



# EDUCATION CATERING TOOLKIT



# Education Catering is a \$2.6B industry that accounts for over 30% of QDOBA's catering business.

This toolkit is designed to empower you with the knowledge and strategies needed to excel in the lucrative education catering sector. Colleges, high schools, and middle schools are among the most frequent catering customers, making it essential to understand and connect with the primary decision-makers and departments that drive these orders. With an average order value of \$600, QDOBA is well-positioned to capture significant opportunities within the education community. This toolkit will guide you through best practices, key contacts, and effective approaches to maximize your success in this year-round opportunity market.

## WHY IT MATTERS

As the summer season comes to an end, a shift in focus for top catering prospects should be on **Back-to-School Events and Fall Sports**.



# TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THIS CATERING OPPORTUNITY – TIMING IS KEY

## FALL

- Back to School Prep begins in August. Teachers are on campus, in meetings, orientations, training, setting up their classrooms, etc.
- September typically kicks off the School Year with PTA meetings, Fall planning, and Open Houses / Back to School Nights to plan for
- October holds National Principal's Month, Parent Teacher Conferences, Red Ribbon Week, Spirit Week, Bus Safety, and World Teacher Day (October 5th)
- Football season begins in August, and with teams needing to be fed at home, on the road, and after practices – these are typically the biggest spenders
- The NCAA consists of DI, D2, & D3 Sports with Soccer, Basketball, and Hockey seasons starting in October & November. Division I has the most money to spend on catering
- Other Fall sports include cross country, flag football, golf, tennis, volleyball & water polo

## SPRING

- In January, teachers are typically in meetings and planning for Spring Semester
- Spring Sports kick off in February, with Softball and Baseball teams having a lot of games in a short span of time and playoffs in June. Basketball wraps up in February and March with tournaments happening in your area
- Spring Sports may also include golf, lacrosse, swim, tennis, track & field, & volleyball
- March often holds more Parent Teacher Conferences, as well as Employee Appreciation Day (March 7th)
- April holds National Assistant Principal's Week, Administrative Assistant's Week, National Volunteer Week, and Administrative Professional's Day
- Teacher Appreciation Week is in May, as well as when End of School year meetings & Graduations occur
- Athletics may vary by area but can also happen year-round. You may also consider wrestling, gymnastics, diving, surfing, cheer, dance, band, pep & mascots

## WHO ARE WE TALKING TO

There are several key decision makers and departments to consider:

- Activity / Athletic Directors
- Principals / Assistant Principals
- Office Admins
- Head Parent of PTOs / PTAs
- Greek Life
- League Tournaments





## GETTING STARTED – K-12

To identify schools in your local area, start by entering your QDOBA address into Google and searching “nearby schools.” Each school district should have a website with each school listed along with their respective website and contacts. You can compile a list of these schools in an Excel sheet and start visiting each school’s website and finding the staff directory and calendar of all events & activities for the school year. Your market research should include:

### PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS | PRIVATE SCHOOLS | COMMUNITY & CHARTER SCHOOLS

#### Top Ordering Segments & Contacts:

- Administrative --> Administrative Assistant / Office Secretary
- PTO / PTA --> Head PTO / PTA Parent
- Athletics --> Director of Athletics
- Orientation / Training --> Administrative Assistant / Office Secretary

Your events calendar should give you all your potential opportunities to make your presence known. Best practice is to reach out 4 weeks prior to the event or activity.

#### Ask questions like

- “Who would be the best person to connect with to discuss any catering or lunches your school brings in through the year?”
- “How often do you typically bring in food each week?”
- “How many people are typically in each group size?”

You can share all the reasons why QDOBA catering is a great option by highlighting how we can add value to their events. Once you learn more about their order frequency and event calendars, make sure you set up reminders, follow up on orders for the next event, use email to send event reminders, and tap into existing clients to ask for referrals.

#### KEY EVENTS FOR K-12:

- Back to School
- Open House
- Parent Teacher Conferences
- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Game Day Meals
- Student Events
- Awards Dinners
- Education Tours
- Traveling Groups / Team Meals
- PTA Events

## INSIDER TIP!

1. Parent Organizations typically have a website of their own or have links to their contact info on school websites.
2. Get in good with your PTA! Donate goodies, like chips & dips, for a meeting and you will become their go-to for the next event or activity. Promote QDOBA Fundraising, get involved with school fairs – the more your name is out there in your community, the more sales you will build.

## GETTING STARTED – COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

Start by researching colleges and universities nearby. There are many departments and programs within the college that order catering for events. Building relationships with key departments at colleges and universities involves reaching out to specific individuals who oversee relevant areas. Typically you can find staff directories via the college website, LinkedIn, etc. Your market research should include:

### ATHLETICS | STUDENT AFFAIRS | FACULTY | ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS | GREEK LIFE

#### Key Department Contacts and How to Find Them:

- **Athletics:** Athletic Director, Asst Athletic Director, Sports Information Director, Team Coach, Nutritionist --> Athletics Department Website – Look for “Athletics Staff” or “Contact Us” page
- **Student Affairs:** Director of Student Affairs, Asst Dean of Students, Student Activities Coordinator --> Student Affairs or Student Life section of the college website
- **Faculty:** Office Manager, Administrative Assistant, Department Chair, Faculty Coordinator --> Each Academic Department typically has its own page with contact info for key staff
- **Alumni:** Director of Alumni Relations, Alumni Engagement Coordinator, Director of Development --> Visit the Alumni section of the college website
- **Greek Life:** Director of Greek Life, Fraternity & Sorority Life Coordinator, Greek Advisor, House Moms --> Check the Greek Life or Student Life section of the college website
- **Event Planning:** Director of Event Planning, Conference Services Manager, Campus Events Coordinator --> Look for Event Planning or Conference Services on the college website
- **Career Services:** Director of Career Services, Career Counselor, Employer Relations Coordinator --> Visit the Career Services section of the university website

Build out an academic calendar and make sure to include home game schedules. Reach out to your contacts 2-4 weeks prior to the upcoming events. Personalize your email by letting them know QDOBA is a great option for their specific occasion. Again, frequent and consistent follow-up is key. Remember that clubs, sports teams and other student life groups may leverage QDOBA Fundraising throughout the year to raise funds for trips, uniforms, etc. Fraternities & Sororities may also leverage QDOBA Fundraising for their philanthropic partnerships throughout the year.

#### Key events for Colleges & Universities:

- Orientation Week: Early August to September
- Homecoming and Family Weekends: Typically in the Fall
- Rush Week: Early Fall, mid-January, and / or Spring
- Midterms and Finals: Mid-October to November and late April to May
- Graduation Ceremonies: May & June
- Summer Programs: June to August
- Other Events to keep in mind throughout the academic year
  - Sporting Events
  - Club Meetings
  - Career Fairs & Networking Events
  - Concerts & Performances
  - Holiday Events and Festivals

## GETTING STARTED – SPORTS TEAMS

Athletics and sports teams will often have their own website with department contacts and game schedules. Build your own schedule of all upcoming games. Set reminders to know what games are coming up – the more you are on top of their schedule, the better off you will be. It takes several emails & follow ups to get a response, so persistence is key. Consider that visiting teams also order catering. Reach out to those visiting teams by letting them know you are a great option for feeding the team on the specific dates they are in town.

### KEY CONTACTS FOR SPORTS TEAMS:

- Athletic Directors
- Head Coaches
- Nutritionists
- Dietitian, Sports & Performance
- Visiting Clubhouse Managers
- Director of Operations

### KEY TIMING / SEASONS TO CONSIDER:

#### Fall (August - November)

- Football
- Soccer (Boys and Girls)
- Cross Country (Boys and Girls)
- Volleyball (Girls)
- Field Hockey (Girls)
- Cheerleading (can span multiple seasons)

#### Winter (November - February)

- Basketball (Boys and Girls)
- Wrestling
- Swimming and Diving (Boys and Girls)
- Indoor Track and Field (Boys and Girls)
- Ice Hockey (Boys)
- Cheerleading (continues)

#### Spring (March - June)

- Baseball (Boys)
- Softball (Girls)
- Track and Field (Boys and Girls)
- Lacrosse (Boys and Girls)
- Tennis (Boys and Girls)
- Golf (Boys and Girls)
- Soccer (can overlap into spring in some areas)
- Cheerleading (continues)

#### To maximize your catering sales, consider targeting the following:

1. Pre-season practices and team meetings
2. Game days
3. Tournaments and championships
4. Awards banquets and celebrations
5. Hosting Lunch & Learns for head coaches, athletic departments, and nutritionists

#### Year-Round Considerations

- Football
- Soccer (Boys and Girls)
- Cross Country (Boys and Girls)
- Volleyball (Girls)
- Field Hockey (Girls)
- Cheerleading (can span multiple seasons)

#### Special Events

- Homecoming games (typically in the Fall)
- Senior Nights (end of each sport's season)
- Regional and State Championships (varies by sport and region)



## INSIDER TIP!

Don't be disheartened if colleges and universities mention they primarily use "contracted on-premises caterers" such as Sodexo or Aramark. These companies have limitations in their catering capabilities, leaving room for other opportunities such as overflow catering, especially with traveling sports teams and off-campus events!

## KEY SELLING POINTS

QDOBA's selling points vary depending on who we are talking to. Hot Bars are a great option for the Education sector – particularly for Back-to-School Events and Meetings. Hot Bar delivery includes setup and are a great opportunity to drive guests back to your restaurant (see the **Back-to-School Catering Flyer** and **Back to School Catering Email Signature**). Make sure you also use your LRM Toolkit to take advantage of Back-to-School assets that get QDOBA in front of parents, teachers, librarians, principals & coaches for when the catering need arises.

QDOBA's Boxed Meals or Mega Burrito 10-Packs are great options for feeding hungry sports teams, whether at the stadium, on the bus, or in their hotel. You may also choose to limit the number of modifications on box lunches, to make for easier execution and better outcomes. Remind guests that they can earn rewards on their catering orders through the **QDOBA Rewards program** (every 1,000 points earned can be redeemed for a \$50 Visa Reward Card that can be used across the country).

Fundraisers are perfect for schools and sports teams – 90% of QDOBA Fundraisers occur during the school year. Raising money for uniforms, school trips, tournaments, and other projects. Getting the word out that QDOBA gives back 25% helps foster community and build the right partnerships with these organizations. You may find several Fundraising Assets available on **RRD** and within **Brand Portal**.



# HOW TO GAIN MORE EDUCATION CATERING BUSINESS

## 4-WALL MARKETING

- Marketing within the 4 walls of your restaurant is vital to promoting Education & Sports Team Catering to your existing guests. Especially during the key timings:
  - Back to School (August)
  - Fall Sports (Football, Basketball, Soccer, Hockey)
  - Spring Sports (Softball, Baseball)
  - March Madness (Basketball)
  - Teacher Appreciation Week (May)
  - Graduation / End of School Year (May & June)
- Some key 4-wall marketing strategies can include:
  - Setting up a small display inside your location
  - Making sure all merchandising assets are posted
  - Digital Menu Boards (if applicable)
  - Ensuring **Catering Menus** and **4-UP Flyers** are in the POS area for guests to pick up!
- Include **4-Up flyers** in all take out bags (including catering orders and 3rd party delivery orders) and make sure **2-Up flyers** are stapled to every catering invoice
- Talk to guests in the dining room during lunch and dinner. Ask if they are planning any back-to-school events or are a part of any team sports. Hand them a **catering menu** for future reference
- Make sure you are heavily cross-promoting Back to School catering with any school or sports fundraisers that are happening. Work the room, hand out flyers and menus
- See **Brandfolder** for all Education related Catering Sales Assets



4-UP FLYERS



2-UP FLYERS



## KEEP GUESTS COMING BACK – GIVE THEM THE QDOBA EXPERIENCE

- Calling guests within 24 hours of their catering order being placed (if ordered through Monkey Media) to thank them for their business lets them know we value their patronage and creates a friendly, positive experience. It also gives a personal touch to a very important life event for these guests. Be sure to confirm the following:
  - Ensure their order is 100% accurate
  - Gather information on any delivery or setup specifics
  - Seize the opportunity to upsell
- Be sure to reach out to the guests again the day before their event to reconfirm the guests' order, guest count and delivery timing
- Provide excellent customer service throughout the catering process, from initial inquiry to delivery or pickup
- Ensure your staff is knowledgeable about the menu and can assist guests with any questions or special requests
- Operational Best Practices for Custom Box Meals:
  - Prepare cold items ahead of time
  - Clearly mark Box Meals with Protein or Guest Name
  - Keep Burritos in hotbox until ready to deliver
- Follow up – Send an email or call your guest thanking them for choosing QDOBA for their event. Encouraging guests to provide feedback on their experience can help tailor your efforts and better meet the needs of your guests. This is another key moment to build rapport with your education guest and invite them to have a Fundraiser in your restaurant



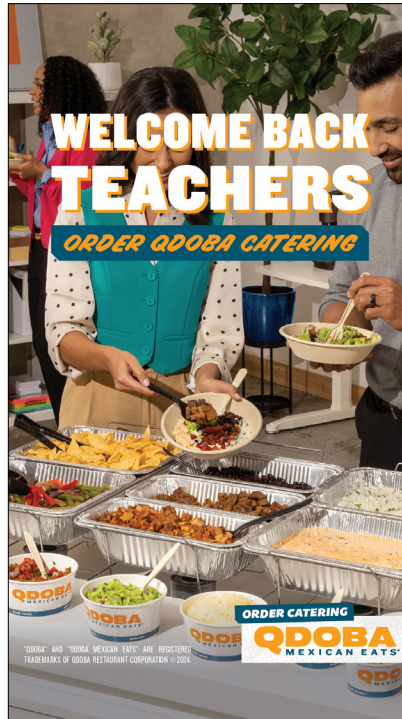
# EDUCATION CATERING SALES ASSETS:

[Click here to download assets via Brandfolder](#)

**KICK OFF THE SCHOOL YEAR  
WITH A+ CATERING**



BACK TO SCHOOL - EMAIL SIGNATURE



BACK TO SCHOOL - PAID SOCIAL



**WELCOME BACK  
TEACHERS**

ORDER QDOBA CATERING


**KICK OFF THE SCHOOL YEAR WITH A HOT BAR  
FOR YOUR MEETINGS & SCHOOL EVENTS**



**WE DELIVER & SET UP**

FULL NAME | FIRST.LAST@QDOBA.COM | CATERING.QDOBA.COM | 1-800-QDOBA260


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BACK TO SCHOOL - 2UP / 4UP FLYERS (EDITABLE)



# EDUCATION CATERING SALES ASSETS:

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**THANK YOUR TEACHERS**  
TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK ★ MAY 6-10

**QDOBA**  
MEXICAN EATS  
CATERING

TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK - EMAIL SIGNATURE



TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK - PAID SOCIAL



TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK - 2UP / 4UP FLYERS (EDITABLE)

# EDUCATION CATERING SALES ASSETS:

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GAME DAY - EMAIL SIGNATURE



GAME DAY - PAID SOCIAL



GAME DAY - 2UP / 4UP FLYERS (EDITABLE)

