The Restaurant Technology Buyer's Checklist

12 Steps to Selecting the Right Systems for your Restaurant Chain

Evaluating new technology for your growing restaurant enterprise tends to be a long, murky, burdensome process. After helping dozens of companies on their restaurant management solution selection journey, we've identified the common factor in finding the right fit: *precise, thoughtful research*.

In this simple guide, we highlight the twelve most essential research areas that technology evaluators need to include in their evaluation journey. The checklist is broken down into the three stages of enterprise decision-making: (1) **Discovery**, (2) **Demo**, and (3) **Decision**.

Follow these steps for a quicker selection and smoother transition to your future restaurant tech partner who will accelerate your future growth and success.

DISCOVERY

1 Identify the top 3 KPIs that you're looking to improve.

It's easy to get sidetracked with shiny object syndrome. To keep you laser-focused, call out the core business objectives and related key performance indicators. Example KPIs include: return on investment, average order value, or customer return rate. These KPIs are the non-negotiable filter by which you'll test every potential partner.

2 Check the vendor's track record to confirm their multi-channel digital ordering solution *actually* increases Average Order Value.

Any technology developer can quote generic statistics about online ordering ROI from big research and consulting firms. Battle-tested partners will be able to provide specific case studies from their existing customer base. To support your restaurant enterprise, only those who can demonstrate results precisely should be on your radar.

3 Ensure you will own your customer data.

In an industry dominated by third-party partnerships that keep you in the dark about who your customers are, taking ownership of the relationship with your customers is one of the greatest levers you can pull to blow open growth bottlenecks. We strongly suggest making customer data ownership a top priority.

4 Find out how Customer Support is handled.

A slow or unresponsive partner, when you're operating dozens or hundreds of locations, can be the difference of hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost revenue. Make sure to get detailed answers on the terms of support, locations of service reps, and guaranteed response times.

DEMO

5 **Request a personalized demo that includes every standard task your business does every day.**

Create a list of frequent tasks, both in the corporate office and in stores, that would create disruption if they suddenly slowed down or didn't happen. You'll want to explore how accessible these features are in software demonstrations. Get as granular as you can—turning a three-second action into a ten-second one will create a mountain of unnecessary labor expense.

6 **Ask about marketing and loyalty capabilities to ensure that customers are receiving a consistent brand experience across all franchise locations.**

Customers have increasingly high expectations for experiences that blend the digital and physical experiences. Fragmented loyalty programs, gift cards, and marketing functions that don't provide a seamless, cross-channel experience just don't cut it anymore.

7 **Create an above-store reporting must-have list to better track and optimize business performance.**

Make a list of the key metrics and data you need to ensure business is running smoothly. See what the process is like to track and learn from more complicated items, like cross-store menu management, franchise royalty tracking, inventory, labor, and payroll. The more effectively you measure and track KPIs, the more control and clarity you have to optimize for them.

8 **Verify that 3rd party delivery platform integrations are straightforward and stable.**

Faulty or inconsistent integrations put a wall between you and your customers. Push your potential partner to demonstrate that these connections are reliable.

9 **Confirm that the solution will aggregate data across all functional areas of your operation and scale with your most aggressive growth plans.**

Most restaurants run on a dozen apps, each with wacky integrations that make it challenging to blend data for essential insights and reporting. A modern point-of-sale platform should incorporate each of these data sources (POS terminal, digital ordering channels, mobile app, loyalty, etc) into a single data model to reduce confusion and power-up your strategic planning.

DECISION

10 Find out how credit card processing is handled.

Payment solutions aren't sexy, but they are consequential. Open source processing solutions are great starting points for small operations, but the lack of support can be detrimental when things go wrong. Proprietary processing solutions offer a higher level of security and reliability, and generally come with dedicated on-demand support. Double-check that you'll be able to accommodate your customers' favorite payment methods, like existing gift cards and NFC (Google and Apple Pay).

11 Validate that the solution uses high-tech security protocols and processes to ensure your critical operations and sensitive customer data are protected.

Data breaches are not only a PR nightmare, but a breach of trust with existing customers. We strongly suggest that restaurant chains prioritize technology vendors who offer cutting-edge security that's backed by a full team of engineers, not lower-level, mass-market security protocols.

12 Get references and testimonials from restaurant chains and franchises with similar operations to yours.

Read the case studies, then go straight to the source. Connect with operators who can verify that all your research above is accurate and realistic, and who can offer additional insights that are unique to your market or use case.

BONUS: Once you select your new tech provider, collaborate on an economic forecast to use for ROI tracking purposes and to measure the KPIs you identified in item #1.

Great partners thrive on your success and want to get into the weeds with you. Building out economic models enables both sides of the partnership to align on goals, which ultimately helps your partner serve your business more effectively. In our experience, a forecasting exercise is the best way to start a long-term relationship on the right foot.

Ready to Explore What an All-in-One POS Can Do?

HungerRush is transforming how growing restaurants manage their chain and franchise operations in a single, integrated platform.

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