

# Tray Liners

Every time you eat a meal inside a fast food restaurant it is served on a tray and usually it has a tray liner. Most of these liners are supplied from the chain's central distributing center. Some, however, are produced regionally and a few locally.

This technique looks ultra easy, however, a large percent of the time the liner project will not be easy. But, once you get it accomplished it will be so easy the next time, and the next.

Here's how to give it a try. Take PSA artwork to the fast food restaurant and meet the manager. Most of the time a second visit will be required, therefore, calling for an appointment may save you a trip. Do not tell the manager what you want over the phone; you want to talk to him or her about a project to help save lives on the lake, is all you might say.

Before the appointment, go in and pick up a tray liner so you know exactly what you are talking about. And, if you can get two or three different ones they will help you understand what the manager will be referring to.

Again, the timing will be better if you can arrange the meeting after a drowning or boating accident. Take the news clipping and show it to the manager. Then start your "selling technique." Why are you there? To save lives on the waterways and explain how the restaurant can join the Corps of Engineers in this noble cause. Take a tray liner and show the manager what your plan is to get the water safety PSA art/slicks on the tray liners, preferably during the "101 Killing Days of Summer," or for a special event.

The restaurants change the liner designs often. First, the manager will probably say a mythical headquarters prints these and they always turn down requests such as this. Bull dust. This is a good way to ease you

out of the office without making you mad. Kindly say to the manager, "Would you like to see these professionally designed water safety messages on your tray liners?" Naturally the manager will say, "Oh yes, but it's not my decision."

Come back with, "Who should I call or write to in order to receive approval?" Now you've touched a sore spot. The manager's do not like to give out the telephone numbers of the headquarters staff. However, they, reluctantly, will provide you with this information. Ensure you have the local manager's name and telephone number. Exchanging business cards is a great way to accomplish this. Tell the manager you want to take some photos when the tray liners arrive and try to get them published when you are being interviewed about the entire water safety program. This might be the "stroke" which will get him or her started in your direction.

Immediately telephone the headquarters contact person. If they are located near you, make an appointment and meet face-to-face. Take the news clippings, tray liners and slicks with you. Also, take any news clippings explaining your water safety campaign. This might help you show what you plan to do once the tray liners arrive at the local eatery. Usually, the first person at the headquarters cannot give you the approval. So, go to the next one. Remember, the local manager said he or she would like to see your slicks on their tray liner. Once you show the approving official the good-looking slicks, you have a good chance of getting one on every month during the "killing days" (May, June, July and August). Or, they might want to design one liner around four or five of your slicks. Or, they might want to print one on each liner for each month of the year. Now you are on a roll. They might even want to recommend your theme to go nationally. Who knows? First, think local, but when the opportunity presents itself, stop, pause, think ahead and quickly change your strategy. These opportunities do not come often, but when they do, go with it. The second this happens inform your immediate supervisor as there may be some correspondence needed to go forward if the liners will go out of your District boundary.

The best-case scenario, of course, will be if the local manager will say, "yes" on the spot. Or, "I really like this idea, let me write a letter to my headquarters

and recommend they adopt this theme for 'whenever' time period." You might write a letter to go with his/her letter to headquarters telling about the problems on the lake and about your water safety campaign. It is so much easier if you get the local person involved.

Some liners highlight a calendar of events. Usually these are locally produced and are the easiest to get your message on.

Okay, you struck out. Let's say you tried

and tried and didn't even get to first base. No problem. Remember, this is only one fast food restaurant. There are others. Also, during your first try you learned what questions and answers they gave. These will assist you during your next tray liner "campaign." And, once you get one printed, really try to publicize it. The publicity will help you get more tray liners from the participating eatery and when used as an example it will help with another town and another restaurant.

Which fast food restaurant are you going to try first? Remember, no drive-thru today... go inside! Good luck.