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Funky Chow Kitchen

Line of business:

- Restaurant

Products used:

- Moneris Go





Summary

Funky Chow Kitchen was born in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and inspired by a trip to Japan. Rosemary Woods is the co-founder of the business. It is her fourth restaurant to open its doors. She brings a dynamic approach to the business through her background in architecture and passion for creating dishes and building inviting spaces for guests. Moneris Go[®] has enabled servers to offer a simple and reliable payment experience to customers.



I want my customers to be captivated by the funky hot pink and bright orange designs on the walls of the restaurant and the delicious menu items. They should feel that the restaurant is not just loud with music, but loud with laughter.”



-Rosemary Woods, Co-founder &
Co-owner of Funky Chow Kitchen



Background

When you think of restaurant success, a career in architecture is not where you'd expect it to begin, but that is where Rosemary Woods' story starts. Becoming the co-owner and co-founder of four restaurants including Funky Chow Kitchen in Windsor, ON has been driven by a passion discovered later in life.

While working as an architect, Woods enjoyed travelling and collecting cook books. "Cook books just have an aesthetic that we enjoy in our home." One day she was looking at the cook books that accumulated over the years and decided to try making one of the recipes. As Woods was new to culinary experiments, she thought of writing a blog and sharing her experiences about preparing each dish. Shortly after the cooking began, she felt a passion for it similar to when she pursued her career in architecture. Little did she know it would lead to a dramatic change in her career.

Woods met with a business partner to discuss her new passion for cooking and ideas for the restaurant industry. After some planning, they began with one restaurant and now manage four. They opened their first restaurant in 2018, followed by two more in 2020 and Funky Chow Kitchen opened their doors in May 2021. The restaurant began by offering take-out only as a result of government restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Funky Chow Kitchen was inspired by a trip Woods went on to Japan and being introduced to many new dishes. When she was talking to her husband about her ideas, he came up with the name 'Funky Chow Kitchen.' She presented the concept to her business partner and the talented chefs on their team. They spent time brainstorming dishes. The first one they developed was 'Karaage', a Japanese Fried Chicken. "It is one of those dishes that we all tried and knew we had perfected it in the first step and it has become popular among our guests. After they try it, they crave it."





Purpose

The environment of the restaurant invites guests to escape. The team strives to make it a place where guests enter and immediately forget about everything else in their lives and indulge in having a good time. "I want my customers to be captivated by the funky hot pink and bright orange designs on the walls of the restaurant and the delicious menu items. They should feel that the restaurant is not just loud with music, but loud with laughter."

Although architecture and restaurants are two very different industries, there are many skills Woods has transferred to managing the restaurants. Some of these include thinking outside the box and customer relations. "As an architect you need to understand the customer's specifications for the building you are designing and at a restaurant guests have very specific needs whether it be dietary restrictions or seating preferences."

Funky Chow Kitchen runs like a well oiled machine under Woods' direction, "My favorite part is how well everyone works together. The respect we have for each other breeds a unique and inviting environment for those dining at the restaurant."

Challenges

Announcing the opening of Funky Chow Kitchen in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions meant the team had to work hard to spread the word about the restaurant and the take-out options offered. Social media channels were leveraged to promote Funky Chow Kitchen and their Instagram account alone has grown to over 3,000 followers. “A huge benefit for us is that people were spending a lot more time at home therefore were on social media frequently and sourcing out take-out options for meals at home,” she says.

“Operating a restaurant is a difficult business to navigate because there is a lot of uncertainty even in the best of times because it is one that completely depends on customers.” The COVID-19 pandemic added to that challenge as the business constantly changed in accordance with provincial health guidelines. Woods emphasized that one skill she had as an architect that she continuously applies as a restaurant owner is flexibility, “If something has to change, there is usually no choice but to find an immediate solution to avoid a major conflict.”

Beyond the obstacles presented by the pandemic, Woods shared other challenges of moving from a corporate environment to food service and what lessons she brought with her. “I’ve had to relate to employees differently because I understand that employment in the restaurant industry has many challenges when compared to an office environment. I really emphasize the importance of working together as a family. We work hard and enjoy each other’s company and even on the busiest days, we are here for one another.” It is important to her to understand the needs of each employee so that she can make sure they have the best possible experience being part of the restaurant’s family.





Why Moneris?

“At our other restaurants we have had a great relationship with Moneris® and trust that solutions are reliable and that made it a very easy decision to work with Moneris for Funky Chow Kitchen,” relates Woods.

When looking at their payment solution for the restaurants, Woods and her partner selected Moneris Go. “Our decision to choose Moneris Go was motivated by our mission to offer a modern, flexible payment solution to our guests. Moneris Go has an intuitive interface for both customers and servers. The touchscreen interface and easy-to-use features make it simple for busy servers to work with when they are processing payments from customers.”

In addition to the ease of use, Woods adds, “Having the reporting available on all of the devices throughout the restaurant makes it especially convenient for us to quickly gage how the restaurant is performing on any given day.”

The all-day battery life has been especially important for the restaurant as it is critical for them to be confident that machines will run smoothly from opening to close, without interruption.

Looking Forward

“We are excited to continue to serve our customers and predict a very busy year ahead while continuing to stand out in the city of Windsor.” The restaurant is already booking a week in advance for Saturday nights as people are starting to feel more comfortable going out.

They are thrilled to offer a unique experience in the city of Windsor while being one of the newest restaurants in town for tourists and locals to try. “We love seeing the same faces who keep coming back to us and the new ones too.”

For now, Woods and her team are excited to continue serving customers, working together and having fun in between.





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