

TOP OF THE CLASS CATERING

• GRAD CATERING TOOLKIT •



GRADUATION SEASON IS ONE OF THE TOP B2C CATERING MOMENTS OF THE YEAR.

Graduation is an important milestone—not just for the graduates, but for their families too. It marks the culmination of years of hard work, dedication, and unwavering support. Loved ones have witnessed the journey—cheering through successes, comforting through challenges, and nurturing dreams along the way. Celebrating this moment includes acknowledging academic achievements, but also honoring growth and resilience, and reflecting on all the little moments that make up the journey with pride and gratitude. In these moments of celebration, we not only honor the past, but also embrace the future with hope, excitement, and endless possibilities.

In this toolkit you will find the why, what, and how—including tactics and creative assets to help amplify QDOBA's National Media Plan and set your restaurant up for success during this important season when families are celebrating graduations.

WHY IT MATTERS

Families and schools will be hosting events to celebrate their beloved graduates, providing the perfect opportunity to position QDOBA catering as the preferred choice for graduation celebrations.

HOT BARS ARE THE PERFECT CHOICE TO FEED A HUNGRY CROWD, OFFERING A VARIETY OF CUSTOMIZABLE OPTIONS TO PLEASE EVERYONE IN THE GROUP, ESPECIALLY THE GRADUATE!



TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THIS CATERING OPPORTUNITY!

- Graduation dates vary throughout the country (late April to late June)—this leads to a long Graduation Catering Season. Keeping QDOBA catering top of mind for consumers during this season is the goal.
- Competition is fierce. Standing out from our competitors (not just in the Mexican food category) is essential for a successful Graduation Catering Season.
- During graduation season, your main marketing objectives should be:
 - Acquiring new catering guests
 - Converting existing non-catering guests into catering for graduation
 - Frequency—tap into existing catering guests
- An additional wave may be expected in July/August as outgoing high school seniors celebrate with combination parties—graduation and college send-off.

WHO ARE WE TALKING TO

Our primary target audience is B2C parents of high school and college students that are graduating. Particularly Family First Budgeters in their late 30s to early 60s that seek flavorful variety to satisfy everyone in their group.

PARTNERING WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

Start by identifying schools and universities in your local area. Look for opportunities to set up a booth or table at school events leading up to graduation ceremonies that give decision makers a chance to taste and experience QDOBA firsthand. Bring queso/salsa & chips flyers, catering menus, and talk about any promos you're offering for graduation parties. Some community events to consider sponsoring:

- Senior Nights
- Sports Games/Banquets
- Awards Dinners
- PTA End-of-Year Events
- Career Fairs
- Incoming Student Fairs

★ INSIDER TIP!

1. Use Google Maps to find schools and universities within a 5-mile radius. Use your Trade Area Analysis to add notes and contacts to start reaching out to your school list. Call 2–3 schools a week to start asking about how QDOBA can help celebrate your soon-to-be graduates during upcoming end of the year school activities.
2. Each school or district should have a website with a calendar of events & activities for the year you can plan for.

REFERRALS

- Referrals from existing catering guests are the #1 way to gain more graduation catering orders. Make sure you are calling and following up with any referrals.
- Nurture your leads list. Make sure you are updating your list of contacts from previous events or fundraisers. Can they convert to a graduation catering guest? Log in to your fundraiser dashboard reaching out to contacts that have booked fundraiser—they already trust QDOBA!
- Call/email your existing B2C catering guests. Do they have an upcoming graduation or another upcoming event? Invite them to book early to ensure they get their preferred timeslot.



★ INSIDER TIP!

Focus on building long-term relationships with your local community. Every opportunity to engage with school associations and be seen at events keeps QDOBA top of mind and gets our “foot in the door” which can lead to driving new guest visits and future catering sales. The experience we provide is what builds brand loyalty and lifelong QDOBA fans.

EDUCATE POTENTIAL GUESTS ON CATERING REWARDS INCENTIVES. SIGNING UP FOR QDOBA REWARDS MEANS EARNING REWARDS ON CATERING ORDERS SUCH AS:

- Free Entrées: Redeem 125 points for a free entrée.
- Parents can send their graduates off to college with free entrées to enjoy throughout the semester!
- Catering Discounts: Redeem 1,000 points for \$50 off your next catering order.
- \$50 Digital VISA Rewards: Redeem 1,000 points for a \$50 Digital VISA Rewards.

KEY SELLING POINTS

QDOBA's customizable Hot Bar offers a variety of flavorful options with bold, fun, and anything but boring elements that graduates love. For families hosting a party at their home, catering with QDOBA ensures that they can sit back and enjoy celebrating their graduate's accomplishments as we provide the delivery and setup with everything they need for a successful graduation party. Be sure to let them know their order comes with (plates, napkins, cutlery and serving utensils).

Groups of 10 or more people can create their own bowls or nachos with our customizable Hot Bar, packed with 1,000s of flavor combinations served with chafing racks & fuel cans to keep the food hot & delivery includes stress-free setup.

WHY GUESTS LOVE OUR HOT BAR:

1. **Easy ordering:** guests can easily view our catering menu and order online, mobile app, or by phone.
2. **Variety for all:** keep the whole crowd happy by giving guests the ability to make their own delicious dish – choosing from flavorful proteins and tasty toppings.
3. **Versatile:** perfect for business meetings, parties, sports teams, baby and bridal showers, and other events of any size.
4. **Customizable:** feed even the pickiest eaters with add-ons such as queso, fajita veggies, extra proteins, extra sides, tortillas, or the Fresca Salad for health-conscious guests.
5. **Delivery and setup:** A VIP experience is important to busy professionals!
6. **Our Clean Label Pledge:** our guests deserve the best-quality eats – that’s why we ensure our ingredients are free of MSG, artificial colors, and many other additives we’ve pledged to avoid.

HOW TO GAIN MORE GRADUATION CATERING BUSINESS

4-WALL MARKETING

- Marketing within the 4 walls of your restaurant is vital to promoting catering to your existing guests. Since graduation parties are one-time events – these are specific purchasers that do not typically order catering on a regular basis.
- 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)
 - Cashier interactions at the register – “Have you ordered catering for your upcoming graduation parties?”
 - 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 graduation celebrations or know any families that have upcoming graduations. Hand them a **catering menu** for future reference.
- Make sure you are heavily cross-promoting graduation catering with any school or sports fundraisers that are happening. Work the room, hand out flyers and menus.



4-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 (graduation parties tend to increase guest counts), 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.
- Provide a "ConGRADulations" Card with every Graduation Catering delivery as a personal touch for the graduate (ask for the grad's name on confirmation calls) celebrating their achievement & wishing them well. Consider including 2 free entrée coupons for the graduate as an extra touchpoint.
- 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.

★ INSIDER TIP!

We have a tremendous opportunity to win a lifelong catering guest by giving them the full QDOBA experience and leaning into what sets us apart. This type of guest may not be a catering expert but expects white-glove treatment. By exceeding their expectations with the very best service, you can ensure a guest for life.

TEAM MEMBER BEST PRACTICES FOR GRADUATION SEASON

- Check Monkey Media (if applicable) several times a day to receive orders in a timely manner.
- Set up your system of attack. Ensure every order has multiple sets of eyes on it to ensure accuracy.
- Be sure to review your weekend catering orders throughout the week, setting a plan of attack the night before. Organization is the key to avoiding mistakes.
- Prep cold ingredients and paper items a day early to help stay organized.
 - Label items numerically or alphabetically to make delivery and setup easier for the driver.
- Double check orders from the production sheet, marking off every item. Every order should have multiple sets of eyes on it to ensure accuracy.
- Make sure to check for the most common missing items: Tortillas, queso, fajita veggies, desserts/drinks, white rice, cilantro
- Ensure the “day of” cold prep items are included with the pre-prepped items.
- Utilize the Catering Worksheet for complex orders.
- Equip delivery drivers with a “Catering Emergency Kit” to ensure order accuracy and positive experience for the guest.
 - Emergency Kit includes extra supplies such as extra fuel cans, chafing dishes, silverware, glasses, plates, napkins, serving utensils, chafing dish return coupons, bounce back coupons, catering menus, etc. any other items needed to set a catering order.
- Provide delivery drivers with jugs of water so pans can be filled without requiring the guest to provide an on-site water source.

GRADUATION SALES ASSETS

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

PAID META



PAID VIDEO

PAID STATIC



PAID VIDEO

RETRACTABLE BANNER



EMAIL SIGNATURE

