

CANVASREBEL

Meet Daniele Puleo

October 17th, 2024



We were lucky to catch up with Daniele Puleo recently and have shared our conversation below.

Daniele, thanks for joining us, excited to have you contributing your stories and insights. Before we get into specifics, let's talk about success more generally. What do you think it takes to be successful?

Perseverance.....and lots of it! Nothing comes easy and many great ideas fail because of taking success for granted. You can't stand still and wait, you need to go and get it. Customers can approach your business in many different ways nowadays but you always need to get out there and attract them, either in the form of catering, advertising/marketing, donations or simply by getting involved in outside cooking demonstrations. Fast and easy do not guarantee you success, being hands-on in your business is already 50% of the work to succeed.

My mentor was an incredibly talented restaurant owner in Los Angeles, where I worked for several years, who passed away years ago and always told me to choose one path in business and stick with it. He told me about the importance of doing only what you know and modeling it according to your business as times change and generations change. The industry moves with its ups and downs just like any other, we just have to adjust and reduce our potential for failure. Problem-solving is paramount.

Great, appreciate you sharing that with us. Before we ask you to share more of your insights, can you take a moment to introduce yourself and how you got to where you are today to our readers.

I grew up in Palermo, Sicily, from a good and loving family. Soon after high school, I saw little working possibilities and because of my entrepreneurial nature, I left Italy at 22 years old to find a new life in America. It was a life-changing choice and I absolutely had to engage my new American lifestyle with a chance to improve my future so I followed my restaurant knowledge, thanks to my father being in the industry, and embraced the new American experience. I started in Arizona, moved to Los Angeles, and finally Dallas, Texas. I love the service/hospitality industry which I consider fun and different from day to day. I get to meet interesting people and hear their stories as they hear mine. The restaurant business is real life, it's vibrant and gives you that fantastic feeling when you see people enjoying your creations especially when you build a solid customer base. CiboDivino is true to the Italian model and is oriented toward a great customer experience. It was created as a community space where neighbors would meet and mingle while trying some good food and valuable wines. My business is in constant improvement, I research new Italian products, and new wines, from both Italy and California and bring those authentic Italian recipes to our tables, the seasonal menu is a good example.

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How'd you meet your business partner?

My business partner is my wife Christina. We met many years ago when I was ready to open my first restaurant in Dallas, Daniele Osteria. She was a banker at that time and a pretty good one too, but more than that she was a person who was easy to talk to, the type of girl that anyone would love to be friends with. We agreed on many decisions, personal and business-related, and we saw common grounds regarding the way to approach life and how to disconnect from your business when time requires to do so. She understood the industry right away, modeled her life to fit the new one, and later decided to drop the banking world and dedicate her time to the hospitality industry. The transition of course wasn't easy, I remember one day she told me, in a humorous way, that banking was so much easier. I took it as a compliment, that's the life I had lived for many years and I guess I was a tough guy! Since the food and beverage business is considered one of the toughest around. We are still having fun with what we have created together and love it every day.



How'd you build such a strong reputation within your market?

Consistency! That's the key for success. It refers to everything regarding your business. The space, the look of the place, a simple recognizable logo, the brand itself, and of course the food, that's the first thing you want to be consistent – daily, monthly, yearly, and forever. The constant research for better products, better ideas, better wines, fun events, being connected with the community and knowing your customers, keeping in mind that we are in the service industry and customers have a strong voice, you build the place, they build the business!

I show up seven days a week, enter the space in the morning make my sauces for the evening, and am constantly working on our wine selections. When you own you are in the driver's seat, your employees have questions you need to answer, and to do so you need to be directly submerged in your business. You have to know it, every aspect of it.



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