“Ascot is our busiest time of year at Berystede. Zonal technology has gone a long way to helping our staff to take more orders, while reducing mistakes and speeding up service. Thanks to Zonal technology we are delivering a ‘thoroughbred’ service that lives up to the Ascot experience!”

Stuart Garrick, IT Director, Macdonald Hotels & Resorts
Since the launch of the iPhone in 2007, we have undergone a digital revolution which has, in turn, led to a convenience revolution.

With convenience comes a growing hunger for speed. Consumers hate to wait and expect everything in the blink of a swipe, tap or touch of a button.

In this revisited edition of our popular ‘The Need For Speed’ report, we explore why consumers going out for a bite to eat or drink still put speed of service and payment as their number one frustration.

The GO Technology Report produced by Zonal and CGA, which polls 5,000 UK adults, proves that customers on the go put swift service and convenience at the top of their list of priorities and see the use of mobile devices as a good way to overcome these frustrations.

But what has changed since our last report in 2015?

In terms of concerns, nothing has changed when it comes to speed of service – consumers still hate to wait!

However, in just under three years, mobile payment and pre-order is now available in thousands of outlets. This report delves deeper into this subject and shows how the need for integrated technology solutions has never been greater.

Nearly half of customers want more speed when it comes to food orders arriving on time.

Consumers don’t like to be kept waiting, and as the new edition of this report reveals, the demand for speed and convenience has reached new levels. It presents operators with some big challenges - but the good news is that rapid advances in mobile and other digital technologies mean that important parts of the customer journey like seating, ordering, food delivery and payment can be made more efficient than ever. These technological advances can shave valuable minutes off the journey of time-poor customers and increase the likelihood that they will return to a restaurant, pub or bar.

Karl Chessell, Business Unit Director – Food and Retail at CGA
The need for speed often starts before a customer sets foot in your venue as our love affair with smartphone technology continues to grow.

It’s estimated there are around 5 billion mobile phone users worldwide (source: Statista) and consumers are increasingly relying on mobile technology to organise their lives. So, it’s no coincidence that the demand for online reservation systems and innovative ways of taking bookings and orders, such as chatbot technology, has sharply increased.

GO Technology reveals that consumers prefer to book directly on a venue’s website than through a third party, with 60% of consumers using a smartphone to make a booking when out and about.

To capitalise on this opportunity, operators need to invest in an integrated booking system that keeps pace with customer behaviour and delivers an excellent experience. This extends to optimising the opportunity of chatbots within channels such as Facebook’s Messenger, which is changing the way that bookings and orders are being taken.

Zonal Solution

The danger of any reservation system, where bookings are coming in via mobile, online, telephone and walk-ins, is that operators are open to costly mistakes. The trick is to make sure that all bookings feed into one live system, so front of house teams have the latest data at a glance.

Zonal offers a customisable and fully integrated online booking and table management system, liveRES, that synchronises all reservations in one place. Working with partners such as automated telephone booking experts, IOVOX, the risk of lost bookings from missed calls is minimised and revenues maximised.

Being cloud-based, staff can access liveRES from anywhere and on any device, meaning they have more time to focus on delivering excellent customer service.

For consumers it’s also a winner, as they can browse and book venues on the go 24/7, with real-time availability so they can make a reservation online with confidence. And the consumer data collated is yours alone, so customers feel reassured their personal information isn’t being used inappropriately.
Speed of Service
Expert View: Clive Consterdine, sales & marketing director, Zonal

Wait times are a runaway concern for diners, but it’s the speed of food delivery that really gets consumers choked.

It is a complaint common to all age groups, particularly at lunchtimes, when many are watching the clock and every second counts.

This is where integrated systems really come into their own, because they can get serving and kitchen staff working in harmony to give customers what they want: good food served quickly and accurately.

To reduce this frustration, operators must ensure that orders are taken correctly and that they are then processed accurately and efficiently when they arrive in the kitchen. Zonal has developed a number of solutions to tackle these issues.

Zonal Solution

iServe

When it comes to taking orders quickly and accurately, iServe, is a cost-effective replacement to the traditional order pad, which can be installed on any Apple iOS device to create a versatile handheld ordering device. Team members can take orders and print bills from anywhere in the venue, providing a superior customer experience.

With iServe, orders are processed faster with staff visits to the bar and kitchen reduced, giving the team more time to focus on delivering a great customer experience. iServe can also drive spend per head through upsell prompts and links with Zonal’s Tables and Loyalty systems to deliver a truly integrated solution.

Kitchen iQ

Once the order has been taken, Kitchen iQ offers a comprehensive kitchen and service management solution that provides visible real-time information to both kitchen and service staff. It removes the risk of delays in the kitchen and poor communication between waiting and kitchen teams, which can be a cause of frustration for consumers.

“Since we introduced iServe we have increased the number of people we can serve by up to 40% without having to recruit more serving staff, as the process of taking an order is so much simpler and more efficient. iServe also improves accuracy as we take the order and send it straight from the table to the kitchen and bar without re-keying. “

Billy Harley, owner Uig Hotel, Isle of Skye

“72% claim food not coming fast enough is number 1 frustration

Kitchen iQ has been a huge benefit to understanding which dishes create bottlenecks within the kitchen and the effectiveness of our chefs operating the various stations.

Sodexo’s Catering Services Director, Paul Mitchell, the official caterer to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh
Settling the Bill

The need for speed when it comes to settling a bill is also a main priority for many consumers, especially young adults, who want to leave the table quickly after eating.

This is where operators have to offer contactless and smartphone payment technology as standard to meet the demands of today’s consumers.

Card payments now outstrip cash as the most popular form of payment in the UK, according to UK Finance. And, this trend is set to continue as our appetite for speedy spending solutions increase.

According to PayPal, 91% of consumers intend to use their smartphone for online purchases “the same or more” in the next 12 months.

However, the biggest barrier to completing payment for consumers is trust says PayPal, with 77% expressing “concern about the security of financial and personal details”.

This is where recognised payment brands, such as PayPal and Apple Pay, are preferred by consumers who want to complete purchases faster without having to key in their personal details, while keeping their financial information secure.

33% prefer a digital wallet (like PayPal) 77% concern about the security of financial and personal details In 2017 43% of PayPal’s total payment volume was via a mobile device

Zonal Solution

Knowing that quick payment at the table is a key way to speed up the customer experience, Zonal has continued to develop its integrated chip and payment solution (ZPS). Offering contactless functionality, including trusted brands such as Apple Pay and Android Pay, consumers can make contactless payments from their smartphones without sharing their credit card details.

Fully integrated with Aztec EPoS, ZPS simplifies the payment process and enables retailers to turn customers faster, streamline processes, reduce operating costs and maximise revenue potential.

“We couldn’t take card payments, but our customers were rightly demanding a speedier, better experience and now we are on trend thanks to Zonal. We soon expect to be a 50:50 cash / card business, which is great news for everyone, as we can serve more people, quicker.”

General manager of catering at Trent Bridge, Jason Hollingworth
Order and Pay Apps
Expert View – David Gallimore, products and strategy director Zonal Marketing Technologies

No matter where we are, we expect to access free WiFi, make a reservation, place an order and spend ‘cash’ with our smartphones or tablets, with speed and convenience being the key drivers.

Creating an app solution that empowers customers to order and pay on their mobile device from the comfort of their seat is fast becoming mainstream as high street brands, such as Wetherspoons, adopt this technology. At Zonal Marketing Technologies we have seen this played out in the number of enquiries we’ve received from customers, with a steep increase of 400% over the past 12 months!

In our experience, hospitality outlets are looking for smartly branded, easy to use apps that drive revenue in a more convenient, fun and appealing way. App success is dependent on delivering tangible benefits for customers, in addition to ordering and paying for food and drink, such as personalised offers and rewards.

36% say speed is main reason for using an app
22% opt for pre-order and online payment for convenience
21% use an app when paying in a large group

82% are more likely to use a restaurant’s own app as opposed to a third-party provider, with trust being a major factor.

Zonal Solution
The Zonal Order and Pay smartphone app is one of the most game-changing solutions on the market today. This off-the-shelf mobile app can be skinned to reflect your brand. Not only that it is fully integrated with Aztec EPoS, offering real-time stock, pricing, and promotions, meaning minimal operational complexity and maximum convenience for your customers.
Customer Feedback

Expert View: Paul Carrington, customer insight manager, Feed It Back

Feed It Back works with hospitality businesses to combine real time EPoS data, such as Aztec EPoS, with guest feedback surveys, online reviews, social posts and guest emails to give actionable insights. And it’s this insight that confirms speed of service is the number one issue for customers. When looking at complaints, over half of all issues raised relate to poor service or speed.

45% of diners would consider ordering via mobile to speed things up

11% of complaints references the keywords “minutes” and “hour” in their comments:

“Service was really bad. We were at the table for an hour before our order was taken for food. It took 30 minutes for our drinks order to be taken and the drinks to arrive.”

But it’s not just that we are simply becoming more impatient, we are often fitting a meal around other activities or commitments, for example, a trip to the theatre or the cinema. This customer illustrates the point perfectly:

“When we first arrived, we were not greeted for at least 10 minutes. Our drinks took 15 minutes to come after ordering. By the time we got seated in the cinema, it was 10 minutes into the film!”

The reality is that, in this time poor world, customers hate to be kept waiting. Qualitative feedback shows that complaints often focus on how many minutes or hours it took for the guest to be seated, to see a menu, for food to arrive, or to pay the bill.
These pain points present an opportunity to ‘lose’ the customer, but can be rectified with the correct technology, staffing levels and training in place.

And if you get it right, you reap the rewards of happy customers that are likely to return and tell their friends of their fabulous experience:

“We had to eat quite quickly to get to the cinema, and our waiter went beyond the call of duty to serve us and get our food out quickly. We were so grateful that our experience was so easy and pleasant: the food was great, our cocktails were delicious, and we will definitely be back.”

It’s clear that wait times are an important factor in driving customer satisfaction, with both positive comments and complaints featuring time as a key factor, ahead of the food itself!

Successful restaurants will be those that embrace technology to make the guest experience seamless and hassle free, but also invest in the right people to ensure an attentive and slick service on the ‘human’ side of the guest’s journey.
There is no doubt that driven by consumer demand, technology is transforming the hospitality industry. And the key to success is integration.

Hospitality businesses generate a huge amount of customer data that can be put to good use, if it’s harnessed in the right way. However, when IT systems evolve over time, with websites, EPOS and reservations databases coming from different providers or using incompatible platforms, this leads to inefficiencies and silo thinking. Then there’s the stock control system, accounting system, customer feedback system…and anything else you care to mention.

To deliver a seamless and efficient customer experience, it will be those businesses that embrace technology and unify their systems, so they can automate everyday interactions, that will be in a position to extend their competitive advantage.

GO Technology identifies a number of issues that IT can solve for the hugely influential 18 to 44 year old age group.

- **72%** claim food not coming fast enough is number 1 frustration
- **45%** cite incorrect orders as a frustration
- **33%** will share poor customer service experiences online
- **54%** are interested in using their mobile devices to speed up their order

54% claim that food not coming fast enough is number 1 frustration.
About GO Technology

GO Technology by Zonal and CGA tracks consumer attitudes and experiences with technology when eating and drinking out. Research of 5,000 UK adults is conducted quarterly to gain an insight over a period of time to measure consumer behaviour and trends, helping operators to keep one step ahead.

If you are interested in discovering what technology applications you should be adopting to enhance the customer experience then speak to a Zonal expert who can help discuss tailored solutions to suit your business, now and in the future.

Give Zonal a call today to talk about your business of tomorrow.

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