Boston Pizza

No Weak Links

QSR ®
AUTOMATIONS

RESTAURANT PROFILE

Restaurant Type:
Casual Dining

Number of Units:
400+ locations in North America (Canada, US, Mexico)

Year Established:
1964

THE CHALLENGE

To find a technology partner to weave into their long-term ecosystem and strategy.

Sometimes, it's difficult to quantify or even describe how much we rely on technology. It doesn't take a historian to tell us we've come a long way since the advent of the wheel, as we see technology emerging and evolving around us. The internet creates instant communication, unbound by distance. The proliferation of smartphones, literal handheld computers, affords us access to all the world's info whenever we want it. Technology helps make our days a bit easier, at leisure and while we work. For managers in any job field, the connectivity to manage multiple sites assists immeasurably. Nowhere is this more evident than in the restaurant industry.

BOSTON PIZZA

Boston Pizza is Canada's number one casual dining chain, and it spreads from coast to coast. Having operated for more than 50 years, they've established 396 restaurants across the country. Each site presents three dining concepts: a sports bar, full-service casual dining, and a robust off-premise delivery menu.

Back in 2007, they sensed the direction of the industry, ditched their paper ticket and printer system, and opted for QSR Automations' ConnectSmart Kitchen system. For a massive chain, It was a slow and deliberate migration, but one which proved invaluable for weathering the changing restaurant landscape. "We were trying to knit together, strategically, an underpinning architecture for the future long term," says Vice President of Business Technology & Systems, Cavin Green.

"When you change from paper to a KDS, you can see that the technology is reducing stress, improving coordination, and improving time," says Green.

Many of the improvements that he notices are intangible and measured by what is *not* present. In an integrated restaurant, with front and back-of-house technologies connected, orders flow to the kitchen seamlessly. Each station stays conscious of one another; the kitchen staff knows when an 8-top has just walked in, and the FOH staff know when the steak's almost ready. There's less room for error and miscommunication, and the kitchen is quieter.

"The benefits are qualitative," says Green, noting the improvements to the work environment. "It's better for everyone, from the staff to the customers."

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>
> *Cavin Green, Vice President of Business Technology & Systems*

He notes the changing preferences of consumers, the increased need for speed and convenience as well as in being dynamic and flexible to trends.

By 2016, they'd continued their technological initiatives, rolling out DineTime, QSR's Guest Management Solution, to work in tandem with CSK. At present they have it in 80% of their stores, with plans for full deployment imminent.

THE QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENTS

Going from paper to a kitchen display system presents a significant shift for any restaurant.

THE QUANTITATIVE CHANGES

That's not to say there aren't measurable benefits, though. Technology and automation incrementally shave time off each order, allowing more table turns, which nets more sales. It also affords them more visibility, and opportunities to serve more.

"Implementing CSK and DineTime has been a tremendous enabler in modernizing our technology ecosystem, for both team members as well as guests. We've been able to maximize our reach and enable new functionality, like online reservations through DineTime," Says Green.

KITCHENS USING QSR AUTOMATIONS

12%
INCREASE
in peak-hour sales

17%
INCREASE
in covers

32
HOURS SAVED
per week

Typically, those with an automated kitchen outfitted by QSR Automations see an average 12% increase in peak-hour sales and a 17% increase in covers. They also save an average of 32 back-of-house hours a week. Boston Pizza sees improvements like these, mainly reflected in their simplified workflows and off-premise sales.

"Within the four walls of each restaurant, CSK and DineTime have introduced features which assist in our quality and consistency, overall execution, and growing our off-premise revenue."

CONSISTENCY ACROSS THE CHAIN

Every kitchen is a bit unique, even those within the same brand. Depending on the time of day, who's operating the chef stand or its location, each one will function just a bit differently. Restaurant technology helps standardize this, at least in the big picture.

Since ConnectSmart Kitchen is so highly integrative, it will immediately push the order from the point-of-sale terminal to the back. This precision means servers or kitchen staff can't lose the physical paper tickets - the orders are safe on a screen.

The digital handoff cuts down on errors too, as human communication, especially in a high-stress environment, can be quite fallible. Reducing these

communication errors results in happier guests and less waste, as the restaurant doesn't need to spend more time re-making botched orders. By wasting less, of course, their revenue increases too.

"There's improved functionality in the kitchen," says Green. He notes the features within CSK that help staff maintains food quality, despite a vast menu and customer base. "A good example would be some of the color-coding and highlighting. Being able to easily address modifiers like allergens ensures their food is always accurate."

As a chain, they can track consistency and overall performance from a higher level than the kitchen. Data and analytics reporting help their operators pinpoint where to make improvements in their workflows. ConnectSmart Kitchen's data and

analytics features track KPI's like speed-of-service and cook times in the kitchen. "We're also tracking open menu counts with DineTime to know how many people are seated, but haven't ordered," says Green. "It gives the kitchen a forecast on that. We've been trying to use [the data] to forecast prep items too." A data report paints a real-time portrait of success, one that digs beyond the surface and shows where to focus improvement efforts.

TRAINING AND ONBOARDING

Turnover and a shifting workforce come with the restaurant territory and with an operation as massive as Boston Pizza, it's all but inevitable. However, that technological underpinning removes some of the sting from restaurant turnover. For one, with every site using the same technology, an operator ensures that each staff member, site to site, receives the same instruction. The robust features help cut down on onboarding time, training new staff up to your standards quickly.

Additional measures, like ConnectSmart Kitchen's TeamAssist recipe viewer, provide actual graphic images of the menu. "If Johnny Cook forgets how to make a dish in a heated moment, there's a visual refresher there," says Green. Besides improving food quality, it provides peace of mind for the kitchen staff; the figurative safety net ensures there's no wasted energy fumbling around to recreate or revise an order.

Nowadays, it's less about a technology's inherent power and more about how easy it is to use.

NEVER BREAK THE CHAIN

In a restaurant like Boston Pizza, restaurant technology must be capable of accommodating a variety of dining concepts. What suits an off-premise dining audience, might not be best for dine-in. Capacity management features ensure that orders from offsite can flow in, without disrupting that dine-in activity already happening. CSK will "read" the

> A smart restaurant is a low-stress one, and it translates to every facet of the business: **empowering staff and delighting guests.**

restaurant's current workflow and can give guests an accurate pickup time. This ability to change up to suit the environment, to be smart, is crucial for the chain.

A technological rollout is a big job and only gets more daunting the more sites you have. For Boston Pizza, employing solutions for the future was the goal from the outset. "Finding technology partners that we can weave into our long-term ecosystem and strategy, so we don't but end up with something 'Frankensteined,' is what we hope to achieve," says Green. He notes the importance of interconnectivity within systems, allowing them to "talk" with one another.

"It's difficult to quantify the improvements sometimes," he says. "We often use a litmus test: If you were to go to anyone today and say, well, what is the return on investment of you having a smartphone? Maybe they'll say 'I can't quantify that!' Okay, now if you were to say 'give your phone up today!' you'd get an apparent and specific response. The ROI becomes clear."

The analogy translates to their restaurant setup. Fully outfitted with technology from the front to the back, the qualitative improvements become almost second nature - baked into the recipe. Boston Pizza sites all maintain good times, food quality, and even a pleasant work environment. It's easy to forget the technology is there, working virtually in the background. If it were gone though, its value becomes painfully clear. A smart restaurant is a low-stress one, and it translates to every facet of the business: empowering staff and delighting guests.

For Boston Pizza it's more than achievable. It's happening in almost 400 restaurants.

Want to learn more about QSR Automations' smart restaurant solutions?
Contact us at **855-980-7328, ext 1** or email us at **Sales@QSRAutomations.com.**

ABOUT QSR AUTOMATIONS:

Established in 1996, QSR Automations is a hospitality industry leader in innovative in-store, online and mobile restaurant hardware and software solutions. Headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky, QSR helps restaurants and businesses of all sizes and concepts around the world measurably increase efficiency, enhance productivity, improve quality and maximize guest delight. QSR's innovative software and hardware solutions focus on all activities around the guest to help create a positive and memorable guest experience each and every visit. For further information on QSR Automations, visit **www.QSRAutomations.com**.

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