



# The Corner Office

## *Mixing Business With Pleasure*

By Skye E. MacBroom

In the heart of the theater and business district in downtown Denver is The Corner Office, a trendy 70's mod-inspired restaurant. Their marketing approach is unique - shake what your mama gave ya. The Corner Office gets patrons in the door because they have a great sense of self; they know who they are as a restaurant, are comfortable with their identity - and they flaunt it.

### **You've Been Served**

The Corner Office's menu branding reflects the restaurant's sexy, young urbanite corporate types who frequent the establishment. The eclectic food offerings appeal to the downtown crowd, a mix of fashionable high-heeled business hotties, eco-friendly hipsters with purple streaked hair and bowling shoes, and artsy theater-goers wearing horn-rimmed square glasses and black turtlenecks. The Corner Office offers prix fixe dinner specials that are perfect for couples out on "date night" pre-show, or small bar bites that work for a snack or nightcap after work or post-show.

The restaurant's offerings are as varied as the house-mixed tunes that beat in the background. You can order everything from fried chicken, caprese salad, short ribs, spring rolls... to a bowl of Captain Crunch. For dinner! They also have Fruit Loops, Cocoa Krispies, Lucky Charms and almost any other sugary delight you could think of. Where else could you feel comfortable ordering an indulgent kid-friendly meal, while a co-worker orders a New York Strip? (Steak that is.) The "breakfast for dinner" menu also includes strawberry or blueberry cheesecake waffles with a graham cracker maple syrup that is downright sinful.

The international fusion menu is filled with what the restaurant has coined, "global comfort food." Traditional feel-good dishes like baked mac-n-cheese are topped with lobster and sprinkled with cheese and bread crumbs. Heavenly after a hard day at work. The barbecued Vietnamese sandwich is a smattering of flavors: chicken or pork, French bread, pickled carrots, daikon, cilantro, cucumber, and chili sauce. I'll have a side of Szechuan fries with that, please.

Sticking to the Corner Office theme, the menu boasts creative names such as Water Cooler Quickies, Power Lunch Specials, the "Hole Punch" and

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“Paper Shredder” martinis, and “After Five,” a dessert consisting of lychee panna cotta with a ginger gin syrup and raspberry sorbet. The good ol’ 9-5 is sounding better and better.

The Corner Office’s inventive menu is designed by Executive Chef Jeff Bolton. The Denver native’s flair for the dramatic is the result of both his culinary and cultured background with Cuban family ties. Bolton takes traditional and familiar cuisine from around the world, and puts a contemporary stamp on it.

As the website states, “He’s willing to try anything once.” Bolton hails from the Culinary Institute of America and then further honed his slicing and dicing skills all around the country – Las Vegas, Martha’s Vineyard, Texas, Georgia, Kentucky, New York... the list goes on and on.

## Bold and Beautiful, Inside and Out

The playful Corner Office décor has a definitive “Brady Bunch” living room meets “Mad Men” break room vibe. The interior is high on kitschy style, the anti-thesis to stuffy, uptight, and expected. There is a lot of energy here as spiky-haired pencil necks sidle up a long teak bar backlit with blue Lucite.

The Oval Office is a private dining room appropriately named for its shape, suitable for both business meetings and special occasions. There are communal tables, and smaller more private seating areas for canoodling. The room is colorful and funky in a “we’re all workaholics who need to escape” kind of way.

Bright, warm, cheery colors, retro plastic ergonomic chairs, orange plaid wool upholstered booths, and twinkling glass pendant light fixtures combine with clocks that all proclaim it’s 5 PM, 24/7. Now that’s branding.

## Restaurant Marketing 101, Corner Office Style

Valerie Gaddis-Arellano handles the special events and marketing at The Corner Office. She says, “We haven’t noticed a slowing down due to the economy at all. We are right on track and staying busy. Our 5 o’clock happy hour is packed.”

The Corner Office credits their full house of bustling wheelin-n-dealin patrons to marketing efforts such as an email newsletter which they call, “The Memo.” Before you even walk through the doors of The Corner Office, their website provides a glimpse inside the unique venue. It’s like going on an interview; you only get one chance to make a first impression.

Check out [www.thecornerofficedenver.com](http://www.thecornerofficedenver.com), where you’ll find the restaurant is actually located in The Curtis hotel, [www.thecurtis.com](http://www.thecurtis.com). What these websites have in common, is a sense of confidence, fun, boldness, and clear identity. Click on the small white circle with an “x” at the bottom right corner of the restaurant’s home page. It brings up a cartoon office scene with more circular links that bring you to zany videos whose only purpose is to bring a smile to your face.

This marketing is genius and the restaurant gets extra credit for going over the top. The Corner Office pays attention to these small details, the eccentric touches that create an overall attitude that inspires patrons to stop by for a visit and satisfy their curiosity about the “cool” restaurant downtown.

They also have a special loyalty program similar to the reward bonuses that many trendy clothing companies utilize to encourage brand loyalty and frequent visits.

The Corner Office website proclaims, “Kissing up is richly rewarded via our bi-level point program,

commensurate with your level of groveling.”

Is overtime enough or are you angling for a bonus? Under “Time and a Half”, the site reads, “You’ll automatically receive 100 points upon joining the loyalty club. Whether you’re eating or drinking, in or taking out, present your card...and for every dollar you spend pre-tax, you’ll earn one point.” After reaching 250 points restaurant-goers receive a \$25 reward certificate.

There is also a “Bonus” program. “If you’re a concierge or a meeting planner, you may be invited to participate in a particularly rewarding program. For every breakfast, lunch, or dinner reservation you complete, you’ll accrue one point. When you reach 50 points, you’ll receive a \$100 gift certificate.”

Now, that’s motivation for planning the company happy hour. Cheers!

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