

A photograph of two women in a restaurant setting. The woman in the foreground has short brown hair and is wearing a light blue jacket with a white hood. She is pointing towards a digital screen. The woman behind her has long brown hair and is wearing a red cardigan over a white top. They both appear to be engaged and looking at the screen with interest. The background is slightly blurred, showing restaurant decor and warm lighting.

GLORY

HOW RESTAURANTS CRAFT A COMPELLING CUSTOMER JOURNEY **IN THE DIGITAL ERA**



What is the customer journey in a restaurant?

Once, it was a fairly simple story. But not today.

The restaurant industry has undergone a seismic shift in recent years, driven by technological advancements, changing consumer habits, and the global pandemic. The customer journey has evolved, becoming more complex, more personalised, and more demanding.

In the digital era, customers step back and forth between digital and physical interactions. It may start on their sofa at home, or on a bus, and finish at your front counter. Or vice-versa. Or some other combination.

So this is a complex time for restaurants, and the journey can take many different forms. The important question is, what makes a *great* customer journey in this digital era?

New technology has presented fresh challenges for the industry. Thankfully, it also brings fresh solutions.

80% of customers say the experience a company provides is as important as its products and services.

SalesForce - *State of the Connected Customer*



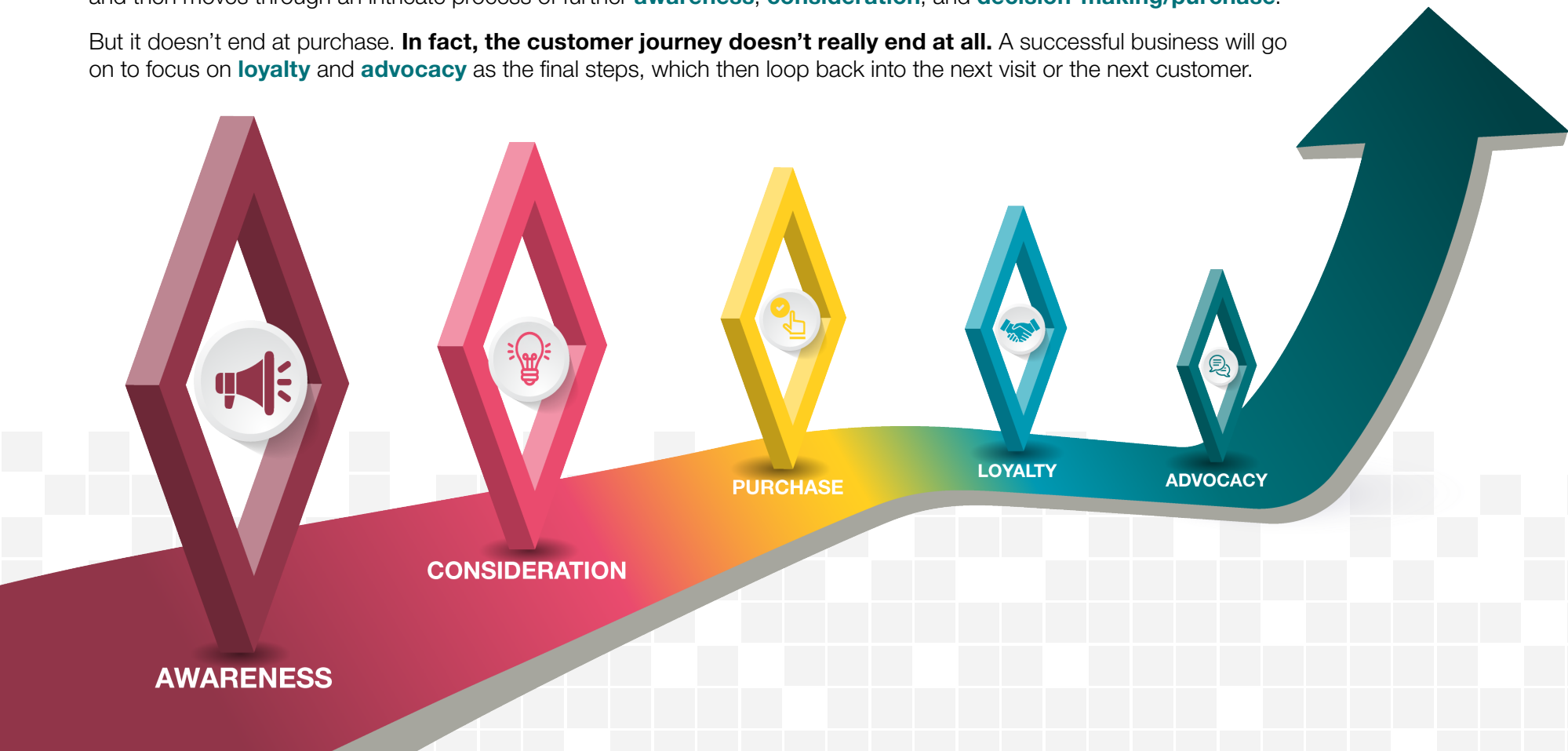
WHERE DOES THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY BEGIN? (AND END?)

The journey for a restaurant customer often starts with a rumble in the tummy...

But awareness of hunger isn't always the first step. It can start with the need to choose a place to meet friends or family. Or an ad that makes them want to try your new product. Or a notification from your mobile app about a special offer. Or they could just walk past one of your restaurants and feel enticed.

The journey really kicks off when the customer becomes *problem-aware* (which is often long before they become *product-aware*) and then moves through an intricate process of further **awareness**, **consideration**, and **decision-making/purchase**.

But it doesn't end at purchase. **In fact, the customer journey doesn't really end at all.** A successful business will go on to focus on **loyalty** and **advocacy** as the final steps, which then loop back into the next visit or the next customer.



HOW HAS THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY CHANGED?



The customer journey has evolved at breakneck speed in recent years with the rise of digital technology.

The channels to promote awareness have dramatically expanded through the invention of social media, loyalty apps, and targeted online ads. The consideration phase has also become ever more significant, as customers now research their choices using online reviews, check out the website and menu ahead of time, and often get a sense of the place through pictures or Google StreetView.

Today, online delivery apps also bring new customers, but sometimes add complications for restaurants in managing third-party relationships, and can blur the lines of responsibility when orders are late or incorrect. Adding more operational complexity, Click & Collect has also become hugely popular, especially with younger demographics, taking advantage of smartphones to have their orders ready on arrival instead of having to stand in a queue.

Let's look at some of the challenges restaurants face in delivering a compelling customer journey.

90% of diners across Europe and the US base their dining decisions on online reviews.

Tripadvisor survey of more than 9,500 international diners



WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES IN DELIVERING A GREAT CUSTOMER JOURNEY?



EVOLVING EXPECTATIONS

Customer expectations are not static, and restaurants have to keep up. Customers today demand a flexible and optimised experience, including seamless ordering processes and unique experiences.



OPERATIONAL COMPLEXITY

Managing the complexity of multiple sales and delivery channels, which can include third party apps and services, can easily lead to errors and negative experiences.



MENU CREATION

The number of menu items can be an issue, as too few won't offer enough diversity, while too many can cause choice paralysis. Restaurants are also expected today to provide quality choices for different dietary needs.



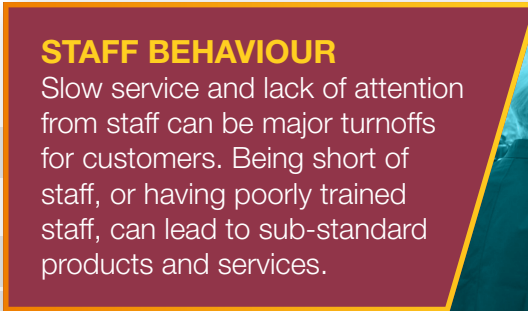
INVESTMENT REQUIRED

Restaurant margins are often tight, making it difficult to make the investments needed to improve the customer experience.



PERSONALISATION

Customers value personalisation and expect businesses to recognise them as individuals, which is difficult to deliver *en masse*. Poor personalisation can lead to higher customer churn.



STAFF BEHAVIOUR

Slow service and lack of attention from staff can be major turnoffs for customers. Being short of staff, or having poorly trained staff, can lead to sub-standard products and services.

OVER THE THRESHOLD...

So, you've got them in the door (or at least the drive-thru).

Now, what are they expecting from your restaurant?

The first thing potential customers will take in is the atmosphere of your restaurant. They want it to be inviting, clean, and with a practical layout. If there is a long queue, then it is important that they can see it is moving quickly and efficiently.

We all know that this first impression is huge. The majority of people may have already decided to purchase by the time they enter your restaurant, but not all. Some will turn around and walk out.

Cleanliness, décor, lighting – all of these play their part in the experience of walking into your restaurant. Layout is particularly important if you have introduced order and pay kiosks, as poor placement can crowd and cramp the order space, creating a poor customer flow and a negative experience.



Drive-thru customers are much more focused on functionality.

A drive-thru needs to be designed to cope with the amount of custom without clogging up the car park, and be able to move customers through the process quickly and efficiently.

The technology used to facilitate the drive-thru must be of high quality, with clear audio and menu displays, easy integration of loyalty programmes, and good management software to keep everything running smoothly.

78%

of customers chose **convenience** as their top reason for using the drive-thru.

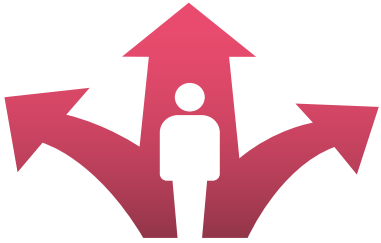
42%

of customers said **speed** was most important for future drive-thru visits.

58%

of customers indicated **order accuracy** was most important for future drive-thru visits.

TIME TO ORDER...



Customers today are used to choice. Choice in how they order, how they pay, and the experience they want on the day.

Customers may want to order on an app and then pick up in-store, or they may prefer the human touch at the manned counter, or the privacy of using a kiosk. They might want to use the drive-thru, but then sit in the car park and eat in their car rather than enter a busy restaurant. People today are used to flexibility, and crafting their own journey to a higher degree than in the past.

This is where integration is key. There are no out-of-the-box solutions to bring all of these elements of your operation together, so be sure to choose a partner who will work with you to create a tailored, integrated solution that allows customers to order, receive and pay for their food the way they want to – with kiosks, app, website, and payment technology all working together to provide a seamless omnichannel experience.

If you get it right, you will see that **customers spend 10-30% more on average when using a kiosk**, and find it easier to customise their orders without feeling like they are fussy or holding up the queue. If you have integrated your kiosks with a loyalty app, the right software can easily use the data from their past purchases to present tailored offers and suggestions.

80% of consumers under the age of 40 consider personalised recommendations important to their digital ordering experience, according to Forrester Consulting research.

PAYMENT FREEDOM...

When it comes to payment, customers will want to use their preferred method – which could be cash, card or mobile phone payment.



Some will have one they use all the time, others may like to use the one that suits them in that moment. Whatever their choice, restaurants don't want to exclude any customers. One of the most common ways this happens today is **cash payers being excluded** or having their order options limited.

Of course, there's nothing we can do to make mobile app ordering friendly to cash payers, however there's no reason they should be excluded from kiosk ordering. Cash automation solutions can easily be integrated with kiosks to make sure no customer gets left behind, and everyone gets the payment experience they want.



Larry Roberts, CEO of California-based El Pollo Loco, told investors that when the kiosks take cash, **up to 80% of customers use the devices.**

Restaurant Business Magazine

STAYING HUMAN...



Of course, the most important element in the customer journey is the human element.

We don't need to tell you what good customer service looks like. But we do know that with a labour shortage striking restaurants all around the world, it can be a real challenge to find, train and retain good staff today.

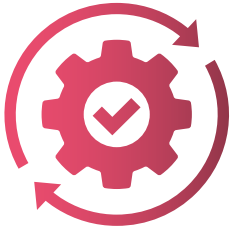
But technology does exist that can help you deliver the experience you want, even when staff are in short supply.

Automation can seem like the antithesis of good customer service, but in reality it can unburden your staff from unnecessary tasks so that they can focus on being on-hand to assist customers, create a great product, and maintain the restaurant environment. It can also speed up service, preventing customers from waiting around needlessly.

Adding to this, automation can open the door to new elements such as table service, straight from your kiosk, that can bring new dimensions to the customer journey in your store.



SMOOTH OPERATIONS FOR EFFICIENT SERVICE...



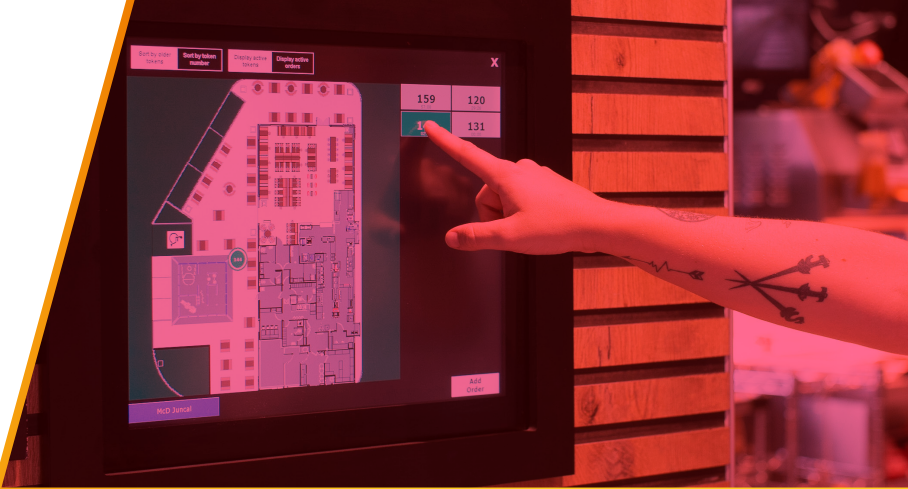
The foundation for a great customer journey is a smooth and efficient restaurant operation.

If your behind-the-scenes operation is lacking, it's impossible to deliver the experience you want consistently. Especially with the complexity of digital-era services now at play.

There are a number of tech solutions that can simplify and optimise your kitchen and back-office operations, relieving pressure on your staff.

A good **drive-thru management system** can ensure that customers are moving through the line swiftly and getting the right orders. **Cash automation solutions** can reclaim most of the time and energy spent on manually processing cash (which really adds up), while also reducing or eliminating errors, internal theft, and counterfeit acceptance.

Systems like these will save your staff time and simplify their job, allowing them to focus on higher value tasks that ultimately serve the customer journey.





The customer journey today is not a simple path.

But it can be managed, and managed well, with the right technology in place and the right partners to help bring it all together.

GLORY's broad range of restaurant solutions stretch from the back-office to the drive-thru, from the kitchen to the dining room. They simplify your operation behind the scenes and make it more efficient. They give your staff less headaches and more space to do their job well. They make ordering and payment quicker and more flexible for your customers, whether it's in the drive-thru, at a kiosk, or at the counter.

Get in touch today to discover how we can help you craft a compelling customer journey that is fit for the digital era.

info@glory-global.com