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THE FUTURE OF DRIVE THRU

With growing demand for off-premises dining, updating the drive thru with technology and better design becomes a critical piece of the sales puzzle. BY DAVINA VAN BUREN

3M

The Drive Thru Grows Up

How brand experience in the drive thru has become a powerful differentiator.

For decades, the drive thru has been a large sales driver, but it's only in recent years that many brands have started paying attention to guest experience in this space. Awkward entrance points, simple signage, and crackling speakers were the norm, not to mention the not-so-glamorous view of the dumpsters and employee break areas in the back. Now, the tide has shifted. With up to 70 percent of quick-service revenue coming from this area, the drive-thru experience is finally getting some love.

Historically, brands have invested inside their stores to improve the environment and make the location more inviting to eat in, possibly enticing guests to upgrade their meals or order desserts before leaving. As restaurants invest more heavily in drive thrus, this aspect of operation is taking on new life. An efficient and effective drive thru begins with the design.

“Drive thrus have historically been under-invested in from a brand experience standpoint,” says Buddy Mayo, corporate vice president at **LSI Graphic Solutions**. “Sight lines of the garbage receptacles, gas lines, electric service, and kitchen access are what the customers view as they inch their way to the pickup window.” Instead, Mayo says, quick serves should use branded drive-thru elements, visual screening, and digital signage to reduce the perceived wait times and improve the customer’s experience.

A holistic look at the traffic plan and potential spots where drivers will sit for a moment allows for great opportunities to tell the brand story and highlight community activity, says Paul Falkenbach, vice president of sales and marketing for **National Sign Systems**. “A uniform brand representation from wayfinding through



“It’s really about technology, both inside and outside of the restaurant, that increases throughput in the drive thru and provides guests with a great experience.”

the thank you sign are critical.”

Today’s drive-thru innovations include outdoor digital menuboards, mobile interaction to facilitate delivery of online orders, and integration of business intelligence systems to prove real-time optimization of operations. “These innovations provide for more effective customer communications and engagement, more efficient order taking, improved queue

management, and more efficient operations—all working together to drive more profitability from the drive thru,” says Ken Neeld, CEO at **Delphi Display Systems**.

Digital signage is one of the most creative ways to improve drive-thru design. With outdoor digital menuboards, restaurants can add creative features, like full-screen takeovers. “This allows for full-screen ads to display when no cars are in

the drive-thru loop, which can be an effective way to attract more guests to the restaurant,” says Ryan Hildebrand, product manager at **SICOM**.

Once a guest enters the drive thru, digital signage provides a much richer ordering experience for the guest. “At the order point, the menuboard content can be personalized to a specific range of products based on a customer order,”

images and wording make it easier for the customer to identify what they want and then make a purchasing decision,” says Richard Ventura, vice president of strategy, DSCE for **NEC Display Solutions of America**. He also says that order confirmation screens within the menuboard have also been a game changer, helping immensely with speed and order accuracy.

Some quick serves are taking digital

and provides guests with a great experience,” Hildebrand says. “Inside the restaurant, drive-thru timers will add more visualization features to help restaurant crews increase speed of service and overall throughput. This includes real-time visualization of the drive thru that gives restaurant crews a comprehensive view of the drive thru at all times.”

Outside digital menuboards can sync with indoor menus, as well as order confirmation systems and pre-sell boards. “When all these components work together, it can provide drive-thru guests with a great experience,” Hildebrand says.

To address the all-important speed of service issue—the No. 1 drive-thru complaint—many restaurants are adding lanes or incorporating dual lanes into the original restaurant design. Some, like Chick-Fil-A, also use “brand ambassadors”—employees who come to the drive thru and take orders face-to-face with tablets. Not only does this decrease the customer’s perceived wait time, but it is also an excellent opportunity to increase brand awareness and customer service.

The rising popularity of mobile ordering has also created another trend: dedicated mobile order lanes. The equivalent of a grocery store express lane, they allow customers who order via a brand’s mobile app to zip through their own drive-thru lane. “I am keeping a close eye on the Dunkin’ flagship in Quincy, Massachusetts,” says Scott Marentay, global director of outdoor service innovation for **Acrelec**. “To my knowledge, they are the first team to dedicate a full lane to the mobile customer, allowing them to skip the line. It presents some obvious operational challenges to move outside the “first-in, first-out model” of drive-thru service.”

Marentay says that if Dunkin’s gambit pays off, we’ll see more side-by-side ordering setups convert to express lanes to skip the line. But with the rapid advancements in this area, we could see even more innovative solutions soon. “You can never count out the creativity of the marketplace,” he says. “I think that there is a magic bullet for the mobile customer, and someone is going to figure it out.”

No doubt, this trend is fueled by the



“Millennials are increasingly moving towards digital ordering and paying ahead for convenience.”

says Robert Heise, executive vice president at **Global Display Solutions**. “If they are looking to order beverages, the entire menuboard can be updated to a more compelling canvas of available beverages. The use of video in the drive thru has the ability to capture the attention of the customer more than just static content.”

Digital menuboards also allow for day-parting and incorporating imagery in the content, which has been very important for digital in the drive thru. “Large

to the next level by adding video feeds to their menuboards. “I like what Starbucks has incorporated, which is a portrait-mounted digital screen that serves as an order confirmation unit (OCU), but more importantly, can play live video of the barista who is interacting with you while taking your order,” Mayo says. “With the additional eye contact and personal exchanges, I have to believe they have a lift in sales—if not repeat customers—for the experience. Consider the low-tech alternative of the OCU screen and poor audio exchange, which is being offered by the vast majority of current installations.” Creative use of video feeds like the ones at Starbucks are a great example of how brands can use the drive thru to up their branding game.

“It’s really about technology, both inside and outside of the restaurant, that increases throughput in the drive thru



“However, those brands that focus on delivering a great customer experience in their drive thrus may actually take share from their competitors and delivery.”

all-important millennial demographic. “Millennials are increasingly moving towards digital ordering and paying ahead for convenience,” says Mark Brooks, national sales manager, food services and retail solutions group for **Panasonic**. “As millennials’ digital ordering and payment adoption increases, we will see quick serves offering more grab-and-go with mobile and kiosks, curbside pickup, and delivery options,” he says, adding that speed lanes where mobile orders can be picked up either by car or walk-up add a positive perception to the digital order journey.

Mark Hunter, global business manager for drive thru at **3M**, says millennial order

preferences can create other sales channels in addition to drive thru. “As an alternative channel for ordering, I could see volumes going up by tailoring the ordering processes with customer interests,” he says.

In addition to customized marketing, mobile ordering also allows restaurants to collect valuable consumer data about their customers’ preferences and habits. Mobile is a strong out-of-dining-room experience indicator of emerging revenue opportunities for restaurants. “Digital orders allow brands to capture individual customer information and connect directly with that customer with offers to drive their behavior,” Brooks says.

Another interesting trend among mil-

lennials is their propensity toward not owning cars, but this seems to be a geographical phenomenon. “Millennials in urban areas may not own cars, but automobile ownership in general has increased over the last decade,” says Anna Ellis, sales and marketing manager at **Ready Access**. “This is most likely due to suburban sprawl, a strong economy, high employment rates, and low gas prices.”

The propensity of millennials to not own cars hasn’t noticeably impacted quick-service sales—yet. In fact, it could give rise to another movement. Ellis says that the trend for delivery service is definitely on the rise among restaurants. “However, delivery appears to be in addition to drive thru versus a replacement for it,” she says. “Restaurants often offer both.” As the lines between quick serve, fast casual and delivery blurs, some traditional drive-thru restaurants are adding windows for order-ahead pick-up and courier services, such as Uber Eats, and res-

SUMMIT		Summit Innovations						
Rank	Restaurant	Hour CSS	Hour Avrg	Hour %	Cars Hour-Today	Day CSS	Day Avrg	Day %
1	Terminal Larkin	0:58	1:19	100 %	2 - 25	1:48	2:13	64 %
2	Section7 Shah Alam	1:00	1:41	94 %	31 - 162	1:12	2:01	80 %
3	Wangsa Maju	1:06	1:25	100 %	2 - 250	2:10	2:28	56 %
4	Esso Hulu Langat	1:06	1:47	90 %	10 - 58	1:07	1:58	81 %
5	Kulai	1:12	1:21	100 %	7 - 54	1:15	1:25	96 %
6	Gong Badak	1:12	2:03	84 %	25 - 174	1:12	2:06	76 %
7	Port Dickson	1:15	1:26	100 %	14 - 120	1:34	1:45	86 %
8	Pet Federal Highway	1:18	1:27	100 %	14 - 140	1:49	2:13	67 %
9	BHP Tanjung Malim	1:20	1:34	91 %	32 - 126	1:07	1:20	98 %
10	Taman Selera	1:20	1:31	94 %	17 - 127	1:16	1:37	90 %
11	Metrocity Matang	1:27	1:41	87 %	31 - 228	1:23	1:36	96 %
12	RTC Gopeng	1:28	1:38	100 %	7 - 22	1:36	1:49	86 %
13	Pet Metramac Cheras	1:28	1:43	91 %	23 - 136	1:47	2:01	73 %
14	Gua Musang	1:28	2:24	57 %	14 - 128	1:21	2:18	65 %
15	Ayer Keroh	1:29	1:58	83 %	23 - 144	1:26	1:52	84 %
16	Extreme Park	1:29	2:17	67 %	30 - 162	1:49	2:36	60 %
44	Kepong	1:50	1:57	79 %	14 - 100	1:55	2:03	80 %

easier. “Virtual order takers would greet guests, and displays would show predictive menu images and offerings based on their preferences,” he says.

Hildebrand says it is normal for some channels to shift as consumer preferences change. “For example, customers who choose delivery rather than visiting the restaurant can represent a valuable source of revenue, even if it shifts from the drive thru to another channel like delivery,” he says.

Delivery also represents a strong consumer preference for convenience, and the drive thru still represents one of the most convenient options, especially as more restaurants implement drive-thru timers and improve speed of service times. “If quick serves can consistently provide a great drive-thru experience, there’s no doubt the drive thru will remain a critical piece of the restaurant’s revenue,” Hildebrand says.

Should millennial behavior and preferences steer away from drive thrus, Cox says, “it simply creates new channels and opportunities through mobile, social, and other digital experiences of value.” Most quick-service restaurants are holding off on delivery lanes for now, preferring to see how the the models mature and what customer expectations are established before investing in this upgrade.

As the drive thru grows up, Doug Watson, president and CEO of **The Howard Company**, says restaurant operators should remember that the successful drive thru, most importantly, is a mindset. “From the design to the products and services in the drive thru and the training and reinforcement to the staff and crew, everyone has to be focused on the drive thru from bottom to top,” he says.

All in all, it’s an exciting time for the drive thru. “I’m glad this area is finally getting some attention, along with some innovative solutions that promote speed, accuracy, and a positive customer experience,” Falkenbach says. “The drive thru is a direct reflection on the quality and attention to detail that occurs with counter service. It’s great to see so many smart quick serves focusing attention on brand awareness and an improved customer experience in the drive-thru area.”



“The drive thru is a direct reflection on the quality and attention to detail that occurs with counter service.”

restaurants will need to consider alternative ways and areas to rendezvous with the finished goods. “Mobile order lanes, pick-up parking areas, and specific mobile pick-up islands and windows will be required for the increased pre-arrival orders to maximize growth,” Mayo says.

There is even talk of eliminating the drive-thru lane altogether; instead, a restaurant would have numbered parking stalls, like Sonic. “Either before approaching the brand or while safely parked, the customer would open the app, order their food, and sit in the comfort of their car in parking spot 10,” Mayo says. “They can surf the internet, make calls, and not have to worry about inching their car forward while in a painful queue. I could see offering Wi-Fi, and even having RGB LED screens for viewing entertainment while waiting.”

André Pravaz, CEO of **Summit Innovations**, says new cars with built-in ordering interfaces and predictive suggestions will make ordering from a car even

restaurants known for delivery, like Jimmy John’s and Domino’s Pizza, are adding drive-thru windows.

With the recent upsurge in services like Grubhub and Uber Eats, meal delivery—including fast food—is at an all-time high. “To consider whether this will impact drive-thru sales in the future, one must factor in variables such as delivery costs, aged food quality control, restaurant delivery-service best practices, and increased consumer access to multiple brands,” says Ken Neeld, CEO at Delphi Display Systems. “If the food quality and overall brand experience can be maintained in a delivery model, drive-thru sales could be adversely impacted. However, those brands that focus on delivering a great customer experience in their drive thrus may actually take share from their competitors and delivery.”

As mobile orders increase, quick-serve

Making the Move

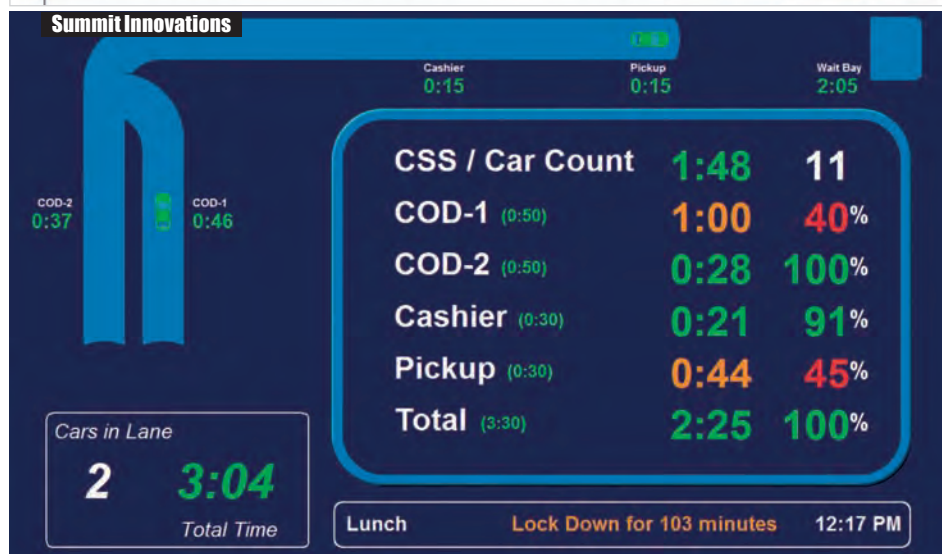
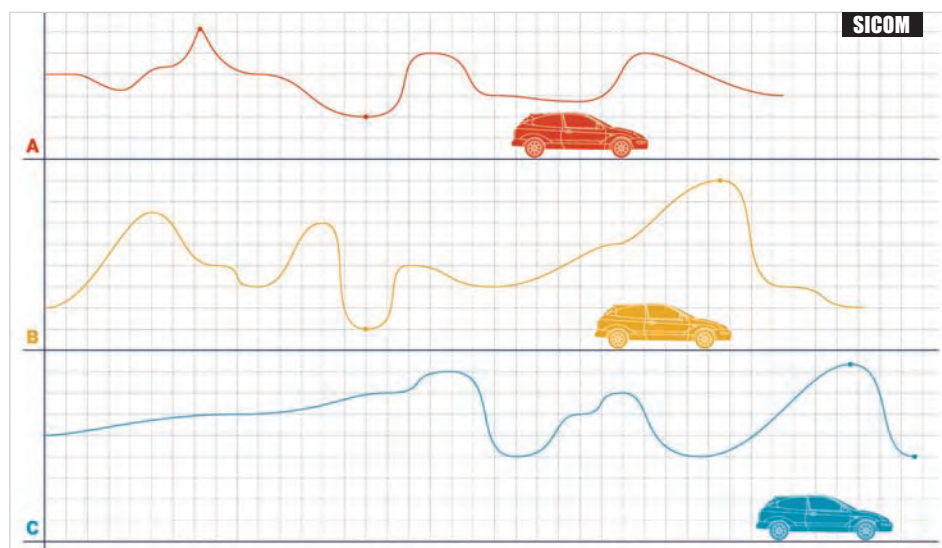
Industry pros share their best tips for adding or expanding drive thrus.

With advancing audio and video technologies, the ability to create personal guest experiences with mobile, and more vendors than ever in the space, the American drive thru is undergoing a renaissance. As competition in the space expands, restaurants must leverage this aspect of operations to meet customer demand and increase profits. For brands that have been considering adding a drive thru—or simply improving on what they have—now is the time.

Before embarking on a drive-thru project, however, it's important for operators to put themselves in guests' shoes. "All drive-thru decisions should be made with the customer journey in mind," says Ryan Hildebrand, product manager for **SICOM**. That starts before entering the parking lot.

Real estate is not just important to consider when it comes to the inside of the restaurant. The parking lot should be large enough to have one or two lanes without affecting customer parking. "The drive thru has to look like it is moving and set up for efficiency," says Doug Watson, president and CEO of **The Howard Company**. "While it is good to have lines at the drive thru, people pass you by if the line looks too long or like it is not moving fast." For that reason, double drive thrus are gaining momentum.

"For existing sites, we see so many opportunities in which lanes are not being used," says André Pravaz, CEO of **Summit Innovations**. "Consider moving your order point to the back of your building so that you have substantial increased space between service points." If it is a new build, leaders should ask themselves and their contractors if there is sufficient real estate to build a drive thru and if there is easy access without creating congestion in



and around the drive-thru area.

Paul Crawford, president and CEO of **Ordermatic**, says a drive thru should look like a logical extension of the building. "If you're going to spend the money to have a drive thru, accept the truth: You're creating an experience of your restaurant, and image absolutely matters," he says.

There are no one-size-fits-all solutions, so, quick-service owners and operators should put a good deal of thought and consideration into the installation or upgrade of a drive thru. "Work with an architect or experienced general contractor to ensure the site has adequate room to handle the increased traffic you'll get with

the inclusion of a drive thru,” says Paul Falkenbach, vice president of sales and marketing for **National Sign Systems**.

When it comes to the design of the drive-thru lane, it is essential that the speaker post is not placed on a corner facing a highway or major street. This helps eliminate unwanted traffic background noise. “It’s also important to have only one entry point to the drive thru,” says Paul Foley, president of HME hospitality and specialty communications at **HM Electronics**. “Multiple entry points can result in chaos during peak hours. The drive thru needs to be easy for a customer to figure out, and there should be signage that clearly indicates where to place your order.”

Restaurants should also ensure that all elements of the drive thru are cohesive. “With an increasing number of options available in the drive thru, such as outdoor digital menuboards, order confirmation systems, and pre-sell boards, all these screens need to work together to create a planned process that’s fluid and fast and provides customers with a great experience,” Hildebrand says. “With the drive-thru technology now available, there are opportunities for restaurants to serve and delight a set of customers that might never even visit the inside of the restaurant.”

To save time and money down the road, invest in commercial-grade equipment from the outset. “Focus on what the impact to your business will be if the system doesn’t work or cannot be read or seen,” says Richard Ventura, vice president of strategy, DSCE for **NEC Display Solutions of America**. “You need to set your goals and strategies and then define your needs and wants. Once a strategic plan is set into motion, aligning it with your brand, your goals, and your differentiation is key.”

When it comes to technology, it’s worth it to equip the team with the latest tools. Restaurant leaders should consider the largest-size vehicle that will commonly visit the drive thru, as this can affect menu height and placement. Easy-to-read digital menuboards and signage, along with a high-quality sound system, are a good start in establishing brand loyalty.

Imperative to a smooth drive-thru flow



“The drive thru shouldn’t be treated as a side issue. It needs a full team to focus on the speed and accuracy of the business.”

is the ability of staff to clearly hear customers’ orders. Order station enhancements, such as order confirmation and a quality sound system, help eliminate order errors and customer frustration. “Purchase a quality headset that includes a level of digital noise reduction and can remove external noise interruptions, allowing for clear voice engagements with your customers, which will increase order accuracy,” says Mark Brooks, national sales manager of **Panasonic’s** food services

and retail solutions group.

While it can be tempting to go down a rabbit hole of technological innovations, it is important not to overlook the basics. “Things like lighting, landscaping, and keeping the dumpster area clean are often overlooked, but can truly impact a customer’s decision to return to your restaurant or not,” Foley says. Items such as large marketing signage to cover garbage gates and strategically-placed trees and shrubs can go a long way in maintaining



the desired experience.

The space between order taking and order pickup is another excellent opportunity for marketing, assuming there is not a cash window. “That zone is a perfect location for impulse items,” Crawford says. “If a customer is waiting there for 20 seconds or more, then the spot is quite analogous to a Walmart line with impulse items all around.”

Despite technological advancements that can influence purchasing decisions and improve order accuracy, there is no substitute for excellent customer service. While much of this is basic, some of it is subliminal. “Make sure the focus is on customer comfort and accommodation,” Falkenbach says. “The addition of order-station and pay-window canopies enhance the customer experience by providing a respite from the elements.” Skipping out on a canopy or awning can keep customers from wanting to visit a store on bad weather days.

Anna Ellis, sales and marketing manager at **Ready Access**, points out that oper-

ators should review local building codes to ensure their windows are compliant. “For example,” Ellis says, “California typically requires a restricted service opening and flyfan, Florida may require a hurricane rating, and some counties require fully automatic windows with motors.” To improve drive-thru window design, owners and operators should consider surrounding the service windows with transoms and sidelights to provide more light to employees and a friendlier feel.

As mentioned earlier, there’s no substitute for good old-fashioned customer service, so having a properly-trained and enthusiastic drive-thru staff is paramount. “Quick-service owners and operators need dedicated staff to manage the drive-thru portion of the business,” says Mark Hunter, global business manager for drive thru at **3M**. “The drive thru shouldn’t be treated as a side issue. It needs a full team to focus on the speed and accuracy of the business.”

Managers should also include team members when establishing or re-estab-

lishing drive-thru operating procedures, actively seeking staff input and feedback. “They are the end user and can point out important details that someone who does not work the drive thru eight hours a day may overlook,” says Bob Noorian, founder and CEO of **R.F. Technologies, Inc.** “Showing the team is valued by having quality, clean, working equipment for everyone is very important as well. The team will respect the company that shows respect.”

Restaurateurs should think about production and plan store processes to optimize workflow efficiency. “If you have two or more order points, the kitchen needs to be able to react to those points,” Foley says. “Also, design your drive thru so you place the speaker post far enough back to get a longer queue. Your queue will impact your production flow.”

If brands have been on the fence about drive thrus and are ready to enter this market, they should thoroughly explore their options and think about what they want to accomplish and what the customer experience should feel like. “Adding a drive thru will add customers; that is a proven fact,” says Scott Marentay, global director, outdoor service innovation for **Acrelec**. “Do not skimp on signage or technology. If you take care of the customer in the drive thru, it will pay back.”

Whether a new installation or an upgrade to an existing setup, all drive-thru systems should be actively maintained, supported, and upgraded on a regular basis. Further, says Seth Remaley, senior director of sales and business development, QSR, for **Mood Media**, “if one is looking to incorporate a drive thru, make the most of that investment and continuously train your staff on how to best use it. Rely on and hold accountable your drive-thru equipment provider to coach you on best practices and how to use the system as a tool to make your life easier.”

The drive thru is a completely different experience than indoor dining, and should never be treated as an afterthought. Since the majority of a restaurant’s profits will likely come from it, brands should put their best staff there and build procedures that help customers enjoy the process. **SC**

Sales Drive

These proven and newly emerging tactics increase drive-thru sales.

It may seem like simply having a drive thru is a slam dunk for sales, but there's always room for improvement. With such a large percentage of most quick serves' revenue coming from the drive thru, any tips and tricks that influence purchasing decisions can push profits even higher.

It's not only about increased sales, however—a few small improvements can lead to a better customer experience, too. The drive thru is an extension of a brand; similar in ways to the indoor experience, but with its own vibe. Magan O'Dell, vice president of business development at **Uni-Structures**, suggests consulting with manufacturing companies that have an in-house design team in order to implement marketing, design, and branding that expands the indoor atmosphere to the drive thru. "This often includes color, vinyl logos, wood textures, LED lights, and promo boards that use pixel-rich digital images," she says.

Common sense says that the faster the service, the shorter the line. Dual lanes can help keep lines short in drive thrus. "This setup enables you to take double the amount of orders during a peak hour, essentially doubling your overall capacity," says André Pravaz, CEO of **Summit Innovations**. "Dual-lane order points come with a caveat though—your staff must be quick at preparing the meals and expediting the orders swiftly through the pick-up point."

Once a car enters the drive thru, restaurants can immediately help speed guests' decision-making process using digital signage. "Pre-sell boards can be used before the ordering section to highlight promos and limited time offerings before the guest begins ordering," says



“Dual-lane order points come with a caveat though—your staff must be quick at preparing the meals and expediting the orders swiftly through the pick-up point.”

Ryan Hildebrand, product manager for **SICOM**. When customers spot a LTO or special deal on the pre-sell board, they often will make an instant decision to purchase that item, saving time at the menuboard.

The menuboard itself should provide a clear message to customers, promote new

menu items and deals, and place information in front of the customer in an easy-to-read and appealing manner. Similar items, such as combos, beverages, and dollar menu items, should be grouped together in one area. "When the customer is well informed on the menu options, they'll make a menu selection faster," says Scott

Marentay, global director of outdoor service innovation for **Acrelec**. “LTO still rules the day.”

Richard Ventura, vice president of strategy, DSCE for **NEC Display Solutions of America**, advises formulating a strong drive-thru content strategy to increase sales. “Dayparting, offering LTOs, and having a call to action will help engage the right audience throughout the day,” he says.

Along with visual order confirmation at the outdoor unit, the ability of the culinary team to listen to the customer through headsets and listen-in-only systems boosts customer satisfaction in other ways. For example, a receipt may say “heavy pickle,” but the kitchen would hear “put pickles on the top, in the middle, and under the patties,” which is exactly what will satisfy the customer, but cannot be

tems in hand, face-to-face upselling, and doling out smiles and thank yous under a bright blue sky. “Quick serves have realized that customers appreciate face-to-face interaction in the drive-thru lane,” says Paul Foley, president of HME hospitality and specialty communications at **HM Electronics**. “When there’s a person out on the lane taking orders, it gives it a personalized touch to the customer experience. And when there’s a long line in the drive thru, customers know they won’t have to wait to reach the speaker post to place their order,” he says. This changes the customer’s perspective on their wait time because they know their order is being placed sooner.

As demand for speed and convenience increases on the consumer side, restaurants are responding in innovative ways. Increasingly, concepts are being built with no dining room at all. “We are seeing more restaurants built with a drive-thru and walk-up-only design,” says Anna Ellis, sales and marketing manager at **Ready Access**. Frozen custard concepts, coffee shops, and burger joints are jumping on this trend.

Restaurants are also adapting to mobile ordering options. As more brands invest in mobile, guests will be given the option to use the restaurant’s app, then pick up their orders at the drive thru or at designated parking spots. “Mobile apps may also provide promotional discounts through mobile notifications when you’re near a restaurant to entice you to stop in,” Foley says.

Many of the innovations we see in the modern drive thru—packaged value meals, simplified ordering, auto-greeters, clear menuboard design, friendly service—are common aspects that we have seen peak and flatten, so it is reassuring to see so many quick serves “reinventing the wheel” using technology. But don’t get too comfortable yet—the next wave of improvements is waiting in the wings. “The next incremental increases will be found through the integration of data and technology to create an entirely new customer experience that increases loyalty and spend,” says Seth Remaley, senior director of sales and business development, QSR, for **Mood Media**. **SC**



R.F. Technologies, Inc.



Ordermatic

“Quick serves have realized that customers appreciate face-to-face interaction in the drive-thru lane.”

Order confirmation units—which display a guest’s order on a digital screen—are one of the best ways to improve speed of service and accuracy. “Quick serves can save time suggestive selling by using graphics on the order confirmation unit and confirming order accuracy with the unit as well,” says Bob Noorian, CEO and founder of **R.F. Technologies, Inc.** This helps avoid bottlenecks caused by incorrect orders or additions. “The order confirmation unit, therefore, helps with speed of service, incremental sales, and overall order accuracy,” Noorian says.

quickly noted on a receipt in that detail. Attention to these small details builds brand loyalty. “The customer will return to the restaurant that has the technology to get it right every time,” Noorian says. A high-quality audio system with clear, crisp sound is always a sound investment in the drive thru.

In the old days, customers wouldn’t encounter the human element of the drive thru until the end of the experience. Now, it’s not unusual to see employees outside in the drive-thru lanes—greeting customers with tablet-style POS sys-