4 MUST-HAVE TECHNOLOGIES FOR YOUR RESTAURANT

EBOOK

Focus

POS software should make a restaurateur's long work week more productive and more profitable. Be honest, does yours? Antiquated processes like printing sales reports from a back-office computer or passing out loyalty punch cards cause you and your employees to take extra steps and end up slowing down your overall operations.

Today's top executives are able to communicate with customers, view business data and make and accept payments straight from their smartphone – so why should your restaurant business be any different?

Too many restaurant operators and employees are stuck using the same technology they've been using for the past five to 10 years – and to some, it may not seem like they are very far behind. However, at the rate technology is advancing, the POS

software developed in the late 1990s and early 2000s is wholly insufficient in providing value to restaurant operations.

In fact, technology has changed so much in the last decade that restaurant customers have come to expect restaurants to use the same platforms and devices that use at home – mainly mobile devices, mobile apps and eCommerce capabilities.

That said, on your journey to growing your business, your main goal should be to find POS software that not only supports the latest technologies, but can also be customized to meet the unique needs of your establishment.

This eBook outlines four restaurant technologies that are necessary to improving productivity and profitability of your operations, as well as growing your business.

1. MOBILE POS

According to Hospitality Technology's annual POS Software Trends Report – which polls restaurant operators about what they're looking for in their next POS upgrade – mobility is the word on most businesses' minds. **More than 45 percent named mobile phone integration as their highest priority; tablet integration, tableside POS and mobile wallet integration were not far behind.**

Mobile POS gives restaurants the opportunity to implement innovative technology that will excite customers, while also streamlining the ordering process for both customers and employees.

Many of today's mobile POS solutions are native Apple™ iOS® apps compatible with iPad®, iPod Touch® and iPhone®, allowing restaurants to seamlessly integrate them with their software and leverage state-of-the-art mobile devices.

The core ideas behind mobile POS are convenience and initiative: rather than waiting for your customers to come to your POS system, your system can come to them. The main functions of mobile POS devices and apps are line busting, tableside ordering

and payments. In other words, employees can spend more tableside time with customers to provide them with a quicker, easier, more valuable experience, as well as streamline service and eliminate confusion during peak times or rushes.

With tablets and wireless connectivity, restaurants can also extend their sales to festivals, trade shows, outdoor seating areas, food trucks, etc.

Perhaps the most important benefit of Mobile POS is increased sales and profit margins through upselling. Think about it: some of the items with the highest margin are add-ons like appetizers and desserts, and these purchase decisions are usually made extemporaneously. When your employees have POS software at their fingertips while tableside, they can quickly and easily add such items to the bill – without having to travel to a back-office terminal or central database.

High-margin items and new specials can be programmed into your software and mobile devices can prompt wait staff to suggest such items.

2. MOBILE MANAGEMENT

Hospitality Technology's annual POS Software Trends Report also reported that, on the software side, **more than 40 percent are seeking access to enterprise-wide or centralized POS data and more than 37 percent are interested in cloud and hosted software.** Restaurant owners have recognized the need for technology that grants them access to business data anywhere, anytime.

Mobile management solutions can be synced with POS software to allow managers to view valuable information such as net sales, labor costs, overtime warnings, employee performance, last batch information and credit card status, among many other metrics, whether they're at home or on vacation.

The technology is especially useful for managers when they are away from their restaurant, because they can receive alerts and warnings when labor costs are high or inventory is low. When these things are kept top of mind, it is easier for restaurants to mitigate risk and theft.

One of mobile management's main benefits is the ability to control labor costs – one of the biggest challenges that restaurant operators face. It's important to ensure that you don't waste money by overstaffing or compromise service by understaffing. They can view staffing levels, peak times and sales volume to make sure the establishment is optimally staffed – as well as receive labor alerts about overtime warnings.

Another benefit is remote access. This functionality makes mobile management an ideal solution for restaurant professionals that commute to work, travel frequently or sense suspicious activity.

3. ONLINE ORDERING

In 2014, it's imperative for businesses to have an online presence – and it is of great importance to make sure that your restaurant's online presence is one that adds value and convenience to the customer experience. Customers not only crave some form of digital interaction with their favorite restaurants, they expect it.

The National Restaurant Association's 2014 forecast indicated an increase in customers using their mobile devices to find local restaurants. In fact, 67 percent said they used their smartphone or tablet to find a place to eat. And they're not just looking for directions – they're looking to place orders. **Sixty-three percent said they have gone online to browse restaurant menus and place orders** – a number that has proliferated in recent years.

Many modern restaurants are integrating online ordering platforms with their POS software – allowing customers to place delivery and take-out orders via a web browser or mobile app – to expand their reach, provide a convenient customer experience and ultimately increase revenue.

With this technology, the ordering process is automated to bolster productivity and eliminate unnecessary steps. Orders can be processed directly into a restaurant's POS system and printed to the kitchen or production area without requiring human intervention. And customers can place orders directly from their computer, tablet or smartphone.

4. LOYALTY PROGRAMS

A 2014 Deloitte study, "Second helpings: Building consumer loyalty in the fast service and casual dining restaurant sector," revealed that half of the respondents belong to at least one restaurant program. However, 74 percent who belong to at least one loyalty program do not participate in their favorite restaurant's program.

Why? According to the study, this is because one is not offered or they are not sure if one is available. As restaurant industry professionals, it is our responsibility to provide customers with ways to engage in our businesses and reward them for their loyal patronage.

Of those who indicated that their favorite restaurant did have a loyalty program, 87 percent said they belonged to it – a high conversion rate among a restaurant's best customers. So restaurants that do invest time and consideration in their loyalty programs will not be disappointed. Not only will a high percentage of customers be interested in participating, but these programs also allow restaurants to frequently and effectively market to patrons to increase sales.

Let's address the definition of "loyalty program" – today's successful ones are much more than a punch card. They involve a combination of cloud computing, mobile apps, social media, point plans, marketing and the ability to implement a loyalty program across several locations. To leverage a powerful loyalty program that will help you build your customer base and gain a competitive edge, be sure to seek a provider that offers these features when choosing or updating your POS software.

As mentioned, today's successful loyalty programs are an asset to both the customer and the marketer. With a computerized loyalty program consisting of individual customer accounts, restaurant owners and managers have the opportunity to match transactions to names and faces. They can personally identify loyal customers – including email addresses and demographics – and motivate and engage with them through email blasts, text message promotions and social media marketing. POS software allows restaurants to then measure the success of those exchanges.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CUSTOMIZATION

No two restaurants are alike – they can differ in scope, architecture, infrastructure and demographic, among many other factors. Quick service restaurants shouldn't be using the same POS system as fine dining establishments, and smoothie shops should not be using the same system as nightclubs.

Many POS software providers will be able to offer some or all of these POS features, **but without the ability to customize, there is no guarantee that a solution will be able to meet your specific business needs or fit into your existing workflows.** To obtain maximum value from your POS software solutions, it's imperative for restaurants to seek a provider that enables customizable features.

For example, your restaurant POS software should allow you to customize menu screens, reports, system alerts, employee login and marketing capabilities to make sure your system is the perfect match for your operations.

Focus POS offers each of the customization options listed above, as well as integration with online ordering technology and customizable gift card and point-based loyalty programs, among other options. Focus even allows its restaurant customers to create a custom mobile app or Facebook plug-in that seamlessly integrates with their loyalty rewards program, making it easy for customers to check their point balances and transaction histories.

In order to grow your customer base and annual revenue, restaurants must use technology that allows flexibility and convenience for both customers and employees.

ABOUT FTR TECHNOLOGY

Our company was created in 2017 when a former restaurant owner and a skilled bartender decided to go into business. Between their skills, passion, and knowledge, they were able to provide customers with a unique perspective on restaurant management and software solutions. Since the companies founding, FTR Technology has continued to bring on team members with firsthand experience working in restaurants. Our team understands the industry inside and out, and we are ready to make your jobs and lives easier today.

We provide Restaurant Point of Sale Software that helps businesses run successfully. Our carefully curated staff are experts not only in POS but in the restaurant industry. Because our team knows the pain points of every operation, they are ready to advise clients on what solutions work best for their establishment.

FTR TECHNOLOGY

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