEAT LOVERS PIZZA

All the meat! Pepperoni, sausage, ham, ground beef, Canadian bacon **21.99**

### VEGGIE LOVERS PIZZA

All the veggies: olives, peppers, carrots, tomatoes, parmesan cheese **18.99**

## Tacos

### BRISKET TACOS

Two tacos with smoked brisket, sharp cheddar cheese and chipotle sauce **8.99**

### FISH TACOS

Two tacos with battered cod and spicy mayo **8.99**

### PORK TACOS

Two tacos with pulled pork, mango salsa, five cheese blend and pork taco sauce **8.99**

## Bowling's Famous

### CHICKEN AND DOFFLES

Combination of sweet and savory!  
Six mini fried chicken nuggets sandwiched between two donut waffles

**\$10<sup>99</sup>**

