

Four Considerations for a POS System in the Digital Restaurant

As restaurants move to digital systems, a new type of POS system is needed. One integrated, all-digital management system can maximize efficiencies, speed decision-making and improve customer service.

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By Denise Harrison
Contributing writer,
FastCasual.com

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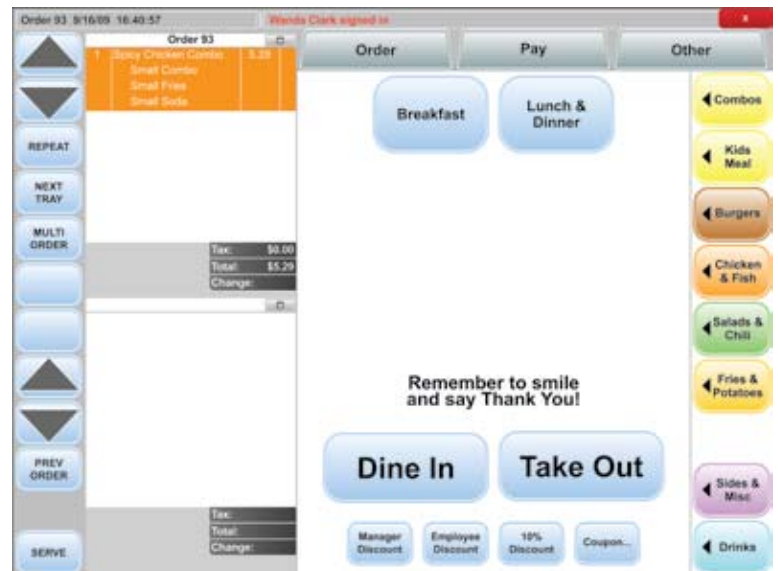
A state-of-the-art POS system provides all the features and functions needed for successful management of quick-service restaurants. It maximizes efficiencies, attracts and retains customers, creates better work environments and inspires creative marketing. Many restaurants moving to digital systems tend to acquire different, specialized software programs to control different functions, but a better approach is to adopt a single integrated system.

Whether managing one restaurant or hundreds, an all-digital management system can provide control, reporting and analysis from a central location. Furthermore, each function in this single system is integrated with, and automatically interacts with, the others. For example, conversational ordering, operations, enterprise management and marketing are integrated, leading to real-time decision-making to improve the bottom line.

Operations

An integrated POS system can give everyone, from the manager up to the CEO, the ability to control every function in the restaurant using a single Web-based interface with total integration.

“When the different features and functions of a POS are not integrated and unable to act and react to real-time data, a restaurant is losing a tremendous amount of flexibility, spontaneity and, therefore, revenue,” said Greg Perrill, chief operating officer for Eden Prairie, Minn.-based WAND Corporation,



A high-quality POS system, like the NextGen system from WAND, seen above, can help save time, ease training and decrease voids, resulting in satisfied customers.

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maker of the NextGen POS system. “A POS with 100-percent integration is the only way to ensure maximum use of resources and data.”

Integration should include a back-office system that interfaces with other applications to allow for one-click updating; it also should provide forecasting, food management, labor management and reporting.

Labor management is an important aspect of an integrated system. When the POS system can identify the best employee for the job and accommodate sharing between locations, labor savings will follow. Integrating biometrics into the POS system is a labor-savings feature designed to ensure that the correct employee is clocking in and out.

Built-in single-shift training and the incorporation of training materials as part of the day-to-day functionality greatly reduce the strain on managers. A high-quality POS system also can result in the near elimination of voids, saving time for managers. To make maximum use of each employee, a POS system with quick-tender functionality can allow a drive-thru operator to take an order while simultaneously cashing out another customer in queue.

For analyzing efficiencies and profitability, site-level progress reports allow analyses of inside and outside speed of service and food and labor costs. Managers also should have access to customizable dashboards, so they can create alerts that give real-time status, monitoring and problem-detection information.

Up to a 6-percent decrease in food costs, labor costs and employee theft has been found with an integrated POS system.

Conversational ordering

Conversational ordering within the digital POS system ensures satisfaction on both sides of the register. The cashier benefits from an easy-to-understand interface, with fast combo and quantity switching, fast-order entry and quick tender. The POS system takes the guesswork out of up-selling, too, indicating which products to suggest and how to suggest them.

“QSR customers want pleasant, fast and accurate service,” said Perrill. “It should be easy for employees to deliver that experience, and obvious to the customer that this experience is superior.”

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Enterprise management

An integrated POS system also is ideal for companies that own multiple restaurants, offering access to up-to-the-minute data and the ability to react to that data immediately. Managers can quickly and easily micromanage a single restaurant or many. Changes to prices, recipes and configurations (for example) can be executed locally or remotely using a Web-based interface. The same can be done for confirmation displays, digital menus and POP boards.

Employee management also is centralized: biometrics can track employees, even when sharing, reactivating and roaming. The POS system also can provide a standardized PLU database for standardized recipes, regardless of individual menu mix, as well as built-in security using role-based access.

Marketing

A modern POS system lets a manager evaluate real-time sales data, and then change a promotion with one click of a button, where the new promotion is displayed both indoors and outdoors immediately. Managers gain powerful marketing tools, since menu content and sales data interact in real time, allowing for real-time test marketing coupled with real-time measurements of a promotion's effectiveness, saving both time and money compared to traditional promotions and test marketing.

The POS system should be programmable for presets, such as automatically promoting chili on a cool day, or snacks in the afternoon. The system also should have the ability to promote specific menu items on specific days of the week with effective day-part programming.

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

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store. WAND also is the first company to have developed and sold a completely dynamic three-panel outdoor digital menu board.

WAND provides full- management services for digital restaurants, with 24-hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week technical support 365 days of the year, located in the United States. The WAND Creative Group helps to create the most competitive messaging in a number of markets. WAND works with powerful international partners, including NCR, Panasonic, IBM, Samsung, LG Electronics and more.