

#RESTwithEU

01 Pathway

**Digital
presence:
connecting
with dinners**



In today's digital age, maintaining a strong online brand presence is vital to the success of any business, including restaurants.

Having a robust digital presence enables restaurants to connect with a wider audience, engage customers, and build a loyal following. It serves as a virtual storefront that showcases your unique offerings, ambiance, and dining experience. **A well-crafted online brand presence**, encompassing a visually appealing website, active social media presence, and engaging content, not only attracts customers but also **helps establish credibility and trust**. It allows you to communicate your brand story, share updates and promotions, and engage with your audience in real-time. In an increasingly competitive market, a strong digital presence sets you apart, boosts brand visibility, and creates opportunities for growth. Get ready to embark on a digital journey and harness the power of online brand presence to leave a lasting impression on your target audience. Let's explore the world of digital possibilities and elevate your restaurant's presence in the online landscape.

WHAT ARE THE RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES FOR THIS CHALLENGE?

01

BEST PRACTICE 1:
BUILD AND NURTURE YOUR ONLINE BRAND PRESENCE.

02

BEST PRACTICE 2:
IMPROVE DINER DISCOVERY THROUGH PROFILE MANAGEMENT ON RESTAURANT DISCOVERY APPS, EFFECTIVE REVIEW HANDLING, AND SEO.

03

BEST PRACTICE 3:
DIGITALISE YOUR MENU.

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 highly recommend embracing these best practices for the following compelling reasons:



ONLINE VISIBILITY MATTERS:

If you don't have a website or have one but haven't invested in its maintenance, it's time to make a change. Relying solely on map applications may not be enough, especially if your restaurant is not located in a high-traffic area. Keep in mind that today's diners turn to the internet for research before dining out.



ADAPT TO THE DIGITAL AGE

If your restaurant has yet to adapt to the digital age and you've been running it the same way for the past two decades, it's time for a transformation. Initiating your online presence is a significant first step, which opens doors to a world of new best practices that can revolutionise your operations. Your website can become the central hub of your business.



COMPETITIVE EDGE

Staying competitive in today's market is essential. The slightest improvement in your restaurant can make all the difference between mere survival and thriving success. By adopting these practices, you can gain an edge over the competition and attract more customers.



ATTRACT NEW DINERS

If you've noticed a decline in your customer base and are receiving fewer phone calls and struggling to attract new diners, you must consider adopting a fresh approach. Implementing these best practices will help revitalise your restaurant's appeal and draw in a new wave of customers.

** This challenge has curated a selection of the best practices for enhancing online presence. It's essential to exercise discretion when adopting these practices, **as not all of them may align with your restaurant's specific needs.** Take the time to identify the best practice that is most relevant to the growth of your business. While it's possible that implementing the first one may naturally pave the way for others, **prioritise these practices based on how they cater to the distinct circumstances of your establishment.***

Always keep in mind that your online presence, whether through your website or social media profiles, serves as a means for potential customers to discover your restaurant. However, **the true essence of your business lies in what you offer: the delectable food, exceptional service, and memorable dining experience.**

Your online presence acts as a window into the heart of your restaurant, enticing customers to delve into what makes your establishment truly special.

1

BEST PRACTICE 1: BUILD AND NURTURE YOUR ONLINE BRAND PRESENCE

In the modern business landscape, it is clear that establishing an online presence, with a well-designed website as the fundamental cornerstone, is absolutely essential.

A website serves as a central hub for presenting basic business information, spanning from operating hours to menu offerings and social media connections. Beyond this, it often forms the bedrock upon which more sophisticated functionalities are built, including reservations, delivery services, and streamlined order management. But it is crucial not to overlook the importance of getting the basics right.



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



STANDING OUT IN A DIGITAL ERA

In a digital era filled with a wealth of choices, **standing out is the key to success for restaurants**. By creating a unique online presence, you can set yourself apart from the competition. Crafting visually captivating websites and focusing on social media engagement can help you showcase your unique values and leave lasting impression that will incite your customer to choose you over the rest.



REACHING NEW AUDIENCES

By establishing a strong online presence, your restaurant can tap into new markets and engage with a broader audience. With your distinct personality and values, along with targeted advertising, you can attract the attention of potential new customers who may have previously been unaware of your business.

Did you know that a whopping 80% of diners rely on the internet to find their next dining destination? It's clear that being absent from online directories and search engines is like turning off the lights to the largest channel of attracting new customers.

Source: "The State of Digitalisation of the Hospitality Industry in Spain" report, Basque Culinary Center Innovation (2022).

BEST PRACTICE 1 - DIGITAL PRESENCE: CONNECTING WITH DINNERS BUILD AND NURTURE YOUR ONLINE BRAND PRESENCE



CLEAR OBJECTIVES

Begin by defining clear and measurable objectives for your online brand presence. Are you aiming to increase online orders, attract more dine-in customers, or build a loyal online community? Understanding your goals will guide the formation of your strategy. Exercise caution when setting your goals: your objective might be as simple as creating a basic website to display your restaurant's information. It's important that you refrain from overly ambitious goals that could be challenging to attain, potentially lead to frustration. Begin with an achievable milestone that you can comfortably reach within a short timeframe.



WHAT ABOUT TIME

The primary factor that determines the timeline for website development is complexity. If you opt for free platforms with pre-designed templates, you could have your website up and running in as little as a day or a week. However, if you aim to incorporate additional features, the development and deployment process may take more than 10 weeks. It's essential to note that such extended timelines should not be the norm. For most restaurants, a basic website is sufficient to begin experiencing positive outcomes. More extensive projects, such as those for chains or upscale establishments, should be reserved for specific cases.



CHOOSE THE PERFECT RECIPE FOR YOUR WEBSITE

Selecting the right website builder, platform, or solution provider is crucial to ensuring your restaurant's online success. Consider your needs, budget, and desired features when evaluating different options. Discover the perfect fit for your needs: you have the option of simple, template-based solutions for website creation, or you can opt for a fully customised website. The choice is entirely yours.



DON'T FORGET SEO

Ensure that your website is optimised for maximum visibility. SEO, or Search Engine Optimisation, refers to the process of optimising a website's content and structure to improve its visibility and ranking on search engine results pages. For more information on this best practice, refer to [BEST PRACTICE 2: Improve diner discovery through profile management on restaurant discovery apps, effective review handling, and SEO.](#)



CONSIDER YOUR BUDGET

Budgets play a crucial role in dictating how you wish to approach website creation. You can opt to use free platforms with pre-designed templates that you can update yourself or ad-hoc development that can implement specific tools for your business. To provide you with a cost estimate, a basic custom-designed website built from scratch may require an investment of approximately €5,000. However, there are far more affordable solutions available: for as little as €20 to €50 per month, these alternatives handle all the essential maintenance tasks, offering a budget-friendly and hassle-free way to establish and maintain your online presence.



CONSISTENT BRAND IDENTITY

Your online presence should always be complemented by a compelling and unwavering restaurant brand. This entails the harmonious integration and consistent visibility of your brand elements, such as your restaurant name, logo, colours, and style, throughout your restaurant, website, and social media profiles. If you haven't ventured into the realm of social media, we strongly recommend you explore its potential. These platforms offer you valuable channels to engage with your diners, share captivating photos of your venue and delicious dishes, and more, ultimately enhancing your restaurant's visibility and connection with your audience.



ADOPT A MOBILE-FIRST APPROACH

Whenever feasible, prioritise designing your website with a mobile perspective in mind, as mobile devices are often the primary means through which visitors access your site. Keep this in mind when choosing your solution provider or website template.



THE POWER OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Employ high-quality images of your restaurant and its culinary creations to bolster your establishment's brand and create a visually captivating first impression.

Recipe for Success: Crafting Your Restaurant's Online Presence

- 5 Step Guide

01

DECIDE WHAT YOUR WEBSITE IS ABOUT.

Once you've chosen your solution provider (either an existing solution or a customised development), the first step is to clarify the purpose of your website and identify its essential features. It's imperative that you think ahead, even if you plan to start with a small-scale website, as this foresight can simplify future implementations and expansions. What information are you looking to include, and what information do your customers seek? This may comprise details such as your opening hours, photos, the menu, contact information, and links to your social media profiles. Do you wish to share the story of your restaurant's origin, its underlying motivations, and what sets it apart from competitors?

02

GATHER THE NECESSARY INFORMATION.

Whether you choose to build the website on your own or enlist the services of a professional, it's crucial to ensure you have all the necessary materials and information prepared in advance. This proactive approach will help prevent delays and misunderstandings. Typically, a restaurant website includes photographs of your establishment, signature dishes you offer, written descriptions about your business, the menu (with or without prices), and various contact options (such as social media links, phone numbers, and reservation systems). Having all these elements ready before beginning the website creation process is highly advisable.

03

CONSIDER ALL ASPECTS CAREFULLY: YOUR WEBSITE MAY BE SCALABLE.

While creating a website may seem straightforward, it can quickly turn complex beyond imagination. Establishing an initial structure is vital to avoiding any unnecessary costs. If you intend to expand your website by incorporating new sections, such as booking and ordering systems, ensure it can be seamlessly integrated with your existing restaurant operations to maximise efficiency and convenience. To delve deeper into these best practices, we offer additional best practices on Booking, [BEST PRACTICE 3: Digitalising your menu, and Ordering](#).

04

DESIGN AND DEVELOP YOUR WEBSITE.

Developing a visually appealing and user-friendly website is essential when establishing an online presence. Confirm that your website reflects your restaurant's branding, showcases high-quality photos of your establishment and dishes, and provides all the essential information your customers seek. Keep in mind the features you initially outlined, such as the menu, contact information, and links to your social media profiles. The design and development phase is where your vision transforms into a fully functional online platform for your restaurant. Ensure that the user experience, which is a critical aspect of your design process, aligns with the purpose and vision you defined in step 1.

05

MONITOR AND KEEP YOUR WEBSITE UPDATED.

It's critical to monitor the performance of your website regularly after its launch. Use web analytics tools to track visitor metrics, identify areas for improvement, and ensure a smooth user experience. Regularly update your website to reflect any changes in your business, such as modified opening hours, menu updates, changes in contact information, or new locations. Keeping your website fresh and updated is essential to providing the best possible experience for your customers and maintaining a positive online reputation.

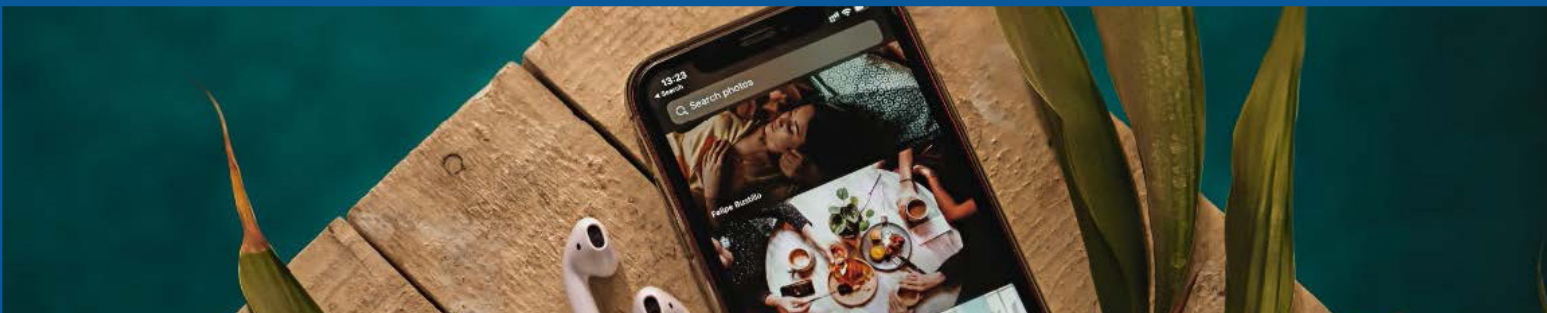
We encourage you to consider the following pathways after crafting your online presence with a website:

A BOOKING APPLICATION:

A website serves as the primary gateway for potential customers to explore your restaurant, presenting them with essential information about your dining offerings and allowing them to peruse your menu and make contact if they find something appealing. Moreover, your website can offer a seamless booking process, eliminating the need for customers to make phone calls and wait for restaurant availability. With just a few clicks on your website, customers can instantly check real-time availability for their desired date and time. Upon booking, the restaurant can promptly confirm the reservation and seamlessly integrate the new reservation into its list and table management systems. [Find out more about these best practices at Facilitating booking: Easy reservation management.](#)

A TAKE-AWAY AND DELIVERY:

Given the necessary resources, your business can expand its offerings to include an ordering system integrated directly into your website, mirroring the functionality described earlier for the booking system. You can provide your customers with the choice to place orders, allowing them to opt between picking up their order in person or having it conveniently delivered to their doorstep. [You can learn more about implementing this feature in Challenge 8's best practices: Delivery, take-away, and others: New business models and revenue channels.](#)



Take note of:

Understand that creating a website for your restaurant comes with potential risks. Be prepared to tackle technical challenges, manage content effectively, prioritise online security, overcome SEO obstacles, and allocate resources wisely. By addressing these risks head-on, you can ensure a smooth and successful website implementation that drives growth for your business.

2

BEST PRACTICE 2: IMPROVE DINER DISCOVERY THROUGH PROFILE MANAGEMENT ON RESTAURANT DISCOVERY APPS, EFFECTIVE REVIEW HANDLING, AND SEO.



Maintaining a digital presence encompasses various elements, including effective Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), strategic review management, and leveraging discovery apps.

Implementing robust SEO strategies ensures that your restaurant ranks higher in search engine results, making it easier for potential customers to discover and choose your establishment for their needs. Proactive review management allows you to monitor and respond to customer feedback, enhancing your reputation and building trust. Additionally, leveraging discovery apps and platforms expands your reach, enabling new customers to discover your restaurant and engage with your services. By embracing a comprehensive strategy for your digital presence, your restaurant can effectively attract and retain customers, ultimately driving growth and success.

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



ENSURE VISIBILITY IN EVERY SEARCH RESULT

In the vast online landscape, being easily found in every search result is essential for restaurants to maximise their visibility. By implementing effective SEO strategies, restaurants can ensure they appear at the top of search engine results, increasing the chances of attracting new customers.



ELEVATE THE VOICE OF YOUR CUSTOMERS

By actively engaging with and responding to customer reviews, feedback, and comments, restaurants can build trust, demonstrate excellent customer service, and exhibit their dedication to customer satisfaction. Encouraging customers to share their experiences through online reviews and testimonials amplifies their voices and acts as social proof, attracting new diners and fostering a positive reputation. Embracing customer feedback as a valuable asset helps restaurants to continually improve, tailor their offerings, and create a more personalised and memorable dining experience.



CONSIDER CREATING ACCOUNTS AND PROFILES IN THIRD-PARTY APPLICATIONS FOR RESTAURANT DISCOVERY

By being listed on restaurant search engine aggregators, restaurants can reach potential customers who are searching for information on new dining options before making reservations. The creation of the profile in such third-party application includes information such as the restaurant's name, cuisine, menu, location, hours, and photos, which helps potential customers learn about and make informed decisions about satisfying their dining needs.

BEST PRACTICE 2 - DIGITAL PRESENCE: CONNECTING WITH DINNERS IMPROVE DINER DISCOVERY THROUGH PROFILE MANAGEMENT ON RESTAURANT DISCOVERY APPS, EFFECTIVE REVIEW HANDLING, AND SEO.



SEO IS A MUST:

Effective SEO is key. It's important to consider the keywords and phrases your potential customers might use when searching for a restaurant like yours. Conduct keyword research, optimise your website content, and ensure that your website is mobile-friendly. Staying updated with SEO best practices can significantly boost your online visibility. What does this mean? If your restaurant specialises in Mediterranean cuisine, **make sure that your restaurant's information includes keywords that people are likely to use** when searching for restaurants of the same style. Ensure that you use keywords like "Mediterranean" or dish names associated with it. Remember to include keywords that identify your location, whether it's your city or region. This will boost your restaurant's spot in search engine results.



ACTIVELY ENGAGE WITH REVIEWS

Managing customer reviews and feedback is an ongoing commitment. In the digital age, many users actively contribute reviews and feedback on various platforms where potential customers seek restaurant recommendations. **Encourage customers to share their experiences** and be prompt and courteous in your responses. Showcase your restaurant's dedication to delivering top-notch service and addressing concerns professionally. Remember that **every review presents an opportunity to build and enhance your reputation**. Responding to reviews - both positive and negative - with professionalism and appreciation demonstrates your commitment to customer satisfaction. Remember that these reviews are an integral part of your restaurant's digital presence and can significantly impact its success.



CONTROL YOUR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

You must take ownership of the information that appears about your restaurant on the internet. Your restaurant's name may already be listed on navigation and mapping apps. To ensure accuracy and consistency, **reach out to the providers of these maps and update your business profile with correct and up-to-date information**. This proactive approach helps you maintain control over your digital footprint, ensuring that potential customers can access accurate details about your restaurant online. By owning your online presence, you can shape the narrative and provide a seamless experience for customers seeking information about your establishment ([BEST PRACTICE 1: Build and nurture your online brand presence.](#)).



TRACK AND MEASURE

Implement analytics tools to consistently track and measure the performance of your digital presence. These solutions can range from basic to advanced, but we recommend maintaining a vigilant eye on both customer reviews and your visibility in search engines. Prospective customers often rely on these platforms for information. If you have lower ratings or are absent from search results, or if the information displayed is inaccurate, it can significantly impact their perception of your restaurant. Regularly assess and optimise your digital strategies based on the data and insights you gather to ensure you maintain a positive online image and maximise your restaurant's success.

Take note of:

The customer isn't always right, but the internet empowers their voice to be significant. Safeguarding your online image and reputation on the internet and social media is exceptionally critical. You may encounter dissatisfied and sometimes unpleasant customers, even if their claims lack validity. However, for the sake of your business, strive to be courteous and unwavering in your responses. This is because potential customers will not only see the customer's opinion but also your reactions.

Recipe for Success: Improve Diner Discovery and Reputation Management – 5 Step Guide

01

SEARCH FOR YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE AND CHECK THE RESULTS.

Begin by conducting a thorough search of your restaurant online and examine the results that appear. This initial step is crucial for evaluating your current digital presence, offering valuable insights into how potential customers perceive your business and identifying opportunities for improvement.

02

IDENTIFY THE APPLICATIONS AND SEARCH ENGINES WHERE YOU WANT TO APPEAR.

Next, pinpoint the specific applications and search engines where you'd like your restaurant to feature prominently. Create accounts on these platforms and diligently follow their procedures for claiming ownership of your restaurant's information. Many platforms offer options such as "I'm a Business" or "I'm a Restaurant" to facilitate this process. Taking control of your digital presence on these platforms empowers you to actively manage and curate how your restaurant is portrayed in the online realm.

03

CONSISTENTLY MAINTAIN YOUR RESTAURANT'S INFORMATION.

Consistency remains key, much like in the previous best practice. Keep your restaurant's information readily accessible and meticulously up-to-date. The accuracy and timeliness of this information are vital to guarantee potential customers' access to trustworthy and updated details about your establishment.

04

REVIEW AND OPTIMISE THE RESTAURANT CONTENT TO BE SEO-FRIENDLY.

When crafting online content, always bear in mind the principles of SEO. Optimise your content to align with search engine best practices, utilising relevant keywords, and ensuring your website's structure and content are search engine-friendly. These strategies collectively work to enhance your online visibility and expand your reach to a broader audience. If needed, don't hesitate to seek professional guidance and assistance to ensure your SEO efforts are on point and yield the best results.

05


SOLICIT CUSTOMER FEEDBACK AND REVIEWS.

Remember to encourage your customers to share their experiences by leaving reviews on popular platforms at the end of the service. Actively engage with their reviews, responding professionally and courteously, whether they are positive or negative. Utilise their feedback as an opportunity to improve and enhance your restaurant's reputation. Positive reviews and the respectful handling of negative ones not only improve your online image but also act as social proof, attracting new diners and demonstrating your dedication to customer satisfaction. By continuously monitoring and managing customer reviews, you actively contribute to your restaurant's online presence and its potential for success.

3

BEST PRACTICE 3:

DIGITALISE YOUR MENU



Digitalising a menu in a restaurant refers to the process of **converting a traditional, paper-based menu into a digital format** that can be accessed and viewed on electronic devices such as smartphones, tablets, and computers. With a digital menu, your restaurant can provide customers with an immersive and interactive experience, displaying your offerings in a visually appealing and informative manner. Digital menus allow for easy updates, enabling restaurants to feature seasonal specials, promotions, and dietary information instantly. Indeed, every advantage it offers to the restaurant also extends to diners and the restaurant's online visibility. It has become increasingly common for potential customers to peruse menus online and determine their dining choices based on what each establishment presents. Ultimately, as demonstrated below, digitising the menu, though appearing straightforward, can serve as a pivotal step that aligns with various other restaurant processes.

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



LESS PRINTING, MORE UPDATES

A digital menu offers the convenience of effortless menu updates. Gone are the times of reprinting for minor changes, patching prices or ingredients, or replacing whole dishes. Even seasonal menu or dishes can be easily added to a digital menu.



NEW SELLING OPPORTUNITIES

By facilitating menu updates, you have the flexibility to introduce special offers at specific times or for particular dishes, as well as adjust prices based on demand or inventory levels. Implementing price reductions for dishes with surplus stock can facilitate cost optimisation and a reduction in food waste.



IMPROVED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

A digital menu provides an ideal platform for presenting information and context about your dishes. Utilise this space to present high-quality food photographs, offer detailed descriptions, and enable customers to filter options, such as by allergens or dietary restrictions. It serves as a powerful marketing tool to captivate potential new customers when they discover your menu online.

Did you know that a significant 84% of diners now browse restaurant menus online before choosing a new dining spot? This is a substantial increase from just 59% in 2017. It's evident that having your menu readily available online is like offering a sneak peek into your culinary world, making it an essential part of attracting and satisfying potential customers.

BEST PRACTICE 3 - DIGITAL PRESENCE: CONNECTING WITH DINNERS

DIGITALISE YOUR MENU



CHOOSE THE CORRECT SOLUTION FOR YOUR RESTAURANT

When it comes to digitising restaurant menus, there is a broad array of options available, offering a diverse range of solutions and functionalities. These solutions vary in complexity, from simple methods like creating a PDF to share digitally or through QR codes to more advanced ones that utilise technology, such as artificial intelligence (AI), to make personalised food recommendations based on customer preferences, habits, and current trends. The choice of which solution to adopt depends on the unique characteristics and requirements of each restaurant. This extensive variability makes menu digitisation an easily adaptable and scalable practice with the potential to positively impact the restaurant industry as a whole.



CONTENT CURATION AND QUALITY IMAGERY

Begin by curating the content for your digital menu. Choose high-quality images that do justice to your dishes and create a visually appealing menu. Craft detailed and enticing descriptions to advertise the essence of your cuisine.



NAVIGATIONAL SIMPLICITY

Ensure that your digital menu is easy to navigate. Implement user-friendly features such as filters, allergen information, and search functionality to help customers find dishes that match their preferences and dietary needs.



INTERACTIVE AND INFORMATIVE ELEMENTS

Elevate your menu by incorporating interactive or informative elements: consider adding videos, chef's recommendations, or customer reviews to enhance the dining experience and engage potential customers.



PRICING AND SPECIALS MANAGEMENT

Use the digital menu as a dynamic tool to manage pricing and specials. Update prices based on demand or inventory and introduce special offers at specific times or for particular dishes.



MOBILE OPTIMISATION

In today's mobile-centric world, ensure that your digital menu is optimised for mobile devices. A responsive design will ensure accessibility and engagement for customers who browse your menu on their smartphones.



MAKE YOUR MENU 'PHYGITAL'

In the midst of the current rapidly evolving restaurant landscape, it's necessary to embrace innovation and reimagine the dining experience. 'Phygital' combines the best of both physical and digital worlds, offering your customers a dynamic and engaging way to explore your offerings. Consider incorporating digital menu access into *physical* elements within your restaurant: explore creative placements on napkins, coasters or even in plates to offer a seamless way for your customers to explore your menu digitally.



We encourage you to consider the following pathways after digitising your menu:

INTEGRATION WITH POS SYSTEMS:

Beyond the fundamental step of merely digitising the paper menu, which represents the most basic level of menu digitisation, there is an opportunity to advance and integrate it with other restaurant processes. One option involves linking it with the point-of-sale (POS) system, where waitstaff access the menu on mobile devices and record orders directly into the POS system. Should you choose to pursue this avenue, you must consider a potential integration with your existing POS system to ensure seamless operation. [Learn more about POS systems in best practices in \[CHALLENGE 5 - Business insights: gathering and using data \(Data and market intelligence\)\].](#)

TABLE MANAGEMENT:

Consider the impact of a digital menu on your restaurant's table management. A smoothly integrated system can optimise table turnover, allowing orders to be sent directly to the kitchen and even granting customers the option to place orders directly from their digital menu. [We delve deeper into table management in best practices in \[CHALLENGE 4 - Improving table service: faster and better processes\].](#)

MENU ENGINEERING:

Menu Engineering is a strategic approach aimed at structuring a menu to maximise profitability. In essence, it entails a thorough understanding of the cost breakdown for each dish, ingredient, and portion. This knowledge equips restaurants to make well-informed decisions, such as identifying the most profitable dishes, monitoring the menu items' popularity, and reacting to ingredient price fluctuations. It allows them to ensure that their menu remains a financially viable and enticing offering for their customers. A sophisticated digital menu harmoniously integrated with the restaurant's operations can furnish the establishment with this vital information, presenting the restaurant with significant advantages and potential profits. [More information about menu engineering in best practices in \[CHALLENGE 3 - Intelligent warehouses: towards optimised food and stock tracking\].](#)



Recipe for Success: Designing an Interactive Digital Menu

- 5 Step Guide

01

BEGIN WITH YOUR MENU'S EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS.

Before delving into the digital menu transformation, you must conduct an initial assessment. Assuming your restaurant already has a menu in a traditional format, be it printed or in another form, take a close look at your existing offerings with the aim of understanding your menu's structure, items, descriptions, and pricing. This serves as the foundation for digitising your menu effectively. Ensure your menu is up-to-date and prepared prior to commencing the digitisation process.

02

CHOOSE A SOLUTION PROVIDER AND ONBOARD THEM INTO THE DIGITAL MENU DEVELOPMENT.

With the rise of digital menus in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a plethora of solutions have flooded the market, simplifying the process of creating digital menus for restaurants. Your first step should be selecting the one that aligns best with your specific requirements and budget. These options vary, from those exclusively offering digital menus to more comprehensive solutions that incorporate physical elements like QR codes and labels. Some even offer advanced features, smoothly connecting the digital menu with your ordering system and point-of-sale (POS) setup. Carefully assess your needs to determine which solution suits your restaurant best. After choosing your solution provider, initiate the interaction: in this step, you'll closely collaborate with your selected solution provider or follow the provided manual, sharing the necessary information to customise the digital solution to meet your restaurant's distinct requirements. Alternatively, if the platform is self-managed, you'll be responsible for inputting menu information directly into the platform.

03

ENRICH YOUR DIGITAL MENU WITH VISUAL COMPONENTS.

If the solution permits, take the opportunity to enrich your menu by incorporating high-quality images of your dishes and beverages. This addition is pivotal for streamlining the digitisation process and, more importantly, for improving the customer experience. The visual appeal of your offerings can significantly influence diners' choices and expectations. The choice is yours, but we strongly recommend that you include professionally taken photographs. While images captured with your mobile phone are acceptable, higher quality pictures can significantly enhance the final appearance of your digital menu. Professional photographers specialise in this type of work, and their services are worth considering for achieving the best results.

04

DIGITALISE YOUR MENU USING THE SOLUTION PLATFORM.

This step is dedicated to the concrete digitisation process, during which you'll either directly input menu items, descriptions, and prices into the digital platform or provide this information to your solution provider for menu configuration. Additionally, you'll seamlessly incorporate eye-catching visuals into the menu, enhancing the presentation of each item.

05

TEST, LAUNCH, AND MANAGE YOUR DIGITAL MENU.

We highly recommend conducting a preliminary test with a small sample of customers before full implementation. Choose off-peak hours and involve your regular patrons in a controlled trial. Inform them about the introduction of a new menu, allowing them to explore it and provide feedback or suggest any changes. After thorough testing and necessary adjustments, extend the changes to the entire restaurant. Keep in mind that there will be a transitional phase for you, your staff, and your customers. The results will become apparent in due time.

BEST PRACTICE 3 - DIGITAL PRESENCE: CONNECTING WITH DINNERS
DIGITALISE YOUR MENU

Digitising restaurant menus offer numerous advantages, as highlighted in this guide. However, it's important to acknowledge the existence of a digital gap in certain segments of the population: not everyone possesses the same level of proficiency in using electronic devices. This challenge is especially relevant for older individuals who may encounter difficulties with mobile phones and technology in general. Additionally, there are those who do not have access to mobile phones or the internet, further exacerbating the issue. To address this, we strongly recommend implementing alternative solutions to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for all potential customers.



Other SME restaurants have already proved the best practice

Restaurant MEAT (Virtuvės projektai) (from Lithuania) implementing the product of Eatable Technology Srl (from Romania).



Objective of the pilot

The pilot project aimed to implement a digital system in “Meat Steak House” to enhance customer engagement throughout their restaurant experience.

Overview

The pilot was initiated to address several objectives, including streamlining order-taking processes, minimising errors, digitising restaurant operations, and refining the takeaway system. The project spanned from May 25, 2023, to July 27, 2023, incurring a total cost of €5,150.

“Everything [during the pilot project] was perfect! We improved our eShop and its management. [We had] the opportunity to print dishes stickers straight from the order. This improvement helps us to be more digital. It is very comfortable for our guests. [Now, we are thinking on new digital improvements]: the guests ordering system through QR – straight to the cash register and to printers in the kitchen. Also, I would like to implement in the kitchen the screens for orders’ calculations: [the] kitchen could mark the ready order and the waiter will know when he has to come to take the order. [Digitalisation] helps to be more productive, to generate more sales and to be more comfortable for the guests and personal.”

Meat Steak House (LT)

HERE ARE OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Initial consultation between the restaurant and solution provider to align the tool's functionalities with the restaurant's needs;
- Validation of the tablet and printer with the solution provider;
- Capture of new photos and creation of resources for the digital menu;
- Configuration of the digital tool, including menu information, dish photos, logo, and restaurant details;
- Technical setup of the tablet and printer in the kitchen and dining room;
- Potential POS integration and the inclusion of a payment platform (Stripe) in the app;
- Staff training for order-taking using the application;
- Implementation of order-taking functionality, tablet notification system in the kitchen, and an integrated reservation system on the restaurant's website;
- Gradual rollout of new functions based on feedback and consolidation of the basic system.

ABOUT THE RESTAURANT

JSC "Virtuvės projektai" presents "Meat Steak House", a meat lover's paradise with locations in Vilnius and Neringa, Lithuania. Led by renowned chef Liutauras Čepreckas, a Le CordonBleu graduate with Michelin-starred experience, the restaurants offer the finest quality beef sourced from local Lithuanian farmers and beyond. With a state-of-the-art dry-aging room and open flame grilling, the Vilnius venue provides seating for 70 guests, while the Neringa summer restaurant comfortably accommodates 80 outdoors and 30 indoors. The menu is carefully crafted to cater to brunch, à la carte, and business lunch selections. To complement your meal, the restaurant offers an extensive and diverse wine selection, housed in their 600-bottle wine room. Apart from exceptional dining, the establishments are well-equipped to host business events and presentations.

ABOUT THE SOLUTION PROVIDER

Bootseat offers a white-label user-centric marketing and sales SaaS solution, designed to facilitate restaurant revenue management practices. The platform enables restaurants to present their customers with a comprehensive solution, granting them the option to place orders online for both delivery and pickup, make table reservations, order and pay at the table, and enjoy loyalty offers across online and offline interactions.