



MARCH 2018

THE APP-ATHY EPIDEMIC

Takeout takes off while app adoption remains low. How can your restaurant secure transactions with off-premise diners who don't want to use apps?

TAKEOUT IS THE RESTAURANT'S FUTURE - STARTING NOW

CARRYOUT INCREASES

Researchers agree: takeout will continue to grow in 2018. According to research performed by the NPD Group, 63 percent of the total restaurant transactions recorded for the year (ending in June 2017) were to-go orders¹. Out of those transactions, carryout represented the largest percentage. In 2018, NDP and others expect the carryout and delivery percentages to increase as even more restaurant-bought meals are consumed at home.

FOOT TRAFFIC DECLINES

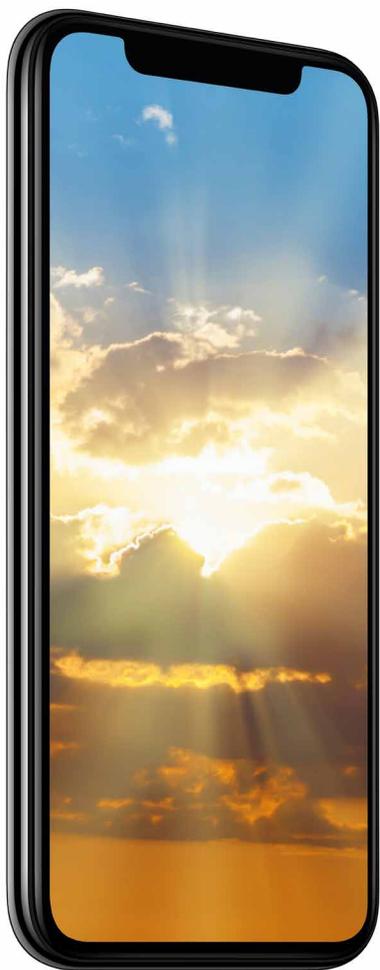
During the past three years, almost all of TD2NK's monthly industry snapshots have shown negative numbers for same store traffic, and that trend is expected to continue in 2018. Restaurant guests expect greater convenience in how they order and acquire food, and they're finding it through order-ahead, takeout, delivery, and drive-thru. And, while the industry would love to get more guests back inside the restaurant, current trends demand that restaurants prepare for foot traffic to progressively decrease.

RESTAURANTS RESHAPE

Many restaurants are preparing to meet off-premise demands by physically changing their store design to meet the influx of carryout and delivery orders. Some restaurants are even creating ghost locations featuring kitchens dedicated solely to cooking takeout. In 2017, Red Robin Gourmet Burgers and Brews opened a test, delivery-only concept in Chicago², and numerous other top brands developed pickup stations at their current locations to accommodate order-ahead guests. Brands nationwide are innovating spaces dedicated to takeout.



All roads lead to
takeout orders
and off-premise
dining... so, how
do you get that
virtual traffic to
your restaurant?



V.S.



THE MOBILE APP EXPECTATION

The why of developing a mobile app makes sense. Restauranteurs are desperate to be in the digital age, and, at first glance, providing an order-ahead app for mobile devices seems brilliant. According to industry leaders, mobile apps were supposed to be the next revolutionary addition to restaurants' ordering channels. Apps would provide the convenience, simplicity, and speed guests were demanding; they would love them!

THE MOBILE APP REALITY

Unfortunately, the results did not turn out as expected. The ethereal view of what mobile-app ordering would do for restaurants and their guests doesn't match today's reality. Only a handful of restaurants have seen some "success." Success being they've received a small number of downloads and a near negligible percentage of mobile-app transactions, with the exception of one app leader.

COFFEE: THE PRICE FOR A “SUCCESS STORY”

THE PERKS OF PERKS

With millions of transactions, hundreds of millions of dollars to invest in development, an addictive product, and a simple menu, Starbucks created an app that tops charts and brings in 10 percent of their total transactions. Using their extensive budget, Starbucks was able to invest in pricey app development, testing, and regular updates to secure a 63.5 user-sentiment score for the app³. Starbucks already had several factors inherent to their business that set the company's app for greater success than most restaurants and cafés.

THE LOYALTY BOOST

Before development ever began on the Starbucks Mobile Order & Pay app, the company had one of, if not, the largest loyalty base of any foodservice operator. Many of their customers continually add money to company cards to then spend at the store; some now do this through the app. That's a level of loyalty and regularity that most competitors don't have.

FAST AND STEADY

And, unlike many restaurants, Starbucks' simple menu lends itself to this kind of loyalty and repetition. Coffee is a product that millions of people purchase on a steady basis, even daily. Plus, many of Starbucks' regular customers are already accustomed to having baristas know their names and orders; an app that does the same only faster just makes sense.

IS IT ENOUGH?

However, even with the success of acquiring 10 percent of their total transactions through the order-ahead app, that still leaves another 90 percent of transactions coming through other channels. So, what are the other primary ordering methods that Starbucks guests are using? Even with the advances in ordering technology, many guests still walk into the store, wait in line, and then order a drink to-go. Why? Apparently, even for the “best” app, there is still room for growth in off-premise, takeout solutions.

Purchasing Channels as a Share of Total US Starbucks Store Transactions

Q3 2017

Order-ahead
Mobile 9%

In-Store
Mobile 21%

Non-mobile 70%

Source: Starbucks, BI Intelligence calculations

A SUPER-SIZED FAILURE

If the app-leader, that's miles ahead of other restaurants, has room to grow, then it's no surprise that the rest do, too... to the extent of starting over. Many large chain restaurants with thousands of units and large budgets failed to create apps that guests would adopt. According to an ARC by Applause report³, McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's, TGI Fridays, Dunkin' Donuts, Sonic, and Tim Hortons made the top ten list for restaurant mobile apps with the worst customer sentiment ratings.

So, while they spent the money for app development and the money for marketing and giveaways to get people to download their apps, they did not get the response from consumers that they'd hoped. Instead of exciting adoption rates, they ended up with a lot of disloyal, quickly abandoned downloads that cost them millions in free-food giveaways.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

It's interesting to note that even though Tim Hortons is a coffee shop like Starbucks, and offers a simple, repetitive, and addictive product, their app still did not see success. So, what ultimately makes the difference? If having the money, a simple menu, and a repetitive product... isn't enough to get restaurant visitors to order using a mobile app, what is? Or, is the medium the issue and Starbucks is the rare exception?





IS AN APP RIGHT FOR YOU?

While Starbucks' app success is desirable for most restaurants, it's just not practical, at least at this point. Starbucks started app development with several supporting factors in place that most restaurants can't emulate: a huge loyalty base, massive spending budget, simple menu, and an inherently addictive product. Does your restaurant currently feature any of these characteristics? If so, great! Maybe a mobile app would be a nice addition to your omnichannel ordering platform.

But, don't forget about the many other restaurants who have huge budgets and addictive products that still did not see success with their native apps. You have to determine if the investment required to build and gain adoption will pay out for your restaurant in the end. Do you truly have the setup for a successful app?

THE RESTAURANT APP GAMBLE

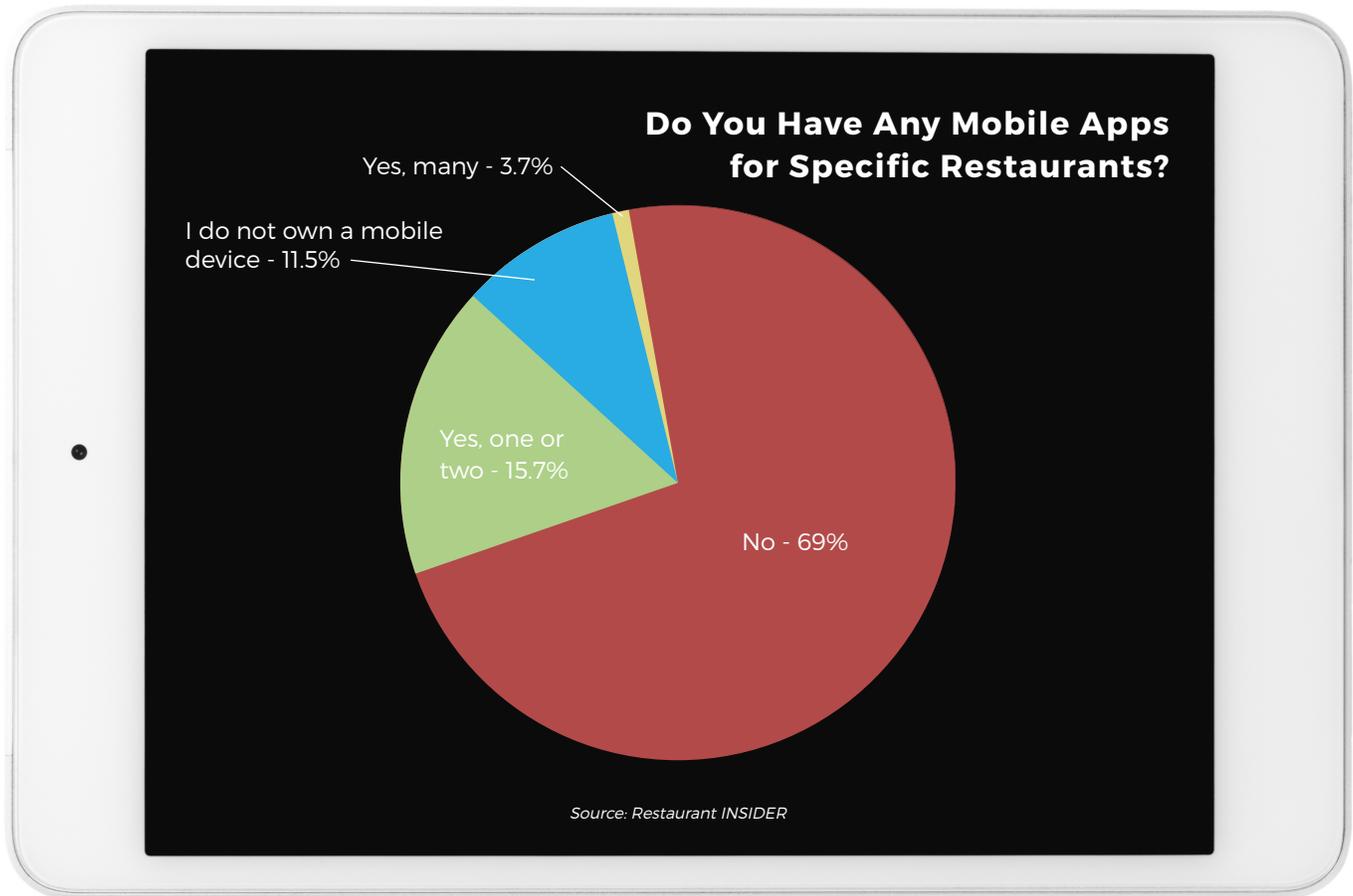
For most restaurants, developing and maintaining a mobile app in its current state is not the best use of their budget, big or small. If the track record for apps tended more toward the Starbucks situation, then the investment could be worth it for restaurants with lots of extra money to spend on additional revenue channels. But, with so many other restaurants experiencing hundreds of thousands of dollars wasted on apps that consumers rejected, the cost of app development is more like a 100-to-1 bet, as opposed to a sound investment.

So, why are restaurant apps struggling to see even a glimpse of real success? Why are they leaving restaurants with millions of dollars wasted and a scrambling desperation to capture the growing number of off-premise, takeout diners? It's time for restaurants to identify more effective ways to address the app-athy epidemic.

1 2 3 4

The restaurant industry has an app-athy epidemic on their hands. People are not adopting apps as hoped. So, what should restaurants do? Is there a core issue with the current apps that restaurants could resolve and adoption would skyrocket; or, is the issue the actual medium of mobile applications? When determining your answer to these questions, consider these **FOUR** current characteristics of the app market...





THE BAD NEWS

“Sorry, investors, consumers don’t like your app.” Words that no restaurant or company of any sort wants to hear after spending hundreds of thousands of dollars developing an app; yet, several have! Few people are downloading native restaurant applications. As of May 2017, almost 70% of consumers did not have a restaurant-specific, mobile app downloaded⁴. And, out of all apps (social media, retail, entertainment, and the rest), only 10 percent of mobile-device users will launch an app twice, and even fewer, 2 percent, will return eight or nine times⁵. Essentially, at least at this point, apps are not being used nearly as much as most industries had

USER FRUSTRATION

For native restaurant apps in particular, a small percentage of consumers download them, and even fewer actually open and use them. Plus, out of the small percentage of people who do open the app, what are they doing with it? Many simply look at the menu or look for coupons; they don’t use order-ahead, thus no profit for the restaurant after a lot of money expended. And, if users find the navigation complicated or the app unattractive, they’ll abandon it before even reaching the menu.

USED AND ABANDONED

App abandonment happens a lot. According to the ARC Best and Worst Restaurant Apps Report, restaurants aren’t doing so hot when it comes to impressing guests with their apps. Out of the NRN’s top 100 restaurants, only 55 had native apps with more than 150 reviews at the time of the report in 2016. The average mobile sentiment score for those restaurants was 37.8 percent. The average mobile sentiment for apps from all industries is 67.3 percent; only six restaurant apps scored higher than that average³. Ouch. With competition among all apps so tight, such low ratings for restaurants doesn’t bode well.

THE COMPETITION

With little adoption and high abandonment (one in four of all apps are abandoned after one use⁶), the competition for restaurants to get a piece of the app-usage pie is like a boxing match between a 250-lb professional and a 130-lb beginner; restaurants being the lightweight. Not only is this an unfair fight, it costs restaurants millions just to get in the ring. Social media, preinstalled apps like Safari, and other heavyweights eat up most of the time people spend on apps⁷ and the space people are willing to let apps take on their mobile devices.

EVERYBODY WANTS A PIECE

To expand more on just how competitive the app market is, it's important to know that only 3 percent of the time⁸ spent on all mobile apps was spent on retail apps as of June 2017. So, somewhere in that very small percentage are restaurant apps, competing with all other retail, and then also competing with each other! You're fighting for 3 percent... of ALL retail app usage time. That's it.

THERE'S ONLY ONE PIE

What are the odds you'll get a substantial piece of that pie? Let's just say the bigger retail boxers, like Amazon, Etsy, and Groupon, to name a few, have probably already knocked you out at this point. Not to mention, the restaurant portion of that 3 percent time slot may or may not include actual mobile orders. It could just be menu-checking and coupon searches, so little-to-no actual profit for your restaurant.

Distribution of Time Spent on Mobile Apps in the US

Social Networking	20%
Music	18%
Multimedia	10%
Games	10%
Photos	4%
Instant Messaging	3%
Retail	3%
Search & Navigation	3%
News & Information	3%
Maps	3%
All Others	23%

Source: Statista



WHEN YOUR
GUESTS LOOK
AT YOUR APP
AM I WHAT
THEY SEE?

TO KEEP UP - YOU MUST LEAD

Technology is always changing! If you don't already have a native app on the market, by the time you launch one, you'll probably need to update it just to keep from seeming outdated, cumbersome, and inconvenient. As apps and technology continue to evolve, new benchmarks for consumer expectations are set. App adoption and retention requires being unique, compelling, and better than the competition. Remember, if you fall behind, your app is only a touch away from being uninstalled.

INNOVATION IS EXPECTED

Another issue for mobile apps is that new tech for ordering is continually being innovated. You may finally release an order-ahead app right when a new channel makes these apps obsolete, which is why it's important to assess the risk before making the investment. Consumer's ever-evolving expectations demand innovation.

Sometimes new innovations prove very successful, like Red Robin's various off-premise technologies. According to a FoodNewsFeed article⁹, "As for agility, Red Robin's off-premise growth was significant in 2017. If you combine carry out, third-party delivery, and catering, Red Robin saw a 45 percent lift over the previous year, and recorded an 8.3 percent mix of sales in Q4 versus 5.7." Utilizing off-premise services from SYNQ3 and others, Red Robin's takeout business is booming; and, it's not coming from their mobile app, which was discontinued with plans to release a new one sometime in 2018¹⁰.

KNOW YOUR GUESTS

So, how can restaurants determine the best use of their resources? To start, they have to know their guests! That's why Red Robin decided to hold off on developing order-ahead for a mobile app; they concluded that their guest-to-restaurant relationship and product is nothing like that of Starbucks¹¹, thus not as well suited for a mobile app. Instead, they've opted to use other technologies and off-premise ordering channels to secure to-go guests. What about your restaurant? Does investing in mobile app technology make sense based on your guests and product?

THE ODDS ARE GRIM

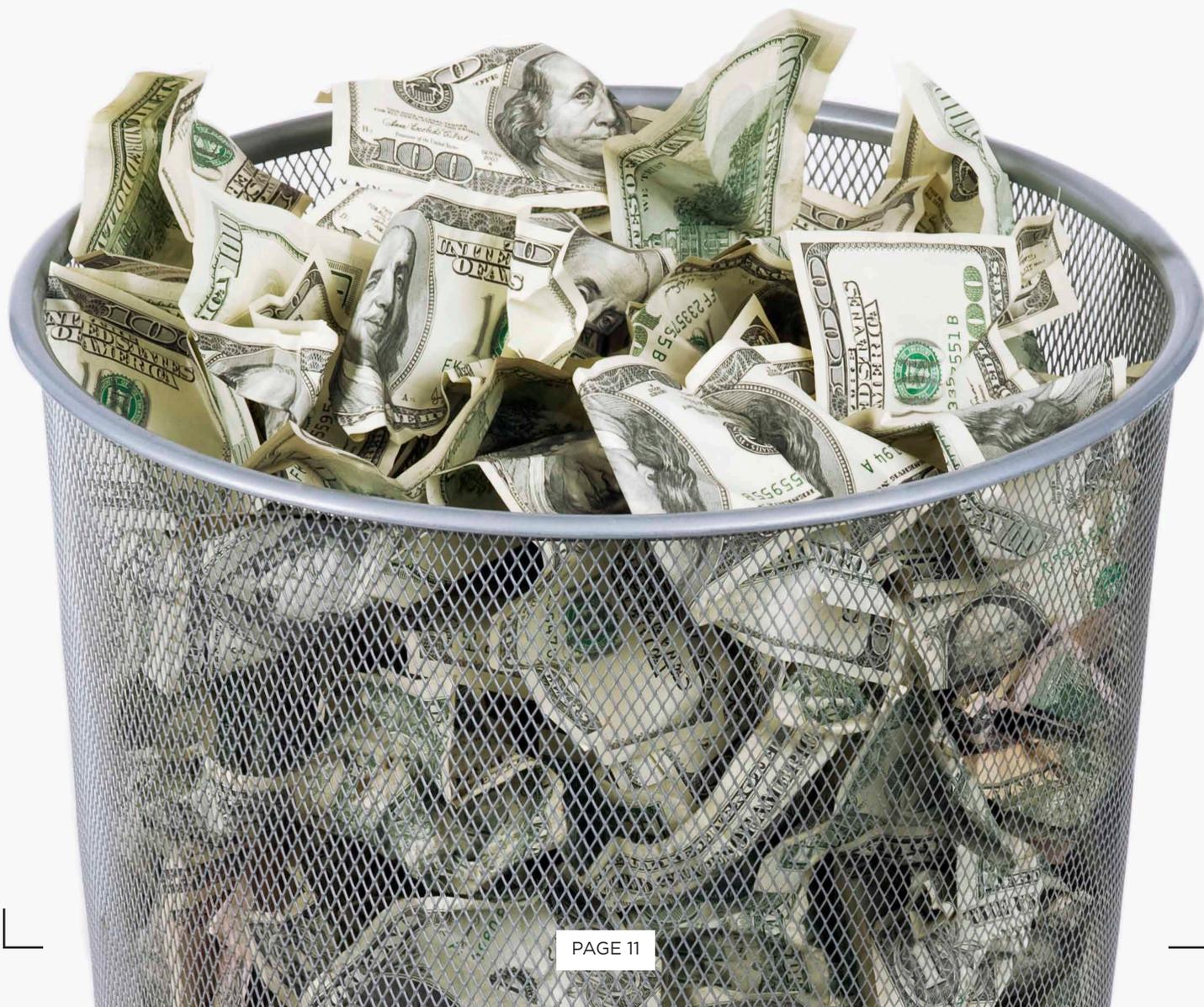
Ultimately, the three other factors listed (low adoption, the nature of technology, and intense competition) all contribute to the primary issue with investing in a restaurant app: the risk. All investments carry some measure of risk, which is why some are deemed wiser than others. Looking at everything discussed in this report, investing in a native restaurant application comes at a high risk. The track record thus far shows that many apps don't succeed. "Success" for one out of 100 is not the makings of a sound investment.

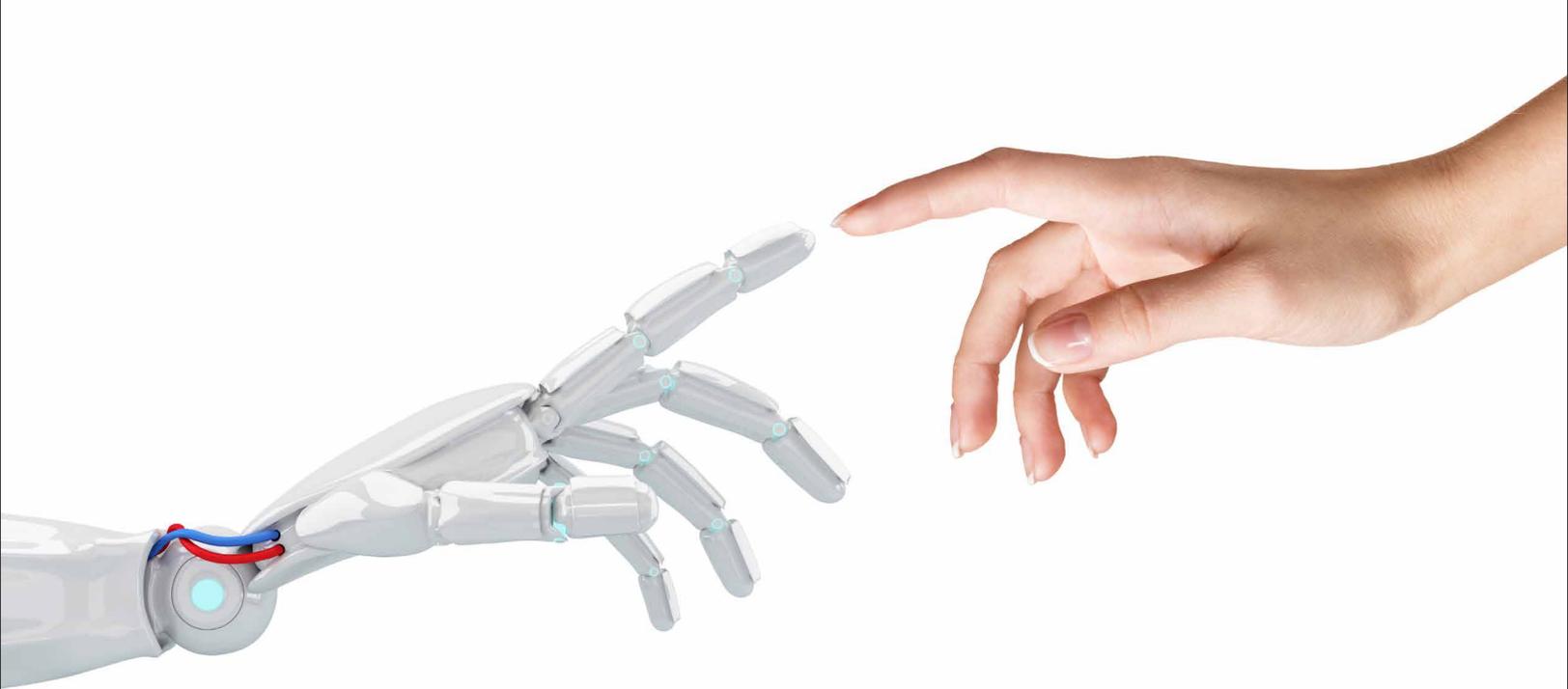
THE PRICE IS HIGH

Plus, most restaurants can't afford the financial risk of developing an app that could end up providing zero customer engagement and zero profit. Apps have a small window of opportunity to impress guests. If consumers open an app and feel it's complicated, they will uninstall it. Restaurants are dependent upon consumers' first impressions and reviews, which have not done very well; as noted earlier, restaurants' overall mobile sentiment score sits at 37.8, according to the ARC by Applause app report.

THE WINDOW IS NARROW

Additionally, there is the issue of how apps are actually being used if they do get downloaded. Out of all smartphone users assessed in an eMarketer study, 75.8 percent had NEVER used a mobile app to order ahead⁴. That number and several others suggest that investing in an app to acquire more off-premise orders may not be the best choice. The idea of meeting guests where they're at and providing other channels for them to order from you is great! But, is it actually working through mobile apps, or could there be a better way?





THE CHALLENGE

With mobile app results presenting a high-risk, low-reward situation, there's got to be another way to secure orders with the fastest growing sector of restaurant consumers, the off-premise diner. These takeout guests want fast, convenient and easy ways to order what they want, when they want, how they want. So, more channels to meet guests where they're at is a good thing; however, each channel must provide a stellar restaurant experience creating interactions that clearly benefit the guests.

THE WISE INVESTMENT

Just because a platform is new doesn't mean it's worth the investment. The more the merrier doesn't work with consumers if the ordering platforms lack quality, clarity, and obvious benefits. If you're a Domino's, and you have a large, expendable budget to test out numerous different ordering channels, great! Get them all! But, if you're like most restaurants that need to invest more specifically, it's important to assess the return on each platform; and, as seen in this report, mobile apps do not currently present the best return on investment. Thankfully, there is a way to avoid the app-athy epidemic and secure a greater number of takeout guests. This solution comes in the form of a new technology that already has proven results in numerous industries and even some preliminary results for early adopting restaurants.

THE AI, AUTOMATION OPPORTUNITY

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation technologies are finding their way into every industry, and restaurants are up next. We see AI everywhere these days from at-home speakers, like Amazon's Echo, to smartphone assistants, like Okay Google and Siri, to vehicle operating systems, to smart TVs, and more. And, as consumers become more and more accustomed to conversing with AI to receive products, get information, set appointments, and perform other tasks, their expectations for all business interactions will shift. They'll expect the AI-level of efficiency, convenience, and speed in everything; anything slower or less efficient will likely be considered irritating and inconvenient, and will ultimately be abandoned.

AI, AUTOMATION, AND THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

THE FUTURE IS TO-GO

Faster service, better to-go packaging, more efficient ordering processes, and convenient delivery will grow in necessity as guests demand restaurant options that fit with their busy schedules. Today, people order ahead while driving to the restaurant. More consumers use delivery apps to get lunch while at work. According to NPD, as stated in a Nation's Restaurant News article¹², 50 percent of restaurant-bought dinners are now consumed at home; and, that number is expected to increase in 2018 with more women entering the workforce, and other factors pushing the at-home, takeout trend.

CAPTURE THOSE ORDERS

With takeout and AI, automated technologies on the rise, exciting new ordering channels present the opportunity to secure off-premise orders in a way that native restaurant apps have not. Unlike apps, AI is a more reliable solution, as opposed to a potentially fickle trend. AI tech will evolve and adapt with time as it's made smarter, but it won't cease to be. AI will continue to offer easier, more advanced ways for guests to interact with restaurants for at least the next several decades. Plus, with new government regulations, AI and automation present ways for restaurants to make ordering and takeout operations more efficient and profitable.

AI IS GOING MAINSTREAM

Also, unlike retail apps, AI already has a proven track record of success with consumers. Out of the 77 percent of Americans who own smartphones¹³, most use their AI assistants on a regular basis. During the 2017 Christmas season, Amazon reported selling tens of millions of AI, Alexa-powered devices¹⁴. And, they reported that the most popular purchases made using Alexa devices were more Alexa devices, such as the Echo Dot and Fire TV Stick. Apparently, consumers really do want AI.

APPLYING AI AND AUTOMATION

Unlike apps, AI has a wide range of uses and capabilities. An AI tool that can stretch across several platforms to smoothly integrate with restaurants' POS systems and other technology will be revolutionary. The good news is, the technology already exists, and it's deploying at thousands of restaurant units nationwide in mid-2018.



THE WOW FACTOR

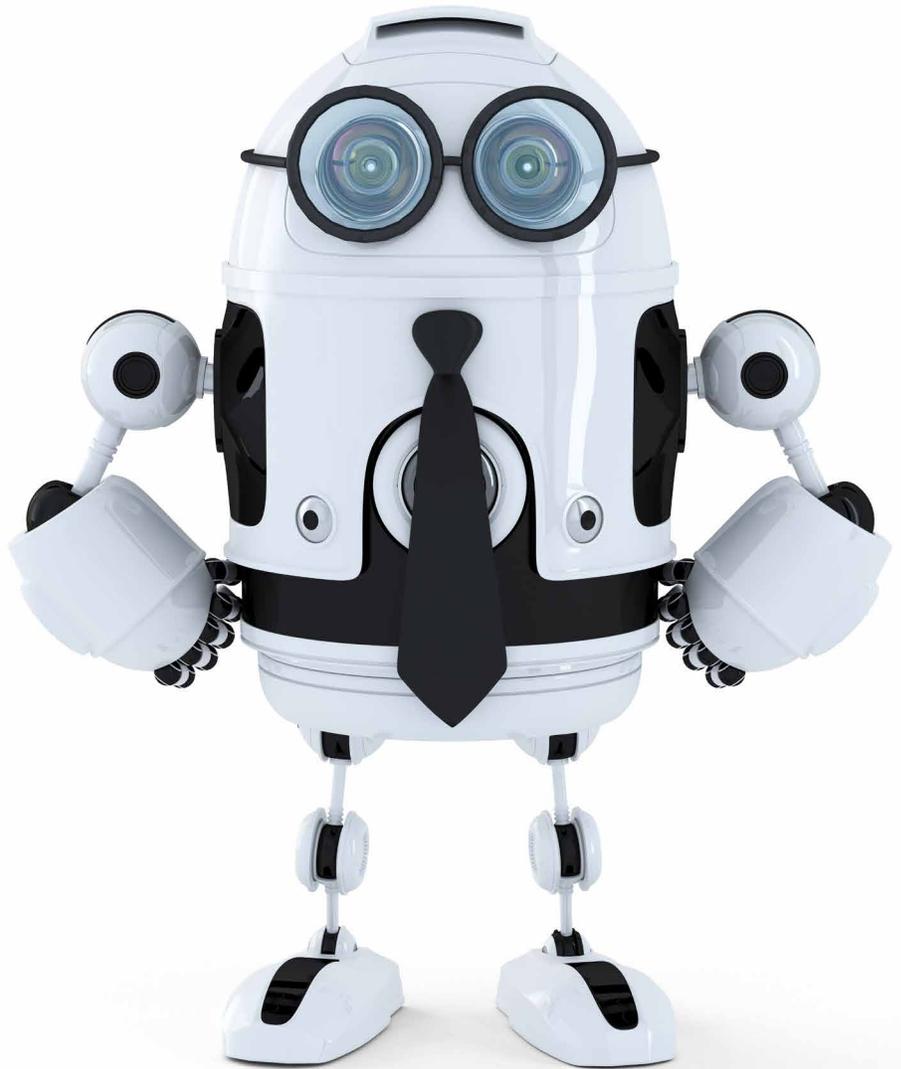
With AI in place to transform the restaurant industry's future, SYNQ3 Restaurant Solutions deployed one of the first, highly advanced, AI, takeout-ordering technologies: VIA. VIA (Virtual Intelligent Assistant) is an automated-speech-recognition, AI, order-taking, data-tracking bot that helps restaurants secure off-premise, takeout orders while building loyalty with guests through rapid reordering and advanced, personalized guest interactions. The VIA tool wows guests with a greater level of efficiency, convenience, and speed.

UNIVERSAL INTEGRATION

So, how does it work? VIA engages with guests through whatever voice-enabled, digital channel they choose, from smart TVs, and even refrigerators, to smartphones and cars. Communicating with VIA feels natural, like a normal takeout conversation with a restaurant employee who's fully engaged. And, the communication translates directly to the restaurants' POS systems; so, no need to keep track of another tablet for to-go order transfers.

READING THE ROOM

Plus, VIA can perceive what guests are feeling. It can tell if a person is crying, stressed, irritated, happy, etc.; and, with that information, VIA can direct the conversation to meet that guest's specific needs at that moment. For example, does the guest sound rushed and on the edge of irritability? Rather than trying to upsell, VIA will quickly move through the order to provide what that guest wants and needs in that specific interaction for the sake of best serving the guest and building restaurant loyalty. Does a guest have a lot of questions about the menu and seems to be in a good mood based on tone and vocal exchanges? Then VIA may present upsell options.



SHORTCUTS TO LOYALTY

VIA speeds up the process for future orders as well. Guests can simply text "repeat" to the restaurant number if they want the same order that they placed last time. The VIA system will receive the order and pass it right along to the restaurant's POS system. Or, if a guest connects with the restaurant again by a voice-enabled device, VIA will first ask if the individual would like to repeat his or her previous order; and, if the person says no, VIA will then retrieve and save their new order along with the previous one.

STONE & PERSONALITY

Another unique feature that VIA offers is its customizable persona. Restaurants can adapt VIA to fit their restaurants' personality. The voice and demeanor of VIA can be molded to fit each restaurant differently.

Guests First, AI vs. Apps, Greater Efficiency in All Voice Channels, Backed by Numbers.



FIRST THINGS FIRST

Developed with a guest-centric focus, VIA's functions are programmed to very intentionally meet guests where they're at to provide the best ordering experience possible. Restaurant success depends on making each guest interaction convenient, efficient, and easy. Every interaction either builds on or hurts the guest-to-restaurant relationship.

MAKING FRIENDS

VIA helps build the relationship by providing guests with the experience they want for each specific order. Sometimes a normally chipper guest is on a big deadline and feels overwhelmed. For that guest, the order needs to be quick and to the point; whereas, at other times, that same guest might love to hear all about the specials available. Assessing the situation first is essential. With VIA, the advanced AI quickly assesses tone and other vocal cues identifying the situation and adapting accordingly to serve both the guest's and the restaurant's interests.

PIXEL PERFECT

Plus, VIA virtually eliminates human error giving guests a more reliable and enjoyable takeout experience. When a guest picks up an order or receives a delivery, and it's incorrect, your restaurant loses an opportunity to build loyalty; and it could even cost you future business with that guest. A huge part of why people order takeout in the first place is to make the experience fast and convenient; if the order's wrong, it completely destroys that goal. With VIA, restaurants can better ensure a positive takeout experience for their guests.



MAKING THE RIGHT INVESTMENT

AI and mobile apps present different opportunities for the restaurant industry. The issue between the two lies in determining which is the better investment for your restaurant. Mobile apps do present another channel for guest orders; however, as seen in the research presented earlier in this report, restaurant apps have not seen much success thus far. So, spending thousands for a high-risk, seemingly low-reward, new platform is probably not the most lucrative investment.

NO EDUCATING THE GUEST

Whereas, with AI-ordering, specifically with digital voice and omnichannel orders, the risk is lower and the reward greater for multiple reasons. For one thing, you don't have to try to train them and get them to adopt a new way of interacting with your restaurant. People are using AI to interact with businesses every day, multiple times a day, as seen through AI-enabled devices, like Amazon's Alexa units, and smartphone assistants, like Siri and Okay Google.

JOIN THE MOMENTUM

AI is a new, exciting technology that consumers are rapidly adopting across industries, and the technology isn't going anywhere. It won't become obsolete with time, and it won't be replaced; it will simply get smarter and more normalized as it spreads through every industry. The adoption of AI in other industries shows consumers' acceptance of the technology and the beginning of their shifting expectations.

ENDLESS CUSTOMIZATION

Plus, with AI, guests are given much more freedom to customize. You can't tell an app that you want just a handful of mushrooms added to your pasta if that's not a normal addition that's preset into the app. With VIA, a guest can describe what they're wanting and if there is anything that needs extra clarification, VIA is backed by programmers who interpret unclear communication to aid VIA in seamlessly continuing the order experience. So, even specially customized orders can be taken more accurately, which helps to improve the guest interaction and build guest loyalty.

GREATER EFFICIENCY IN ALL VOICE CHANNELS

MAKING THE RIGHT CALL

Along with servicing digital channels, like chat, voice-enabled AI, and text, VIA also helps create a more efficient experience for guests who still want to contact the restaurant by phone. In 2015, there were still 1.02 billion phone-orders placed¹⁵. So, as some consumers are a little resistant to shift to voice-enabled, digital channels, VIA makes sure that those guests are provided a great experience as well.

ATTENTION IS DIVIDED

Oftentimes, typical restaurant phone-orders distract in-house employees causing decreased service for both the in-restaurant and takeout diners. Restaurant employees will rush through an in-person order to get to an endlessly ringing phone. Or, they'll give divided attention to both in-restaurant and phone guests as they try to bounce back and forth to serve each. Plus, if the wait times get too long, guests will abandon the order and choose another restaurant.

A PATH FOR EVERYONE

Recognizing the need and having the technology already in place for other voice-enabled channels, SYNQ3 positioned VIA to also service the call-in guests. The new VIA system helps to eliminate the stress that many restaurant employees experience as they try to serve both the guests in front of them and the guests calling in at the same time. It also allows for faster, more efficient to-go orders, and better, more focused service for take-out and in-restaurant guests. Plus, it decreases call abandonment and increases average check.



BACKED BY DATA

TRACKING EXCELLENCE

Another positive aspect of the VIA technology is its ability to track data that can help restaurants improve their operations. AI presents a world of exciting data opportunities. For example, in an analytics study performed in early 2017, VIA assessed takeout calls for three major restaurant chains. They found that restaurants that use dedicated order-takers and guest-specific data experience a 6.4 percent increase in sales and an 11.4 percent increase in positive customer experience.

DIGGING DEEP

In this first study, the advanced AI, ASR tool tracked tone of voice, vocal stress, language, interactions, timeliness of responses, interruptions, vocal exchanges, and emotions during each call. It then assessed those factors and correlated them with customer experience, engagement, handle time, call abandonment, average check, and order-to-call ratios to sift out applicable findings for restaurants. This study and these findings merely scratch the surface of what VIA will discover through data acquisition, especially when it starts assessing all digital and voice channels.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

As VIA begins taking live orders for major restaurant chains, the tool will be able to assess and record findings specific to each restaurant. Findings that can help the restaurant decide how to best allocate their money for takeout orders and other areas of their business. It can assess far beyond just menu items and peak transaction times... it can also assess best practices for securing upsell profits in relation to customer's emotions, among several other things. This kind of data holds the potential to provide insights and discoveries that can transform operations for all restaurants.



THE KEY TO CONVENIENCE IN AN OFF-PREMISE WORLD



OMNI-CHANNEL IS ESSENTIAL

Off-premise, at-home, on-the-go dining: takeout is taking off, and restaurants need a solution. Impressing guests in the age of takeout requires an omnichannel ordering platform that allows guests to interact in the ways that suit them best: digitally, through AI, by text, chat, social media, etc. And, while many industry leaders thought mobile applications would be a revolutionary addition to the omnichannel approach, results show different. When determining what channels to develop, restaurants should carefully consider the risks involved with the investment.

LESS RISK - MORE REWARD

For mobile apps, if you have an extensive budget for development, testing, and updates, along with a large loyalty base and addictive product, you might see some success. But, consider the cost and track record. Mobile app “success” stories are few and far between. And, even Starbucks, the leader in restaurant apps, still retrieves 90 percent of their total transactions from channels other than their Mobile Order & Pay app; and, they, unlike most restaurants, have the perfect recipe for app adoption: a huge budget, addictive product, and a large, very devoted customer base.

APPS ARE A PRICY GAMBLE

While a mobile app may have been a great addition for Starbucks, it came at a high price, and it’s unknown at this point whether it’s led to new customers or just shifted the channel that already loyal customers were using. The good news for Starbucks is: they have the money to find out. Does your restaurant?

VIA IS THE SAFER ROUTE

For most restaurants, there are other established channels prepped to secure greater profits at smaller investments. VIA is one of those channels. If greater convenience is the way to unlock success in the restaurant’s future, VIA is the off-premise key.

With VIA, restaurants can leapfrog the mobile app-athy epidemic, minimize wasted investments, and build the guest-to-restaurant relationship using AI and automation.

LET’S HELP YOUR GUESTS

Ultimately, the most important factor to consider when looking to invest in new technology is how will it benefit the guest. Looking at consumers today, they continue to demand faster, more convenient, and more efficient service. And, as seen in most industries, people want AI and automation. They correlate AI with efficiency and convenience, and they are beginning to expect it in all areas of their lives. So, skip the app headache and get ahead of the curve with AI.

¹ <http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-restaurant-digital-renovation-0903-biz-20170831-story.html>

² <http://phx.corporate-ir.net/phoenix.zhtml?c=131715&p=irol-newsArticle&ID=2316594>

³ <http://go.applause.com/rs/539-CKP-074/images/ARC-By-Appraise-The-Best-And-Worst-Restaurant-Apps-2016.pdf>

⁴ <https://upserve.com/restaurant-insider/data-shows-building-restaurant-mobile-app-guests-waste-time/>

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⁶ <https://techcrunch.com/2016/05/31/nearly-1-in-4-people-abandon-mobile-apps-after-only-one-use/>

⁷ <https://digiday.com/marketing/restaurant-apps-battle-stay-relevant-new-loyalty-payment-options/>

⁸ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/319652/us-mobile-app-time-distribution-category/>

⁹ <https://www.foodnewsfeed.com/fsr/chain-restaurants/behind-premise-growth-red-robin-storms-back>

¹⁰ https://redrobin.secure.force.com/fr_Home?id=KA21Y0000001JwSAK&l=en_US&fs=Search&pn=1

¹¹ <http://fortune.com/2017/04/12/red-robin-digital-ordering/>

¹² <http://www.nrn.com/consumer-trends/convenience-and-value-will-prevail-2018>

¹³ <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/06/28/10-facts-about-smartphones/>

¹⁴ <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/12/26/how-many-amazon-alexa-echoes-were-sold-over-the-2017-holidays.html>

¹⁵ <https://qz.com/452609/online-food-delivery-ordering-is-about-to-overtake-phone-ordering-in-the-us/>

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