



Why your digital ordering platform is failing

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Launching digital ordering can seem like an overwhelming project, considering it involves marketing, operations and IT. Poorly executed, it can be devastating to your brand. Done successfully, it can help significantly increase the revenue of your business.

Recently, I personally experienced digital ordering from three different national restaurant brands.

Two were outstanding and set the bar for my expectations moving forward. The third experience felt like a letdown, probably because my first two experiences were so stellar. With the first two visits (one a QSR sandwich chain and one a fast casual chain), I ordered via the brand's app. When I walked into the restaurant I was greeted with a smile, asked "are you Lisa?" and was handed my food. I was in and out in less than 30 seconds- perfection!

Needless to say, the third experience had a high bar to meet. I used the online portal and it was a little cumbersome, but I was able to select a location, order a sandwich, enter my payment information, etc. I hopped in the car and drove to the restaurant, parked and walked in expecting the same smile and ready to go order I had become accustomed to.

Unfortunately, as I walked in and identified myself, I heard my order called out to the line, who then made my order in a rush. I was escorted to the cashier line, where I had to sign a credit card receipt, even though I had paid online. These are small things and would typically not bother me, but combined together and compared to the bar that had been set, I felt disappointed.

The point of this story is simple. If you are going to launch digital ordering for your restaurant brand, take the time to put yourself in your customers' place and look at each step of the process as a potential opportunity to exceed their expectations.

Here are a few thoughts to consider:

- Should you require a login upfront, or would your guest prefer a "guest" option?
- How can you make the guest ordering as simple and flexible as possible
- What payment options will your guests expect?
- Will your guests expect your loyalty program to work with digital orders?
- How will each location handle updates to orders and adjustments, etc.?
- Will your provider offer 24/7/365 customer support?
- How will you set up the operational flow in your locations to be successful?

A recent report from Deloitte, *The Restaurant of the Future, 2016*, found that 40 percent of those surveyed preferred to order online and when they do their average spend increases 26 percent for QSR and 13 percent for casual and fast casual establishments.

As customers become more comfortable with this method of ordering, their demands will become more and more complex. Look at this as an opportunity to exceed their expectations while building a loyal, off-premise revenue stream for your restaurant.