

2019 RESTAURANT CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT TRENDS

Customers have an appetite for convenience...

They want a dining experience to be quick, easy and personalized just for them.

According to U.S. diners and executives, "ease of ordering and payment" is the most important factor in the dining experience.¹

Trend No. 1

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY DRIVES CONTACTLESS DINING EXPERIENCE

Mobile apps. Mobile ordering. Mobile wallet. With Dunkin' (Donuts) rolling out mobile voice-ordering via Google Assistant,² this is just one example of how brands are honoring their customers' preference to make little or no contact with employees. Contactless has become the name of the game.

82% of U.S. employees said they would buy meals more often from their workplace cafeteria if they could:

- a) mobile order ahead and
- b) pick up their order from a "dedicated service point."

52% would do it every time.³



Trend No. 2

MULTICHANNEL OPTIONS IMPROVE LOYALTY PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT

Domino's and Starbucks realize loyalty programs should be seamless. The pizza chain's loyalty points can be earned on every channel available and even with the competition. Through their rewards app, the coffee giant enables customers to check and reload their loyalty card via website, in-store or mobile app with updates seen in real time.⁵

Nearly **70%** of U.S. Internet users participate in one to five loyalty programs.⁴

Trend No. 3

ENABLING SELF-SERVICE HAS ITS REWARDS

Removing human interaction (and error) from the dining experience is proving to be smart business. In fact, 60% of QSR customers said they'd visit a restaurant more often if it offered self-ordering kiosks. And if there's a line, kiosks proved beneficial in making customers stick around.⁶

"Kiosk customers come back more frequently."

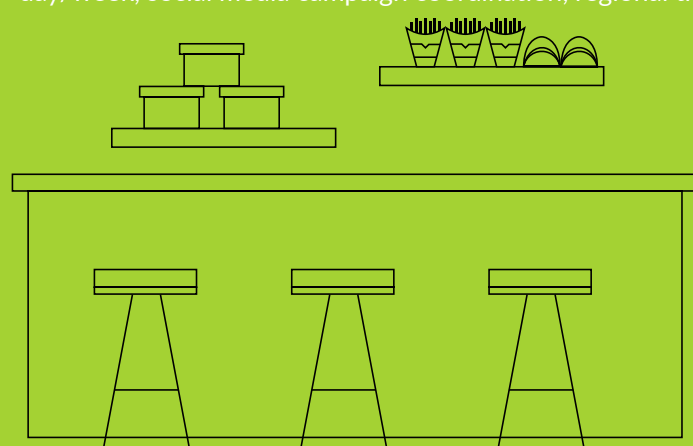
— Mark Berinato, VP of Digital Experience, Panera Bread.⁷

Trend No. 4

MENU BOARDS GET A DATA-DRIVEN MAKE-OVER

Research has shown bigger menus don't necessarily translate into better experiences and more sales. Data-driven menu boards gives QSRs more flexibility and confidence to showcase key higher-margin menu items when the opportunity presents itself (e.g., time of day/week, social media campaign coordination, regional trends/news, etc.).

80% of a restaurant's food sales come from only 16% of menu items.⁸



Menu boards can help reduce "perceived wait time by up to **35%**"⁹

Trend No. 5

EATERS' TASTES ENABLE MEANINGFUL PERSONALIZATION

Subway and Panera are making major inroads on how they leverage purchase behavior to better personalize their loyalty programs. Subway delivers a rewards experience that's random and customized specifically to an individual's tastes. Panera allows for in-app menu customization — reducing order times, increasing engagement all while enabling direct access to customer-driven preferences.¹⁰

49% of U.S. Internet users are interested in receiving personalized messaging from restaurants (and bars).¹¹

Trend No. 6

MAJOR BRANDS MAKE LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING

Major brands are taking major steps to address single-use food packaging waste. Wendy's "Squarely Sustainable" approach includes using "better and seek(ing) certified sustainable materials where possible."¹² By 2025, KFC and McDonald's have committed to consumer-facing packaging that's recoverable or reusable.^{13, 14}

48% of U.S. consumers express a willingness to change their consumption habits to reduce their impact on the environment.¹⁵

Trend No. 7

PHOTO-FIRST SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS RESONATE WITH KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Facebook (and Twitter) are finding ground where it matters most. Among 12-34 year olds in the last year, usage dropped a sizeable 15%.¹⁶ What's not slipping? Photo-driven social media platforms. The big three — Instagram, Pinterest and Snapchat — were the only social platforms to see popularity growth in 2018.¹⁷

73% of teens agree Instagram is the best way for brands to communicate to them about new products and promotions.¹⁸

"Instagram and food are kind of made for each other — I would say it's the perfect platform for food."

— Todd Smith, CMO, Sonic¹⁹

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SOURCES

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