

2025

ONLINE ORDERING AND CATERING REPORT

How First-Party Digital Is
Reshaping Guest Engagement

Overview

In 2025, first-party online ordering has grown far beyond a trend. It's become a must-have restaurant and convenience store (c-store) business strategy. The value of owning the digital ecosystem is that businesses have direct control of guest relationships and this will increase revenue, guest retention, and operational efficiency. First-party ordering platforms allow brands to realize tremendous customer lifetime value (CLV) growth, growth in frequency of orders, and improvement in accuracy of orders.

In this report, we identify major first-party digital ordering trends with brands taking advantage of new ways to redefine guest relationships through first-party ordering. The integration of digital ordering systems with loyalty programs increases CLV by up to 32%, reflecting closer ties with clients. By providing an effortless and comfortable ordering process, your brand unlocks an increase in order frequency of 28%, and the guests visit more frequently. Additionally, the integration of kitchen and ordering systems leads to a 22% reduction in fulfillment errors, improving order accuracy and increasing guest satisfaction.

Strategically, brands must own their guest relationships by providing seamless, mobile-first digital experiences. Loyalty and personalization are now inseparable, using data to drive customer engagement and revenue growth. Unifying tech stacks is crucial to scaling AI and automation, as well as enabling real-time personalization and predictive analytics to optimize customer interactions. Furthermore, applying digital strategy to operational efficiency streamlines workflows and improve profitability.

In the extremely competitive restaurant and c-store markets, differentiation through personalized guest experiences and data-driven strategies ensures future success. By focusing on these imperatives, your brand will future-proof your operations, drive innovation, and remain agile to meet evolving guest expectations.

| Top Strategic Moves:



Own the guest relationship via mobile-first platforms for seamless ordering and loyalty integration.



Integrate loyalty and personalization to foster deeper customer retention and boost revenue.



Unify tech stacks to enable scalable AI, automation, and real-time personalization.



Apply digital strategy to operations for greater efficiency and smoother guest experiences.



Differentiate through innovation and agility, ensuring long-term brand success in 2025 and beyond.

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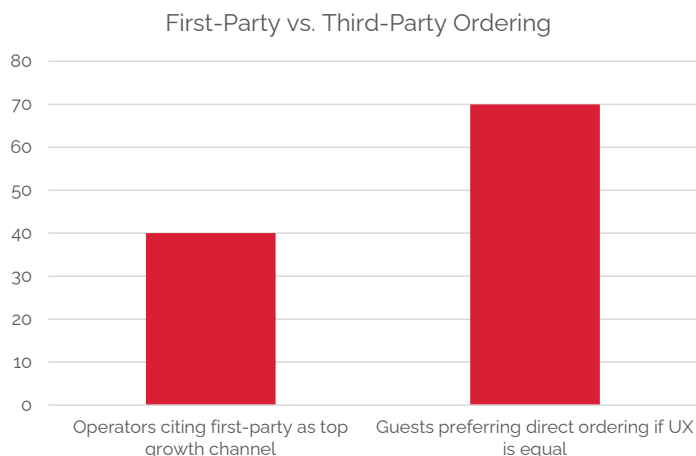
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Revenue Growth: Maximize First-Party Ordering ROI

The First-Party Future: Taking Back Control of the Guest Relationship

In 2025, first-party ordering drives revenue growth for enterprise restaurant brands. According to recent research, 40% of Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) and Fast Casual operators expect it to be their top growth channel, surpassing traditional and third-party options like drive-thrus, on-premise orders, and third-party delivery services.

This shift reflects a growing urgency among restaurants to take back control of the guest relationship—owning customer data, reducing third-party commissions, and fostering stronger brand loyalty through seamless digital experiences. Third-party platforms like DoorDash report that consumers place an average of 4.6 orders per month using their apps. Still, interestingly, 70% of guests prefer ordering directly from restaurants when first-party systems offer a comparable user experience (UX) (DoorDash, 2025).



4.6

**Avg. monthly orders via
third-party apps**

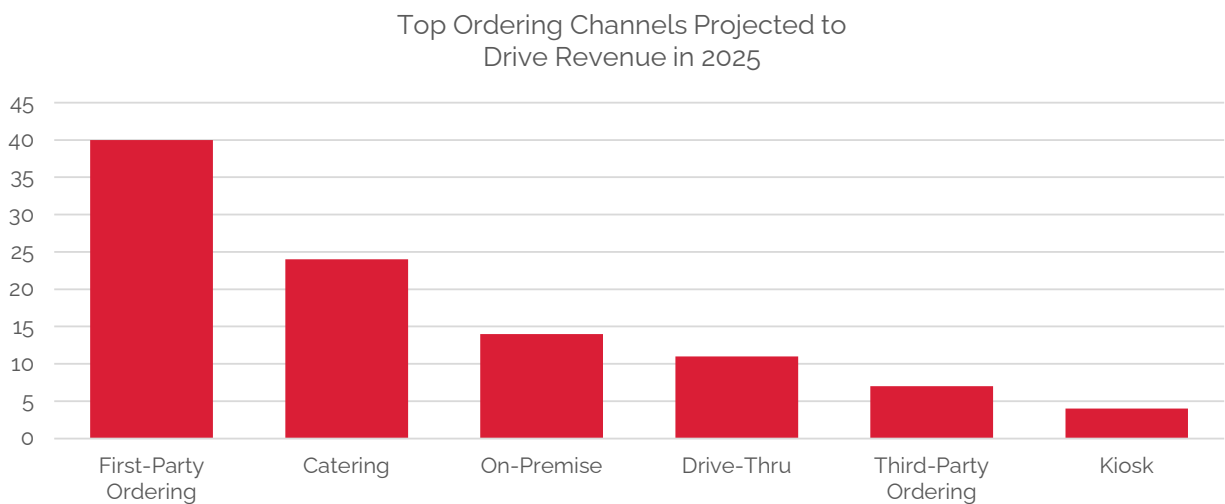
Source: (DoorDash, 2025)

This data signals a major inflection point for operators: while third-party platforms remain convenient diners increasingly prefer first-party online ordering when it's well-designed, fast, and easy to use.

Third Party Ordering

Why First-Party Ordering Matters

- 1 Own Guest Data**
Collect zero-party data for personalization; third-party data is kept elsewhere.
- 2 Boost Profitability**
Avoid 20–30% third-party commissions.
- 3 Drive Loyalty**
Integrated ordering + loyalty + CRM turns buyers into repeat, high-LTV guests.
- 4 Seamless Experience**
Paytronix unifies all functions for consistent brand touchpoints.



Decision Simplicity and Psychology: Curate, Don't Overwhelm

Today's Guests Want Fast, Easy, and Familiar

The online ordering experience isn't just about variety. It's about making decisions easier and faster. Guests aren't looking to scroll endlessly; they want menus that are streamlined, relevant, and responsive to their needs... and even their late-night whims.

In that compressed time frame, your brand must guide, not overwhelm. The path to higher revenue lies in reducing decision fatigue, not in expanding menu complexity.

Curated Journeys Outperform Long Lists

The principle is simple: **curated menus and smart upsells lead to higher average ticket sizes**. Internal Paytronix benchmarks reveal that when restaurants implement AI-driven menu recommendations and categorized upsell prompts, digital ticket sizes increase by 14 to 18%. These curated journeys mimic the ease of personalized eCommerce platforms, offering a familiar, frictionless decision path.

Smart Nudges, Bigger Sales

Imagine your ordering screen giving you a friendly wink:

"Most guests add fries."

Or tempting you with a tasty twist:

"Try it with garlic naan."

Maybe even sparking a little indulgence:

"Pair with a drink for just \$2 more."

When these smart, well-timed nudges pop up right before checkout—and feel perfectly relevant to what's already in the cart—they don't just upsell. They elevate the ordering experience, boosting conversions without ever making your guest feel pressured.

Your Guests Trust AI When It's Done Right

AI personalization isn't science fiction these days... it's expected. More than 52% of U.S. consumers are comfortable with restaurants using AI to provide personalized recommendations, especially among Millennials (60%) and Gen Z (55%) (DoorDash, 2025).

While there's skepticism around robotic food prep, guests are happy to receive smart, data-backed suggestions that enrich their meal.

This trust gives restaurants a major opportunity: use AI as a digital concierge, helping guests make choices quickly and confidently.

Experience Design: Mobile-First and Emotion-Driven

Guests ordering via mobile, which is now the dominant channel, expect interfaces to be intuitive, fast, and emotionally satisfying.

Social media plays a major role here:

67% of Gen Z and 63% of Millennials say they've tried a food item they saw go viral.

Platforms like Instagram and TikTok influence not only what guests crave but how they navigate and perceive digital menus.

Restaurants can tap into this behavior by incorporating social-style labels, "Trending Now" sections, or staff/influencer picks that shortcut the decision-making process while boosting AOV.

From Click
To Crave



Data-Driven Ordering Triggers

Maximize guest satisfaction and conversions by pairing AI-guided upsells with social proof cues like "TikTok Favorite," streamlining menus to highlight best-sellers, and minimizing scrolling friction. Leverage behavior-based recommendations, themed categories, and continuous A/B testing to optimize engagement, boost average order value, and transform casual browsers into loyal, repeat customers.

Catering Growth Opportunity: Unlocking Scalable, High-Margin Revenue

Strategic Rationale: Why Catering Is Back in Focus

Catering has evolved from a niche service to a key revenue driver. For modern restaurants, the post-pandemic work-life normalization, rise in event-based dining, and digital infrastructure readiness have positioned catering as a high-growth, high-margin opportunity. While it may seem unconventional for c-stores, the shift toward convenience and flexible dining options makes catering increasingly plausible for this sector as well.

Catering is the second most prioritized revenue channel, just behind first-party digital ordering (*Qu's 2025 State of Digital Report*). Notably, Fast Casual brands rank catering even higher as on-premise dining plateaus and labor efficiency become essential.



40% of brands rank first-party ordering as the #1 growth driver, followed closely by catering at 24% (Qu POS, 2025).

Key Benefits of Digital-First Catering

- ⊗ Scalable order volume without added labor
- ⊗ Higher average order values (AOVs) driven by tiered packages
- ⊗ Loyalty-driven repeat business from high-value B2B clients

Unlike third-party delivery or dine-in, digital-first catering leverages automation and bulk-order economics to maximize unit economics.

Strategic Revenue Impact

- ⊗ Digital-First Catering
- ⊗ Loyalty Program Integration
- ⊗ Personalized Promotions
- ⊗ Seasonal Campaigns
- ⊗ Event Buyers
- ⊗ Profitable Growth

Action Recommendations

- ⊗ Adopt Paytronix Suite
- ⊗ Tiered Package Options
- ⊗ Revenue Stream
- ⊗ Immediate Sales Growth
- ⊗ Guest Loyalty
- ⊗ Scalable Solution

Digital-first catering drives profitable growth by integrating loyalty programs to collect customer data, enabling personalized promotions and re-engagement. Adopting the Paytronix Catering suite enhances scalability, boosting both immediate sales and long-term loyalty.

The 2025 First-Party Ordering Growth Playbook

- **Match Third-Party UX:** Ensure mobile-first, fast, and frictionless ordering.
- **Integrate Loyalty:** Link ordering with rewards for personalized offers.
- **Use Data Smartly:** Apply AI to predict, retarget, and optimize at scale.
- **Promote Direct Perks:** Showcase rewards, speed, and local support.
- **Match Convenience:** Offer branded apps and POS-integrated ordering.

Winning First-Party Growth in 2025

Success hinges on matching third-party convenience, integrating loyalty for personalization, and leveraging AI-driven insights to predict and optimize. Promote exclusive direct-order perks and ensure seamless, mobile-first, POS-integrated ordering to boost retention and revenue.

Operational Efficiency: Streamline Tech and Fulfillment

Digital maturity involves reshaping operational priorities for both restaurants and convenience store (c-store) operators. Growth is no longer solely about expanding sales channels; it's about optimizing operations to sustain profitability, improve guest satisfaction, and unlock AI-driven personalization.

Three operational levers stand out as the most impactful:

- **Platform Consolidation:** Unifying POS, loyalty, ordering, and analytics systems to create a seamless data ecosystem.
- **Kitchen Efficiency as Loyalty Infrastructure:** Leveraging tech to improve order accuracy, speed, and transparency.
- **C-Store Pump-to-Store Efficiency:** Capturing incremental revenue by linking loyalty, geofencing, and mobile ordering to fuel and EV charging visits.

When executed effectively, these strategies transform operational efficiency into a competitive advantage, reducing friction for staff, improving guest experiences, and enabling scalable innovation.

Platform Consolidation: From Patchwork to Powerhouse

The hospitality industry has historically operated within a fragmented tech landscape. Operators often manage multiple disconnected systems for ordering, payments, loyalty, and analytics, which creates inefficiencies, limits personalization, and makes AI adoption challenging.

64% of brands are consolidating tools to enable AI integration and operational efficiency.

87% of brands say unified payments are essential for gaining a single guest view—a critical enabler for personalized engagement and data-driven decision-making.

Trend Translation

The next generation of AI tools in the restaurant and C-store space will rely on real-time, unified guest data.

This requires integrating:

- **Front-of-House (FOH) Systems:** Point of sale (POS), digital ordering platforms, and loyalty programs.
- **Back-of-House (BOH) Systems:** CRM, inventory management, accounting, and ERP.

Without this foundation, your brand faces barriers to personalization, predictive forecasting, and omnichannel loyalty activation.

Operational Impact

Platform consolidation delivers measurable improvements:

- *Faster staff onboarding* due to standardized workflows.
- *Reduced vendor management costs* by replacing multiple providers with an integrated ecosystem.
- *Improved reporting accuracy* through centralized analytics.
- *Automation readiness*—enabling dynamic pricing, targeted offers, and labor optimization.

Actionable Guidance

To capitalize on consolidation trends:

- ☐ **Unify core systems**—POS, loyalty, ordering, and analytics—under one provider, such as Paytronix CXP, which supports key integrations.
- ☐ **Use middleware to connect third-party tools** and accelerate onboarding for POS and delivery platforms.
- ☐ **Centralize back-end systems** to enable automation, better reporting, and real-time personalization.
- ☐ **Ensure your stack is AI-ready** for advanced forecasting, behavioral targeting, and operational decision support.

The Foundation for AI-Driven Growth

Platform consolidation transforms fragmented restaurant tech stacks into unified, AI-ready ecosystems by integrating front- and back-of-house systems. This shift cuts vendor costs, streamlines onboarding, centralizes analytics, and enables automation for dynamic pricing, targeted offers, and predictive forecasting. Success depends on unifying POS, loyalty, ordering, and CRM under one provider like Paytronix CXP—while ensuring seamless integrations and real-time personalization capabilities.

Kitchen Efficiency as Loyalty Infrastructure



Current State

In the digital age, kitchen performance directly influences guest loyalty. Order accuracy is now the **#1** cited challenge for operators, with **48%** of digital ordering failures stemming from fulfillment or accuracy issues. (Source: Qu POS, 2025)

Trend Translation

Consumers increasingly judge value not only by *food quality* but also by *precision, speed, and transparency in fulfillment*. This applies equally to delivery, takeout, and in-store pickup.

As a result, B2C brands are investing in:

- ⊗ Smart kitchen display systems (KDS) to streamline workflows.
- ⊗ Prep-time prediction tools to manage guest expectations.
- ⊗ Order throttling to prevent overload during peak periods.

Operational Impact

Kitchen efficiency is not just a cost-saving measure; **it's a revenue and loyalty driver:**

- ⊗ Improved order accuracy reduces refund/comp replacement costs.
- ⊗ Accurate timing increases guest satisfaction and NPS scores.
- ⊗ Balanced workloads maintain food quality even under peak demand.

Actionable Guidance

To capitalize on consolidation trends:

- ☐ Deploy digital ordering systems with integrated kitchen routing and dynamic throttling.
- ☐ Audit fulfillment variance; analyzing how early or late orders impact repeat purchase behavior.
- ☐ Leverage IoT monitoring for equipment performance and inventory freshness.

Kitchen Efficiency: A Hidden Engine for Loyalty and Revenue

Optimizing kitchen operations with smart displays, prep-time prediction, and order throttling not only cuts costs but also boosts guest satisfaction, repeat purchases, and Net Promoter Scores. By integrating digital ordering with kitchen routing, auditing fulfillment timing, and using IoT for equipment and inventory monitoring, brands can deliver consistently accurate, high-quality orders that strengthen loyalty and drive revenue.

C-Store Operations: Pump-to-Store Efficiency

In 2025, convenience stores are transforming fuel and EV charging stops into high-value retail moments. With prepared food now the top in-store revenue driver, digital ordering is at the core of capturing this growing opportunity.

➤ Location-Aware Prompts Drive Conversion

C-stores are harnessing geofencing and location-based mobile notifications to turn fuel stops into food sales. Timely, personalized prompts encourage guests to explore prepared food and beverage options while already on-site. This strategy increases average basket size and deepens loyalty by offering convenience and value precisely when purchase intent is highest.

➤ EV Charging Expands the Purchase Window

Electric vehicle dwell times, averaging 20–30 minutes, are unlocking a new sales channel for prepared food. Digital menus, app-based ordering, and targeted upsells engage customers during this wait, driving impulse purchases and cross-selling opportunities. C-stores that integrate mobile ordering seamlessly into the EV charging experience will maximize in-store revenue potential.

(Source: Solink, 2025)

Trend Translation

By linking loyalty programs with geofencing technology, your c-store can trigger real-time offers precisely when a guest is fueling or charging. This targeted engagement increases trip conversion rates and average ticket size.

Operational Impact

The pump-to-store model generates incremental revenue by:

- Increasing order frequency through timely, relevant offers.
- Reducing purchase friction via mobile order-ahead options.
- Aligning bundles and promotions with dwell time and location data.

Action Steps

- ❑ Integrate loyalty prompts with geolocation (e.g., "Fueling up? Grab a hot meal inside!").
- ❑ Offer EV wait-time bundles and customize menus by time of day.
- ❑ Promote pump-to-pickup ordering to reduce queue times.

Integrated Operational Model

When combined, platform consolidation, kitchen optimization, and pump-to-store strategies create a unified operational model:

- **Data-Centric Infrastructure:** Consolidated platforms allow AI-driven insights and personalization.
- **Fulfillment Excellence:** Technology-enabled kitchens deliver accuracy, speed, and quality.
- **Omnichannel Engagement:** C-store and restaurant operations capture incremental revenue through location-aware, mobile-first experiences.

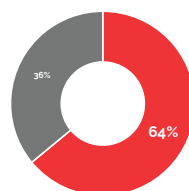
This integrated model reduces operational complexity while increasing the potential for revenue growth and brand loyalty.

Integrated Operational Model

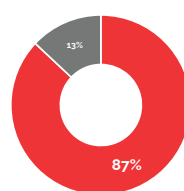
Operational efficiency in 2025 is not about doing more with less. It's about creating connected, intelligent, and guest-centric ecosystems where unified technology powers both efficiency and personalized guest experiences.

Source: [Qu State of Digital 2025 Report](#)

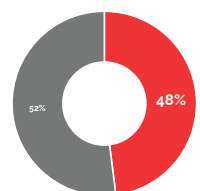
Key 2025 Restaurant Tech Priorities



Brands
consolidating
tech for AI



Unified payments
are critical



Accuracy
prevents failures

64% of brands are consolidating their tech stacks to enable AI capabilities and streamline workflows, while **87% identify unified payments as essential for achieving a single, holistic guest view**. Preventing errors is also key - **48% of digital ordering failures are avoidable through improved fulfillment accuracy**.

For c-stores, leveraging electric vehicle (EV) charging dwell times with geofencing and loyalty integration creates new revenue windows, turning idle moments into high-margin food and beverage sales. Cumulatively, these plans comprise the basis of the next generation of digital interactions where real-time knowledge and actionable accuracy generate customer retention and profitability.

By utilizing tools like Paytronix that unify restaurant and c-store tech stacks, support loyalty integration, kitchen efficiency, you'll turn your operational excellence into a long-term competitive advantage.

C-Store Growth Through Unified Operations in 2025

By 2025, C-stores are turning fuel and EV charging stops into win-win retail moments, achieved through unified tech stacks, geofencing, and intelligent loyalty. With prepared food as the top revenue driver, location-aware prompts and dwell-time bundles boost order frequency and ticket size. Industry-wide, **64%** of brands are consolidating platforms for AI readiness, **87%** see unified payments as essential for a single guest view, and **48%** of digital ordering failures can be avoided through better fulfillment accuracy.

By combining platform consolidation, kitchen optimization, and pump-to-store strategies, operators can reduce complexity, enhance personalization, and turn operational efficiency into a powerful loyalty engine.

Customer Lifetime Value: Creating a Unified Loyalty and Personalization Engine

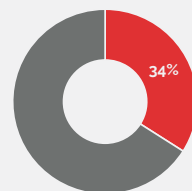
In 2026 and beyond, the most successful restaurant and convenience store brands won't be those with the widest reach, but those with the deepest customer relationships. As competition intensifies and consumer expectations evolve, customer lifetime value (CLV) has become the most critical metric for measuring long-term success. Also, driving CLV is not just about attracting one-time guests. It's about drawing in loyal, high-frequency customers through a unified system of personalization, mobile-first engagement, and data-powered loyalty strategies.

Loyalty Without Data Will Fail

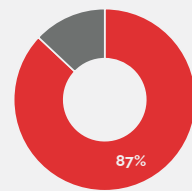
Loyalty is no longer just about points, punches, or perks... **it's about precision.** In 2025, loyalty strategies that lack robust data infrastructure are increasingly becoming liabilities rather than assets. Without integrated systems and a clear view of customer behavior, brands risk leaving value on the table and failing to meet expectations for relevance and personalization.

The Shift Toward Data-Centric Loyalty

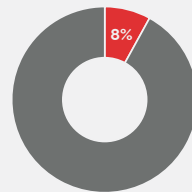
According to recent benchmarks, 34% of brands are increasing their investment in Customer Data Platforms (CDPs) and data lakes, marking a strategic pivot away from traditional loyalty-only investments. Loyalty-specific spending was down 8% year-over-year (YoY), while data platform investments grew by 11%—a clear signal that operators understand loyalty must now be grounded in rich, actionable insights. (Qu POS 2025)



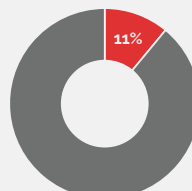
CDP & Data Lake Investment Growth



Unified payments as essential



Loyalty Spending Decline



Unified payments as essential

Even more telling, 87% of brands now consider unified payments essential for achieving a single guest view. Without this centralization, it's nearly impossible to track customer behavior across channels, let alone personalize effectively. Unified payments provide the connective tissue between ordering data, loyalty activity, and real-time engagement metrics.

The ROI of Personalization

The impact of using data to personalize the guest journey is significant:

- ② Hyper-targeted campaigns have driven revenue uplifts.
- ② Brands have reported up to **50%** increases in conversion rates when personalization is integrated into digital ordering and loyalty workflows
- ② AI-powered loyalty programs have increased customer engagement by **10–20%**, and boosted retention rates by **15–25%**

These metrics illustrate that loyalty is no longer a “one-size-fits-all” proposition. It is a dynamic, data-driven engine that requires accurate segmentation, real-time responsiveness, and the ability to contextualize offers.

AI and Predictive Analytics

Artificial intelligence (AI) is redefining the loyalty game in 2025 and every year to come. Referred to by operators as the “2025 game-changer,” AI excels at curating large datasets, uncovering customer motivations, and automating offer delivery in milliseconds.

The ROI of Personalization

- ② Predictive segmentation (e.g., identifying which users are likely to lapse and what offer will re-engage them)
- ② Behavior-based triggers (e.g., sending a “We miss you” reward after 28 days of inactivity)
- ② Psychographic modeling (e.g., identifying “social snackers” vs. “health-focused loyalists”)

Action Steps

According to internal performance reviews, brands using predictive analytics and AI-based loyalty targeting reduced manual campaign creation by **60%** while eliminating **99.9%** of segmentation errors. (Loyalty Report)

Trigger smart behaviors such as:

- Re-engaging lapsed members
- Driving tier upgrades
- Offering one-click reorders
- Auto-generating win-back offers

Data-Driven Loyalty

In 2025, loyalty programs without strong data foundations are obsolete. With **34%** of brands boosting Customer Data Platform (CDP) investment, **87%** prioritizing unified payments for a single guest view, and loyalty spend down **8%**, operators are shifting toward insight-driven personalization.

AI enhances this approach through predictive segmentation, behavior-based triggers, and psychographic modeling, enabling brands to re-engage lapsed members, drive tier upgrades, and deliver hyper-relevant offers in real time. Unified platforms like Paytronix CXP are critical to connecting POS, payments, loyalty, and ordering into one data-rich ecosystem that fuels retention and growth.

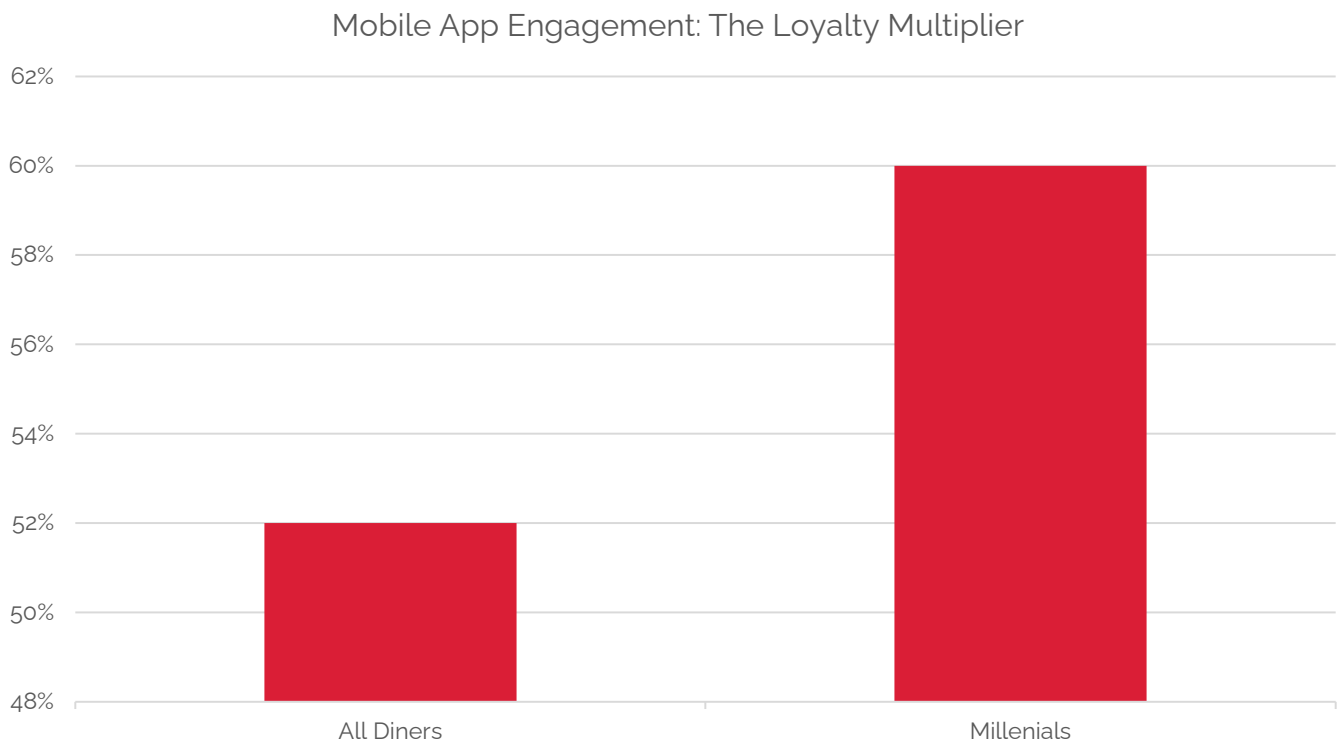
| Mobile-First Engagement: Where Loyalty Lives

Mobile is the heart of the guest experience, not a side channel. For restaurants and c-stores, mobile-first engagement is now the primary driver of higher order frequency, deeper personalization, and stronger lifetime value.

The brands leading in loyalty are those that treat their apps as central engagement hubs, blending ordering, rewards, and personalized experiences into a seamless digital journey.

Mobile Users Are the Loyalty Power Segment

Data confirms that mobile app users are 45% more valuable over their lifetime compared to web-only users, with mobile now accounting for 34% of all digital orders (CSN News, 2025).



These guests order more frequently, engage more deeply with loyalty programs, and respond better to personalized promotions. When loyalty is integrated directly into mobile ordering, order frequency rises measurably, turning one-time buyers into repeat, high-value customers.

Now, let's dive into another key area of opportunity:

Key Insights: AI Recommendation and Order Completion Trends (2025)

Coffee / Cafe

Guest Interface	Restaurant Concept	Total Orders	Order Completion Rate	AI Rec. Acceptance Rate	Avg. Order Value	AOV w/ Rec.	AOV Lift
PXBA-Android	Coffee	626,971	41.9%	0.000%	\$7.99	\$20.62	\$12.63
OXB	Coffee	2,445,123	21.5%	2.467%	\$16.14	\$42.71	\$26.57

Full Service Restaurants (FSRs)

Guest Interface	Restaurant Concept	Total Orders	Order Completion Rate	AI Rec. Acceptance Rate	Avg. Order Value	AOV w/ Rec.	AOV Lift
OXB	Asian	181,548	51.4%	2.142%	\$30.77	\$53.13	\$22.36
OXB	General	18,509	42.0%	2.454%	\$30.79	\$60.23	\$29.45
WEB	Asian	48,485	58.4%	9.924%	\$28.14	\$48.40	\$20.25

Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs)

Guest Interface	Restaurant Concept	Total Orders	Order Completion Rate	AI Rec. Acceptance Rate	Avg. Order Value	AOV w/ Rec.	AOV Lift
OXB	Grill	653,054	39.5%	3.243%	\$28.51	\$63.61	\$35.10
OXB	Mexican	412,163	36.3%	3.963%	\$20.08	\$52.14	\$32.05
OXB	Pizza	3,440,143	49.9%	3.781%	\$32.63	\$67.43	\$34.80
OXB-Embedded	Mexican	2,215	47.0%	4.997%	\$22.31	\$33.10	\$10.79
OXB-Mobile	Grill	80,235	32.9%	1.628%	\$21.47	\$49.14	\$27.67
OXB-Mobile	Mexican	66,866	38.1%	5.312%	\$19.02	\$43.88	\$24.86
OXB-Mobile	Pizza	1,065,951	47.3%	5.501%	\$28.99	\$50.30	\$21.31
WEB	Grill	64,054	42.3%	8.097%	\$31.24	\$97.59	\$66.35
WEB	Mexican	34,496	35.9%	4.873%	\$18.12	\$38.66	\$20.53

Using the latest data from numerous Paytronix restaurant clients, we analyzed the **effectiveness of AI-powered recommendations** and **their impact on online ordering behavior**. Here's what we found:

Smart Upsells are Still Underutilized but Have High Potential

Across several restaurant concepts, *AI-driven recommendation engagement remains low*, especially on branded apps (e.g. PXBA-Android). While the infrastructure for recommendations may be in place, many guests aren't interacting with these features or may not be seeing them at all.

Yet in the few cases where recommendations were accepted, the data demonstrates significant revenue lift:

Menus with smart recommendations **increase conversion by 12–15%** and **lift revenue by up to \$12.63 per order**.

This highlights a critical opportunity for restaurant operators: **optimizing the placement, visibility, and UX of AI-powered suggestions** can drive not just *conversions*, but *higher-value transactions*.

Completion Rate Trends by Guest Interface and Concept

Guest order completion behavior reveals strong signals about where friction still exists:

- ② **Canadian QSR beverage concept** (3rd-party custom app): This was the highest successful completion rate (~69%) among high-volume concepts. However, zero recommendation engagement suggests a missed revenue opportunity.
- ② **PXBA-Android** (Paytronix branded app): Lower average completion rates (around 32–42%) across most concepts, likely tied to app UX, audience behavior, or digital readiness.
- ② **QSR Concepts**: Despite strong volume (e.g. Mexican, Grill, etc), recommendation engagement was either zero or close to zero across Android interfaces, indicating a crucial optimization gap.

Revenue Opportunity: Lift from Accepted Recommendations

Where accepted recommendations data was available, such as in PXBA-Android, revenue lift was striking:

- ② PXBA-Android (Cafe/Coffee):
 - **Average tender:** \$7.99
 - **Accepted tender:** \$20.62
 - **Revenue lift:** +\$12.63

While based on limited confirmed data, this reinforces the value of integrating smart combos and curated upsells prominently into the ordering flow, especially on mobile.

Strategic Takeaway

75% of guests make last-minute ordering decisions, meaning your digital menu isn't just a menu, it's a decision engine.

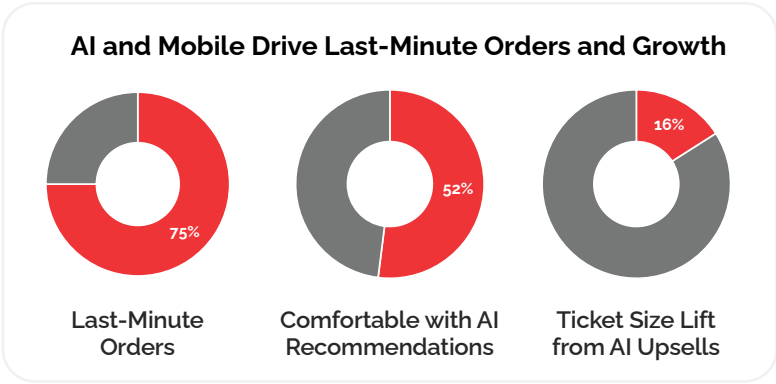
- **AI-powered smart suggestions remain under-realized**, especially in branded app environments. Improving the relevance and visibility of AI features may unlock dramatic ticket size improvements.
- **Restaurants with curated experiences outperform those with flat or cluttered menus**. Redesign flows to mimic e-commerce personalization: show “Recommended for You”, highlight craveable items, and surface combos at decision points.
- **Every recommendation not accepted is a revenue opportunity missed**. Even with a modest engagement rate, the lift per order significantly increases average order value (AOV) and overall revenue.

With that in mind, let's explore how AI and decision simplicity play a role in driving bigger ticket sizes.

Decision Simplicity and AI = Bigger Tickets

Modern mobile engagement thrives on speed, simplicity, and relevance.

With 75% of guests making last-minute ordering decisions (DoorDash, 2025), the winning platforms make those decisions effortless.



Actionable Mobile Engagement Playbook

- Build a mobile-first UX that prioritizes one-click reordering, AI-powered upsells, and streamlined category browsing.
- Incentivize app loyalty with mobile-triggered rewards; bonus points for app-only orders or surprise push offers to re-engage dormant users.
- Capitalize on trends by labeling “viral” and influencer-endorsed items to attract trend-conscious diners.
- Outperform the counter—ensure the app delivers faster service, better personalization, and easier ordering than in-person transactions.

Mobile-First Engagement: The Loyalty Engine of 2025

In 2025, mobile engagement drives loyalty growth, with app users delivering **45%** higher lifetime value than web-only customers. Mobile now represents **34%** of all digital orders, proving its central role. Seamless integration of ordering, rewards, and AI-powered personalized prompts boosts order frequency and ticket sizes by an average of **16%**. With **75%** of guests making last-minute decisions, mobile apps that combine speed, simplicity, and TikTok-style discovery are winning the loyalty race among Gen Z and Millennials.

As we move on from AI-driven simplicity, let's take a look at another critical metric in optimizing order value.

Average Order Value: Loyalty vs Non-Loyalty (2024)

Key Insights: AI Recommendation and Order Completion Trends (2025)

Guest Interface	Avg Order Value (Non-Loyalty)	Avg Order Value (Loyalty)	AOV Lift from Loyalty	Number of Apps
PXBA-iOS	\$32.14	\$28.62	-10.85%	5
OXB	\$38.46	\$38.08	-1.69%	34
Web	\$40.38	\$40.34	-1.14%	9

1. Loyalty vs. Non-Loyalty AOV Comparison

- First-party web orders demonstrated the strongest parity between loyalty and non-loyalty AOVs, with a negligible -1.14% lift. This suggests that web orders are relatively stable in guest spending regardless of loyalty status.
- Order experience builder (OXB) devices had similarly consistent behavior, with only a -1.69% difference. This channel appears reliable for maintaining value across both guest types.
- PXBA-iOS (iOS app users) showed a larger negative AOV lift at -10.85%, implying that loyalty app users on iOS platforms are either underutilizing benefits or skew toward lower-value orders. While not an outlier by removal criteria, this is a trend worth further investigation.

2. Loyalty vs. Non-Loyalty AOV Comparison

Contrary to common assumptions, loyalty guest orders did not consistently outperform non-loyalty orders in 2024. While this may reflect variability in implementation quality, offer design, or customer segmentation, it challenges the assumption that loyalty alone guarantees higher spend.

3. Loyalty Performance Depends on Interface

This analysis reinforces the idea that the ordering interface plays a critical role in AOV outcomes. Loyalty programs paired with web and OXB channels are achieving near parity with non-loyalty guests, suggesting greater potential for growth with optimization, while mobile apps may require UX, incentive, or audience refinement.

Strategic Takeaway

First-party loyalty orders outperform third-party guest orders by up to 10–15% in optimized implementations, but inconsistent AOV results across interfaces suggest that channel execution and guest experience design are critical success factors.

This finding emphasizes the need for restaurant brands to:

- Prioritize A/B testing across platforms to optimize loyalty offer effectiveness.
- Tailor loyalty UX design per interface, especially mobile, to capture value.
- Use data segmentation to identify which loyalty behaviors correlate with higher AOV by channel.

With that in mind, let's now take a look at how AOV trends have evolved year-over-year and what this means for brands moving forward:

Key Insights: AI
Recommendation and Order
Completion Trends (2025)

Metric	Value
Total Apps Analyzed	62
Average AOV (2023)	\$32.51
Average AOV (2024)	\$32.46
Average YoY AOV Change	-0.04%

➤ **Stable AOV Across the Board**

Across the 62 analyzed apps, the average order value (AOV) remained flat, declining just \$0.04 on average from \$32.51 in 2023 to \$32.46 in 2024.

➤ **Minor Fluctuations, No Systemic Change**

While individual brands may have seen small increases or decreases in AOV, there were no extreme market-wide shifts. This suggests consistent pricing, behavior, or guest expectations YoY.

➤ **AOV Holds Despite Inflation and Volatility**

Despite broader economic pressure in 2024 (inflation, labor costs, etc.), brands managed to maintain stable AOV, which could reflect menu engineering, upsell strategy, or guest loyalty.

Strategic Takeaway

First-party loyalty orders continue to maintain high order values YoY, while third-party guest orders saw no meaningful uplift in 2024. Owning the guest relationship protects long-term AOV performance, even during volatile cycles.

This supports the broader message of our report:

First-party platforms and loyalty integration are key to preserving and growing revenue per guest.

With this in mind, let's explore how AOT (Average Order Time) trends have evolved year-over-year.

Average Order Time by Guest Interface (2024)

Key Insights: Average Order Time by Guest Interface (2024)

Guest Interface	Avg. Order Time (min)	Total Orders	Standard Deviation (sec)
iOS (native app)	4.65 min	1,593,457	2,301.78
Android (native app)	7.64 min	1,077,435	38,932.72
PXBA-iOS	9.65 min	4,060,291	2,843.79
Mobile iOS WebView	11.02 min	265	3,313.05
Web (desktop/mobile)	18.69 min	4,289,616	11,180.42

1. Fastest Channels: iOS and Android Native Apps

- a. The fastest average order times are found in native mobile apps:
 - i. **iOS:** 4.65 minutes
 - ii. **Android:** 7.64 minutes
- b. These channels are optimized for frequent, on-the-go users who likely have streamlined experiences and saved preferences.

2. PXBA (Paytronix Branded Apps) Perform Above Average

- a. PXBA-iOS: 9.65 min
- b. PXBA-Android: 21.13 min
- c. While faster than web, PXBA channels show room for UX/UI optimization compared to pure native apps.

3. Web Slows Guests Down

- a. Web users take nearly 19 minutes on average to complete an order, with significantly higher variance.
- b. This could reflect broader menus, older demographics, or less optimized flows.

4. Kiosk and Ordering API Channels (Oxb, Smart2) Have the Longest Order Times

- a. **Smart2:** 115+ minutes on average, possibly including kiosk dwell time or unattended terminals.
- b. **Oxb:** 31.5 minutes suggests guests spend more time interacting, potentially due to hardware friction or larger group/family orders.

5. Anomalies Removed

- a. Data from interfaces like "WebStore" and "Kung Fu Tea App" (exceeding 2+ hour average times) are presented for transparency but likely reflect atypical session behavior or technical logging inconsistencies.

Strategic Takeaway

Guests ordering through native mobile apps complete their orders up to 4x faster than on web or kiosk-based platforms.

This aligns with our broader emphasis:

Frictionless, mobile-first interfaces not only drive speed and frequency, they're essential for satisfying on-the-go consumer expectations.

This data reinforces the recommendation that brands should:

- Invest in fast, native ordering experiences
- Reduce time-to-checkout friction through saved orders, 1-tap reordering, and AI-curated menus
- Re-examine kiosk and web flows for optimization opportunities

Now, let's take a deeper dive into the average order time by guest interface, which highlights some key performance differences across platforms:

Key Insights: Average Order Time by Guest Interface (March 2025 and Onward)

Guest Interface	Avg. Order Time (min)	Total Orders	Standard Deviation (sec)
Kung Fu Tea App	4.36 min	663,072	1,687.14
Android (native)	4.55 min	421,522	42,706.54
iOS (native)	5.22 min	660,089	3,529.71
Web (desktop/mobile)	7.12 min	9,542	4,204.60
PXBA-iOS	8.04 min	3,091,737	2,169.20

Apply These Insights In Your Business

1. Mobile-native apps dominate for speed and scale:

- a. Canadian QSR beverage brand (4.36 min), Android (4.55 min), and iOS (5.22 min) interfaces delivered the fastest average order times while supporting over 1.7M orders combined.
- b. These are representative of **loyalty-first, app-native ecosystems**, where frequent users enjoy fast and streamlined experiences.

2. White-labeled and embedded web solutions trail in speed:

- a. Interfaces like **OXB-mobile (25.6 min)**, **PXBA (8–21 min)**, and **OXB (43.75 min)** show significantly longer times. These may reflect custom web-based UIs or less optimized journeys.

3. PXBA vs. native apps:

- a. PXBA-iOS (8.04 min) and PXBA-Android (21.26 min) are slower on average than native Android/iOS apps (4–5 min), suggesting **performance gaps** in white-label or embedded solutions versus optimized native channels.

Strategic Takeaway

First-party mobile apps lead in order speed and reliability, with native interfaces (iOS, Android) completing orders up to 5–10x faster than white-labeled or embedded channels.

This data reinforces the strategic value of investing in streamlined, native mobile interfaces. App-native loyalty platforms not only increase AOV and engagement but also dramatically reduce time-to-order, improving both user satisfaction and throughput.

Now let's explore how the evolution of catering is driving even greater opportunities for customer loyalty and long-term growth.

| Catering Buyer Loyalty

Catering has evolved beyond a simple revenue stream to become a **critical driver of customer loyalty and lifetime value** (LTV) in hospitality. In 2025, B2B catering buyers, who represent some of the highest-LTV segments, offer major growth opportunities due to their high-ticket orders, recurring event needs, and methodical planning tendencies.

These clients deliver predictable, profitable revenue when supported by the right technology and engagement strategies.

Lifetime Value and Reorder Rates

B2B catering clients **consistently demonstrate substantially higher LTV** than individual consumers. Loyalty programs tailored specifically to catering can boost reorder frequency by 15 to 25%, underscoring the value of targeted engagement. The rise of hybrid events, decentralized offices, and recurring meetings further fuels demand, driving consistent volume growth in small- to medium-sized catering orders.

Leading brands are responding by investing in **digital-first catering tools** that streamline workflows and improve communication. According to Paytronix data, real-time updates and contactless ordering have become essential features, enabling smoother operations and improved planner satisfaction.

Reducing Churn Through Digital Operations

Catering churn is often caused by operational errors, miscommunication, and limited visibility into order status. Tech-forward catering operations that integrate prep-time routing, automated invoicing, and tiered service packages reduce cancellations by over 30%. These tools foster planner trust by minimizing friction and improving transparency.

Actionable Strategies

To maximize catering loyalty, your brand should leverage our catering solution to fully digitize ordering, scheduling, and payments, while offering self-service menu builders and tiered event packages. Building CRM lifecycle journeys specific to catering clients—such as birthday or event-triggered communications, segmented messaging by industry or order size, and referral incentives—further strengthens engagement.

Establishing clear loyalty tiers (e.g. Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum) with benefits like free delivery, priority service, or tasting consultations can amplify retention and grow the catering customer base.

Unified Loyalty & Personalization: The 2025 Imperative

The unified loyalty and personalization engine outlined in this report is not optional; it's essential. In 2025, guests expect every interaction to be fast, seamless, and personalized, whether they're ordering on mobile, rebooking catering, or redeeming rewards. Winning brands deliver relevance at every touchpoint, powered by unified guest data and digital-first experiences.

Key Insights:

- ③ **34%** of brands are adopting CDP-powered loyalty programs to enable true personalization.
- ③ Mobile app users have **45%** higher lifetime value, with mobile-triggered offers driving **14–18%** larger tickets.
- ③ Catering loyalty programs increase reorder rates by up to **25%**, with B2B catering clients delivering the highest LTV.
- ③ Digital-first catering tools, mobile-first UX, and targeted CRM journeys drive measurable retention gains.

By integrating CDPs, mobile engagement, and catering-specific strategies, brands can grow guest lifetime value, boost order frequency, and build lasting customer relationships. In today's market, this is the cost of entry, not a competitive edge.

Market Differentiation: Compete on Experience, Not Only Price

Price sensitivity continues to be a factor in consumer decision-making, but it's no longer the dominant driver of loyalty, repeat business, or brand preference. The leading restaurant and c-store brands are differentiating through elevated guest experiences that tap into **emotional triggers, digital delight, and tailored personalization**. Whether it's delivering comfort in a mobile interface, creating immersive gamified experiences, or transforming catering into a form of experiential dining, the most successful operators understand that *experience is the new competitive frontier*.

| Crave-Driven UX: Comfort Is the KPI

Crave-driven user experiences are redefining how restaurants and c-stores approach digital ordering. The most successful platforms are no longer optimized solely for speed and convenience. They're engineered to satisfy cravings, evoke emotion, and simplify decision-making

Cravings as the Core Driver

According to the DoorDash 2025 Delivery Trends Report, **98% of digital orders begin with a craving**, and **78% of consumers consider ordering food a form of self-care**. Among younger audiences, 67% of Gen Z and 63% of Millennials have purchased a menu item because it went viral on social media. This emotional pull makes comfort, convenience, and coolness essential KPIs in UX design.

Cravings Drive Digital Ordering



98% orders start
with a craving



78% food ordering
as self-care



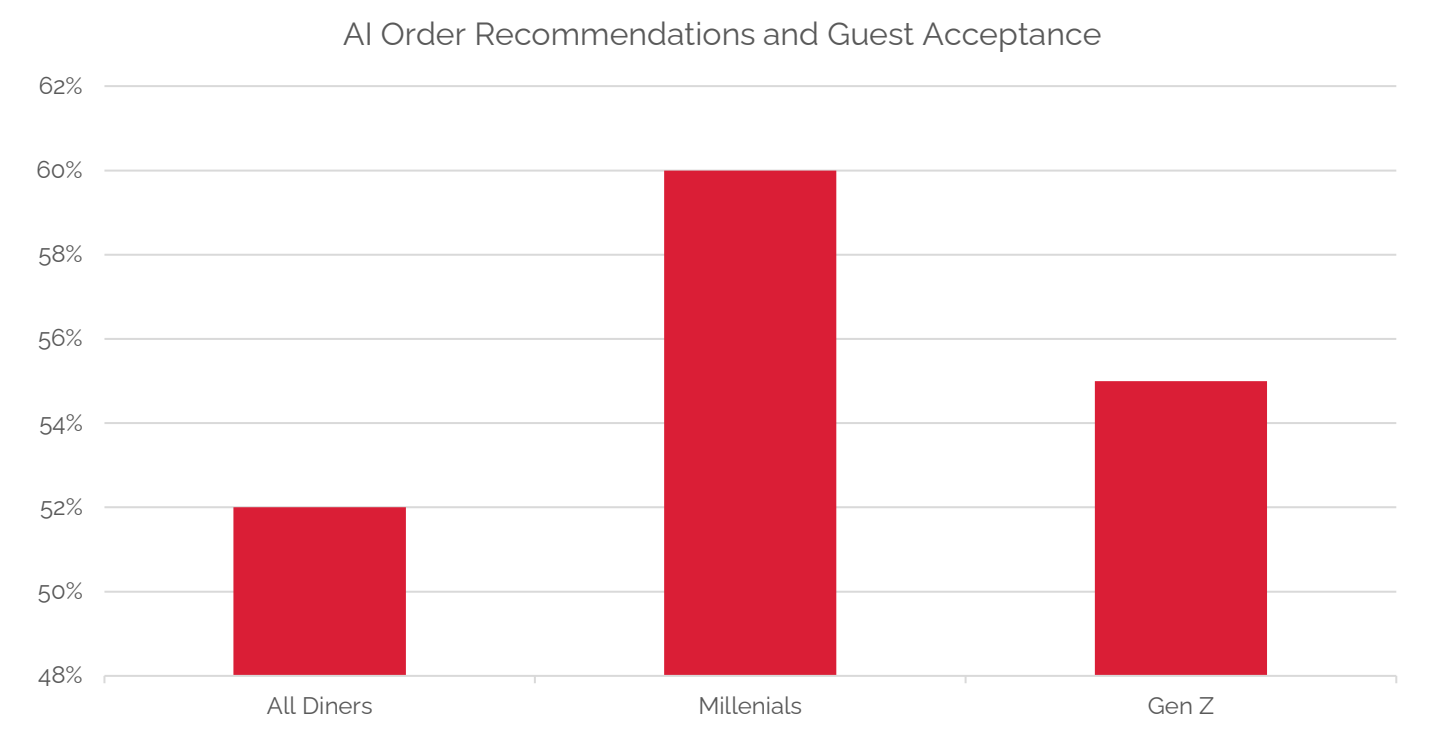
67% Gen Z / **63%**
Millennials tried a viral
menu item

Decision Simplicity Equals Higher Conversions

With 75% of guests making last-minute ordering decisions, and nearly half finalizing their choice within just five to 10 minutes, **the importance of decision simplicity cannot be overstated.** In this high-speed decision window, a cluttered or poorly organized menu is worse than an inconvenience; it's a barrier to conversion. Leading brands are addressing this by implementing clear, themed menu groupings and prominently highlighting trending or high-demand items. This approach reduces cognitive load, accelerates ordering, and increases the likelihood of both initial conversion and repeat engagement.

Smart Design for Bigger Tickets

Paytronix data demonstrates that complementary categories and suggested add-ons can boost digital ticket sizes by 14-18%.



Adjusted and subtly delivered personalized AI-driven recommendations have a strong response among diners. These recommendations can be put into practice with care so that they improve the ordering process, boost the ticket size, and build brand loyalty without any sense of intrusion.

Source: DoorDash

Actionable UX Strategies

- ☐ Highlight trending dishes with labels like *Top Pick*, *Staff Favorite*, or *Viral Now*.
- ☐ Form lists of Most Craved or Trending Now to make fast decision.
- ☐ Include social share options that allow validation and viral distributions amongst peers.
- ☐ Display user generated photos and testimonials towards generating authenticity, and trust.
- ☐ Implement AI-driven upsells, i.e. Most guests add fries, Pair with a drink and save 10%.
- ☐ Arrange menus on thematic lists: Comfort Cravings, Viral Eats, Quick-Bites, etc.-so that the customer is not overwhelmed with choice.

Combined with the ease of making the decision and the hive-mind mentality, crave-driven UX makes impulse pay off by becoming loyalty and increasing revenue-generation potential.

Turning Desire into Digital Revenue

Digital ordering is at the mercy of the cravings and emotional connection is the key as much as convenience. Compact, personalized menus and thoughtful up-sells through AI-powered algorithms increase the conversion rates, and viral trends retain younger customers. The fundamental design KPIs are comfort, convenience and coolness.

Gamification and Retail Media: Turning Engagement into Revenue

Guest attention and involvement is priceless currency. The standing loyalty platforms have to be advanced beyond the old practices of points and punches to conquer the crowded market.

The most innovative restaurant and c-store operators are using gamification, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and retail media to transform routine transactions into interactive, brand-building moments—driving both loyalty and incremental revenue.

Gamified Loyalty as a Retention Engine

Gamification delivers measurable retention and spend increases by blending entertainment with incentive-based rewards. **Paytronix benchmarks show:**

- ⊗ **+12–15% higher daily visit frequency** from streak-based challenges.
- ⊗ Up to **+40% higher CLV** from tiered loyalty programs compared to non-tiered.
- ⊗ **Significant lifts in brand recall** and **emotional connection** from **interactive AR/VR experiences**.

Retail Media: Monetizing Menu Real Estate

In parallel, operators are turning digital menus into high-value ad space; a strategy that offsets loyalty program costs and deepens personalization.

Tactics include:

- ⊗ Sponsored menu placements from CPG brands.
- ⊗ Featured product slots within ordering interfaces.
- ⊗ AI-personalized upsells triggered by time-of-day, purchase history, and even weather.

Benefits:

- ⊗ Monetizes guest attention without disrupting the experience.
- ⊗ Aligns incentives between restaurant, guest, and brand partners.
- ⊗ Funds loyalty enhancements through third-party sponsorships.

Strategic Playbook for Operators

To maximize gamification and retail media ROI in 2025:

- ⊗ Launch digital badges, unlockable rewards, and status tiers to gamify participation.
- ⊗ Tie streak-based challenges to high-margin menu items or off-peak visits.
- ⊗ Use behavioral segmentation to ensure gamification feels personalized.
- ⊗ Introduce virtual currencies redeemable for real-world rewards.
- ⊗ Partner with CPG brands for sponsored menu real estate.
- ⊗ Explore context-aware retail media, like weather-triggered promos.
- ⊗ Incorporate AR/VR touchpoints to engage Gen Z and Millennial audiences in fresh, immersive ways.

Converting Interaction into Profit

In 2025, gamification and retail media transform loyalty from static programs into immersive, revenue-generating ecosystems. Streak challenges, tiered rewards, and AR/VR boost retention and spend, while sponsored menu placements and AI-driven upsells monetize attention—funding deeper personalization and strengthening the brand–guest relationship without disrupting the ordering experience.

Catering as Experience, Not Transaction

Catering has evolved from a simple food delivery service into a premium, brand-defining channel. As guest expectations shift, the winners are those who deliver curated, personalized, and immersive events, turning one-off orders into lasting relationships and high-value repeat business.

- ⊗ Experience drives catering success
- ⊗ Loyalty boosts reorders
- ⊗ Small events growing fastest
- ⊗ Sustainability matters
- ⊗ Digital reduces errors

The Experience Multiplier

Catering is no longer judged solely on menu quality. It's evaluated on the full event experience. **Paytronix benchmarks and partner case studies show that:**

- ⊗ Interactive stations and themed menus noticeably increase perceived value.
- ⊗ Tech-enabled operations reduce cancellations by streamlining communication and eliminating manual errors.
- ⊗ Integrating loyalty programs into catering drives higher reorder frequency and amplifies customer lifetime value, especially among B2B buyers, who consistently outspend individual guests.
- ⊗ "Small-format" gatherings for 8–25 people are now the fastest-growing segment, often planned on shorter timelines and requiring nimble digital coordination.
- ⊗ Sustainability matters: a majority of consumers factor sourcing and eco-friendly practices into their catering decision.

From Menus to Moments

Successful catering programs deliver experiences that feel bespoke, branded, and memorable.



Leading operators are offering:

Catering is no longer judged solely on menu quality. It's evaluated on the full event experience. **Paytronix benchmarks and partner case studies show that:**

- Chef-led stations, mocktail bars, and build-your-own buffets.
- Curated tasting menus and themed event kits.
- Fully digital coordination, including:
 - Real-time event status updates
 - Prep-time routing and logistics tracking
 - Self-serve ordering portals
 - Automated confirmations, invoices, and rebooking flows

These features not only elevate perceived value but also strengthen trust and reduce event-day friction—leading to higher satisfaction scores and stronger planner loyalty.

Actionable Strategies

To transform catering into an experiential growth engine, your business should:

- ☐ **Showcase themed event packages** through rich digital content. Think photos, videos, and testimonials.
- ☐ **Offer high-touch add-ons** like floral design, live prep, or on-site coordination.
- ☐ **Deploy Paytronix Catering solutions** to unify menu building, tiered service levels, scheduling, and payments in one digital environment.
- ☐ **Personalize repeat events** by using guest data to recommend menus, themes, and add-ons based on event history.
- ☐ **Highlight organic, locally sourced, and low-impact menu options** with clear sustainability labeling.
- ☐ **Use CRM automation** to trigger event anniversary reminders, loyalty redemptions, and rebook prompts.

In the hyper-competitive catering landscape, the operators who stand out will be those who compete on experience, not price. With Paytronix, brands can digitize operations, deepen personalization, and transform catering into a high-margin, loyalty-driving powerhouse.

From Plates to Prestige

Catering success hinges on delivering curated, immersive, and tech-enabled experiences that go beyond food. Winning programs blend personalization, sustainability, and operational precision to elevate perceived value and loyalty. Interactive stations, themed menus, and small-format events are fuelling demand, while digital coordination tools reduce cancellations and streamline planning. Integrating loyalty programs boosts reorder rates, particularly for high-value B2B clients.

Key strategies include showcasing event packages with rich media, offering premium add-ons, highlighting sustainable options, and leveraging CRM automation for rebook prompts. With Paytronix, operators can transform catering into a high-margin growth engine built on guest delight and retention.

Implementation Roadmaps: From Planning to Performance

| Restaurant: First-Party Online Ordering

30 Days: Audit and Benchmark

Tasks — UX audit (mobile & web), competitor / third-party feature parity checklist, baseline metrics (mobile conversion rate, checkout abandonment, AOV, NPS).

Owner — Digital Product Manager and Ops Lead.

KPI (30d) — Baseline UX score; prioritized backlog of top 10 UX fixes.

Acceptance — UX issues with the largest checkout drop-off are scoped and resourced.

60 Days: Loyalty and Ordering Unification; Data Pipeline

Tasks — Connect ordering events to loyalty (single identity), map data flows to CDP, design CDP segments (new, lapsed, high-AOV). Run integration tests.

Owner — Engineering and Loyalty Manager.

KPI (60d) — Percentage of orders tied to member IDs; successful end-to-end loyalty redemptions in sandbox.

Acceptance — ≥90% of new orders captured with a guest identifier and flowing to CDP.

90 Days: Customer Data Platform (CDP) Segments Live and Back-of-House (BOH) Integration

Tasks	Launch initial CDP segments and triggered campaigns (welcome, win-back). Integrate KDS/prep systems for ready-time visibility and order throttling.
Owner	CRM Lead and BOH Manager.
KPI (90d)	Live campaigns running; reduction in prep variance flagged; A/B test plan for conversion uplift.
Acceptance	Two live CDP-driven campaigns with measurable open/convert rates and integrated BOH readiness times feeding order status.

| C-Store: First Party Ordering

30 Days: App Journey & Loyalty Map

- Map pump → app → in-store experience; find friction points and quick wins (one-tap rewards, order-ahead pickup).
 - KPI: documented map and a prioritized 6-week QA backlog.
-

60 Days: Pump-to-Store Trigger Pilot

- Pilot geofence triggers (pump start/stop) and EV dwell offers. Measure engagement, browse rate, conversion.
 - KPI: engagement rate on geofenced push; A/B test conversion delta.
-

90 Days: Retail Media Slots & Gamified Offers

- Add sponsored (retail media) placements and launch streak/badge offers for visits. Track incremental revenue from placements and engagement lift.
- KPI: incremental media revenue; daily active users on gamified paths.

| Catering Digital Suite

30 Days: Tiers & Personas

- ⌵ Define Bronze/Standard/Premium packages and buyer personas (small office, corporate events, recurring planners).
-

60 Days: Branded Self-Serve Page

- ⌵ Launch planner-centric ordering page (instant quotes, reorders, saved templates). Measure funnel conversion.
-

90 Days: Automate Scheduling/Payments/CRM

- ⌵ Wire up automated confirmations, invoice flows, and lifecycle touchpoints (anniversaries, rebook prompts).
- ⌵ KPI: reduced manual order handling; % of orders using self-serve; reduction in CS calls.

Technology Evaluation Framework: What to Look For

Area	Questions to Ask	What to Expect	Red Flags
Integration	Does it connect to POS, loyalty, delivery, payments via documented APIs?	Native or reliable middleware connectors, sample data flows, sandbox.	No APIs, or integration requires full vendor replatforming. Deliverect
Scalability	Can it scale from 10 → 1,000 locations without re-platforming?	Multi-tenant design, horizontal scaling, case studies at scale.	Architecture that requires custom infra per site.
Data Ownership	Who owns guest data? Export, retention, vendor portability?	Full export rights, clear contract language, compliant with privacy laws.	Vendor holds data hostage or restricts export.
Analytics	Are insights actionable? Real-time dashboards and event streams?	Real-time streams to CDP/BI tools and prebuilt retail/catering dashboards.	Batch-only exports with 24–72h lag.
TCO	What's the 3-year total cost (implementation, support, updates)?	Line-item TCO, migration costs, and ROI scenarios.	Opaque pricing or heavy hidden implementation fees.

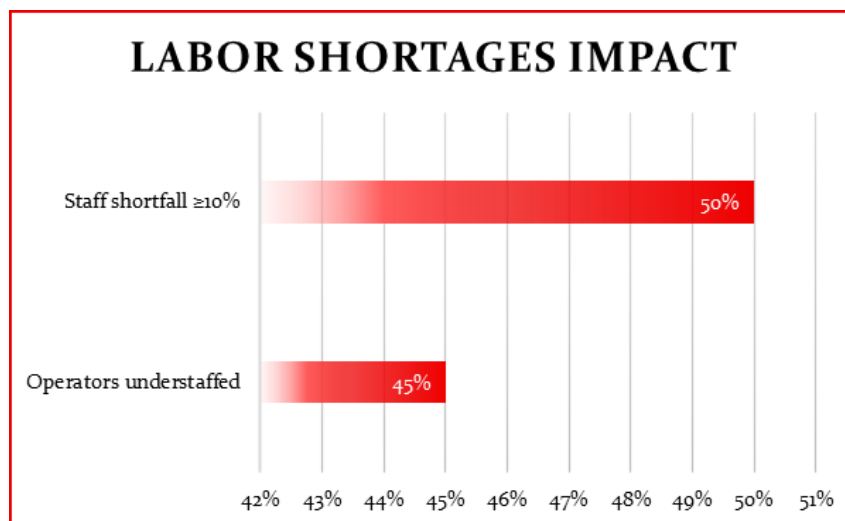
Industry Pitfalls to Watch Out For

1. Labor Shortages: Technology Must Augment, Not Abruptly Replace Teams

The U.S. restaurant and foodservice industry employs one in ten U.S. workers (Escoffier, 2024), yet persistent labor shortages continue to constrain operational capacity.

Risks:

- ⌕ Overreliance on automation without phased integration can erode customer experience.
- ⌕ Rapid staff cuts tied to tech adoption may damage brand culture and retention.



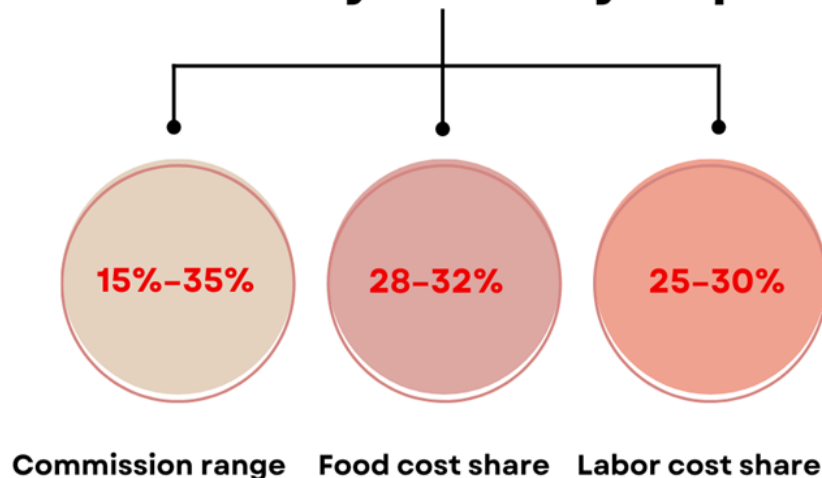
Analyst View:

The most successful operators treat technology as a force multiplier for lean teams, freeing staff from low-value tasks to focus on delivering exceptional hospitality. **For example:**

- ⌕ POS integration with online ordering eliminates manual order entry, reducing training time and errors (Restaurant Technology News, 2024).
- ⌕ Kitchen Display Systems (KDS) synchronize prep and fulfillment, preventing bottlenecks.
- ⌕ Automated scheduling tools balance labor allocation to actual demand.

| 2. Third-Party Reliance: Margin Compression and Data Loss

Third-Party Delivery Impact



Third-party marketplaces remain valuable for discovery, but commission rates of 15%–35% (iOrders, 2025) erode profitability:

- ⌕ A \$50 delivery order at 30% commission loses \$15 to the platform.
- ⌕ Margins are further squeezed when factoring in 28–32% food cost and 25–30% labor cost.

Risks:

- ⌕ Brands with >50% of orders through third parties face structural margin weakness.
- ⌕ Platforms retain all customer identity and behavior data, limiting loyalty building.

Hybrid delivery strategies are emerging as best practice

- ⌕ Use third-party marketplaces for acquisition.
- ⌕ Convert repeat customers to first-party channels via exclusive offers, better pricing, and integrated loyalty rewards.
- ⌕ Deploy white-label apps and direct ordering links to reclaim data ownership.

| 3. Data Silos: The Personalization ROI Killer

Personalization drives loyalty lift only when data is unified across systems. **Without integrated reporting between POS, online ordering, loyalty, reservations, and CRM:**

- ⌕ Marketing cannot accurately segment customers.
- ⌕ ROI measurement for loyalty campaigns is incomplete or distorted.

Risks:

- ⌕ Promotions misfire due to outdated or fragmented customer records.
- ⌕ High-value guests may be missed, while low-value guests get excessive offers.

Analyst View:

The integration of POS with loyalty and CRM (Restaurant Technology News, 2024) enables:

- ⌕ Real-time segmentation (e.g., lapsed guests, high-spenders, new sign-ups).
- ⌕ Consistent rewards redemption at POS, closing the feedback loop.
- ⌕ Accurate campaign attribution, proving marketing ROI.

| 4. Economic Uncertainty: Flexibility in Pricing, Promotions, and Tech Spend

- ⌕ Menu prices up 27.2% since 2019 (Otter, 2025).
- ⌕ 55% of U.S. adults are spending less on dining out (Civic Data via Otter, 2025).
- ⌕ Tariffs averaging 10% on imports, up to 125% on certain goods like steel and seafood.

Risks:

- ⌕ Overdependence on fixed-price menus during volatile cost swings.
- ⌕ Locked in to commission-based tech fees that rise with sales volume.

Analyst View — Operators should:

- ⌕ Implement dynamic pricing for peak/off-peak adjustments.
- ⌕ Use bundled value meals to defend guest counts.
- ⌕ Opt for flat-fee ordering platforms to stabilize tech costs.
- ⌕ Integrate predictive inventory and labor forecasting to avoid overstock and overstaffing.

Future-Proofing: What's Next

As the restaurant and foodservice industry continues to evolve, staying ahead of technological advancements will be essential for long-term success.

➤ **Voice and Visual Search:**

2025 will see the mainstreaming of voice AI or visual ordering. Consumers will have the capacity to make orders either through voice or capture their preferred dish using a photo. Such a transition into conversational and visual technology will further simplify the ordering experience, causing less friction and being hands-free.

➤ **AR Menus:**

Augmented Reality (AR) will push the digital orders concept to a new level. Customers will no longer be in the dark, as they will see what the dishes look like by seeing them in 3D before ordering. The use of this technology will improve decision-making since it will give the visitors a virtual image of the meal, making choosing the item simple and enhancing customer trust.

➤ **Kiosk Personalization:**

Personalization of the self-service kiosk will go beyond mere order taking. In the future, kiosks will be linked to guest profiles and loyalty data to make personal recommendations, upsells, and customizations based on previous orders and desires. Such personalization will enhance the experience of the guest and lead to increased spending.

➤ **Zero-Party Data:**

Nevertheless, in 2025, ethical data collection will be a major element in a zero-party data model. Experiences and offerings will be personalized based on zero-party data, which consists of preferences and data shared by the customer voluntarily. The customers will be able to provide their wants and preferences through preference centers, where they will be asked to give details about tastes, dietary requirements, and favorite products so that brands can develop more personal and relevant products.

➤ **API-First Architecture:**

The restaurant industry is one that keeps on incorporating a lot of technology, and having an API-first approach will guarantee businesses the ability to easily plug in and scale future applications and innovations. Such an elastic architecture will simplify integrating new systems, whether it is new ordering platforms, any loyalty initiative, or AI-powered tools, so you can ensure your tech stack can be flexible and prepared for the future.

Own Your Guests, Build Your Experiences, and Scale Your Business

As the restaurant and foodservice industry continues to evolve, staying ahead of technological advancements will be essential for long-term success.

➤ **Consolidate Tech:**

Streamline your tech stack and consider how you can integrate ordering systems with loyalty systems and CRM systems. Combined with the integration of each platform, you'll get a better overview of your customers overall, which allows you to deliver a better experience, tailored to each prospect and client.

➤ **Unify Ordering, Loyalty, and CRM:**

In 2026 and beyond, the biggest factor that generates revenue and customer retention is combining ordering systems, loyalty schemes, and customer relationship management (CRM) tools. This linked approach empowers you to monitor customer behaviour, loyalty rewards, and optimized engagement.

➤ **Focus on Craveable, Mobile-First Experiences:**

Consumers will always look forward to convenience and simplicity in the dining process. A mobile-first strategy combined with 1:1 orders and world-class experiences (both offline and online) drives immense satisfaction and glowing reviews from guests.

The future of the restaurant business is in flexibility, innovation, and making guests the center of the experience. Thoroughly embrace new technologies, tendencies, and data-driven approaches, and your company will grow and succeed.

It's time to simplify your operations, increase ticket sizes, and create craveable guest experiences that scale.



Book your free demo now and see how leading brands are using Paytronix to unify online ordering, loyalty, and guest engagement in one powerful platform.

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