

# THE EXCEPTION

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## orderTalk's CEO: Restaurants Are Adopting a Mobile-First Mentality



orderTalk is one of the pioneers in the food tech category and has been helping restaurants adopt digital ordering systems since the dot-com era. The Exception interviewed orderTalk's CEO Patrick Eldon about his company and the need for restaurants to become mobile-first.

# Essentials

## Company Name

orderTalk, Inc.

## Founding team

Patrick Eldon, Hilton Keats, Yvette Keats and Tracy Keats

## Investors

HBD Venture Capital

## Office location

Flower Mound, Texas

## Employee count

23

## The Exception Interview

**How would you describe your company and its product to someone who has never heard of it?**

orderTalk, Inc. is the original provider of digital ordering solutions for the restaurant industry worldwide offering expedient, dependable and secure online ordering systems. Since 1999, the company has utilized proprietary remote ordering software as well as mobile and social media applications to meet the expanding needs of their clients. orderTalk's sophisticated software solutions are designed to leverage business growth through stronger sales, higher check averages, decreased overhead costs and a higher customer satisfaction level.

**How did you come up with the idea for your company? How did you validate the concept early on?**

The initial idea was formulated in conjunction with a Texas-based restaurant chain in 1998. The first iteration of the software was launched to the public in February 1999. In 2004, the founding team launched the product as a Software as a Service proposition.

The proposition was piloted in the UK where it was well received by the restaurant industry there. In 2005, orderTalk Inc. was launched in the U.S. as a Software as a Service company.

### **What does your ideal customer look like?**

orderTalk is flexible and has the ability to customize for any type of client. However, we recommend having 50+ stores, buy in from everyone in the system and POS integration, which is not a requirement but it does streamline the process.

### **Where would you like to see your company in 5 years?**

We are just scratching the surface in the restaurant sector and see tremendous potential for even more growth there.

According to industry statistics, more restaurant operators believe the technology in their restaurant is lagging rather than leading edge. We want to be aggressive in helping restaurant companies flip those stats. They also note that the barriers to adding customer-facing technology include cost of implementation, lack of infrastructure, service and repair, per transaction/usage costs, customer acceptance and staff training. That means there is a huge opportunity for us.

### **What broader trends are driving interest in the food tech sector?**

The food technology industry is evolving every day. Some trends with online ordering specifically are a mobile-first mentality, native mobile apps, cloud-based POS integration and mobile management solutions.

In the last year, online ordering through mobile apps has increased from eight percent to 15 percent and mobile orders now account for the majority of orders placed. Cloud-based POS integration, which is a centralized communication over secure private networks for order delivery, has become popular because it eliminates the need for store-level software installation and allows easier load-balancing and failover systems.

Lastly, a lot of companies are moving to mobile management solutions which allows access to online ordering management tools on the go. Using orderTalk's CSR and new Menu/Coupon manager features will provide operators a fully responsive experience to manage their online ordering system from anywhere via their cellphone, tablets or desktop devices.

### **What excites you personally about working in food tech?**

The progress our company and our team make every day. I am also excited about our customers and their response to our technology. We are energized every day by the positive impact our company has on our customers' business. If they are successful, we are successful.

**Do you believe your city/state supports its food tech startups?**

The state of Texas and the city of Dallas are very supportive of all startup businesses and encourage business growth by creating and nurturing a business friendly legislative framework.

**What other companies or founders do you follow for inspiration or advice?**

I look to many companies, some that are customers and some that are giants. I am always inspired by stories of companies started in garages or basements which were propelled to great heights by doing things differently or challenging norms.

**What words of wisdom would you like to share with the next generation of food tech CEOs?**

To say that the tech industry is fast-paced is an understatement. There's risk involved but the opportunities are endless. Have courage and conviction. Follow a path that may be hidden to others. Surround yourself with an inspired, creative and energetic team.