



# HOLIDAY CATERING TOOLKIT



# The holiday season is QDOBA's second biggest catering season of the fiscal year behind Cinco de Mayo/Graduation Season.

Between early November and January, there is an influx of group holiday gatherings both in-office and at home, making the holiday season an ideal time to enhance our marketing efforts to showcase QDOBA's Catering as the go-to option for flavorful food that can be delivered and set-up. This toolkit is set up to provide you with an action plan for targeting the right guests with the right messaging at the right time.

## WHY IT MATTERS

Unlike Cinco de Mayo, which focuses solely on Mexican cuisine, the holiday catering season has many competitors vying for catering sales. Still, tremendous opportunity exists between early November & New Year's Day. Being armed with catering sales tactics that stand out from the competition can help increase catering revenue and topline sales by targeting new and existing catering guests.

Hot Bars are the #1 selling catering menu item during the Holiday Season. Sales strategies should center around the advantages and key selling points of our Hot Bars, while customizing our messaging to fit the audience we are communicating with (B2B or B2C).





## KEY SELLING POINTS

Groups of 10 or more can create their own bowls or nachos with the customizable Hot Bar. It's packed with 1000s of flavor combinations and is served with chafing racks & fuel cans to keep the food hot. Delivery includes stress-free set-up which is perfect for feeding hungry employees & families during the holiday season.

### WHY GUESTS LOVE OUR HOT BAR DURING THE HOLIDAYS:

- **Easy ordering:** guests can easily view our catering menu and order online or by phone.
- **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.
- **Versatile:** perfect for holiday parties, gift exchanges, planning meetings, etc.
- **Customizable:** feed even the pickiest eaters! Be sure to suggest add-ons such as queso, fajita veggies, extra proteins, extra sides, tortillas to make your own tacos, or the Fresca Salad for health-conscious guests.
- **Delivery and setup:** a VIP experience is important to both B2B and B2C catering guests.
- **Clean Label Pledge:** our guests deserve the best-quality food - that's why we ensure our ingredients are free of MSG, artificial colors, and many other additives we've pledged to avoid.

## WHO ARE WE TALKING TO

Our Primary Audience consists of **B2B decision makers** (business to business) that place group catering orders for their office or company employees. Our top Holiday B2B ordering segments include:

**CORPORATIONS | EDUCATION | HEALTHCARE | GOVERNMENT | RETAIL**

Our Secondary Audience consists of **B2C target segments** (business to consumer) who are hosting holiday parties at home with their friends or family. Our top Holiday B2C ordering segments include:

**FLAVOR SEEKERS | FAMILY FIRST BUDGETERS | ON-THE-GO WITHOUT COMPROMISE**

## GETTING STARTED – RETAIL

- QDOBA's retail catering season starts before Thanksgiving and goes through January inventories.
- **Black Friday** (11/29/24) and **Cyber Monday** (12/2/24) are the biggest retail sales days and are great opportunities to drive Catering Sales to Retailers ... **WHY?** Big Box retailers are looking to feed their sales staff, warehouse employees, and support staff during the busiest shopping weeks of the year.
- Key messaging for retail should begin early in November to secure business and get businesses to plan orders ahead of Black Friday and Cyber Monday.
- It takes multiple communications/touch points (at least 3) to convert guests to place a catering order.

To get started, gather your Retail Catering Guests from the past 3 years. Call them and encourage booking early with possible Early Bird Offers & Discounts. You may also identify other retailers within 1-5 miles of your restaurant. Consider Big Box (Target, Kohl's, Macy's, Cabela's, DICK's, Sam's Club, etc.), Small Box (Victoria's Secret, Lululemon, Bath & Body Works, Jarrod's, Game Stop, etc.) as well as Outside the Box (Warehouses, Logistics Centers, UPS/FedEx, Call Centers, Car Dealerships, Grocery Chains, etc.). You will want to aim for 10-20 prospects per week with regular follow-up. Timing is key – while planning meetings typically start 4 weeks before Black Friday, the majority of orders will likely be placed during the week of Thanksgiving.

### YOUR CONTACTS FOR RETAILERS COULD INCLUDE:

- **Store Managers**
- **Assistant Store Managers**
- **HR Managers**
- **Team Lead or Executive Team Leads**

You can share all the reasons why QDOBA catering is a great option by highlighting convenience, reliability, and ample portion-sizes with variety & ability to satisfy various dietary needs. After your first touchpoint you may offer a sample/tasting/Chip Chat. Make sure you set up reminders, follow up on orders for upcoming December holiday & inventory business, use email to send event reminders, and tap into existing clients to ask for referrals.

### INSIDER TIP!

Consider an “Early Bird Gets the Queso” promo to encourage retail guests to book early for Black Friday. Use the discount as an incentive when visiting or following up with retailers until you secure the order - “if you secure your order before November 16th, we can give you a Free Delivery Code or up to 10% discount.” Try to avoid visiting stores during their busiest times (morning or lunchtime is best).



## GETTING STARTED – NON-RETAIL

Many companies across different segments (Education, Government, Healthcare, etc) host Holiday Parties for their teams between November 28, 2024 and December 20, 2024 to celebrate the holiday season. Start by calling and emailing your top B2B Customers as well as any large catering customers from December of last year and offer to “Make it the Most Flavorful Time of the Year.”

### PROSPECT FOR NEW CATERING CUSTOMERS VIA TARGETED OUTREACH TO LOCAL BUSINESSES:

- Use Google to identify local businesses, offices, corporate headquarters, and coworking spaces in your trade area.
- Try localized searches for bigger clients such as: “Largest companies in...” “Top Employers to work for in....” “Corporate Headquarters located in....”
- In addition to Google and other search engines, use LinkedIn, local business directories, and Chamber of Commerce membership lists to identify businesses and decision makers.
- Don’t forget your Public Services: Hospitals, Police, Fire, Utilities, Waste Management, etc.

### YOUR CONTACTS FOR NON-RETAIL B2B CUSTOMERS COULD INCLUDE:

- Office Managers
- Executive Assistants
- Human Resources
- School Administrators / PTA
- Hospital Administrators/Departments Leads
- Event Planners
- Facilities Coordinators

#### INSIDER TIP!

The majority of businesses get together for a catered Holiday Party in the first two weeks of December. 50% of Holiday catering orders are booked 2-3 days before their event. Make sure you’re following up consistently and sharing the message that Catering with QDOBA can make their holiday gathering more festive and flavorful, and take the stress out of planning! Remember to constantly check your catering quotes in Monkey Media. Ensure you mention early-bird discounts or try a bonus promo for booking before a certain date.

## GETTING OUT IN THE COMMUNITY

- Give your list of local businesses, schools, hospitals, medical offices and public services a chance to experience QDOBA firsthand with Queso and Chips! “Chip Chats” are a surefire way to gain more holiday catering customers.
- The holiday season is typically buzzing with local community events and festivals that give you a chance to get our menu offerings and **promotional materials** in front of people. Community Centers are aware of all local events and is a great resource!
- Set up a booth/table at these events and engage with attendees by offering samples and handing out **flyers** and catering **menus**.
- Large Home Communities will have multiple holiday parties for different community clubs and organizations between December and January.
- Reach out to all your Non-Profit and Religious Organizations to secure their holiday catering business and offer referral discounts/Free Entrée cards for members to have office or personal holiday parties catered by QDOBA.



- Network with other vendors such as party rental companies and venues without catering services. They may be interested in partnering with you or referring customers for catering.
- Collect contact information or encourage rewards signups through incentives so you can continue to communicate our offerings throughout the holidays and beyond.
- Educate potential catering guests on Catering Reward incentives:
  - Free Entree – 100 points
  - \$50 Off your next Catering Order – 1,000 points
  - \$50 VISA Reward Card – 1,000 points

## HOW TO GAIN MORE HOLIDAY CATERING BUSINESS

Among our B2C target segments, spending time with friends and family is a top priority – and they wish they could do it more often. 38% of Flavor Seekers say they are the life of the party, and 45% of our target segments say they do not have enough time to cook or eat at home as often as they would like. Additionally, our targets seek convenient catering that doesn't break the bank during the busy holiday season.

### HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Friendsgiving
- Ugly Sweater Parties
- Weekend Holiday Parties (Christmas, Diwali, Hanukah)
- New Year's Eve/Day Parties

By catering with QDOBA, our B2C guests can leave the work to us, no grocery shopping, food prep or washing dishes and focus on creating lasting memories and share holiday cheer with a festive QDOBA feast.

## CONTACT YOUR LOYALISTS

- Contact your top catering contacts and offer to “Make it the Most Flavorful Time of the Year.”
- Call your past Holiday Catering orders from the last few years and invite them to rebook early to ensure they get their preferred timeslot.
- Use your Holiday catering list from the previous year, QDOBA is top-of-mind, and they had a wonderful experience, remind them how easy it is – they already trust QDOBA!
- Use available catering sales assets to communicate with guests for Holiday Parties, Friendsgiving, & more.
- A festive QDOBA catering feast creates lasting memories and spreads holiday cheer!
- Timing and Follow-Up is key!

## 4-WALL MARKETING

- Marketing within the 4 walls of your restaurant is a powerful way to promote catering to your existing guests and encourage repeat business. Some 4-wall marketing strategies can include:
  - Setting up a small display inside your location
  - Making sure all merchandising assets are posted
  - Cashier interaction at the register – “Have your ordered you catering for the Holidays?”
  - Ensuring **Catering Menus** are in the POS Shroud for guests to pick up!
- Consider an “Early Bird gets the Queso” promo encouraging guests to book in advance. Note: Be sure to submit your POS request form 10 days in advance of go-live date.
- Starting 4 weeks before **Thanksgiving** place **4-Up flyers** in POS Shroud and include in all take out bags (including catering orders and 3rd party delivery orders) and **2-Up flyers** are stapled to every catering invoice.
- Talk to guests in the dining room during lunch and dinner. Ask if their workplace is planning a celebration for the Holidays. Hand them a **catering menu** to take back to any decision makers at their organization.



## 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. 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 and delivery/eat 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.
- 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.

