



the **FUTURE** *of*

CONSUMER SELF-SERVICE



assess, align, achieve®

ath Power Consulting | White Paper

Vending Times

KIOSK
marketplace

the FUTURE *of* BUSINESS:

Where Self-Service and Human Experience Intersect



The self-service trend feels futuristic; in reality, it's actually quite timeless. Industries have been asking consumers to do the work themselves for generations. Self-service began in the 1880s with the introduction of vending machines.¹ Less than 100 years later, John Roscoe revolutionized gas stations in 1964 by introducing self-service into the retail experience.² The trend caught on and shows no signs of slowing down more than 50 years later.

Fast forward to 2015 and the use of ATMs had increased year-on-year, with nearly 75% of consumers in the United States using ATMs as part of daily banking activities.³

Self-service isn't going anywhere. In fact, self-service is increasingly preferred by consumers seeking faster transactions. Nearly three-quarters of shoppers surveyed in 2018 indicated they prefer self-service versus interacting with sales associates, which was nearly an 11% increase from the previous year.⁴

Businesses concerned with securing a stronger connection with consumers must navigate towards enhancing the intersection between self-service and human experience.

To isolate and better understand consumer and industry expectations, we conducted an extensive 2020 study that focused on 729 consumers and 353 industry professionals. This research was co-produced by ath Power Consulting in conjunction with Network Media Group – a leading B2B Publisher in the self-service space. The following represent our four key takeaways:

- 1 Trust is in the balance. Listen to what your customers are asking for.**
- 2 People (the right people) still matter. Self-service requires superior staffing.**
- 3 Choice is critical. Respecting the customer preference for self-service or human interaction is key.**
- 4 Reliability is non-negotiable... and we still have a way to go.**

Ultimately, and regardless of advances in self-service technology and automation, businesses must remain committed to delivering a superior customer experience that involves human interaction in order to stay competitive and inspire consumer trust.

While COVID-19 might have accelerated the demand for self-service options, the fact remains that **self-service has been a consumer preference for quite some time; ultimately, for its potential to save them time.**

According to Tillster’s Self-Service Kiosk Index, kiosk ordering in restaurants makes it possible to sell more, faster and with fewer staff. Most importantly, employee service only options tend to create long lines and cause customers to seek other options. However, if a kiosk option was available, these customers might remain.⁵

The emphasis on self-service has resulted in businesses increasingly seeking technological advances able to support these alternatives, from kiosks to vending options, applicable to a range of industries and verticals. However, the task facing businesses goes beyond providing adequate self-service options. **Adequate will not cut it.**

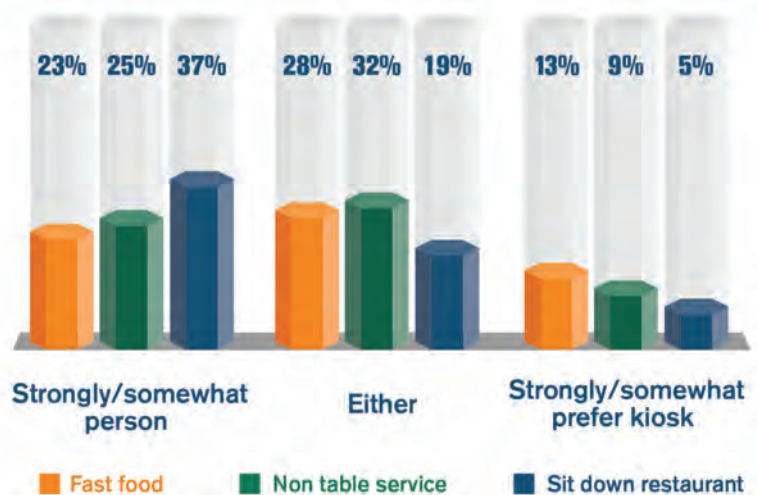
Perse Faily, CEO of Tillster has observed that “Customers of all ages are now looking for digital interactions in restaurants, especially ones that provide them with a faster and easier dining experience.”

TRUST IS IN *the* BALANCE. Listen to what your customers are asking for.

Consumer preference typically favors human interaction at restaurants but is dependent on the type of dining experience. Our study shows that 45% prefer ordering from a person at a fast-food restaurant like McDonald’s or Wendy’s, while 49% prefer to order food with a person at a casual non-table service restaurant like Panera or Starbucks. When it comes to sit-down, table service restaurants like TGI Friday’s, nearly 73% of consumers want to order from a person as opposed to a self-service alternative.

Consumers rate their preference for human interactions at restaurants

PREFERENCE FOR HUMAN INTERACTIONS AT RESTAURANTS



Source: ath Power Consulting

¹ <https://www.meridiankiosks.com/evolution-of-the-self-service-kiosks/#:-:text=The%20self%2Dservice%20industry%20first,other%20forms%20of%20self%2Dservice>

² <https://www.convenience.org/Topics/Fuels/The-History-of-Self-Fueling#:-:text=On%20June%2010%2C%201964%2C%20John,pumps%20in%20the%20United%20States>

³ <https://www.ncr.com/company/blogs/financial/atm-proves-popular-among-us-consumers#:-:text=One%20of%20the%20key%20takeaways,physical%20branch%20has%20also%20increased>

⁴ <https://www.retaildive.com/news/study-73-of-consumers-want-self-service-technology/546044/>

⁵ <https://www.qsrmagazine.com/technology/study-kiosk-demand-rise-quick-service>

ABOUT ath POWER CONSULTING

ath Power Consulting is the leading provider of research and customer experience solutions. We are the all-in-one resource for survey and mystery shop research, competitive intelligence, compliance auditing, market analyses, employee training and development, executive coaching and strategic consulting.

Since 1997, ath Power has helped clients improve customer retention, build brand loyalty and advocacy, deepen employee engagement, measure compliance, maximize performance, and increase profitability – distinguishing them from their competition and giving them a commanding edge in the marketplace.

This research was done in partnership with Network World Media Group, Publishers of Kioskmarketplace, Vending Times, QSRweb, and Fastcasual.



Vending Times

CONTACT US

E.J. Kritz

ejkritz@athpower.com

1.978.474.6464 x209

www.athpower.com



assess, align, achieve®

This confidential business summary document has been prepared by ath Power Consulting Corporation and is furnished for informational purposes only. By accepting a copy of this document, the recipient agrees not to reproduce it in whole or in part, not to use it for any other purpose, and not to disclose any of its contents to third parties without written permission of ath Power Consulting Corporation. © ath Power Consulting Corporation.

