WHITE PAPER



Making Every Glance Count: Digital Signage and Integrated Technologies in QSR

As restaurants adopt new technology, having an integrated, all-digital system will help improve efficiency and allow decision-making with real-time data.

By Denise HarrisonContributing writer,
QSRweb.com

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he digital age brings businesses entirely new, powerful forms of communication. One of the most visible applications of technology in restaurants is digital signage, which helped the quick-service food industry take a giant technological leap forward. Restaurants have been quite happy to adopt this technology for replacing static, difficult-to-manage and costly printed materials.

Indoor and outdoor digital menu boards, for example, fulfill the promise of digital signage by allowing computer controls to change messaging rather than physically replacing paper or plastic signage. But digital menu boards also engage the customer in ways static signage never can, offering sharp, high-definition displays with dynamic, eye-catching text, animation and video. These solutions promote up-selling and high-margin items, as well as entrees, combos, promotions and suggestions for impulse purchases and desserts.

The integrated restaurant

Digital menu boards, however, are just the beginning of what today's technology can bring to the QSR industry. Many

The benefits of digital signage

- Digital signage receives 10 times more eye contact than static signage.
- 30 percent of video viewers make unplanned purchases.
- Digital signage reduces perceived wait time by more than 15 percent.
- A clutter-free, high-tech appearance is appealing to customers.
- Preprogrammable promotions set to time of day, seasonal availability, region, etc. save time and deliver consistent messaging.
- Digital signage offers prominent reinforcement of restaurant branding.

restaurants purchase various hardware and software for different operational and marketing functions. These systems are sufficient, but they work independently of one another. One system may give data that requires management decisions, for instance. The manager then needs to decide which actions to take, and then go into another system to implement these decisions — a

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The integrated restaurant would feature digital menu boards, as well as state-of-the-art back-office and POS systems.

slow process in an industry where fast reactions result immediately and directly in increased sales. Furthermore, each system, from training to inventory, from accounting to marketing, may be sold and supported by different vendors, with different methods for getting service and different levels of quality of service.

The industry, however, may be at the precipice of another technological leap, changing how each of those functions contributes to overall profits and efficiencies.

"The future of quick-service restaurant functionality isn't about any one digital technology," says Myles Mjolsnes, marketing and business analyst at WAND Corporation. "At WAND, we are developing the digital restaurant, which will facilitate the integration of each and every function with the others. Real-time data from one can trigger real-time reactions from the others so that profits and efficiencies can be maximized up to the minute."

Total system integration is a natural evolu-

tion for an industry in which time is so critical. Decisions can be made on the fly that immediately maximize speed of service, margins and sales volume — decisions that, when based on accurate, upto-the minute data, could actually double reven-e in any two-hour period.

Such a system could be controllable from one computer interface, giving managers the ability to analyze data and make changes with a few mouse clicks.

Furthermore, a fully integrated system can even automate some decisions. For example, marketing can change automatically based on real-time supply data, and promotional messages can be changed based on precise, real-time measures of effectiveness. Have an oversupply of chicken? Such a system could automatically change digital menus to promote the chicken selections. On a hot day, is the animated ice cream promotion working? If not, then an integrated system will let the manager try, and analyze in real time, the iced mocha promotion instead. Do the cashiers know what

2

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to up-sell? Based on previous information they do, because the cashier interface changes based on decisions made elsewhere.

Within this digital management system, components such as the point of sale, kitchen video system, training, digital menu boards, point of purchase, order confirmation display and the back office all tie together for sharing and comparing data. As data interacts, efficiencies are automatically maximized, working to enable fast and astute changes to the right system components, and thereby increasing profits minute by minute.

Importantly, this integration can extend beyond the walls of any one quick-service restaurant. An integrated restaurant management system could allow a manager to make decisions for any number of stores, all from a central location. In addition, different stores within a franchise could communicate with each other.

The benefits of system integration in a restaurant

Satisfying employees. One of the benefits of integrating functionality in the QSR is single-shift training, which quickly makes employees more secure in their performance. Single-shift training can be incorporated into the digital signage order system in the kitchen, allowing for quick mastery by the food preparation staff via training videos on the same screens as recipe displays and build photos, all accessible by one push of a button. When new products are introduced, the new data can be sent from a central location to all kitchen screens. For cashiers, the interface ensures single-shift training by displaying step-by-step procedures, even including

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up-sell suggestions.

Satisfying customers. Customers choose a quick-service restaurant with expectations that service will be fast. An integrated system will provide more time-sensitive interactions. The time spent at the cash register will be less because the cashier will have fewer questions with step-bystep processes. Customer satisfaction also is increased with viewable detailed order confirmation (even special order instructions) inside or outside the restaurant. The customer can alert the cashier to any incorrect order information on the spot, and before the order is built. Waiting time is decreased as well, since the customer need not wait while an employee is trained to build the product — the kitchen video system ensures builds are done quickly.

Increasing sales and profits. The real-time data analyses and automated interactions bring tremendous power to QSR managers. Managers will be able to take control of increasing sales on a moment's notice — real-time sales data and fast messaging control allow lightning-fast adjustments to digital signage marketing messages to help drive sales. Even subtle animations can prove effective, and managers can easily experiment with different types of content. If a new message isn't working, managers can immediately change it back.

Inventory integration. A method for increasing profits is inventory integration. Managers will be able to use the inventory integration to set parameters, so that

3

the entire system, from signage to cashier up-selling, can promote production overages or soon-to-expire products once that threshold is reached.

With integrated digital technology, managers can make better decisions more quickly with a wealth of real-time data metrics at their fingertips. These decisions are then quickly carried out by operations and result in greater profits.

About the sponsor: WAND Corporation is the home of the digital restaurant. With more than 22 years of experience in QSR, WAND supports many of the largest brand names in the industry. WAND developed its digital menu board technology in the Wendy's community, and is the only vendor with digital menu boards in a corporate Wendy's. WAND also is the first company to have developed and sold a completely dynamic three-panel outdoor digital menu board.

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