

How Screens Can Revolutionize the Restaurant Industry

Background

With sales in the restaurant industry forecasted to reach \$799 billion in 2017,¹ there's a huge opportunity for digitized solutions in any type of eatery, from QSR to fine dining. Restaurants can choose among many cost-effective solutions with an array of advantages that can help them streamline their processes and maximize revenue. Simultaneously, these solutions can help create a seamless experience for patrons and, ultimately, increase brand loyalty.

Digital solutions can eliminate the agony of wait times, provide updates on food orders, showcase mouth-watering food options, or display entertainment with customizable live TV. Here are just a few potential perks that restaurants with screens could be taking advantage of:

- Make instantaneous changes to menu options via a centralized system
- Enable employee-free ordering and reduce wait times with kiosks
- Increase stay time in bars and entertainment areas by using projectors and direct-view LEDs to display images and information
- Control energy costs by syncing display screens with opening hours
- Prevent black screens and other glitches by providing third-party support; self-monitoring software alerts a support team before anyone knows there may be an issue.

In today's digital age, customers have come to expect instant gratification. Screens can provide an engaging experience that goes well beyond the reach of showcasing traditional pricing and signage.



The Benefits of Digital Solutions

"Nearly 50 percent of fast-casual operators have embraced the digital ordering shift and successfully neutralized the convenience advantage of their fast-food competitors," according to QSR Magazine.² Integrating digital solutions into the ordering process can have multiple benefits:

ELIMINATING WAIT TIMES

Self-service kiosks allow for employee-free ordering. Restaurants have the added benefit of being able to integrate orders across a variety of platforms. Patrons could place their order on kiosks in the restaurant, or they could use their own devices to place the order before leaving the comfort of their homes. Upon arrival at any restaurant, a kiosk could alert them to the wait time, direct them to their food, or send them to a specific table. An automated digital system could also be designed to send updates on their order status to a patron's phone or email account.

LOWERING MEAL COST

Allowing customers to place automated orders may lower the cost of overhead. This could increase revenue for the restaurant and also have a direct effect on the expense of going out to eat, ultimately making dining out more affordable and, therefore, more attractive to customers.³

ENSURING ORDER ACCURACY

Kiosks and menu displays can be operated by the customers themselves, cutting down on the possibility of employee errors and allowing patrons to call out special requests, such as food allergies or request food substitutions.

Investing in a digital display kiosk will simplify the ordering process and allow consumers to enjoy a lower-cost, hassle-free restaurant experience.

Menu Displays

Whether you are an independent restaurant, a fast casual chain, or a QSR, large-screen displays and direct-view LED displays offer customizable ways to display menus with on-screen text, images of mouth-watering food, and promotions. These displays can be installed via a centralized system, so that it's easy to change out specials, amend the price of an item, or offer promotions across multiple locations, all with the press of one button.



For example, a fast casual restaurant headquartered in Arizona replaced its static printed signage with LCD displays for menu boards and promotional content. The company's graphic designer created a design that was in-line with its brand. The company can now roll out promotions in one restaurant or across the chain –without the overhead of printing costs⁴

Entertainment

Restaurants can now opt to provide entertainment in many ways. Multimedia projectors, large-screen displays, and direct-view LED displays offer crystal clear, impeccable resolution. Captivating entertainment makes bar and amusement areas attractive draws, increasing stay time and, in turn, revenues. Large-screen displays with speakers can provide high-quality sound – perfect for traditional viewing, karaoke, and quiz nights.

Interactive Tables

Customers can use interactive tables, which include an embedded keyboard and touchpad, to place orders, charge a phone (using an induction charging station for mobile devices), or act as a fully developed workstation that includes an LCD display.⁵ This cloud-based workstation allows customers broad use of the internet, so that they have the ability to connect to various personal applications such as Google docs, email, and so forth.

SOCIAL GAMING

In addition to being used as a workstation, interactive tables can be used to provide tailored entertainment for patrons as they wait for food. Instead of providing crayons and paper, or other giveaways, to keep kids entertained, games and apps could be available right on the tabletop. As mobile and social gaming and apps continue to thrive, restaurants have a unique ability to provide this sort of entertainment for kids and adults alike.

Restaurants have the opportunity to create custom content for these tabletops. From apps and promotions to simple games specific to the space, innovative creativity could easily generate buzz and publicity for a venue.

Alternatively, because patrons have the ability to connect to the internet right on their tabletop, they could also access mobile and social games they've previously started and saved on the interactive digital platform of their choice.⁶

SOCIAL MEDIA

Interactive tabletops could also be used to access social media accounts. If a restaurant wants to build up their online community, they could offer incentives to post status updates, check-ins, or to hashtag menu items or promotions. This could boost a restaurant's digital profile and get people talking.

Live social media feeds could also be displayed on screens throughout a restaurant. One restaurant chain reported a 200 percent increase in Instagram interactions when they began using screens in their venues to display live posts that used their designated hashtag.⁷ Promotions like this can be set up with a filter that will automatically eliminate profane language and negative comments.

Loyalty programs – such as promotions, contests, or giveaways – could also work to keep people chatting and to help positively promote the restaurant, both in and out of house. In-house, there could even be an added bonus of connecting customers who are in the restaurant at the same time.

Delivery and Order Management

Digital options in restaurants are revolutionizing the pick-up and take-out industry. One early-adopter fast casual restaurant uses display and kiosks to run the front of the shop employee-free. The digitalized model has allowed the restaurant to process between 600 and 700 orders every hour.⁸ The use of kiosks and screens cuts down on overhead costs, which has the added benefit of allowing the chain to charge less for a meal than its biggest competitors.

Large screen displays and desktop monitors also allow patrons to customize their orders. It's easy to backtrack and fix mistakes, and they can also be programmed to call out food allergies, make modifications, and request add-ons as restaurants see fit.

TAKE OUT

While interactive screen solutions have numerous benefits for diners eating at a restaurant, there are also a variety of perks for restaurants that want to simplify their delivery process. Many customers now place their orders using apps or directly on a restaurant's website. These apps could link up to a centralized digital system that displays orders to restaurant employees and allows employees to update customers of these apps on their order as they are being prepared.

Improving the Dining Experience

As technology continues to evolve at a rapid rate, screens can have many benefits. People have come to expect instantaneous service and updates. Digital solutions in restaurants can help with this. They allow for better communication with patrons and between employees. Whether you are looking to display information front and center, or if you want a more subtle, back-end digital system, NEC has a display solution for your business.

To learn more about NEC's innovative solutions to improve the dining experience, visit us at <http://www.necdisplay.com/solutions/restaurant/9>

About NEC

NEC Display Solutions of America, Inc., a leading designer and provider of innovative displays, offers the widest range of products on the market, such as commercial- and professional-grade large-screen LCD displays, desktop LCD monitors, direct view LED displays, a diverse line of multimedia and digital cinema projectors, and integrated display solutions. Benefitting from the technologies of NEC Corporation and its own Research and Development, NEC produces leading-edge visual technology and customer-focused solutions for a wide variety of markets, including education, retail, transportation, broadcast, enterprise, healthcare, houses of worship, and many more. NEC is orchestrating a brighter world with the quality and reliability of its products and outstanding customer service. For additional information about NEC Display Solutions of America products, call (866) NEC-MORE, or visit the website at www.necdisplay.com. Follow us on our social media channels: [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [Google+](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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