MODERN TECHNOLOGIES IN RESTAURANT BUSINESS

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Innovative technologies are nothing new at quick-service restaurant brands, with many concepts employing digital menuboards, kiosks, iPads at the table, and other ways of letting customers tap into technology while inside the four walls.

However, many brands and operators are thinking even further outside the box, adding innovative technologies in the kitchen and at the front counter to help drive profits, smooth operations, and create a top-notch customer experience.

Cutting-edge technologies can help a quick-serve restaurant not only save money, but also create a more efficient business, adding that technology can provide a visual representation of this sort of data and quantify these costs.

One example of this technology in play at many brands is restaurants whose chefs are using technology to track recipes and ensure that food costs are in line with company expectations.

In an attempt to keep its kitchen staff from having to memorize recipes and food preparation policies, one can add tablets managed by mobile device management company AirWatch to push recipes to its line cooks. We can initially roll out iPads to the restaurants, and we can use them for checklists for quality assurance so we'd be ready for rushes.

It is very hard to get compliance on paper, so one can decide to have a third party build an app that could house the checklists so they can be seen immediately by the corporate office with photos and notes.

In the past, the quick-service brand would send recipes and manuals out to restaurants and operators in hard-copy form, and the materials quickly became outdated.

Once the AirWatch platform was built and installed, many restaurants chefs added all of their recipes to the app, including videos that could be used by kitchen staff to help create food in a consistent manner.

Kitchen staff tells that having this info at [their] fingertips makes a huge difference in the everyday running of the restaurant. The system also pushes marketing materials to the tablets that can be printed in the units to keep posters and menus up to date.
The concept uses a proprietary intranet that has all recipes, manuals, and specifications on a computer in every kitchen for instant access and updates for staff. The productivity of this is extremely inefficient.
The brand also uses online ordering that is interfaced directly with its systems to enable guests to order and pay online. Guests then show up at the restaurant, give an employee their name, and collect their food. In terms of operations the process is seamless, acting as a typical walk-up, to-go order.
McAlister's Deli recently began experimenting with a table-tracking system, which enables food runners to know exactly where a guest is seated, replacing the less effective table tents it used to employ.
The system helps keep track of how much time lapses between the point at which the initial order is taken and the time the food is delivered to the guest, allowing a franchisee to study each unit's time management.
The system can also be used to gather data about what tables are being used most frequently, as well as where a guest goes after placing an order at the counter.
Whether it's using the iPad-based system to take an elderly customer's order in lieu of making them stand in line behind other guests, or e-mailing a receipt from the system to a customer who has placed an order over the phone, we can be sure this concept is able to offer guests a better overall experience through the use of those programs.

References

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