



Limited-Service, Unlimited Possibilities

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## The Digital Ordering Trends to Watch in 2017

A mobile-first mentality should be on everyone's New Year's resolutions list.



Digital ordering technology is on the cusp of becoming indispensable for most multi-unit restaurants. THINKSTOCK

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To say technology is changing rapidly is an understatement. It continues to make a significant impact on the way we do business, as well as how we consume products. Keeping ahead of these shifts helps business owners and consumers achieve their goals faster and smarter than ever before. High quality at a quick pace is the new standard in an era where countless products and services are available with the click of a button or the tap of a finger. Food is a necessity, never goes out of style, and we all want it when we want it and to our preferred tastes. This is why the digital online ordering industry continues to experience exponential growth year after year. As we move into 2017, we must continue to keep a finger on the pulse of developing trends in technology and consumer behavior to better meet evolving needs.

Today it's a mobile-first mentality with mobile ordering now surpassing desktop ordering. Consumers are interacting with restaurant technology 50-plus percent more today than they did two years ago. Fifteen years ago, the digital ordering industry was just tapping into online, computer-based ordering for pizza chains. In just a few short years, technology improvements and consumer demand have synergistically altered the digital ordering landscape, leading to the development of innovative business solutions and programming to meet the needs of an increasingly sophisticated consumer. From quick service restaurants offering on-the-go mobile app ordering to delivery service integrations with traditional casual dining restaurants, digital ordering technology is a dynamic consumer and business tool that is on the cusp of becoming indispensable for most multi-unit restaurants.

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In 2017, we see three digital ordering growth trends to watch:

## **Proliferation of Native Mobile Apps**

A mobile-first mentality is the new norm in the digital online ordering industry. When a restaurant offers customers access to a native app, one that can be stored directly on a mobile device, we are seeing more than 15 percent of orders coming directly through that channel. That's a 7 percent increase over 2015. With nearly double the increase in native app ordering within the last year, further momentum is projected in 2017. Many quick service restaurants are currently in the process of developing their own apps and are working with companies to utilize their application program interface (API) to power those apps.

As fast-pay programs such as PayPal, Apple Pay, and Android Pay become second-nature and delivery companies become more prevalent and efficient, these numbers will undoubtedly be on the rise. This is especially true when restaurants partner with digital online ordering companies that understand the complexities of the food industry and can create seamless transactions that keep customers satisfied.

## **Cloud-Based POS Integration**

More and more quick service restaurants are updating their POS systems to include cloud-based technology. With these advancements, digital ordering companies are increasingly using streamlined and less intrusive software to integrate with these restaurant systems. Cloud-based POS integrations support centralized communication over secure private networks and eliminate the need for store-level software installation, support and maintenance. The cloud-based POS integration also allows for easier load-balancing and fail-over systems. Integrating fully featured digital ordering systems with cloud-based POS systems is an ideal solution to create a highly satisfactory digital ordering experience. Many restaurant chains are currently working on such POS projects to stay ahead of the competition.

## **Mobile Management Solutions**

Large restaurant chains have a hierarchy of district and regional managers and many of these employees are continually on-the-go, but need to stay connected. New mobile solutions are currently available and in demand to assist with secure, back-end management functions that are accessible by mobile phone, tablet and desktop devices. Digital ordering companies are increasingly offering on-the-go functionalities such as the ability to adjust orders, ensure payments are applied, add discounts to orders and update online menus and coupons.

It is advisable that restaurant brands seek out digital ordering companies that specialize in food and the complexities that come along with it. Not only will a digital ordering company that caters to that industry be able to offer the newest technological functionalities to immediately increase profit and customer satisfaction, but they can also offer tremendous insight to help leverage business growth in 2017 and beyond.

Patrick Eldon is the chief executive officer for orderTalk, Inc. Since joining orderTalk and launching it as a software and service provider in 2004, Eldon has served as CEO. Under his leadership, orderTalk has provided digital ordering solutions for the restaurant industry worldwide offering expedient, dependable and secure online ordering systems. As CEO of orderTalk, Patrick leads the sales, technology, projects and marketing teams responsible for implementing the company's strategic direction. He can be reached at [patrick.eldon@ordertalk.com](mailto:patrick.eldon@ordertalk.com).