

The opportunity to enjoy an intimate conversation in many restaurants is diminishing. Part of this is due to construction of the interior space, partly it is caused by how the interior is decorated and arranged and in some cases it is intentional. Either way, as a restaurant owner you should take the time to evaluate and do a sound check in your own restaurant to be sure that the noise levels on a busy night are what you and your target audience are hoping for.

So if you own a restaurant that caters to a crowd that is looking for a noisy and energetic place to eat, most of what I will tell you here will not matter. But if your clientele has disposable income and wants a place to enjoy a meal and conversation with their friends and family, your job of making sure the noise levels are appropriate will have a huge impact on whether or not you can turn them into repeat diners.

The first step is to try and test the noise levels for yourself on a busy night. Just sit at a few of the tables with one of your managers or employees and quickly check how easy it is to hear each other. Do this in several different places in your restaurant as there will be big differences in the noise levels at different spots in your restaurant. Now keep in mind that there are many reasons why this subjective measurement can be difficult. [Here's a great blog on the pitfalls of measuring your restaurant's sound levels subjectively.](#)

Once you know where the louder and quieter places are, perhaps you can train your hostess to try and be more perceptive about the clientele and put them in the most appropriate seats at noisy times. Is anyone in the party wearing a hearing aid? Is it a large party or a party of 2? What age is the customer? All of these factors could help you make this decision.

Think about what is creating the noise levels in your restaurant. Hard surfaces will reflect noise and drive up the overall din. How much is the noise of your kitchen contributing? What about music? Is the music simply driving up the overall noise level as people attempt to talk over it? Perhaps background music is important and valuable at some times of day and should just be turned off at others.

Hanging tapestries or other items on the walls will reduce the reverberant noise in your restaurant. Likewise, tablecloths and carpets will also reduce noise. And watch out for sky lights as their domes can create white noise spots where it is difficult to understand conversations even when no one else is in the restaurant.

Every restaurant is different and each might have a different goal regarding music and noise levels. But what is important is that you take the time to monitor the noise levels at different times of day and night and make sure that your restaurant is providing the atmosphere that you want for your patrons.

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