



The CIO-CMO partnership: The path to digital ordering dynamism

May 17, 2017 | by Patrick Eldon



As CEO for a leading digital ordering company, I come into contact daily with restaurant CIOs and CMOs who want to revamp or fine-tune their company's digital ordering platforms. Both executives understand when improvements are needed, however, often those in these two key positions see the solutions to digital ordering challenges through vastly different lenses.

Surprisingly perhaps, in many organizations these two executives do not even have the same goals. But, with the spectacular rise of the digital ordering industry, the greatest likelihood for overall organizational digital ordering success comes when CIOs and CMOs align their objectives.

A year ago, when orderTalk sat down with one company to work out a the best approach to their digital ordering needs, I recall thinking how divergent these two individuals objectives were. The CIO was laser-focused on improving outdated software deficiencies without much thought around customer needs. The CMO seemed to consider the technology to be relatively unimportant in making statements like mentioning that mere software tweaks and updates wouldn't accomplish the task of delivering consumer-driven messages.

Clearly, the players in these two important roles had to find a common goal to build a successful digital ordering platform. A cooperative team effort and a shared vision are the first building blocks needed and while most businesses understand these concepts, their creation and implementation is often more difficult to achieve.

To that end, here are some ways CIOs and CMOs can work together to innovate and activate the most effective digital ordering platform:

- **Align visions to reflect shared business goals**

The savvy CIO realizes that customer experience is no longer simply a marketing concern. The proper technological infrastructure can lead to business growth or hinder it significantly. With ever more business conducted online, customer satisfaction can be easily thwarted with glitches or antiquated software. Additionally, opportunities to understand customer behavior can be missed without the right programming in place.

When the two executives work toward a common goal, like creating a better customer experience, then CIOs can share needed business data with CMOs who can, in turn, create relevant customer interactions.

Build a bridge

CIOs and CMOs are both busy and in charge of leading their own teams within their own spheres. Some don't clearly understand the jobs and technicalities of the other, or are just too busy and are put off by the mere idea of collaborating with one more person. So ideally, the two build a bridge between their roles to develop some mutual understanding. But if that doesn't occur, **hiring** a bridge, like a chief marketing technology officer, who can act as a liaison and detail person to span the gap between the two executive functions can help greatly.

Collaborate across skill-sets

Strong partnerships demand cooperation, communication and appreciation. That's why some companies achieve success when teams interact and learn one another's roles. Training employees across skill-sets gives everyone a greater understanding of another department's projects and processes. With that comes greater understanding and appreciation.

Establish defined roles

Team excellence demands that team leaders all feel confident they are providing a skill that only their expertise can generate. That's why clearly defined roles and core competencies result in better teams and better team results.

The presence of this also tends to reflect what's going on at the top of the organization. So CEOs who reflect this mentality will have better success with all those under his or her leadership.

From my perspective and experience, CIO and CMO collaboration is absolutely necessary to catapult a restaurant to the next level in the digital ordering world. Digital ordering technology is a dynamic consumer and business tool that is indispensable for most multi-unit restaurants. It makes sense then to push for this kind of collaboration among leaders organizationally and particularly when attempting a technological solution like that for digital ordering.