

# WOBBLY & MISALIGNED TABLES

can cost you more than you think.

The wrong table base could cost you more than \$208!



## LABOR COSTS

Good servers are difficult to find. The time they spend stabilizing and aligning tables each day, plus cleaning up spillages could cost **\$13,687 over 3 years.**



## BREAKAGES

Broken and damaged service ware from wobbly tables could cost you more than **\$65.42.**



## REPUTATION

Dissatisfied customers often take to social media and review sites to talk about your annoying wobbly tables, spills, and unappetizing situations where servers are on the floor dirtying their hands to fix tables, which can harm your reputation for years. **Cost - PRICELESS**



## REPLACEMENTS & REFUNDS

Having to replace spilled food and drinks, and refunding unhappy guests can cost **\$782.00 over 3 years**



## DRY CLEANING COSTS

Losses you could incur having to dry clean or even replace guest's clothing due to spilled food and beverages could cost you around **\$18.00 or more per table.**



## SHRINKAGE

Those unsightly napkins, coasters, and other materials used to temporarily fix wobbly tables aren't free! They can cost more than **\$15.00 over 3 years** and damage your brand.

**FLAT®**

engineering stability

Costs are calculated over a 3 year period and indicative only. Calculations may vary per location and are detailed overleaf.

## Protect Your Brand & Bottom Line with FLAT®

FLAT understands the tremendous strain modern restaurant and hospitality corporations are under to build a business model that is both competitive and profitable. The current market landscape is heavily saturated, exposed to tremendous customer criticism, and eroded by rising labor and overhead costs. Proposing that you spend more on something as seemingly common as tables is a hard to quantify. We get it.

However, FLAT® tables bases and FLAT® Equalizers shouldn't be seen as a luxury purchase, but a strategic investment that pays dividends in three core areas of your hospitality and restaurant business. This example of a regular restaurant will help illustrate both the potential quantitative and qualitative impact on your business that FLAT products can have in both stabilizing and aligning tables. We're going to share how wobbly and misaligned tables can impact **hard operational costs, potential liability exposures, and direct loss of brand reputation.**

### Hard Operational Costs

The first area that has to be covered is the impact on the bottom line. Hard operational costs must be controlled in order to be profitable in any business. The need is much greater in the highly competitive restaurant and hospitality market. That is the reason the hard cost of spending an extra \$30 for each table base can be difficult for many companies to reconcile. However, few companies have actually run the numbers on what that saving may cost the business in the long term.

So, here are the assumptions we will make for the sake of this study. First, that the customer (Restaurant X) has opened a new restaurant on one of their properties wherein they are installing 100 tables. Restaurant X operates 365 days per year and has opted to purchase standard tables rather than FLAT tables at a saving of \$3000 (\$30 x 100 tables).

Now that we have set the table on our restaurant at Restaurant X, let's start considering the impact our initial \$3000 savings could have on our business's bottom line.

### Labor Costs

Labor costs are a significant outlay for all restaurant and hospitality environments. Therefore, having staff wasting time adjusting table feet to stop them wobbling or placing props underneath them to align them is absurd, and preventable. Moreover, cleaning up spillages and dealing with ongoing customer complaints can waste an operation a significant amount of time and be demoralizing for waitstaff and management.



In our calculations we assume that 3 members of staff spend 20 minutes per day (per 100 tables) setting and re-setting table feet to ensure that they are stable and that adjoining tables (for groups) are level. Assuming an average wage rate of \$12.50/hour, this cost amounts to an eye-watering **\$13,687** (almost 1,100 hours) over the period.

### *Dry Cleaning*

There is also the accrued cost of dry cleaning for any damages done to guests by spilled drinks and/or food. We assume that Restaurant X has a dry cleaning bill of \$100 per month. If 50% of this cost is attributed to wobbly or misaligned tables an additional **\$1,800** cost over the period is being incurred.



### *Refunds*

Next are the inevitable refunds Restaurant X will incur from annoyed or angry customers due to poor table experiences. This cost will vary greatly from restaurant to restaurant, but we assumed a conservative cost to the restaurant of \$5 per week. Over a 3-year period, the restaurant is giving away **\$782** in compensated drinks and meals.



### *Breakages*

First, we need to look at the hard cost of replacing broken or damaged service ware for the restaurant caused by unstable and misaligned tables in the dining area. According to information shared by restaurant owners and operators on Quora, the industry average for annual breakage is around 15 to 20\* percent.



For our calculations, we have assumed a breakage rate of only 2% per annum and that only half of those breakages were resulting from wobbly or misaligned tables. With these conservative estimates and assuming the operator is using average glassware and plates, our restaurant would incur an added cost of **\$65.42** just in broken water glasses, wine glasses, and dinner plates over the 3-year period.

### *Shrinkage*

According to a 2013 YouGov survey, 75%† of respondents agreed that table legs propped up by coasters, napkins and sugar packets looked unsightly. Consider the potential damage these unsightly props are doing to your brand and customer experience.



It's not only customers that think they should not be under the tables. Operators are

losing money every time they prop up their tables with their resources. In our calculations, we suggested a modest cost for napkins and sugar packets of 5 cents per table over a 3-year period resulting in a **\$15 cost** over the 3-year period.

That doesn't sound like much, but it also has other implications that must be considered—like creating slip hazards for staff and guests, attraction of pests, and cross-contamination of food from servers having to get down on unclean surfaces to fix issues.

### The Totals

So, as we have evaluated just a few of the hard costs related to the selection of tables for Restaurant X we can see some big numbers coming into focus. By our conservative inputs, it looks as though our initial savings of \$3000 to go with a standard table base—rather than FLAT tables bases—will cost the restaurant an extra **\$13,350** in the first 3 years.

It's important to note that this loss is likely to grow exponentially each year, as tables incur more wear and damage from continued use. If we look at it a different way, the numbers show that each non-FLAT table base that you install could actually cost your business **\$208.50**.

Now let's talk about the other impacts wobbly and misaligned tables could have on your guests' experience. This is where the situation becomes really concerning.

### Potential Liability Exposure

One of the things that every restaurant or hospitality owner wants to avoid is any unnecessary exposure to liability. Having an environment that is safe for staff and guests is paramount to running any customer-facing business. Having furniture that is unstable or not functioning properly creates a situation that can cause serious trouble for the business owner.

In 2018, an article by Emerging News listed the three top reasons restaurants get sued each year. Of those three, two could be contributed to by faulty furniture in the dining area. The top cause of most restaurant lawsuits is due to slips and falls. According to the National Safety Council, more than 25,000 slip-and-fall accidents occur every day. With these occurrences costing businesses upwards of \$100,000 per incident, it's really important to make every effort to mitigate the situation. Having wobbly tables and foreign materials like coasters, napkins, and food packets on the floor to cause slips and trips is not a great way to keep customers and staff safe on the busy dining room floor.

The second biggest cause of restaurant lawsuits is due to food poisoning or foreign matter in food or beverages. Having a need for server staff to get down on their hands and knees to fix a table, and then serve food to guests, can cause a cross-

contamination opportunity that is extremely dangerous. Even if the servers are washing their hands after being on the floor, then may have wiped their hands on their uniform and may pick dirt and germs back up by wiping their hands again later. The damage to a business's reputation can be devastating.

Of course, in addition to slips, trips and hygiene issues, spillages caused by wobbly and misaligned tables can cause significant harm to patrons and staff, particularly if serving hot drinks and meals. The liability risks associated could be significant and avoidable.

It may seem unlikely that your tables could cause a safety issue within your restaurant, but there are several infamous lawsuits that would beg to differ. Even if there is only a small chance that your business could be affected by this the costs and impact on the brand should not be ignored. Are you willing to take the risk in your restaurant to save \$30 per table?

### **Loss of Brand Reputation**

Restaurant and Hospitality companies spend Billions every year to build a compelling brand position to attract and retain customers. The hours spent developing the perfect menu, training staff to provide exceptional service, and designing an amazing atmosphere for your guests are all crucial to standing out in a crowded market. Why would you allow the table your guests are seated to experience all your hard work undermine your effort? A 2013 YouGov survey found that 56%† of respondents would reconsider returning to an establishment where their experience was spoiled by a wobbly table. Could your business afford to lose that repeat custom?

### ***The Social Effect***

And it doesn't stop there. We live in an age of technological wonder, where people can instantly take out their smart device and share their thoughts on your business with the whole world. Just do a quick search on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, or Yelp for "wobbly tables" and see what customers really think of this problem. Restaurant and hospitality owners and operators can become complacent about the issue because the expectation is that there is no issue—or the issue doesn't impact "their" business. Having the right tables that operate properly means the problem doesn't exist, but when the table is damaged, misaligned, or unstable for guests then nothing else you're doing matters nearly as much.

Protect and grow your market segment with an ounce of prevention by investing in FLAT table bases or FLAT Equalizers. These patented and innovative products completely alleviate the problems caused by wobbly and misaligned tables for your guests. As

we've presented in this case study, the initial cost is more than offset by the peace of mind and protection of your brand they provide.

We're confident you will be delighted by the performance of any of the FLAT products and the service you will provide by our team. Set the stage for success by seating your guests at a table secured by FLAT.

To learn more, contact us and we will be happy to help you find the perfect option for you. Visit [www.flattech.com](http://www.flattech.com) to learn more.

#### Footnotes:

\* 2017 Discussion on **Quora** about estimating how much glassware and dishes a restaurant needs in inventory. <https://www.quora.com/How-do-you-estimate-how-much-glassware-a-restaurant-needs>

† **2013 YouGov Survey of 1,093 US Citizens**

<https://www.restaurantbusinessonline.com/operations/reinforce-your-restaurants-dining-experience>

NOTE: This study has focused on the purchase of new table bases—where there is an average difference in unit cost between FLAT table bases and standard bases of \$30—and the potential impact over the first 3 years of use. While this data will vary for each client, we are confident that it is valid for a large proportion of restaurants and even leans towards providing conservative estimations.