

A photograph of a smiling waitress in a cafe serving a customer. The waitress is wearing a grey apron over a dark shirt and is looking towards the customer. The background is a blurred cafe interior with shelves of bottles.

inmoment

EBOOK

Three Steps to Future- Proofing the Guest Experience in Food Service

From Operational, to Experiential, to a Truly
Loyal Guest Relationship



The Evolution of Guest Experience in Food Service

Guest experience and the food industry have always been closely connected. In fact, some experts believe that the need for restaurants to gather guest feedback pushed the larger CX industry to where it is today.

However, in today's experience economy, a traditional guest experience program is no longer enough. Understanding and remedying cleanliness, service, and speed are still critical, but also table stakes.

The issues today's food service providers face are more complex than ever, including:

- *How do I attract the new wave of Millennials and Gen Z'ers to choose my restaurant over others?*
- *What new items should I incorporate into my menu?*

- *How do I protect my brand when using a third-party delivery service like UberEats or DoorDash?*
- *How do I improve efficiency to manage rising labor costs?*

These are all examples of the ever-evolving nature of the food service industry and, more importantly, all challenges a comprehensive guest experience program can help solve.

“The premise of restaurant marketing is to connect with customers. However, the communication that restaurants initiate and respond to are often opportunistic, one-directional, and fail to drive value.”

STEVE CARLIN, EXPERT INSIGHTS

Future-Proofing Your Guest Experience Program

In the past, guest experience has been primarily used as a tool to detect and fix problems such as cleanliness, issues with staff, or food quality. This operational approach creates a consistent experience, but consistency does not always equal loyalty.

To create that loyalty, brands must move beyond the traditional operational and experiential approach to guest feedback, and treat each interaction with guests as part of a targeted approach to larger, longer-lasting relationships. Organizations that recognize the need to compete within this new environment experience lower customer churn, an increase in loyalty, and ultimately outperform the competition.



Step 1: Create Operational Consistency

Operations are a critical part of your organization. It is also where many food service providers begin their overall quest to improve the guest experience and help answer questions like:

- *How do I create a consistent experience between locations?*
- *How do I encourage and enforce positive behaviors in staff?*
- *How do I understand the overall experience guests are having with my brand?*

Taking an operational approach is exactly what it implies: it helps food service providers understand where to make operational improvements that result in consistent experiences: clean bathrooms, tasty food, friendly service, and more.

INTEGRATED STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPS):

Your frontline employees have the greatest impact on your guests' experience. Help them provide a consistent experience by choosing a voice of guest (VoG) provider that can

incorporate your business's SOPs to provide tailored insights and recommendations.

CUSTOMIZED ACTION PLANNING:

Every location and employee in your organization is different. Encourage or train frontline employees on positive behaviors by creating public and private customized action plans by location or region.

PRO TIP:

When implementing an operational approach, look for solutions that help provide actionable guidance for employees and program managers.

How Arby's Empowered Area Supervisors with Tools to Focus on Weaknesses

Arby's needed a way to effectively analyze data from two of its key technology partners to understand the interplay between brand standards and customer perception. It had no way to integrate operationally-driven data with guest experience data, and then derive a solution set.

InMoment developed a seamless process to integrate Arby's Operations Review data with more than 50,000 pieces of customer feedback collected from phone, mobile, and web surveys each month in a granular, location-level report.

By bringing audit and guest feedback data together, InMoment's prescriptive analytics automatically generate two improvement priorities for each location. The integration model takes into consideration both guest experience and audit score, and creates priorities tied to the greatest return on investment.



After implementing these data-driven improvements using InMoment, Arby's restaurants saw a significant increase in all key metrics in just eight months:

+34%

in OSAT

+33%

in Friendliness

+22%

in Product
Quality

+22%

in Cleanliness and
Facility

+19%

in Speed of
Service

+12%

in "Make it Right" (if an
order had a mistake,
was it corrected?)

+3%

in Order Accuracy



Step 2: Optimize Individual Experiences

Once you have mastered the art of operational guest experience, it's time to take the next step and tackle a more experiential approach. Operational approaches focus on creating a consistent experience for all your guests. An experiential approach focuses on creating and optimizing a positive experience for each individual guest and answering questions such as:

- *How do I understand the experience every individual guest has with my brand?*
- *How do I communicate with guests about their experience in a way that works for them?*
- *How do I turn negative guest experiences into positive ones?*
- *How do I incorporate employee feedback to improve the guest experience?*

PRO TIP:

For an experiential approach, make sure you're using a solution that allows you to listen to customers and respond to their individual experiences.



MULTIMEDIA FEEDBACK:

Engaging your guests in a variety of fun and interactive ways—through voice, video, and image—leads to more meaningful conversations and more detailed stories. This rich data then allows you to understand exactly what you’re doing well and what needs improvement.

CASE MANAGEMENT:

It’s easier to keep current guests than acquire new ones. Get alerted about potential guest issues in real time and reduce

individual guest churn. Also look for a solution that helps you understand larger trends, and quickly see root cause through the eyes of your employees.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND VOICE OF EMPLOYEE:

Engaged employees are more effective and, in turn, positively impact and provide a unique perspective on the guest experience. Choose a vendor who can seamlessly integrate employee data into the guest experience.



How Pizza Hut Delivers Innovative Guest Experience

When Pizza Hut decided to undergo its biggest brand overhaul in its 56-year history, it wanted to ensure it did not overlook the things its customers and employees love most about the brand. They knew they had to make their employees part of the process.

By running text analytics on 40,000 responses using the InMoment platform, Pizza Hut found that its employees were the most satisfied when the workplace felt like a “family atmosphere” where everyone works and solves problems together. “The InMoment-generated themes from the responses led us to identify Become Your Best, Make Friends, and Have Fun as three key things that will happen when working at the Hut,” says Kara Berry, Director of Global Communications & Engagement. “We validated those elements with additional surveys from various markets across the world where these same three themes rose to the top.”

Pizza Hut used this knowledge to inform the internal rebrand: Life Unboxed. This global people platform provides its 300,000 team members with programs, benefits, and other opportunities to grow inside and outside the workplace. Since the launch of Life Unboxed, Pizza Hut has decreased turnover, improved retention, and created more positive experiences for employees.

Step 3: Personalize Lasting Relationships

With the amount of competition in today's food service market, creating loyalty with your guests is more important than ever—and the final step in completing your journey from an operational, to experiential, to relationship-based guest experience program.

Ensuring brand loyalty requires creating a high-quality, consistent experience at every touchpoint to answers questions like:

- *How can I engage the guest in a friendly, authentic way?*
- *How can I give the guest the ability to customize their experience to their specific needs?*
- *How can I demonstrate awareness of the guests' situation and acknowledge their needs?*
- *How can I create an experience for the guest that is perceived as a personalized experience?*

- *How can I remember the guests' preferences and anticipate their changing needs?*
- *How can I incorporate guests' feedback into my business?*

Restaurants that differentiate themselves and create these high-quality consistent, experiences will separate themselves from their competitors.

PRO TIP:

When building a relationship-based guest experience program, look to integrate with loyalty and brand apps, meet guests on their terms, and understand the broader market landscape.



MULTI-TOUCHPOINT SUPPORT:

Your guests' perception of you is based on more interaction points than ever: your mobile app, in-store and online experience, advertising, social media, and more. Choose a vendor who can request feedback from guests at every touchpoint along the journey.

“Many restaurant loyalty programs are somewhat generic and uninteresting. They typically involve sending coupons or other offers designed to entice customers to visit the restaurant; yet, increasingly we are seeing restaurants support loyalty programs that help give their customers a more personalized, memorable experience.”

ROSENBERGER, DELOITTE CONSULTING

DIGITAL INTEGRATION:

Guests are more digital than ever. Find creative ways to connect with them by integrating your feedback surveys into your app, kiosk, or loyalty program.

BENCHMARKING:

Guests have more choices than ever when it comes to dining options. Understand how you stack up by choosing a solution that allows you to capture unstructured data from review sites, social, and surveys to show you where you rank against your competitors.

InMoment: The Leader in Food Service

At InMoment, we have 15+ years of experience guiding the best food service brands to experience success. With our platform, we can take your guest experience program from operational, to experiential, to relationship and loyalty by:

- **Resolving Complaints Quickly:**

Understand feedback, address root cause, and take the necessary actions to reduce guest churn, saving you both time and revenue.

- **Interpreting Your Data:**

Measure responses to new menu items with real-time insights that uncover patterns, trends, and abnormal spikes in comment topics.

- **Coaching Employees:**

Give your frontline employees the feedback they need to deliver positive guest experiences and your managers the insights necessary to provide effective coaching every day.

- **Predicting Behavior:**

Understand your guests and their habits today, so that you can gain a more accurate view of how they may behave in the future.

- **Providing a Holistic View:**

Use data from audits to loyalty program information, even weather patterns, to get a holistic view of the guest experience and understand the trends that impact your business.

“InMoment is part of the conversation at every level of our organization ... From brand development to marketing to operations to restaurant valuation, we look at the score and we look at the comments, and we know what to do and where to focus our efforts. You can’t put a price tag on that sort of business-steering intelligence.”

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About InMoment

InMoment™ is the leader in Experience Intelligence (XI), transforming metrics into meaning to drive high-value business decisions and relationships with both customers and employees. The company's cloud-native XI Platform is engineered with data science at the core, and specifically architected to harness intelligence from across the entire experience ecosystem to deliver clear business value. The platform features three clouds that all work seamlessly together to give companies a comprehensive understanding of the most important factors impacting their bottom lines, including: Customer Experience (CX) Cloud, Employee Experience (EX) Cloud, and Market Experience (MX) Cloud. InMoment's approach of providing strategic technical, best practice and thought leadership support ensures that our nearly 500 brands across 95 countries realize maximum business impact.

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