

The Restaurant

Introduction

Start the project by having the class brainstorm on “vegetarian/vegan restaurant”. Do the students have any ideas about what kind of food is served at vegetarian/vegan restaurants? Are these restaurants any cheaper or more expensive than restaurants that serve meat? Have any of the students been to a vegetarian or vegan café or restaurant, and if so, what did they think of it?

Research

Divide the class into groups of four to six students and explain that they are going to research, plan and market a new vegetarian or vegan restaurant.

Marketing

On the board, write the names of three popular vegetarian/vegan restaurants in the UK:

- Farmacy
- Food For Friends
- Ready Burger

What images do the restaurants’ names bring to mind?

- **Farmacy:** This name merges two different things – “Pharmacy”, as in a place where people go for health solutions, and “Farm” where produce is grown – so students may think the food at this restaurant is healthy, home-grown and organic.
- **Food For Friends:** The name immediately evokes a warm and welcoming homely place where friends can relax together over a meal.
- **Ready Burger:** “Ready” signifies that the dishes are prepared quickly and this, along with the word “Burger”, may suggest to students this is a fast food establishment.

Ask the students to visit the restaurants’ websites:

- **Farmacy:** farmacylondon.com
- **Food For Friends:** foodforfriends.com
- **Ready Burger:** readyburger.co.uk

Were the students’ preconceptions about the three restaurants accurate? What different images and messages are the three restaurants trying to convey? What kinds of food do they serve? Are they trying to attract both meat-eaters and vegetarians? Do the restaurants also encourage “flexitarians” and people committed to meat free days such as Meat Free Monday? How do the menus differ? In what way, if any, is each restaurant innovative? What ideas do the students like? Which don’t they like? What might they do differently if they ran the restaurants?

Background

TV programmes such as Dragon’s Den and The Apprentice, which many of your students have seen, have made people aware of the steps involved in doing research for a business plan and in starting and running a successful business. This learning idea offers a great opportunity to build students’ confidence whilst simultaneously improving their design and technology, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills through an exciting social enterprise project.

Learning Objectives

Students should learn the following:

- To empathise with others by representing a view that may not be their own
- To understand why branding is an important part of marketing
- To use creative approaches to answering questions, solving problems and developing ideas



Extension Idea

Tying in with literacy and instruction writing, students should choose one dish from their restaurant’s menu and write a detailed recipe. If practical, they should then be given the chance to acquire the relevant ingredients and prepare the dish in the food technology department. Students can try each other’s dishes. You could even turn this into a competition.

Some Ideas

- **Farmacy:** Champions the belief that “food is medicine” and supports local, organic and biodynamic farming.
- **Food For Friends:** Serves a range of good quality British, Middle Eastern, North African and Mediterranean vegetarian food using fresh seasonal ingredients.
- **Ready Burger:** Offers fast food including vegan burgers, “chicken” fillets and soft serve ice cream.

Further Research

Have the groups independently research other vegetarian restaurants, particularly in their own neighbourhoods. These restaurants will be their “competition”, so their own restaurants will need to feature something different in order to attract customers.

Concept

Groups should now come up with their concepts. Each message should be clear and effective. Who are they trying to attract? What kind of atmosphere will the restaurant have? Where and in what kind of building will it be located? Will it be advertised as vegetarian or vegan? Will the restaurant have a specific theme? How will the restaurant differ from all other restaurants?

Menu

Students should now come up with a basic menu which should complement their concept (health food, fast food, ethnic food, food that follows a particular theme, etc.). They may wish to consult a chart containing nutritional information if they are focusing on health food. If they are going to serve “meaty” dishes, they could research which “faux” meat products are widely available (“fishless” fingers, mock duck, soya “chicken”, etc.). Students may wish to be very imaginative when naming dishes, or they may want to keep things simple. They need to link back to the initial concept.

Advertising Pitch

Each group should come up with a short advertising presentation, which they can then “pitch” to the rest of the class. Some members of the group can do the speaking while others can design visual aids, including a logo. They might also find it useful to come up with a mission statement so their objectives are clear. Each group should get a chance to present its restaurant concept in front of the class. The class can vote on the best concept and on which of the restaurants they would like to have in their area.



Role-Playing

<p>Opening Night – Food Critic and Restaurant Owner</p>	<p>A Night Out – Meat-Eater and Meat-Reducer</p>
<p>Food Critic Your newspaper has asked you to review the new vegetarian restaurant in town. You rarely have a meal which doesn't contain meat, so you are not looking forward to the occasion. However, the menu does look quite nice. ... You're interested to see how the staff came up with the ideas for the menu items.</p> <p>Restaurant Owner A famous food critic is coming to visit your restaurant on opening night. You're worried that you might get a bad review, as the critic is not vegetarian. But you believe in your restaurant and your concept and think you can convince him or her that meat free food is delicious!</p>	<p>Meat-Eater Your friend has invited you for a group meal at a new vegetarian restaurant. You haven't tried much vegetarian food in the past, but what you have tried you haven't liked. It's all just carrots and lentils, isn't it? And why should you be forced to eat vegetarian food anyway?</p> <p>Meat-Reducer It's Monday and you support Meat Free Monday so you have invited a group of friends to join you for a meal at the new vegetarian restaurant. One of your friends would prefer to go to a place which serves meat. He or she practically lives at McDonald's! How can you convince your friend to change his or her mind? You know your friend would like the food and would be surprised at how much variety there is! He or she might also learn a thing or two about why people go meat free, and might even decide to take part in Meat Free Monday.</p>