



PLANTPURE COMMUNITIES

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ACTION SHEET: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Restaurant Campaign

Many people have reported great success getting their favorite local restaurants to add healthier, vegan, and plant-based, oil-free meals to their menus. These Implementation Strategies are offered as a guide to support efforts to take an initial conversation with a waiter and turn it into a menu item.

Step 1: Identifying the Contact

- Ask if it would be possible to speak with the Owner, Manager, or Chef.
- If you cannot get beyond the waiter/waitress, this may be a dead end. Instead you might ask the waiter what the Restaurant's process is for receiving suggestions from customers.

Step 2: Designing the Meal

- Use clear language - you will likely need to adjust your ask depending on the restaurant and your point of contact. For example, many may not know the difference between vegan and vegetarian meals, nor might they understand what you mean by 'whole food, plant-based.'
- Locate items on the menu that are close to something you would order. For instance, if they offer a salad and a veggie burger, make the suggestion that they add to their menu a combination of the two options into a new dish. Another example: Italian restaurants will likely have beans, grains and other veggies that could be added to salad, or marinara sauce that could be added to pasta.
- Identify items on the existing menu that can easily be combined to create a complete meal, such as a plain baked potato, brown rice, steamed broccoli or other vegetables, a salad prepared without the cheese and balsamic vinegar instead of their oil-laden dressing. Refer to *Action Sheet: Choosing a Restaurant and Ordering* or print out the card, "*Tips for Designing a Meal.*"
- Decide if you'd like to share with the owner/manager why you are making this special request. Consider what you might say. For example, "I am making this special request for health reasons. I do not eat food with animal products, and I also need the meal to be low or no oil. What do you or the Chef recommend?" Note: most restaurants are accustomed to people with allergies asking for special accommodations.

Step 3: Offer Feedback

- If you are satisfied with your meal, engage with the manager/owner to let them know. Ask them if they wouldn't mind preparing that same meal for you again, and perhaps for your vegan friends, when you come in next time. Be sure to tell them how much you enjoyed the meal and the experience.



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Step 4: Suggest a More Permanent Change

- If you have had a successful experience designing a meal, suggest to the owner/manager that they add the meal to their menu and mark it “no animal products and oil-free”, or “vegan, may be prepared oil-free” - letting them know the “oil-free” indicator is likely to result in a wider audience.
- If the owner/manager is gracious and accommodating, offer them more information by giving them the *Info Sheet: WFPB Diet Explained for a Restaurant Owner/Manager* and *Info Sheet: Plant-Based Cooking with No Oil for Restaurants*.
- Let the owner/manager know about the PPC Restaurant Certificate. Restaurants that add a healthy and complete meal to their menu are invited to apply for an official Certificate that reflects their participation in the PlantPure Communities Restaurant Campaign. For more information on the meal criteria please see the *Action Sheet: PlantPure Communities Restaurant Certificate*.
- Provide suggestions for other meal options and mention potential taglines (e.g., “heart healthy,” “vegan,” “oil-free,” “plant-based”). If appropriate, take this opportunity to explain that the meal they served you is attractive to a wide range of people, citing statistics. Please refer to the *Info Sheet: Tips for Speaking with Restaurants* for examples.
- Recognize that re-printing menus can be expensive and therefore an unlikely outcome in the near future, and instead suggest:
 1. Adding an asterisk or sticker next to existing menu item(s) that can be made plant-based, oil-free
 2. Point out how easy it is to change an electronic menu (online)
 3. Suggest listing the meal on a Specials Board, or posting signage that indicates they have vegan/ plant-based and oil-free options available upon request

Step 5: Helping Make the Change Happen - Note: These strategies are currently in testing mode and may be added to the Toolkit and described in greater detail once they have been fully vetted.

- Start a wave of requests - consider choosing one or more restaurant(s) and approaching the restaurant(s) in waves. Once a restaurant makes a delicious plant-based, oil-free dish at the request of the initial customer(s), multiple waves of different people would go into the restaurant asking for that same dish, encouraging the restaurant to add it to their menu (and apply for the RC Certificate).
- Connect with your local Chamber of Commerce and propose the idea of creating a Healthy Culinary Destination by getting multiple proximate restaurants to participate in the Restaurant Campaign.
- Host a private event at a restaurant with 20-30 people to show enthusiasm and appreciation for the food and encourage the restaurant to add the meal to their menu.
- Reach out to culinary schools in the area and consider setting up a meeting with the head of the culinary program to suggest the adoption of plant-based, oil-free cooking classes.



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Step 6: Institutionalize the Change

- Show the owner/manager the Happy Cow app on your phone and tell them that since they are so accommodating to those who primarily eat plants, that they should be listed. Refer to the *Info Sheet: Maximizing Participation of Restaurants in the Restaurant Campaign via Happy Cow*.
- Make the change public! See the *Action Sheet: Adding the Restaurant Campaign Link to Group Description on Pod Page* for Instructions on how to edit a Pod page to share a list of restaurants that have added healthy meals to their menus.

Step 7: Write Reviews

- Let the owner/manager know that if the Restaurant will add the meal(s) to the menu that you will write a glowing 5-star review on a range of outlets, including any that they may suggest. Refer to *Action Sheet: Writing Reviews of Restaurants on Happy Cow and Other Apps/Outlets*.
- Let the owner/manager know that you would be happy to write a Letter to the Editor (LTE) of your community's local newspaper about how accommodating, delicious and healthy this restaurant is. Refer to *Action Sheet: Submitting Stories to Media Outlets*.

Step 8: Social Media Spotlight + Eblast

- Ask the owner/manager if you can submit a story to the PlantPure Communities Pod Network and Pod News about the restaurant and their new healthy offerings - with photos, etc. This would be shared with hundreds of people in a 100-mile radius of the restaurant via an e-blast, and the story would run on several social media platforms. [Submit the story here.](#)
- Once the restaurant receives the Certificate, write a Letter to the Editor or review and submit it to the local newspapers. Refer to the *Template: Writing a Letter to the Editor* located in the templates section.



We welcome your suggestions and ideas! Please send them to info@plantpurecommunities.org. This material may not be used out of context. Please refer to PPC's terms and conditions for more information. Updated February 2018.