

#RESTwithEU

05 Pathway

Business Insights: Gathering and Using Data

(Data and Market
Intelligence)



The previous challenges have focused on addressing various restaurant-specific issues, including those related to reservations, table and order management, as well as inventory and food tracking. However, among the most significant responsibilities of restaurants, the need to stay informed about their business performance and the broader market dynamics is consistently highlighted by industry experts. It is not solely a matter of discerning whether your establishment is thriving or struggling; rather, it pertains to the ability to quantify these aspects accurately. This accuracy provides valuable insights to make well-informed decisions while also preparing for challenging situations where this information is indispensable for sustained operations. This information is also critical in some cases to make the tough decision to close down the business.

Let's explore the ways to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of your business.

WHAT ARE THE RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES FOR THIS CHALLENGE?

01

**BEST PRACTICE 1:
IMPLEMENT A POINT-OF-SALE (POS) SYSTEM IN
YOUR RESTAURANT**

02

**BEST PRACTICE 2:
HARNESS BUSINESS DATA INSIGHTS FOR
INFORMED DECISION-MAKING**

What is **RESTwithEU** Pilot Project

RESTwithEU is a European Commission Pilot Project that aims to make the restaurant sector more resilient and sustainable by 2030 through accelerated digitisation.

DIGITALISATION WITHIN RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

Digitalisation in the restaurant industry involves more than just integrating new technology or connecting to the Internet. It's the process of transitioning a company's operations into the digital realm. This guide specifically addresses digitalisation challenges faced by restaurants and provides recommendations for implementing best practices in your day-to-day operations.

WHAT IS A BEST PRACTICE

A best practice, in essence, is a method or technique consistently proven to yield superior results compared to alternatives in a specific field. It represents the most effective and efficient way of accomplishing a particular goal, typically developed through experience, research, and experimentation, enjoying widespread recognition within an industry or field. In the context of the restaurant industry, these practices aim to optimize restaurant operations for maximum effectiveness and efficiency, contributing to improved performance and heightened customer satisfaction.

RESTAURANT CHALLENGES

The most effective strategies that can significantly benefit your business have been organised and redefined as restaurant industry challenges. The aim is to make these challenges relatable to you, so you can personally connect with one or more and feel inspired to explore and implement the corresponding best practices in your business.

DIGITAL PATHWAYS

Digitalisation pathways refer to the various routes that restaurants can take to incorporate digital technologies and processes into their daily operations and overall functioning. The objective of these pathways is to guide you through digitalization processes, offering support, assistance, and recommendations to help you initiate and navigate these initiatives effectively.

****Are you in need of assistance in selecting the ideal challenge for your business?***

Delve into the Digital Pathway Tool to explore and pinpoint the most fitting best practices aligned with your current level of digitalisation. This tool has been designed to help restaurants SMEs identify and prioritise your digitalisation efforts.



Why should you embrace the best practices in this challenge?

We strongly recommend embracing these best practices for these compelling reasons:



YOU ARE EAGER TO DELVE DEEPER INTO YOUR BUSINESS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT IT

To pave the way for success, it is imperative to acquire a comprehensive understanding of your current business status. Embracing these best practices will furnish you with a transparent view of your restaurant's performance, enabling you to pinpoint areas for enhancement and expansion. Are you aware of your annual business profits? Do you have a clear grasp of your monthly expenses, cash flow, and supplier expenditures? With these practices in place, you will have all the critical information at your fingertips.



YOU AIM TO BASE YOUR DECISIONS ON DATA RATHER THAN SOLELY RELYING ON INTUITION

Intuition holds excellent value. No one understands your business better than you. However, we offer an additional tool to provide you with valuable data for more informed decision-making. Are you aware which of the dishes yields the highest profits? Do you know the days when filling your restaurants is a challenge? Are rising food and ingredient prices impacting your profitability? All this information is already present within your business; we aim to assist you in organising it effectively, enabling you to make well-informed decisions.



YOU SHOULD CENTRALISE YOUR RESTAURANT CONTROL

In your restaurant, all processes are interconnected. While we understand that some restaurant owners prioritise offering gastronomic experiences, it is essential to remember that a restaurant, at its core, is a business driven by financial outcomes. In the restaurant industry, as in any other, success is ultimately dictated by the payment from customers. In such a scenario, a centralised system that can efficiently track and oversee multiple facets of your restaurant's financial transactions within a single platform is of vital importance. This solution extends beyond merely documenting customer orders and payments as it also includes vital components such as reservations and inventory management, table allocation, and order processing.



YOU ASPIRE TO GAIN BUSINESS RESILIENCE

Experts emphasise that a key factor in bolstering the resilience of your restaurant is gaining an in-depth understanding of its business. It encompasses insights into your customers, daily operations, and the broader market landscape. Armed with this information, you can make more informed decisions and adapt more effectively to shifts and challenges.

** This challenge presents two valuable best practices, which are essential to be implemented in your restaurant. The first focuses on digital support, which allows you to centralise all your business information, whereas the second delves into leveraging the data to make informed decisions and visualise your business's outcomes. These two best practices are interconnected and closely aligned with your restaurant's operational processes. It is essential to initially evaluate the digitalisation steps for your restaurant to prevent making missteps and impulsive investments. Hence, you must first understand the current state of your business.*

1

BEST PRACTICE 1: IMPLEMENT A POINT-OF-SALE (POS) SYSTEM IN YOUR RESTAURANT

In essence, a Point-of-Sale (POS) system for restaurants is a computer-based technology that streamlines the payment process. This system usually incorporates hardware to oversee customer payments and their management. Furthermore, it also encompasses features for handling seating arrangements, table assignments, menu items, and inventory control.

As the heart of a restaurant's digital infrastructure, a robust POS system is no longer a luxury but a necessity for establishments striving to thrive in today's competitive market. Let's explore various perspectives and reasons why restaurants, regardless of their size or culinary speciality, should prioritise the implementation of an integrated POS system, recognising it as an essential requirement in today's competitive market.



What you should keep in mind to implement this best practice

We break down the crucial factors you need to consider when applying the recommended best practices. Utilise the provided template to verify that each recommendation is in place before commencing the implementation process.

Mark either a tick or a cross in the boxes presented on the following page.



CHOOSE THE CORRECT SOLUTION FOR YOUR RESTAURANT



WITHIN YOUR POS SYSTEM, ALL RESTAURANT PROCESSES ARE INTRICATELY LINKED AND INTEGRATED.

POS systems allow you to effortlessly oversee every aspect of your restaurant's functionality right from the screen. You can monitor the availability of every dish on your menu, verify the status of each table, and process payments for a seamlessly coordinated dining experience. Furthermore, it can enable you to transmit orders directly from PDAs to the kitchen, where they are displayed on a screen or printed, effectively minimising the likelihood of errors.



SIMPLIFY YOUR STAFF'S DAILY TASKS AND MINIMISE MISTAKES.

A well-implemented POS system provides several advantages for your restaurant, including a significant decrease in paper-related errors. Streamlining operations and simplifying your staff's daily tasks effectively minimise errors, leading to improved order accuracy and a reduced likelihood of encountering issues commonly associated with traditional manual systems. This enhanced accuracy not only contributes to improved customer satisfaction and a more efficient dining experience but also results in cost savings by reducing the need for reprints and corrections. Furthermore, it facilitates seamless record-keeping, simplifies inventory tracking, and offers real-time insights into your restaurant's performance.



EASE OF PAYMENT PROCESSING AND IMPROVING YOUR ACCOUNTABILITY.

Changing times usher in novel approaches and methods. Today, diners enjoy the convenience of settling their bills using electronic devices or cards, marking a departure from traditional cash transactions. This transition offers a compelling prospect for businesses to wholeheartedly adopt digital payment solutions and adjust to the evolving inclinations of their customer base. All of this is seamlessly integrated through a centralised system.

BEST PRACTICE 1 - BUSINESS INSIGHTS: GATHERING AND USING DATA IMPLEMENT A POINT-OF-SALE (POS) SYSTEM IN YOUR RESTAURANT



ASSESS YOUR RESTAURANT'S POS SYSTEM AND HARDWARE NEEDS:

Commence by evaluating the specific requirements of your restaurant, considering both system capabilities and hardware. Consider your restaurant's specific needs, including the required number of terminals, your connections with banks or financial institutions, and the potential integration of your POS system with other software you currently utilise. Your choice of a POS system will depend on factors such as the nature of your establishment, payment processing prerequisites, and your personal preferences as a restaurant manager. In terms of hardware options, you have a range of choices, which encompass tablets and mobile devices, as well as fixed, stationary terminals equipped with printers for kitchen orders. Typically, the POS system is located in a central area, providing easy accessibility for waitstaff. However, it can also be extended to include mobile phones or PDAs. Therefore, it is important to strategically plan the number and placement of these devices based on your restaurant's size and the range of services you provide.



CHOOSE THE RIGHT PROVIDER:

When you decide to acquire a new restaurant POS system, you initiate a lasting partnership with a solution provider. It is of utmost importance to procure your system from a company that excels in delivering top-tier customer service, encompassing comprehensive support such as training, maintenance, and troubleshooting. Well-regarded POS providers can assist you throughout the setup and onboarding process, as well as tailor the system as per your needs. With a dependable provider as your ally, you can proactively avert issues and guarantee the seamless performance of your POS system.



CONSIDER THE TYPE OF RESTAURANT:

The most suitable POS system for your establishment is determined by your business requirements. Fine dining and traditional restaurants may lean towards systems that enhance functionality to optimise staff interaction with customers. In contrast, casual restaurants, bars, and breweries might prefer systems that efficiently split bills, handle group orders, and manage quick transactions, ensuring that no customer is left waiting to settle their bill. Think of your chosen system as an invaluable tool to empower your staff in providing exceptional customer service.



STAFF TRAINING:

Implementing a POS system is a delicate process. Hence, proper staff training is essential for businesses that intend to employ mobile devices for POS operations. Realising the operational benefits of using mobile devices requires ample time and training.



THIRD-PARTY INTEGRATIONS:

A restaurant's POS system is the central control hub for its operations; however, it is crucial to recognise that it will not be the only employed software. When selecting a terminal, you should prioritise its ability to easily integrate with other applications critical to your restaurant, such as inventory management systems, customer relationship management (CRM) software, or accounting systems (if the supplier has not already provided such systems). Furthermore, the compatibility of the software is imperative, as issues with integration problems can disrupt your operations. Over the ten challenges in the RESTwithEU project, you will delve into different aspects of the restaurant's digital transformation, involving a range of initiatives and processes that may necessitate integration.



PROVISION OF DIGITAL PAYMENTS:

The era of cash payments, when one was required to count and balance pennies at the cash register meticulously, has become a thing of the past. Dining customers today demand convenience and efficiency in their overall restaurant experience. This necessitates the adoption of swift and adaptable payment methods, which can now be facilitated through cards, mobile devices, or smart gadgets. Hence, exploring available systems and POS solutions can enhance and streamline the payment process. Learn more about digital payments in best practices explained in [Challenge 4: "Improving Table Service: Faster and Better Processes"](#).



IMPLEMENTATION TIMES:

The timeframe for implementing a POS system in a restaurant can vary depending on factors such as system complexity, restaurant size, and specific requirements. The process typically involves planning and assessment, customisation and configuration, hardware and software installation, staff training, testing, go-live transition, and post-implementation support. For smaller, less complex systems, the implementation may take a few weeks, whereas larger, more intricate systems may require several weeks to ensure a smooth and efficient transition to the new POS system. Also, consider the transitional phase, as your staff will need time to test the new system and ensure its seamless integration into your restaurant operations.



IT'S AN INVESTMENT, NOT AN EXPENSE:

Implementing such a solution necessitates careful consideration, as it can potentially catalyse significant improvements in your restaurant's operations. However, these systems come with their own costs. We strongly recommend viewing this as an investment rather than an expense since this investment can yield returns in terms of reduced operational challenges, time saved in management, and a reduction in stress. While various solutions are available in the market at different price points, it is essential to find one that aligns with the specific requirements of your restaurant.



WHICH METRICS AND VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS ARE PROVIDED BY THE SOLUTION?:

Beyond the concerns addressed in this list, we also advise visualising your business data through the tools provided. These visualisation options should offer simplicity, thereby enabling you to make informed decisions through clear and straightforward illustrations. This data presentation is particularly valuable and will be further explored in the second Best Practice of this challenge.



CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND MAINTENANCE:

Keeping your restaurant competitive and leveraging new features and capabilities requires staying informed about emerging trends and advancements in POS technology. Hence, regular maintenance, which involves updating software, inspecting hardware connections, and ensuring system security, is essential to prevent issues.

Take note of:

We understand that every restaurant operates with its distinct payment system. Within this guide, our objective is to assist you in assessing whether your POS system aligns with the offered recommendations. This guidance is particularly valuable for restaurants embarking on a digital transformation journey, especially the eateries that are starting from scratch.

A restaurant's efficiency can be greatly improved through the implementation of a POS system. Among its various advantages, a POS system simplifies the order-taking process by allowing orders to be entered directly into the system and immediately transmitted to the kitchen. This streamlined approach minimises the risk of miscommunication and errors, resulting in quicker service and increased customer satisfaction.

Recipe for Success: Unleash the Potential of a Point-of-Sale System – 5 Step Guide

01

ASSESS YOUR RESTAURANT'S UNIQUE NEEDS.

Every restaurant is distinct, and your choice of a POS system should align with your specific requirements. Begin by assessing the nature of your establishment. Fine dining restaurants may prioritise systems that enhance staff-customer interactions, whereas casual establishments and bars may require features such as bill splitting and quick transactions. Think of your POS system as a tool to empower your staff to provide exceptional customer service.

02

CHOOSE A RELIABLE PROVIDER.

After identifying your requirements, select the most suitable POS system catering to your needs. This selection process entails considering various factors, including the unique demands of your business, your budget, the necessary hardware components, the devices essential for recording sales (such as computers or tablets), the number of cash registers required, and the types of accepted payment methods. Consider your connections with banks or financial institutions as well as the potential for integrating your POS system with other software you use.

03

SET UP THE POS SYSTEM IN YOUR RESTAURANT.

Commence with thorough planning, considering the ideal device placements, and ensuring hardware compatibility. Subsequently, entrust the professional installation to a technician or IT expert to mitigate potential technical issues. The core of your POS system resides in its software: collaborate closely with your selected POS provider to tailor the software to your restaurant's distinct requirements. This includes configuring menu items, pricing, tax rates, and payment preferences. Make sure that the software is fine-tuned to your specific restaurant operations, and be aware that guidance and support from the solution provider are usually available throughout the entire process.

04

INVEST IN STAFF TRAINING.

Implementing a POS system is a significant change for your staff. Therefore, providing proper training to operate a POS system is essential, especially if you plan to use mobile devices for POS operations. Invest time and resources in training to ensure that your staff can maximise the operational benefits of the system. Well-trained employees can use the system efficiently and provide a better service to your customers. Throughout the process, maintain a focus on your staff, fostering transparency in your plans and building trust with them. It is not uncommon to face resistance to change, particularly in digital transformation efforts. To address this issue, identify and begin with the staff members who are most enthusiastic and committed to embracing the changes.


05

FOSTER INTEGRATION BETWEEN YOUR POS SYSTEM AND OTHER RESTAURANT SOLUTIONS AND EXPLORE EXTERNAL THIRD-PARTY INTEGRATIONS.

While your POS system functions as the control hub for your restaurant, it is critical to evaluate its seamless integration with other vital software applications. Which applications are currently in use, requiring synchronisation with your POS terminal? This encompasses inventory and supplier relations, your reservation and table management system, and your customer relationship management (CRM). Reach out to your solution provider to investigate these potential connections, as they will enable the streamlined management of your restaurant, ensuring that all aspects of your operation are interconnected.

2

BEST PRACTICE 2: HARNESS BUSINESS DATA INSIGHTS FOR INFORMED DECISION-MAKING



Operating a restaurant presents formidable challenges. Beyond providing exceptional service to patrons, it requires meticulous inventory management, diligent oversight of ingredients, fostering a positive working environment for kitchen and dining room staff, attentiveness to the restaurant's public perception (including both word-of-mouth and online reviews), efficient reservation management, and vigilant kitchen supervision. All of these tasks demand access to timely and accurate information for sound decision-making. Unfortunately, such essential information is not always readily available, and we recognise that the burden of handling bureaucratic and financial responsibilities typically falls upon consultants and accountants, particularly in small, family-owned businesses.

In the context of this best practice, we aim to highlight a fundamental recommendation made by industry experts, a suggestion that often goes unheeded: restaurant managers should maintain immediate access to vital data and insights related to their business operations. What data and information are accessible to restaurant managers? How can they obtain and effectively utilise this information? Let's adhere to this best practice, which, in contrast to other readily available practices, delves not only into software or hardware but also into the outcomes derived from them.

What you should keep in mind to implement this best practice

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CHOOSE THE CORRECT SOLUTION FOR YOUR RESTAURANT



EFFICIENCY LEADS TO PROFITABILITY (INFORMED DECISION-MAKING)

Efficiency in restaurant management is essential for profitability, with time being a precious resource. Data-driven insights revolutionise operations, enabling real-time staff scheduling adjustments, optimising inventory, and customising the menu to customer preferences. These insights reduce waste and increase revenue, thereby making data the guiding star for a prosperous and sustainable restaurant business.



DELIGHT YOUR CUSTOMERS, AND YOU'LL SEE THE BACK-OFFICE'S TRANSFORMATIONS REFLECTED ON THEIR PLATES

Your customers are the heart and soul of your restaurant. By grasping an idea of their preferences, behaviours, and feedback, you can provide a more tailored dining experience. You can rest assured that any improvements you implement to enhance your service, whether it is faster service times thanks to agile staff and kitchen, menu adjustments to match diners' preferences, or streamlining the payment and reservation processes, will not be overlooked by your diners. Hence, we urge you to consider the data of your business.

Take note of:

Restaurant industry experts whom we consulted during the project have emphasised that the most effective strategy for business sustainability is to possess a profound understanding of both the business and the clientele. This knowledge empowers you to make more informed decisions regarding your course of action and areas that require improvement. Our internal research has revealed that 70% of restaurants actively monitor their cash flow, which is a critical indicator of a business's overall health. Following closely are the tracking of the cost of goods (61.4%) and labour costs (54.5%). Although revenue is undoubtedly significant, it was measured by only 50% of the restaurants in our study.

BEST PRACTICE 2 - BUSINESS INSIGHTS: GATHERING AND USING DATA HARNESS BUSINESS DATA INSIGHTS FOR INFORMED DECISION-MAKING



ESTABLISH CLEAR BUSINESS GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Initiate by precisely outlining your goals and objectives through your decision-making process. This clarity of purpose will serve as a guiding force for your data collection and analysis endeavours. It is crucial to recognise that before delving into data collection and analysis, you must have a distinct and deliberate set of goals and intentions for your restaurant. It is essential to acknowledge that this journey is akin to a marathon rather than a sprint; hence, it is advisable to begin with manageable challenges and work your way up to build a strong foundation.



TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Evaluate the technology and resources necessary for data acquisition, storage, and examination. Allocate resources or investment for software and hardware that are capable of efficiently supporting your data management endeavours. This may entail the adoption of software solutions and integration of tools compatible with your current POS systems. Many solutions, regardless of the specific processes you wish to digitise, offer pre-built dashboards and visual scorecards for data presentation, thereby facilitating streamlined information accessibility. Hence, a computer and a tablet for restaurant management will suffice for this purpose. You might find Challenge 7 valuable, as it delves into the essential technological and digital infrastructure required for a modern digital restaurant.



ADDRESS RESISTANCE AND FOSTER A DATA-DRIVEN CULTURE

As a restaurant manager or owner, you may encounter resistance, including from yourself, when striving to instil a data-driven culture in your restaurant. To address this, emphasise the benefits of data-driven decision-making, both for the restaurant's success as well as your own role. Provide training and support for your team and ensure that you also receive the necessary tools and knowledge required to foster such a culture. Encourage open dialogue, actively participate in the transition, and lead by example to smoothen the adaptation of a data-driven culture and inspire your team.



DATA SOURCES AND COLLECTION

Determine the sources from which your data will be derived and institute effective data collection techniques. This can include the utilisation of POS systems (as discussed in a prior best practice), conducting customer surveys, harnessing website analytics, or employing other sources tailored to your specific needs and technological capabilities.



THINK OF THE THESEUS BOAT METAPHOR AS A WAY TO UNDERSTAND THE IDEA OF CONTINUOUS MEASUREMENT IN YOUR RESTAURANT

This metaphor draws a parallel between the concept of continuous measurement and the gradual replacement of parts in the famous boat. In this analogy, the boat, while replacing its wooden planks over time, still maintains its identity as "the original" boat. Similarly, the process of measuring and analysing data should be viewed as an evolving and adaptive endeavour, as the central idea is that measurements are not static points in time but should be flexible and responsive to changes in the environment. It emphasises the significance of regularly re-evaluating what you assess and the method employed to assess it, as the variables influencing the food service business are subject to fluctuations and developments. The core purpose and essence of measurement remain consistent; however, the tools and methods used may need to evolve to stay relevant and effective in an ever-changing business landscape. Keep in mind that any measurement will cause your restaurant to change as you make better decisions, but the result will remain the same, similar to the Theseus boat.



PRIVACY AND SECURITY CONCERNS

Make data privacy and security a top priority. Ensure strict compliance with pertinent data protection regulations and establish robust safeguards to shield sensitive information. In this context, safeguarding customer data is of paramount importance; therefore, it is imperative to be diligent in adhering to regulatory requirements. If you rely on digital solutions for data storage, especially those catering to the EU, ensure that the data resides on servers within the EU for added security. The protection of your data is a non-negotiable matter.

BEST PRACTICE 2 - BUSINESS INSIGHTS: GATHERING AND USING DATA
HARNESS BUSINESS DATA INSIGHTS FOR INFORMED DECISION-MAKING

Take note of:

While it may appear intricate, the core focus of this best practice is a shift in behaviour. The digital tools employed in your business inherently generate data, and the transformation lies in harnessing that data for informed decision-making. For instance, a table management solution can provide insights into room occupancy, consumption frequency, and average spending per meal. However, analysing this data manually can be a challenging task.



Exploring Fundamentals: What Kind of Business-Related Data Should You Consider Monitoring for Your Restaurant?

To steer your establishment towards success, it is imperative to gather and utilise valuable business-related information. In this guide, we will walk you through the essential categories of data that you should track to make informed decisions and elevate your restaurant's performance. The following are a few key areas to focus on:

- **Financial Data:** The financial health of your restaurant is a vital aspect that must be monitored closely. Tracking financial data allows you to acquire a comprehensive understanding of your revenue, expenses, and profit margins. Consider keeping an eye on your daily, weekly, and monthly sales figures, as well as your costs, such as ingredient expenses, staff wages, and overheads. Furthermore, keep an eye on your cash flow, which involves the inflow and outflow of actual cash in your business.
- **Familiarise Yourself with Your Customer Base:** Understanding your customer base is key for tailoring your offerings. Gather insights on customer demographics, preferences, and visit frequency to enhance your marketing strategies and menu adjustments. Discover their favoured dishes and assess how they discovered your establishment. What are your customers' preferred dining hours? What spending patterns do they exhibit, and what is their typical expenditure during visits? Do they make return visits?
- **Menu Performance Data:** With respect to the preferences and behaviours of your customer base, we strongly recommend gathering data regarding the performance of individual menu items. This encompasses tracking sales data for each dish, identifying customer favourites, and assessing the profitability of each item. Leverage this valuable information to enhance your menu offerings and fine-tune your pricing strategies. A detailed guide on this process can be found in the best practices outlined in [Challenge 3: "Intelligent Warehouses: Towards Optimised Food and Stock Tracking"](#).
- **Operational Data:** Apart from financial data, operational data includes tracking key and relevant metrics associated with the daily workings of your restaurant, such as data related to inventory management, table turnover rates, kitchen efficiency, and any other operational parameters that impact the efficiency and quality of your service. Have you ever considered conducting a competitive analysis and evaluating the state of the market? By examining your competitors' offerings, pricing strategies, and customer reviews, you can obtain valuable insights that can help your restaurant stand out and excel in the market.

BEST PRACTICE 2 - BUSINESS INSIGHTS: GATHERING AND USING DATA

HARNESS BUSINESS DATA INSIGHTS FOR INFORMED DECISION-MAKING

- **Labour Data:** Ensuring the efficiency of your workforce is vital for your restaurant's success. This entails monitoring scheduling, payroll, and staff benefits. Keeping a close eye on labour data can help you fine-tune staffing levels, control costs, and provide crucial support for your team. The key questions to consider include: How promptly do staff members fulfil customer orders? What is the typical turnaround time for table service? Are there any operational bottlenecks or inefficiencies in the kitchen or service areas? What is the customer-to-staff ratio during peak hours? Further, explore the digitalisation of staff procedures in best practices in [Challenge 9: "Maximising Employee Potential: Managing and Motivating Restaurant Employees"](#).
- **Reservation and Table Management:** This section extends beyond the mere acknowledgement of the importance of skilfully managing reservations and guaranteeing their smooth execution within the dining area. Instead, we will consider the pertinent inquiries and performance metrics that can enable you to evaluate and refine your operational processes effectively. These include a range of essential factors, such as reservations, table turnover rates (indicating how frequently tables are utilised within a specific timeframe), table occupancy (analysing the optimisation of your indoor and outdoor seating areas and pinpointing peak and off-peak occupancy periods), the occurrence of non-arrivals, cancellations, and the efficiency of waiting lists. Learn more on how to digitalise your booking processes and management in best practices described in [Challenge 2: "Facilitating Booking: Easy Reservation Management"](#).
- **Online Relevance and Website Data:** In the digital age, an online presence is vital. Hence, consider tracking data related to your restaurant's website performance and visitor behaviour, such as website traffic, social media engagement and online reviews. This information can help optimise your online presence and marketing strategies. Learn more about online presence in best practices described in [Challenge 1: "Digital Presence: Connecting with Dinners"](#).
- **Customer Feedback:** Actively collect and analyse customer feedback, including both direct interactions and online reviews. This data provides valuable insights into customer satisfaction, allowing you to enhance your services and promptly address their concerns.
- **Don't Overlook Food Waste:** Food waste is a significant issue for restaurants, and tracking related metrics can help reduce waste and save money.

Although it remains crucial, assessing the well-being of your restaurant encompasses more than solely financial data. Therefore, we aim to illustrate the various aspects you can gauge within your business, enabling you to pose meaningful questions and make informed decisions.

Recipe for Success: Track your restaurant metrics - 5 Step Guide

01

EXAMINE THE RESTAURANT - WHAT INFORMATION DO YOU HAVE REGARDING IT?

Before applying this guide, take a close look at your restaurant and understand its unique characteristics, including the type of cuisine, size, the demographics of your clientele, and the specific expectations and challenges that make your establishment distinct.

02

HAVE YOU GATHERED ALL THE NECESSARY COMPONENTS? METRICS REPRESENT THE FINAL PHASE

At this step, you should ensure that all the fundamental elements are in place. This step involves verifying that the tools, software, and processes are in a position to collect the data needed for the digital transformation. Avoid unnecessary complexity, and steer clear of intricate tools for result measurement. Utilise the tools you are already employing or intend to adopt.

03

DATA COMPILATION THROUGH DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

During this phase, you are required to investigate the digital solutions at your disposal for data acquisition. Examine the current tools in operation, such as the POS system and ordering and booking management systems. If needed, evaluate the possibility of incorporating new solutions and prioritise selecting tools that provide data visualisation and extraction capabilities to maintain a streamlined and efficient approach to data management.

04

ANALYSE YOUR DATA

This step involves identifying areas for improvement, addressing challenges, and crafting and implementing solutions based on the data insights. If you feel overwhelmed, do not hesitate to seek support from experts or data analysts. Implement the necessary changes, measure their impact, and remember to compare post-implementation results with the initial data to track your progress.

05

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS

The final step emphasises the importance of ongoing improvements. It is a cycle of refinement and enhancement based on the insights acquired from your data. Always keep an eye on whether the implemented solutions are successful, and be ready to adapt and optimise your restaurant's operations for continuous success.

Recommendation: Start with Levels of Difficulty

- ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ **LEVEL 1 - Basic Data Collection:** Begin with the fundamentals. At this level, you might start by tracking simple metrics, such as daily sales, financial summaries of the state of the business, popular menu items, and number of customers. This involves straightforward data collection and basic analysis, which can be done manually or through simple software tools.
- ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ **LEVEL 2 - Basic Data Analysis:** Once you have collected data, you can begin performing basic analysis. This might involve identifying trends in sales or customer behaviour or determining the menu items that are the most popular.
- ★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆ **LEVEL 3 - Intermediate Data Collection and Analysis:** As you become more comfortable with data collection and analysis, you can start tracking more complex metrics, including customer behaviour patterns, table turnover rates, or social media engagement. You might also start using more advanced software tools and techniques at this level.
- ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ **LEVEL 4 - Advanced Data Collection and Analysis:** In this level, you can explore advanced data tracking and analysis, combining insights from various sources to acquire a comprehensive understanding of your restaurant's entire processes. Metrics such as inventory turnover rates, food waste statistics, and customer lifetime value become integral components of your data-driven approach.
- ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **LEVEL 5 - Data-Driven Decision Making:** This level involves fully optimise your restaurant's data-driven decision-making by integrating all levels of data analysis and insights. At this level, you can employ the insights gained from your data analysis to inform your decision-making. This might involve making changes to your menu based on sales trends, adjusting your staffing levels based on table turnover rates, or launching targeted marketing campaigns based on customer behaviour patterns. You might also utilise Business Intelligence (BI) tools to analyse data and offer insights into business performance. These tools can be invaluable for restaurant owners and managers, as they can help them make informed decisions. In a few advanced software solutions, this feature might be seamlessly integrated.

Take note of:

Don't become overwhelmed; take it step by step. This best practice can be considered as a marathon that will provide you with more comprehensive insights into your business. Digitalisation is a gradual process with benefits that become apparent in the medium term. By the time you reach your destination, your restaurant's culture and routines will have evolved, and the improvements will be substantial.

Other SME restaurants have already proved the best practice

Restaurant Botilia Sto Pelago (from Greece) implementing the product of InfinityMobile (from Belgium)



"We're planning to restructure our digital presence, and the tools and knowledge we acquired through the pilot will enable us to do so much more. [We] learned how to create a digital catalogue, construct a website, and manage digitally received orders and digital payments, among other things related to the tools of the software provider. [Such systems] enable faster operations with fewer mistakes and make us more effective and efficient."

Botilia Sto Pelago (EL)

Objective of the pilot

The main objective of the pilot project was to establish a data and market intelligence system, including customer identification, segmentation, and loyalty programmes, for Botilia Sto Pelago. It further aimed to enhance customer engagement and meet the evolving needs of Millennial and Generation Z consumers.

Overview

This pilot project was centred on enhancing the customer experience and augmenting market intelligence at Botilia Sto Pelago. It was organised into four two-week sprints, each with specific objectives aimed at fortifying the restaurant's digital presence and customer engagement. These goals

included establishing an online ordering catalogue, instituting a customer loyalty program, implementing digital marketing strategies, and streamlining digital payment processes. The overall project budget amounted to €8,419, which encompassed the essential costs. This included €2,250 for the acquisition of crucial hardware, such as a digital printer, two tablets, three PDAs, and a router, all of which were vital for constructing the restaurant's digital infrastructure. Moreover, €789 was allocated for SAYL's solution provider pilot phase, covering setup, licensing, and loyalty premiums. An additional €1,400 was reserved for SAYL's training and translation services. To ensure the sustained operation of the digital solution beyond the pilot, €3,980 was allotted for 22 months of licenses.

HERE ARE OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Created a list of products with photos.
- Established product categories.
- Provided language options for the digital menu.
- Personalised and branded the online presence.
- Enabled the option for click-and-collect orders.
- Defined an embedded loyalty program.
- Activated rewards and gamification systems.
- Defined segmentation fields for “Know Your Customer.”
- Collected customer data, including name, surname, date of birth, and pattern interests.
- Tested the software in a real restaurant environment.
- Utilised hardware devices (tablets, PDAs, digital printers).
- Provided training to the restaurant staff.

ABOUT THE RESTAURANT

Botilia Sto Pelago is a family-owned bar, pub, and cafe located in Preveza, Greece. Established in 2012, it began as a small art cafe known for its detailed decor, mellow jazz atmosphere, and art exhibitions. Over the years, it has expanded to include a beer pub with a diverse selection of over 40 beers and a cocktail garden bar specialising in high-quality cocktails. The cocktail garden bar features a charming mix of local and imported plants alongside metalworks by local sculptors, while hand-painted artworks by local artists adorn the bar and tables. Botilia Sto Pelago offers coffee, tea, alcohol, and snacks, thereby becoming a popular destination for art, music, and a curated beverage experience. It has a seating capacity of 130 guests.

ABOUT THE SOLUTION PROVIDER

Sayl (InfinityMobile) is a customer loyalty and engagement platform with integrated web3 and commerce capabilities. It enables growing restaurant chains to manage multiple sales channels, collect and activate customer data, and drive revenue and retention.