

#RESTwithEU

04

Pathway

Improving Table Service: Faster and Better Processes



INTRODUCTION - IMPROVING TABLE SERVICE: FASTER AND BETTER PROCESSES

While dining out, customer service and the speed of service consistently top the list of priorities. Elevation of the dining experience and enhancement in the speed of service directly correlate with increased customer satisfaction. This, in turn, results in an increased number of positive reviews and an influx of recommendations from satisfied patrons. Achieving this level of excellence necessitates the optimization of processes, reduction of wait times, and ensuring that the staff is equipped with the necessary tools and resources to deliver exceptional service.

The days of taking orders manually on paper or shouting them through the kitchen are behind us. These methods not only lead to more errors but also project a less favourable image of the establishment. Therefore, the solution lies in empowering your waitstaff with digital devices and seamlessly transferring orders directly to the kitchen. This minimizes errors while expediting the entire process. In certain cases, the customers too can improve efficiency by using their own devices or digital kiosks to place orders themselves, thereby accelerating the service.

It is time to embark on a journey to streamline your table service processes, forging a seamless connection between the front end and the kitchen. You should acquire tools that craft remarkable dining experiences, resulting in heightened customer satisfaction. It is further helpful to embrace the challenge of making your processes swifter, more efficient, and truly magical in the eyes of your patrons.

WHAT ARE THE RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES FOR THIS CHALLENGE?

01 BEST PRACTICE 1:
INTRODUCE DIGITAL ORDERING AND COMMAND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

02 BEST PRACTICE 2:
ALLOW DIGITAL PAYMENTS

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 the following compelling reasons:



ERROR-FREE ORDERING:

Say goodbye to the days of deciphering illegible handwriting or misunderstandings between the waiter's instructions and the kitchen. With digitalization, orders are seamlessly transmitted to the kitchen without any hiccups or errors, reducing both cost and food waste.



QUICKER SERVICE:

Orders are transmitted from the table to the kitchen within seconds, eliminating the delays caused when servers must return to the kitchen to convey instructions to the chef. This expedites food preparation and ensures faster service to the customers.



ENHANCED EXPERIENCES GENERATE MORE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Elevating customer service increases the likelihood of receiving positive reviews and recommendations from friends and family. Exceeding customer expectations regarding service enhances the overall perceived value of the dining experience, which extends beyond the quality and taste of the food.



INCREASED TURNOVER RATE


Faster food preparation, streamlined processes, and quicker payments contribute to a higher turnover rate. Reducing the time customers spend at a table leads to accommodation of more clients and increase in revenue. Therefore, it is recommended to ensure that your timing aligns with the type of establishment you are operating so that the experience is not negatively influenced.

** In this challenge, we focus on the efficiency of the table service. These practices impact both the customer's experience and the business. An efficient table service ensures that the customer receives their food faster and without error. Moreover, sometimes, it reduces the waiting time for the server to come and take the customers' orders. For the business, reducing errors leads to less food waste, in turn resulting in lower costs, while improving the pace of order delivery improves the establishment's image, causing better reviews and recommendations.*

To ensure the effectiveness of these practices, it is essential to be mindful of the intended customer experience. For instance, in a fast-food chain, implementing digital kiosks for order placement without direct interaction with waitstaff can enhance efficiency. However, the requirements of a fine-dining setting are different. Hence, it is crucial to tailor the processes accordingly. Providing a QR code for customers to place orders themselves, potentially without waiter interaction, may not align with the expected level of customer service where personalized recommendations and explanations of dishes are valued. In addition, digital ordering and payment methods, such as digitalizing orders directly from a POS system or via a tablet carried by the server, can vary in suitability across different scenarios. Therefore, it is vital to understand your operational process, define the desired customer experience, and select a digital solution that seamlessly integrates into your day-to-day operations.

1

BEST PRACTICE 1: INTRODUCE DIGITAL ORDERING AND COMMAND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS



In our fast-paced and ever-changing world, ensuring a seamless and convenient order management process is paramount for the success of restaurants. The integration of digital ordering and internal order management system is not indispensable, as it offers patrons and restaurant staff the convenience of placing and managing orders effortlessly, whether through the restaurant's website or a third-party application. This user-friendly process typically involves selecting the desired dishes, customizing options, specifying pickup or delivery preferences, and confirming the order with a simple tap. Restaurants have the flexibility to either develop their in-house digital ordering and order management system that is accessible through their website or opt for a third-party platform that consolidates orders within a single app. This versatility allows restaurants to efficiently manage their order flow while ensuring that diners can easily access their preferred dining experience, thus enhancing both customer satisfaction and operational efficiency.

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



PUTTING PEN AND PAPER ASIDE

Leave behind the chaos of misinterpreted orders and illegible handwriting. Embrace a digital future with greater clarity and possibilities. Switching from pen and paper to a digital format brings efficiency and precision. Step into a new era of flawless communication and elevate your restaurant to new heights.



NO MORE RUNNING UP AND DOWN

Unleash the potential of your restaurant with automation and say goodbye to lengthy waiter trips to welcome a seamless dining experience. Let customers self-order as food magically arrives at their table, creating unforgettable moments. Step into the future, where innovation reigns and your restaurant sets the stage for extraordinary dining adventures.

Did you know that a longer waiting time leads to renegeing behaviour, a prolonged period before a customer returns, and a shorter dining duration? Without waiting, the total revenue generated by the restaurant can increase by nearly 15%.

BEST PRACTICE 1 - IMPROVING TABLE SERVICE: FASTER AND BETTER PROCESSES INTRODUCE DIGITAL ORDERING AND COMMAND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS



DECIDE WHICH PART OF THE EXPERIENCE YOU WANT TO IMPROVE

Table service can be divided into several categories: digital ordering from the waiter, automated ordering for customers, automatic orders to the kitchen, etc. Check the aspect that requires improvement or renovate it all at once.



CHOOSE THE RIGHT SOLUTION FOR YOUR RESTAURANT

Begin by closely examining your specific needs, financial constraints, and the features you aspire for in your ordering and command management system. When selecting a digital solution, it is crucial to differentiate between basic and advanced options. Basic systems prioritize simplicity and ease of use, offering essential functionality. On the other hand, advanced systems provide a broader range of features, catering to restaurants with more intricate requirements, such as deeper customization, kitchen system integration, detailed reporting, and efficient order management for high volumes. Therefore, it is essential to carefully consider your restaurant's specific operational needs and complexity while choosing to guarantee a system that perfectly aligns with your business goals and customer expectations.



CHECK FOR POS COMPATIBILITY

The digitalization process encompasses a crucial aspect of connecting various software to automate steps. Not every POS system works with every solution provider; hence, ensuring their compatibility is essential to acquire better and faster results. Discover the factors to consider if you lack a POS system or how to incorporate integrations into your strategy in [Challenge 5: "Business insights: gathering and using data \(Data and market intelligence\)"](#).



MAKE IT TO THE KITCHEN

An ordering and command management system cannot be fully completed without a touchpoint in the kitchen. Don't forget to add a printer or a screen so the orders can get directly to the chef and kitchen staff in the shortest time possible.



GATHER YOUR TABLE INFORMATION

Based on the solutions employed, you will need a digital map of the restaurant to know the dishes ordered by each table. In any case, learning about the structure of your restaurant is beneficial when deciding which tool to implement. How do you determine which table to serve? Have you established designated numbers for each table? Are your staff well-acquainted with the system? What can you do when tables are rearranged or combined? These protocols should be firmly in place as you integrate ordering software.



COLLECT ALL THE POSSIBLE DATA

Prior to rolling out a solution, try to collect a diverse range of metrics, including turnover ratios, order volumes, average ticket values, and the time waitstaff spend moving between tables and the kitchen, among others. By amassing this data, you can make informed decisions about where to initiate improvements and examine the effectiveness of the implemented tool by comparing the resulting metrics. Immediate results may not be apparent; therefore, it is important to allow your staff time to adapt to the new system.



ALLOCATE TIME FOR TRAINING

Implementing new tools means that your workers must be familiarized with them to utilize their potential fully. The workers should be given time to become acquainted with the tools. Most solution providers will guide you in this process, and some might even send someone to do it for you.



DON'T FORGET THE BASICS

When contemplating the implementation of such tools, it is imperative to ensure that you possess all the requisite infrastructure. This spans from having QR codes seamlessly integrated into your tables to acquiring essential hardware, such as tablets, smartphones, a digital POS system, and more. Furthermore, reliable connectivity is crucial within your premises, like Wi-Fi or mobile reception, so that the devices of your customers and staff work properly. Depending on your needs and country, you may spend 300-600€ for each phone or tablet, around 150€ for a screen, or 450€ for a printer. It is prudent to diligently evaluate your budget and procure the hardware that aligns with your financial considerations, thus ensuring a seamless integration of digital payment solutions within your restaurant.

Recipe for Success: Perfecting Your Restaurant's Online Ordering System – 5 Step Guide

01

CREATE A DIGITAL MENU.

When placing orders, you have two choices: your waiter can take orders using your system or device, or customers can place orders automatically via a digital menu. Incorporating images in the digital menu can simplify the process; however, it is especially valuable when customers are able to explore the menu independently. To gain deeper insights, consult the best practice for digitizing your menu, as detailed in [Challenge 1: “Digital presence: connecting with diners”](#).

02

ACCESSING THE MENU.

If you intend to utilize a digital menu for customers to view or place orders, you must provide them with a means of access, such as through a QR code. If customers are going to place orders using the digital menu, you will need to print QR codes for each table. Additionally, it is critical to ensure that your business has a reliable internet connection for the customers to access the digital menu seamlessly. We encourage you to infuse creativity into this task. Utilize QR codes that customers can access via mobile phones and place them in convenient spots such as napkin holders, directly on the tables, or even on napkins. It is important to consider that you may have patrons who either lack mobile phones or encounter difficulties accessing the digital menu, so be prepared with alternatives to accommodate all diners and provide assistance whenever required.

03

CONNECT ALL YOUR DEVICES.

Connecting your tablet, mobile device, or other gadget to the POS system eliminates the need for your waitstaff to duplicate orders. Furthermore, by establishing a connection between your POS system and the kitchen through a printer or a screen, you can further streamline the process, reducing redundant tasks and enhancing efficiency while optimizing your processes to prevent duplicating your staff's workload.

04

CLOSE THE TABLE SERVICE PROCESS WITH EASY PAYMENTS.

If the solution includes a payment feature, it can empower customers to settle their bills without waiting for the server to bring the check, thereby expediting your table turnover rate. Be sure to explore the “Digital payments” Best Practice in this challenge for further insights.

05

TRAIN YOUR STAFF.

When introducing new tools, allocate some time to train your staff. Before implementing these tools in the actual scenario, it is recommended that all your staff is trained on how to operate them and what to do in case something goes wrong to avoid a negative impact on the business.

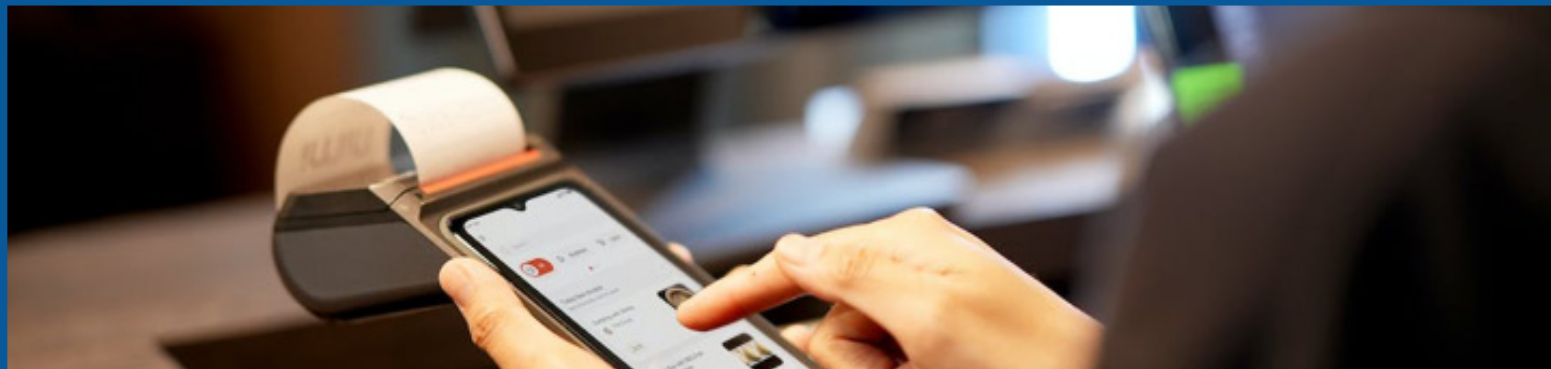
We encourage you to consider the following pathways after implementing an ordering system:

A WEBSITE:

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. Showing the menu can make it easier for a customer to choose your restaurant, as they will be aware of their options in advance. Accompanying the food items with high-quality pictures can further help the customers choose.

TAKE-AWAY AND DELIVERY:

Creating a digital menu and ordering system provides the possibility to use it for the implementation of take-away and delivery. Usually, the same system can be modified to introduce other types of ordering. Combining it with other providers that improve the delivery process might help in making the implementation an easy process.



Take note of:

Changing internal processes is always a risk. Ensure your staff is thoroughly trained and confident in using the new tools and that you have contingency plans if anything fails. The new way of operating should help alleviate work and mental load, so seek feedback from your team and assess the progress.

3

BEST PRACTICE 3:

DIGITAL PAYMENTS




Table service holds immense significance, particularly when viewed through the lens of digital payments. In today's fast-paced world, customers expect convenience and speed in their dining experiences. By embracing digital payment solutions, restaurants can offer a seamless and efficient transaction process, allowing diners to settle their bills quickly and conveniently at the table. This not only enhances customer satisfaction but also streamlines operations by reducing the need for manual handling of cash or card transactions. With digital payments, restaurants can provide a frictionless payment experience, improve table turnover, and create a modern and customer-centric environment that keeps up with evolving consumer expectations.

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



SEAMLESS PAYMENTS, ENHANCED EXPERIENCE

Empower your restaurant with digital payments for a seamless dining experience. Say goodbye to lengthy waits and embrace fast-flowing transactions with credit cards or cash. Take it a step further with self-payment options, like QR codes and apps, offering customers the freedom to split bills effortlessly. Embrace the future of dining and elevate your restaurant to new heights of convenience and customer satisfaction.

While cash remains the predominant payment method, accounting for 59% of transactions, card and mobile payments have shown significant annual growth, surging from 19% in 2016 to 34% in 2022. This pattern shifts when payments exceed €50, with cards becoming the preferred choice. However, despite these statistics, an increasing number of individuals opt not to carry cash, underscoring the importance of offering alternative payment options to avoid losing customers.

BEST PRACTICE 2 - DIGITAL PRESENCE: CONNECTING WITH DINNERS

DIGITAL PAYMENTS



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY DIGITAL PAYMENT?

Digital payment involves utilizing electronic methods, usually through digital platforms or devices, to conduct financial transactions. It encompasses a diverse array of payment options, including credit and debit card transactions, mobile wallet payments, online banking transfers, and digital currency exchanges. A defining characteristic of digital payments is the elimination of physical cash or checks, since all financial interactions occur electronically, thereby offering advantages in terms of convenience, security, and often expedited transaction processing.



OPT FOR THE RIGHT DIGITAL PAYMENT METHOD

When incorporating digital payments into your restaurant, it is crucial to utilize the right method. There are various options, such as integrating it into your POS system to implementing card machines, pay-at-the-table systems, self-payment options with QR codes, or digital apps. Consult with the solution provider to determine the best fit for your restaurant's unique needs.



CHOOSE THE APPROPRIATE SOLUTION

After assessing your restaurant's specific requirements and considering different digital payment options, select the solution that best aligns with your business model, customer preferences, and operational goals. Ensure that the chosen payment method integrates seamlessly with your existing systems and provides a convenient, secure, and efficient payment experience for your patrons. Additionally, explore potential partnerships with payment solution providers to access expert guidance and customize the solution to your restaurant's unique needs. By integrating payments with your POS or accounting system, you can reduce duplicate steps for your staff and achieve more accurate final accounting results.



HOW DOES YOUR BUSINESS HANDLE PAYMENTS?

Evaluate your business's payment procedures while identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Examine the manner in which payments are currently processed, pinpoint any pain points or challenges in the existing system, and consider factors such as bill splitting and handling complex transactions. This analysis will help you select your new payment process.



PROVIDE A SEAMLESS PAYMENT EXPERIENCE

Ensure that the chosen digital payment solution is user-friendly, reliable, and efficient. Train your staff to assist customers with the payment process and troubleshoot any issues promptly.



REVIEW LOCAL LAWS AND RESTRICTIONS

Before implementing digital payment solutions in your restaurant, it is essential to review local laws and regulations that govern payment methods and locations. Different countries or regions may have specific requirements regarding how customers can pay and where transactions should take place. Hence, it is essential to ensure that the chosen digital payment solution complies with these local specifications to avoid potential legal or operational issues.



COLLABORATIVE INTEGRATION WITH BANKING PARTNERS

While implementing digital payment systems, restaurants should consider their banking and financial relationships as an integral part of the process. It is advisable to engage in open communication with your bank or financial institution to ensure a seamless transition to digital payments. This may involve discussing transaction fees, integrating payment gateways, and ensuring that your banking processes align with the chosen digital payment solution.

Recipe for Success: Crafting Your Restaurant's Digital Payment Strategy – 5 Step Guide

01

COLLABORATE WITH A PAYMENT SERVICE PROVIDER AND ASSESS THE NECESSARY DEVICE AND MATERIAL REQUIREMENTS.

To effectively integrate digital payment methods into your restaurant's operations, the initial and pivotal step involves a partnership with a trusted payment service provider before conducting a comprehensive assessment of the essential hardware and materials required. Forming a strategic collaboration with a reputable payment service provider is a fundamental requirement to facilitate a seamless shift toward digital transactions. Close cooperation with this provider is imperative to meticulously scrutinize the specific devices and materials necessary to facilitate the chosen digital payment solutions. This evaluation encompasses various components, including point-of-sale (POS) systems, card readers, QR code scanners, mobile payment terminals, and other vital hardware and software elements.

02

INTEGRATE DIGITAL PAYMENTS WITH YOUR SOFTWARE.

Explore the integration of digital payment solutions with your restaurant's existing software systems and make sure that the chosen payment method harmoniously interfaces with your point-of-sale (POS) software, accounting systems, and other operational tools. Collaborate with your software providers or payment service partners to create a cohesive and efficient digital payment ecosystem that streamlines transactions, reduces duplicate steps for your staff, and ensures accurate final accounting results.

03

IMPLEMENT AND TRAIN YOUR STAFF.

Once the digital payment solution is in place, the subsequent step is to integrate it into your restaurant's daily operations. The chosen solution must not only prioritize user-friendliness but also reliability and efficiency to enhance the experience of your customers, guaranteeing smooth and hassle-free payment transactions. Staff training plays a critical role during this phase, as it ensures that your employees can proficiently manage the new technology, assist customers in navigating the payment process, swiftly address any issues, and ultimately deliver a stress-free payment experience.

04

TEST NEW PAYMENTS AND MAKE THE EXPERIENCE EVEN BETTER BY CONNECTING WITH ORDERING.

Before delving into further developments, it is prudent to adopt a gradual approach to implementing new payment procedures, commencing with a carefully structured transition phase. This transitional juncture is pivotal in placing staff training and adaptation at the forefront. It is an indispensable period, allowing both your team and patrons to acclimate to novel payment methods and systems. To enhance the overall dining experience, the divide between digital payments and the ordering process should be bridged, as recommended in the prior best practice. This endeavour entails rigorous testing and seamless integration, culminating in a more fluid transition from order placement to payment. By forging these critical connections, you can enhance order accuracy, minimize wait times, and fine-tune restaurant operations, culminating in a more synchronized and elevated dining experience for your customers.

05

METRICS AND CONTINUOUS EVOLUTION

The final step in perfecting your restaurant's digital payment system is based on metrics and constant evolution. Hence, it is imperative to establish a robust system to track and analyse key performance metrics related to your digital payment solutions. These metrics can include transaction success rates, customer feedback, and processing times, among others. Utilizing the insights gained from these metrics to refine your digital payment processes can help you stay aligned with the latest industry trends and proactively adapt to evolving customer preferences.

We encourage you to consider the following pathways after enabling digital payments for your customers:

INTEGRATION WITH THE POS AND ORDERING SYSTEM:

Link your payment options to the POS and ordering systems to expedite your processes. Speed is essential when a table is ready to settle its bill, as it enables you to seat more customers promptly, thereby boosting your table turnover ratio and overall revenue. For a deeper understanding of implementing a POS system and its integrations, refer to the best practices discussed in [Challenge 5: “Business insights: gathering and using data \(Data and market intelligence\)”](#).



Take note of:

The benefits of introducing ordering systems can vary depending on your business. Aspects such as the size of the place, distribution, number of employees, type of offering, or even the experience you wish to create impact the return on investment. For example, as seen in the pilot, a local with a terrace, where the waiter needs to cover a long distance from POS/kitchen to the table, will see an improvement more easily than a small, fine-dining place with close personal relationships with the staff.

Other SME restaurants have already proved the best practice

Tak the Bar (from Greece) implementing the product of Greet Menu UAB (from Lithuania).



"[The solution] is very easily implementable in restaurants. It doesn't take much time, and most things are made by the solution once you give them the information."

Tak the Bar (EL)

Objective of the pilot

The primary objective of the pilot was to increase the daily income by increasing the number of clients per day along with the number of orders per client by enhancing the ordering and payment processes to be more efficient.

Overview

In this pilot project, the focus was on Challenge 4, which aimed to improve customer service, focusing on ordering and payments. The main objectives were to introduce a QR code that allows customers to order without a waiter being present and deliver the order to the kitchen, reducing waiting times. The implementation process of the online reservation system occurred over a period of two months with a total cost of €5,767.

HERE ARE OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Gathered all the data and information for the creation of the ordering system (menu, prices, pictures, tables, etc.)
- Created the menu and added the ordering feature.
- Acquainted and trained the staff, including the servers and the chefs, with the new process.
- Gathered feedback from staff and clients who tried the solution.
- Gradually implemented the solution in the day-to-day operations.

ABOUT THE RESTAURANT

Tak the Bar is a standalone restaurant located in Lefkada, Greece, quipped with a uniquely designed space, including a beautiful outdoor area crafted from repurposed nautical wood. Managed by life partners Ksenia Sverku and Tsanas Athanasios, this restaurant aims to provide an eclectic experience that stimulates all senses for its customers. Since its establishment in 2015, Tak the Bar has brought a relaxed yet vibrant atmosphere to Lefkada, offering great music, inspired food options influenced by the Ionian Islands, and experimental cocktails, such as the gin tonic infused with seawater and algae. Tak the Bar has a seating capacity of 40 guests, creating a memorable experience for the customers.

ABOUT THE SOLUTION PROVIDER

Greet is a tech solution created to make the hospitality industry to be more efficient. Our innovative platform enables customers to easily view digital menus, place orders, pay, and leave tips with a simple scan of a QR code without the need to download an app.