

Self-order kiosks are on a roll in U.S. restaurants



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By Hope Neiman, chief marketing officer, Tillster

It's no secret – self-order kiosks are on a roll in the U.S., which is catching up to Europe, where they are already commonplace.

The reasons are multi-fold.

Kiosks expedite the ordering process. And, at a time when guests can get what they want in two days through e-commerce sites like Amazon, speed is everything.

Kiosks also increase speed of service as customers can take control of placing their order, eliminating the need for guests to recite a list of items to employees. That means that a customer trying to order at a crowded McDonald's during lunch no longer has to stress over the typical wait time associated with cashier lines.

Research quantifies customer preference

Consumer research by Tillster this year quantified how much consumers prefer to use self-service kiosks at restaurants.

According to the 2019 Tillster Self-Service Kiosk, more than 65% of customers would be more willing to visit a restaurant if self-service kiosks were offered. While customers look for quick and easy ordering experiences, restaurants take advantage of the added cross-sell and upsell opportunities provided with increased choice-making capabilities made available with kiosks.

Tillster also found that if the cashier line reaches four people, customers prefer to order from kiosks instead. In addition, even if line lengths are equal, 30% of customers will opt for the kiosk, according to the index.

Beyond just line busting, kiosks diminish customer fears of order inaccuracy. The research confirmed that customers feel that self-service technology improves order accuracy, allowing for improved confidence in the ordering process. Furthermore, customers do not feel rushed to approve or place their order, allowing for increased time spent reviewing items selected, leading consumers to be more inclined to return for repeat visits due to a successful ordering experience.

Restaurant brands reap benefits

While kiosks provide guests with better experiences, restaurant brands also reap the benefits. The perception may be that kiosks replace employees, but the reality is that the addition of self-service technology allows employees more valuable opportunities beyond operating the cash register. As it becomes increasingly challenging to hire crew members due to job competition and higher minimum wages, restaurants can better utilize their best employees, giving them higher satisfaction tasks than working the cash register.

With the integration of self-service ordering platforms, employees that typically work the cash register can fully focus on delivering superior experiences. Cashiers can transition into guest experience leads, delivering orders to tables once ready, offering refills, condiments and more, all together improving customer experience and perception of the brand.

Learn more about restaurant kiosks at [KioskMarketplace.com](https://www.kioskmarketplace.com)

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And then there are the bigger orders. With cashier interactions come the human fear of judgment. However, remove that human intermediary, and guests feel more comfortable ordering larger sized items or more items through self-service. Restaurant brands can take further advantage of the perceived freedom to choose and select more items, or personalize items with choice-making features.

How kiosks increase order size

Kiosks are a natural upseller. They allow brands to better showcase order options for guests, facilitating increased upsell and cross-sell opportunities. In fact, kiosks, when utilized correctly, can increase check size by up to 30%.

Here's how: When a customer interacts with the kiosks, restaurant brands can optimize the menu layout and ordering process to allow guests to easily customize orders and add additional items, featuring items that guests are more likely to opt for purchase based on items ordered and time of day.

Before 10 a.m., the breakfast menu is front and center, knowing that customers are more likely to order French toast sticks instead of a hamburger for breakfast. But, during lunch hours, when a customer orders a hamburger at the counter, they may not know they have the option to add guacamole. At a kiosk, the option may pop up once a hamburger is ordered, asking, "Would you like to add guacamole for \$0.59?" These offerings result in increased check sizes.

Kiosks also empower restaurant brands to move more people through their restaurant during peak hours while better-utilizing staff, which ultimately increases check size.

It's no wonder self-order kiosks are on a roll in the U.S.

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