

# 10

**TABLE FOR**

## **Ten Restaurant Technologies Collaborating to Help You Thrive in an Era of Uncertainty**

**By, Kelly MacPherson with 10 Restaurant Tech Execs**

**SPONSORED BY:**

**Ovation**



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## MEET KELLY

Kelly MacPherson is the former Chief Information Officer for Burger King, Popeyes and Tim Hortons, and has held technology leadership positions for prominent global brands such as Abercrombie and Fitch, MICROS, Planet Hollywood, and Hard Rock Cafe.

MacPherson is a global visionary with a 20-year record of bold decision-making and resolute transformation leadership, driving evolution of operational excellence for multibillion-dollar global enterprises in the hospitality and retail industry. A transformative change agent with impeccable customer orientation, strong problem-solving abilities, and intrinsic instincts to consistently raise the bar to enable businesses to deliver results.

She pioneered guest receipt surveys, has successfully innovated technology through two major economic downturns, and looks forward to using her experience to guide brands through the “new normal.”

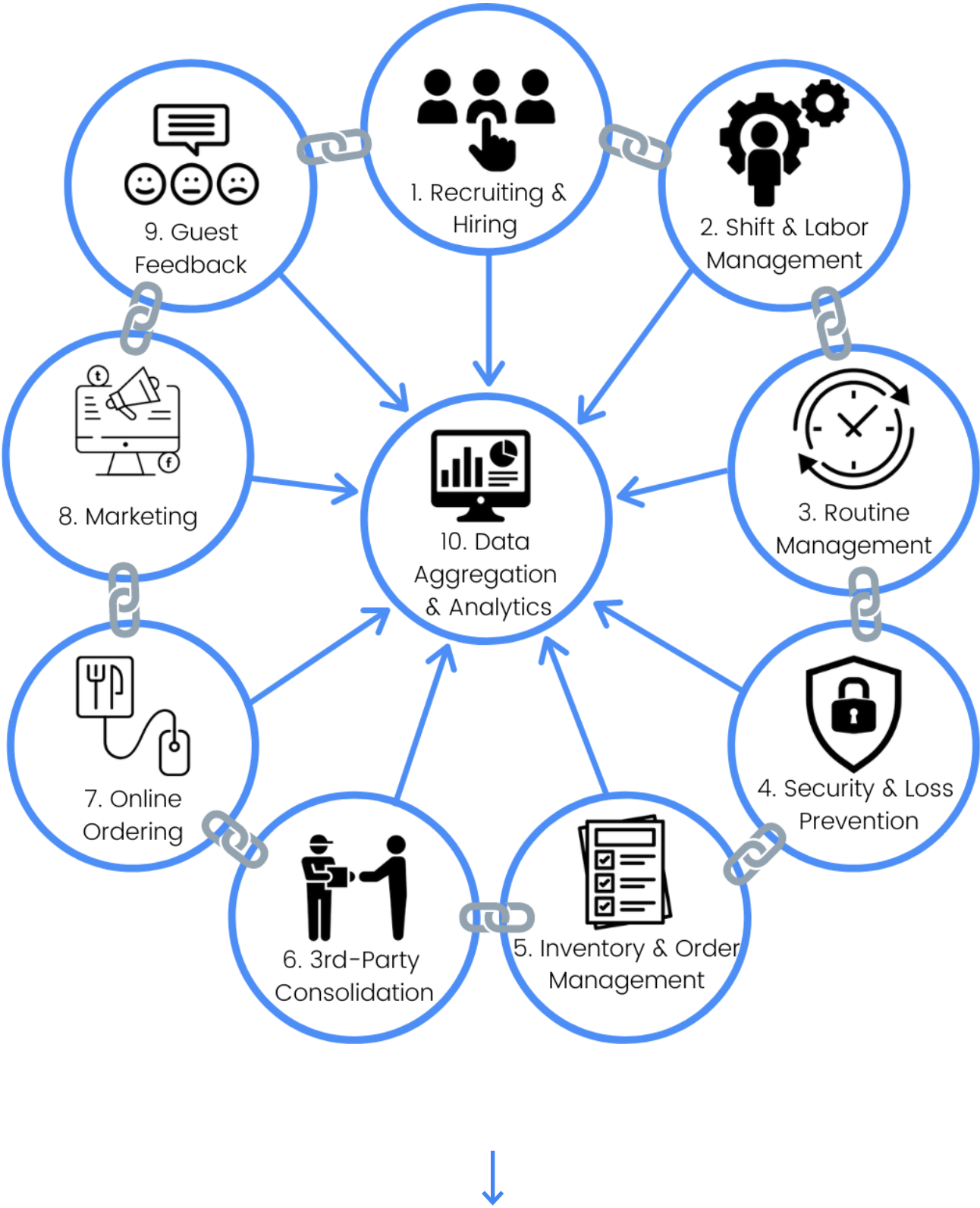


## Introduction

I've worked with Ovation to help restaurant owners and operators think through the technology that will help bridge the gap between the "new normal" and becoming just "the normal." Driving both top line growth and margin improvements through a "connected restaurant experience" will only come through a robust ecosystem of partners built on a scalable flexible architecture enabling a seamless flow of data.

Delivering a "frictionless" experience for restaurant operators, staff and guests will be achieved through smarter restaurants that are focused on flexible commerce, intuitive management tools, and real-time access to key insights. And while POS continues to be the "heart" of the restaurant technology landscape, pumping data in and out, the connected platforms will enable the flexibility required during these ever-changing times.





Throughout my career, the pendulum has shifted between “best of breed” and “fully integrated” solutions. The debate between avoiding complex integrations vs trade-offs in core functionality was always part of the technology selection decision—until now. Cloud and API-driven solutions have enabled restaurant operators to take advantage of new innovations and emerging platforms without significant implementation, integration, and development costs. I’ve found that while there are a lot of different technologies, going to some of the best providers of technology can help to get a handle on things.

Now while I’m not specifically endorsing these companies, I wanted the experts to answer the questions in their field.

We will go over the main components of a restaurant and interview an expert of technology in that field. This book goes over technology for employees, customers, in-store, online ordering, and business intelligence.

**We have interviewed ten different experts and asked them four questions:**

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**01**

What’s wrong with the “old normal?”

**02**

How are things going to change with the “new normal?”

**03**

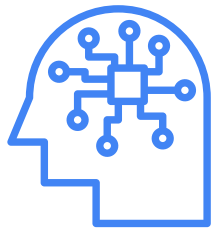
What should I look for when evaluating a technology and partner?

**04**

What do you do?

Each section is also accompanied with an interview I conducted with one of the leaders of that company so you can get a more in-depth view of that category.

That being said, I have four principles I want to share when considering a technology transformation:



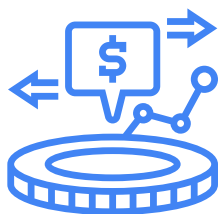
### **Don't overthink technology**

Technology should streamline processes, not drive them. Remember that it will never be perfect on day one, so don't try to plan for every possible scenario when deploying new technologies. VI is just the beginning of the journey.



### **Good analytics and automation are no longer optional**

Data is just data without the tools to analyze and inform decisions. Focus on the strategic KPI's and insights that will move your business forward. Automation of tedious and repetitive tasks is crucial in freeing up the time of managers to go out and make sure their guests are having a positive experience.



### **Omni-channel isn't going away**

Off premise trends were starting pre-covid and accelerated during the pandemic. It's imperative to bring in revenue from everywhere: 3rd-party delivery, curbside, take-out, online ordering, etc. Make sure your backend systems and operational flows can handle new revenue channels.



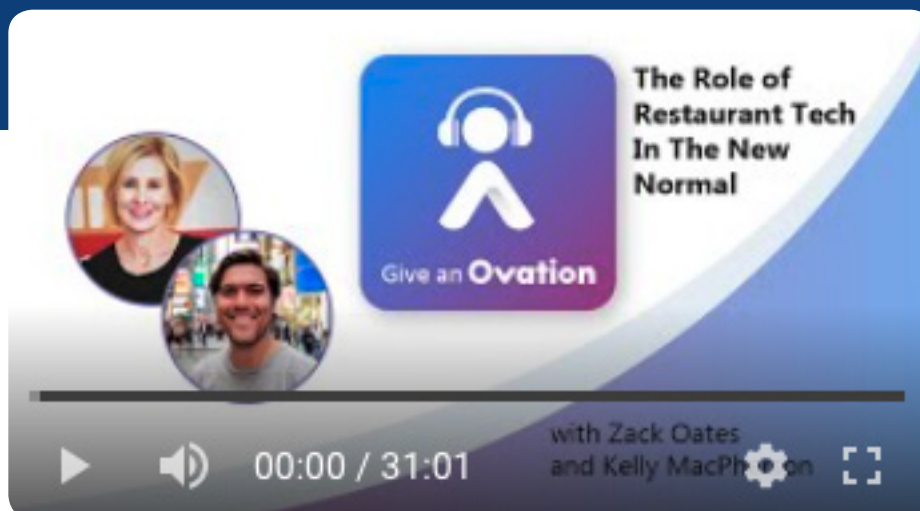
## 04 Guest feedback is key to future success

The consumer base wants to be heard. They expect quick responses from any feedback more than ever before, and there are tools out there that make building that relationship in an authentic and personalized way.

Click here To watch Kelly's whole interview on those 4 topics



So with that all in mind...let's dive in!



## CHAPTER 1

# Recruiting and Hiring



Sponsored by: HigherMe – Derek Williamson, CEO

Higher**me**

This chapter is focused on leveraging technology to better attract and retain talent. Derek Williamson, CEO of HigherMe will also discuss interviewing best practices and gaps in the current processes today.

### What's wrong with the "old normal?"

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Turnover in the restaurant industry is high, and the "old normal" way of hiring isn't fast enough to keep up. Much of the hiring process was done in person: candidates dropping off résumés in store, face-to-face interviews, and completing onboarding on paper. This not only slows down the time it takes to hire new staff, but it's also not the safest during COVID-19. We've seen restaurants make a big shift recently to online applications, virtual hiring parties, and paperless onboarding.

### How are things changing in the "new normal?"

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Working in a restaurant is more complex now than ever before: there are new and changing guidelines for dining rooms, drive-thru, curbside pickup, and delivery. It's more important than ever to have good staff at your business who will stay for a long time and have a strong understanding of your current workplace processes. **Turnover is even more costly than before, as new staff need more training to understand the health and safety regulations and more time to learn these updated processes.**

### What should I look for when evaluating a technology?

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Look at what part of hiring takes you the most time: posting on job boards, evaluating candidates, scheduling interviews, running background checks, or completing onboarding paperwork. Find a solution that will save you time (and money) for the most manual part of the process. Also look for technology that was made for the restaurant industry. HigherMe was founded by a former multi-unit ice cream shop franchisee, so we've built our software with restaurants as top of mind.

### What does HigherMe do?

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HigherMe is all-in-one hiring software that gives restaurant businesses the tools and technology to easily find, screen, interview, and onboard employees from anywhere on any device. We make it easy to see all your job board posts in one place, quickly identify top talent, automate interview scheduling, and complete background checks. Our customers save about 7 hours per hire and can hire a new employee in as few as 72 hours.

Learn more at [higherme.com](https://higherme.com).

Watch Kelly's  
interview here:



## CHAPTER 2

# Shift and Labor Management



Sponsored by: 7Shifts – Jordan Boesch, CEO



This chapter is focused on ensuring the right people are scheduled at the right time to ensure best guest and staff experience while optimizing labor costs. Jordan Boesch, CEO of & 7Shifts will cover the challenge with “scheduling based on gut and excel” and how the right labor management and analytics can drive real business outcomes and improve staff engagement.

### What’s wrong with the “old normal?”

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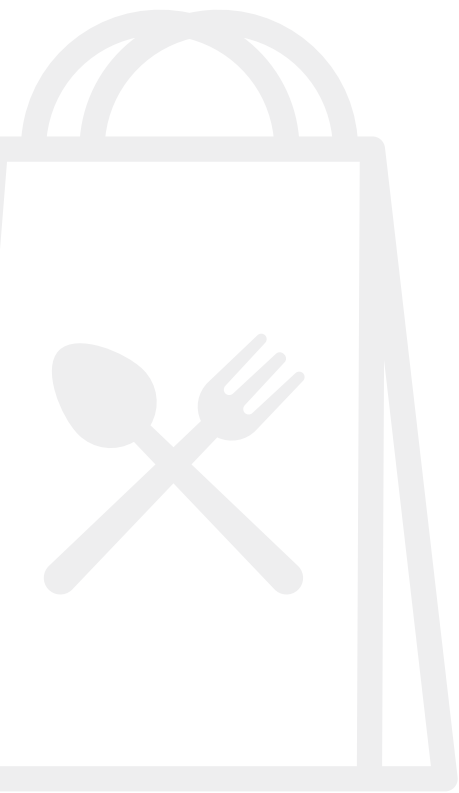


Restaurant technology has been broken for many years, but it’s not just technology’s fault. There is a mindset amongst restaurateurs that is highly defensive, largely due to them operating in a tight-margin industry. Due to this defensive mindset, most restaurants focus more on things that will make them money vs things that will save them money. Being in the “save them money” mindset means technology providers have to do a lot of convincing to help operators understand the ROI of their solution.

It’s hard to blame them for this mindset though – operators are burdened with costs all day, so the last thing they want is to hear about something else that they have to pay for. While this defensive mindset has its benefits, it can limit an operator from adopting new technology that will offensively position them for future growth and success.

### How are things changing in the “new normal?”

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In a short time-span our team at 7shifts has witnessed a rapid shift in the mindset of the restaurant operator. In our space, this change is impossible to ignore--from consumer tech all the way to the back of house. Most restaurants were already walking a fine line between operating profitably and being in the red, and COVID-19 has simply made this insight more apparent. The pandemic didn't cause restaurants to fail; restaurants were already hurting, COVID-19 just opened the wound and threw an entire salt shaker in it.

Those that survived, likely did by leveraging delivery and take-out apps, either 3rd-party or self-run. As we adapt to a “new normal” and restaurants begin to re-open, our hope is that there will be more business savvy operators stepping into the tough world of running a restaurant and using technology as their competitive advantage, to run it more efficiently than their predecessors. Gone are the days of hearing “but this is how we always did it” as those restaurants most likely did not survive.

### What should I look for when evaluating technology?

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If you're evaluating technology, I have one very basic rule – **use tech that integrates with each other.**

There is just too much noise in the restaurant tech ecosystem to make sense of everything you're going to need, but you can always ask “Does X integrate with Y?” If it doesn't, you (or your team) are going to be stuck doing the same tasks multiple times, and it's going to be incredibly time consuming and inefficient.

For instance, when you add an employee to payroll, make sure it automatically syncs that employee data to your POS, training app or your scheduling app.

Also, be wary of technology that claims to do everything. These are often the “jack of all, master of none” product suites. Find out what their core competencies are – a.k.a. what they do 10x better than anyone to provide value to your restaurants – then explore to what degree they do the other things you need. From there, you can decide on whether or not you use their other lightweight features or opt to use another product. If you use another product, make sure it integrates!

### What does 7Shifts do?

7shifts provides over 350,000 restaurant pros with a labor management platform that helps managers save thousands on labor costs every month, reduces time spent managing schedules by 80%, and keeps staff motivated and engaged – all using a free and intuitive mobile app.

Try 7shifts today and get 3 months FREE! Enter coupon code OVATION\_3MO over at [bit.ly/7shifts-ovation](https://bit.ly/7shifts-ovation) once you have signed up.

Watch Kelly's  
interview here:



## CHAPTER 3

# Routine Management



Sponsored by: JOLT- Bob Gibson, CRO and Jeff Pinc, SVP  
Global Sales and Marketing



This chapter is focused on how technology can help owners/operators constantly monitor and audit task completion and compliance with both brand standards and regulations; even when they are not in the restaurant. Bob Gibson and Jeff Pinc of Jolt will talk about the benefits of automation and data to ensure accountability and best practices for “avoiding surprises.”

### What’s wrong with the “old normal?”

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The idea of “food as art” and the rise of the celebrity chef created a new type of customer. Folks were really interested in the “experience” when it comes to dine in. This has created a dilemma in the industry as this created a high touch personal experience.

### How are things changing in the “new normal?”

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**The new normal is being dictated by contactless experiences.** From ordering to payment, the trend is less personal interaction and more technology based interaction. The question is, will this be temporary or permanent? The other major change is around the move to ghost kitchens. When you look at today, the changes we are seeing are a speed up of predicted changes over the next five years. As we look at trends, a good way to understand what is happening today is to look out to future predictions and incorporate into today’s world.



### What should I look for when evaluating a technology?

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Some key areas to look at are the SaaS-based or License, how flexible are their API's, what is their hardware strategy short-term and long-term, what are the hidden charges (credit card specifically), data storage and retention policies, who owns the customers data and what is being done with it.

### What does JOLT do?

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Jolt provides the restaurant industry with a variety of tools to help them become more efficient. We offer Task management, Digital Food Safety, sensors, time and attendance, as well as scheduling.

Learn more at [www.jolt.com](http://www.jolt.com)

Watch Kelly's interview here:

CHAPTER 3

**ROUTINE MANAGEMENT**  
with Bob Gibson and Jeff Pinc

**TABLE FOR 10**

**Jolt**

## CHAPTER 4

# Security and Loss Prevention



Sponsored by: Savi – Brock Weeks, CEO



This chapter is focused on leveraging surveillance camera technology and data to drive real impact to the bottom line. Brock Weeks, CEO of Savi will share his perspective on common pitfalls, benefits, best practices for fraud reduction and the future opportunities camera technology can provide.

### What's wrong with the "old normal?"

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Complacency. As Max McKeown said, "All failure is a failure to adapt, all success is successful adaptation." The old normal allowed people to become complacent and comfortable because you could just keep doing what you've always done. Though many of the changes were forced upon the restaurant industry by COVID-19, some will remain far after it is behind us because the forced innovation created efficiency gains for operators, increased ability to adapt from technology providers, and convenience options for consumers. All of which are good things.

### How are things changing in the "new normal?"

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We think one of the biggest things, which is a positive in our minds, is people are reevaluating the way things have "always been done" and asking is there a better way? It's forcing legacy incumbent players to open up platforms and develop API's on the technology side, enabling those operators that want to offer new experiences and services to their customers the ability to do so quickly and efficiently. **Being forced to make changes quickly has shown companies how adaptive they really are and opened up new ideas and thinking.**

### What should I look for when evaluating a technology?

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First, is it future proof? Yes, it's great if a solution solves your problem today, but is it going to solve your problem in the next 3, 5, or 10 years as your business evolves and how hard is it for the company to make adjustments and updates? Technology is progressing at an ever-quicken pace and so are the needs of operators and wants of customers. What are the costs, time, and man-hours involved to make changes or adjustments down the road? Luckily for operators, today's cloud computing environments allow technology companies that are architected correctly with the ability to make necessary updates, improvements, and adding new features relatively frictionless.

Second, is the data usable? Our world is becoming overloaded with data, but the data is only valuable if the user can find what they are looking for quickly and interpret what that data means. Our new challenge is making data timely, relevant, digestible, and actionable for the end-user.



## What does Savi do?

Savi's cloud-based platform empowers operators and managers to not only understand the results they are achieving through real-time data visualizations and reporting but the behavior causing those results through marrying that data with video and audio of in-store transactions and employee interactions. Enabling them to replicate profit-driving behaviors and eliminate those leading to loss, while gaining new insights into the customer experience. All this is accomplished by leveraging their existing surveillance and POS equipment.

Learn more at [www.getsavi.com](http://www.getsavi.com)

Watch Kelly's  
interview here:



OR VISIT [OvationUP.com/table-for-10-videos](http://OvationUP.com/table-for-10-videos)



## CHAPTER 5

# Inventory & Order Management



Sponsored by: xtraCHEF – Andy Schwartz, Co-Founder & CEO



This chapter is focused on how technology and data can optimize inventory and better control food cost. In this session, Andy Schwartz, Co-Founder and CEO of xtraCHEF will share his perspective on common pitfalls, benefits, and best practices for improving the value of food management systems.

### What's wrong with the “old normal?”

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My partner Bhavik Patel and I started xtraCHEF because we saw restaurants were using archaic technology—or no technology at all. The old solutions were really difficult to use, not to mention expensive and time-consuming to implement. In the past decade, some solutions used up-and-coming tech, like Optical Character Recognition (OCR)—but it didn't actually work the way it should.

In developing xtraCHEF, we recognized that there was a need to eliminate the time-consuming manual data entry associated with invoice processing. So, we created an efficient, accurate, and repeatable process for Accounts Payable Automation. xtraCHEF's backbone is modern OCR; we use it to digitize and automatically code invoices for restaurants, structuring data in a way that can be easily understood and interpreted by anyone on a restaurant team.

Our product is much less expensive than legacy solutions; we even created a [free version of the software](#) to help restaurants who were struggling to control food costs at the height of the pandemic.



### How are things changing in the “new normal?”

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Operators have depended heavily on tech solutions for their front of house to drive revenue over the past several months. But they’re also beginning to realize that tech can help to cut costs for back office operations.

Solutions like xtraCHEF help restaurants better understand their food costs and inventory while reducing labor costs. But it also helps restaurant owners to keep their staff safer, because aspects of the job with many touch points—like processing invoices—are eliminated. Plus, xtraCHEF operates on a cloud, with both desktop and mobile functionality, so work can be done outside of the restaurant and from the safety of home.

### What should I look for when evaluating technology?

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In this industry, the oldest solutions aren’t necessarily the best. Look for terms like “mobile” and “cloud” in order to assess how current a provider’s tech is.

Make sure the product is easy to use. There shouldn’t be one point person necessary to own the software or its implementation; it should be accessible for everyone on the team.

**The solution should also play well with others, meaning it integrates with other tech software on the market.**

Operators shouldn't be sold features they don't need; instead, look for focused solutions that are the best at what they do that share data with other software that's also best in class. A "one-size-fits-all" solution is unnecessary if it's not actually solving all of your problems.

You'll also want to vet the software to ensure it can support your type of business. Do you run a ghost kitchen? What about a group of 100+ franchise restaurants? Ask the provider how they specifically support your needs.

### What does extraCHEF do

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xtraCHEF is a financial and operational management platform built for restaurants of all sizes and services. Leveraging a combination of machine learning, data science, and quality control, xtraCHEF provides the power of data and invoice digitization and automatic coding to streamline the supply chain, fuel productivity, and make more informed purchasing decisions.

Learn more about our premium product at [xtrachef.com](https://xtrachef.com), or get started today with our free food cost management software at [xtrachef.com/xtracash](https://xtrachef.com/xtracash).

Watch Kelly's  
interview here:



## CHAPTER 6

# 3rd-Party Consolidation



Sponsored by: Your Fare – Chris Monk, CEO

**YOUR  FARE**

This chapter is focused on managing the complexity of 3rd-party delivery. Chris Monk, CEO of Your Fare will discuss the importance of maintaining a presence in 3<sup>rd</sup>-party marketplaces and how technology can improve operational efficiencies and execution.

### **What's wrong with the "old normal?"**

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Sometimes, the "old normal" just works – but that is it, it just works and doesn't necessarily mean a company is growing or thriving. For many restaurants that have been around for years, fear of adopting new technology, such as 3rd-party delivery services, can keep profit margins slim. As the pandemic continues to require a change in business, and as consumers utilize delivery more than ever, developing a 3rd-party delivery strategy using platforms such as Your Fare will be essential to improving profit margins for the long haul.

### **How are things changing in the "new normal?"**

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The "new normal" has inspired more traditional business owners to adopt new technologies due to the need for maximized efficiencies, particularly now that every order counts. For many, that means they have had to utilize 3rd-party delivery services for the first time.

**While it can seem expensive to use multiple services, taking advantage of built-in audiences for each one can help increase profits** significantly compared to use of a single delivery platform or managing a proprietary delivery model. Using a platform like Your Fare to streamline management of all the different services is also essential to maximize efficiencies so that the use of multiple 3rd-party delivery platforms works for you, not against you.

### **What should I look for when evaluating the technology?**

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When evaluating new technology, ensure that it will work with you, not cause additional friction. While there will typically be a learning curve, choosing a tool that integrates with existing systems will ensure that your decision benefits you and your team. Employing too many disjointed systems can hinder success, as it often allows tasks to slip through the cracks or errors as information is transferred manually between programs. For example, it's crucial for restaurants using delivery services to use platforms that consolidate orders and integrate directly with POS systems to relay orders directly to the kitchen. If you do not have a POS system that allows for integration, it is essential to streamline all your online orders to a single platform.



## What does Your Fare do?

Your Fare is a leading online ordering management software built for restaurant operators by restaurant operators. While using multiple 3rd-party delivery services can introduce small businesses to a broader range of customers, managing different services often requires numerous tablets. Your Fare helps calm the chaos, combining online food orders from all 3rd-party delivery services [into a single, user-friendly platform](#). Our Austin, Texas-based company [works with restaurant teams](#) to evaluate the current point of sales systems and operations to build an individual strategy that fits each restaurant, keeping revenue high and stress low.

Learn more at [www.yourfareinc.com](http://www.yourfareinc.com)

Watch Kelly's  
interview here:



OR VISIT [OVATIONUP.COM/TABLE-FOR-10-VIDEOS](http://OVATIONUP.COM/TABLE-FOR-10-VIDEOS)



## CHAPTER 7

# Online Ordering



Sponsored by: Lunchbox – Sarah Kabakoff,  
Vice President Solutions

**LUNCH  
BOX**

This chapter is focused on digital online ordering and its critical importance in these times. Sarah Kabokoff, VP of Solutions for Lunchbox and an industry trailblazer will share her perspectives on technology, industry trends, and how to have a strong digital presence.

### What's wrong with the "old normal?"

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I don't know that there was anything "wrong" with the old normal. The old way of thinking was very "cautious" and led to a late adopter mentality in the restaurant industry. I can't tell you the number of times I have heard "your company is too young." I heard it in 2016 when I was first building Toast's enterprise business and I hear it now. New engagement models are being defined. Early adopters of next gen digital technology are seeing great results. Let's face it, our industry was/is behind compared to many other industries when it comes to deploying next-gen technology.

We are just starting to leverage the data that other industries have used for years. It's not that the technology hasn't been available. Profit margins are razor-thin in the restaurant industry and innovation can cost a lot to test and implement. Not everyone has the funding and financial backing like Dominos and Chipotle.

These groups have become tech companies that produce food. Chipotle may not have started out with a tech first model, but they certainly have adopted and adapted. Nothing has held them back. These two brands have thrived in the age of COVID-19. They were early adopters and embraced technology before this mess we're in. COVID-19 has sped up their digital takeover. We are still in the beginning of the mass adoption of new tech in our industry. By the end of 2022, the tech space will look very different from today. New platforms with modern architecture are poised to make some big splashes.

### **How are things changing in the “new normal?”**

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We are only in the beginning of the new “normal.” The next two years will see significant changes in the restaurant tech landscape. Currently, brands are being forced to evolve. Buffets are turning into ghost kitchens. Guest personalization in digital messaging is a brave new world of engagement. The barrier to entry for foodservice is also becoming lower. With the rise of ghost kitchens it's much easier to expand your brand's footprint. I can now take my regional brand and push it national with my choice of several partnership models. I no longer need an expansive real estate footprint that was traditionally a major barrier.



**Consumers are being trained to engage online.**

**Delivery and takeout are now primary ways to**

**engage your guests.** The best brands are rethinking the guest engagement model all the way down to the materials the food is transported in. Automation is starting to be recognized for the tools it can provide. Cashiers will become a thing of the past due to AI, in many segments. Those employees will not be lost but redirected to ensure guest satisfaction. A strong digital storefront is becoming more and more of a requirement. I find myself abandoning my cart and ordering elsewhere if the engagement process is difficult or there are too many clicks I have to contend with. We have become an on-demand society to the point where if your app/web makes it difficult for me to order, I will just go somewhere else. Great food is a benchmark, not a differentiator. Don't miss your opportunity to take control of your guest engagement.

**What should I look for when evaluating the technology?**

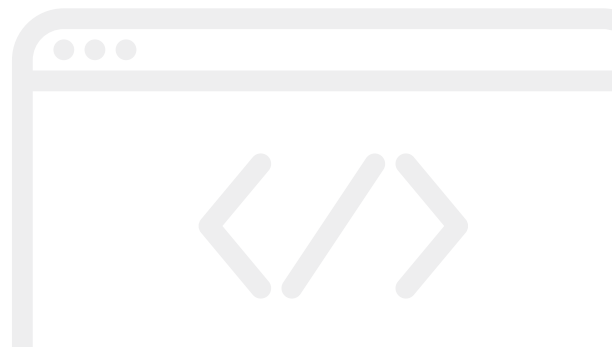
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This greatly depends on the type of tech that you are looking for. In general, you want to find a company that understands the latest technology and needs of the restaurant industry. As systems age and become larger, they become much harder to update. The last 10 years have seen some massive changes to the way technology should be architected.



Ask how the tech is extensible. Can updates be made to one portion of the code without having to have the entire codebase adjusted? I know everyone has heard “it’s on the roadmap” or “we can add that”. Both of those statements may be true, but how many dependencies do these requests have?

Many times the delay is not because the code is hard to build or the feature is too “big,” it’s often because in order to complete your request the company may have to complete several internal architecture changes or adjust areas of the code that might break with the new update. Who are the leaders running this company? Do they have a history of innovation? Do they have the expertise to understand what the person engaging your brand will experience (this could be a guest, employee, or both)? Do they have a vision for long-term product adaptation? Every company becomes ripe for disruption when they grow large. If the companies adapt and grow they can have longevity. Look at Amazon, they sold books, now they own more aspects of your life than you’re aware of. They adapted and diversified. Has your provider done this or are they just sitting pretty in the tower looking down?



## What does Lunchbox do?

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Lunchbox is here to empower brands to increase sales and engagement through powerful tools, to help create stronger relationships with their guests. It is a collection of enterprise solutions that redefine the digital restaurant experience.

Learn more at [www.lunchbox.io](http://www.lunchbox.io)

Watch Kelly's  
interview here:



OR VISIT [OVATIONUP.COM/TABLE-FOR-10-VIDEOS](http://OVATIONUP.COM/TABLE-FOR-10-VIDEOS)



## CHAPTER 8

# Marketing



Sponsored by: Branded Strategic Hospitality –  
David “Rev” Ciancio, Head of Revenue Marketing



Our Marketing section is focused on “digital hospitality.” David “Rev” Ciano, Head of Revenue Marketing with Branded Strategic Hospitality, will share his perspectives on best practices for developing a comprehensive digital marketing plan, industry trends and success criteria for selecting (and deselecting) technology.

### What’s wrong with the “old normal?”

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It’s almost a cliché, but local restaurants have traditionally relied on serving quality food and offering “excellent service” as their marketing. They would open the door and wait for that magic word of mouth to be working. In a pre-COVID world, foot traffic and friendly neighbors might be enough to get you by but with growing competition and the significant advertising spend of large chains, the local restaurants are fighting to survive. Add the fact that the restaurant business hit an over saturation point in 2018. [Analysts](#) basically surmised that there were more restaurants than people had meals to eat.

Enter COVID-19 and now every restaurant is facing new challenges. Fine dining restaurants basically shut down, QSR had a massive boom but with lines that reach for blocks and blocks. Pizza restaurants took up to 90 minutes to deliver a pizza and Google temporarily shut off the ability to leave reviews to alleviate the already added stress.

Casual restaurants who thrived on dine-in are inventing ghost kitchens to rake in the dollars while meal kits and family meals officially become an industry buzzword.

In the old normal, we were headed for a bust. All COVID has done is accelerate the bust. Every industry in the world has adapted to tech. You can book a plumber on Google, you can book a hotel via text message, you can schedule an oil change or a haircut in an app all while restaurants are still relying on a facebook page they don't update to be their website and 3rd party delivery services to be their only means of getting orders to customers.

The old normal was already a mess and COVID hit the fast forward button.

### How are things changing in the “new normal?”

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In the “new normal,” your restaurant is still just that, “normal.” If you were average before the pandemic and did nothing to uplevel, you'll still be average. Don't aim to be average. Aim for better. Aim for THE NEW BETTER.

In the new better, the customer journey is king. It doesn't matter how proud you are of an item your chef created, if it isn't selling and you don't have a definitive means to calculate both sales performance and customer sentiment, it's time to 86 it.



All Restaurateurs, spend ungodly amounts of time, energy and money designing their in store experience. The entrance, the tablecloths, the wine list, the cleanliness, the friendliness, the display menus, the colors, the logo and even the toilet paper are painstakingly chosen. And now that COVID has taken away your dining room or at least the reluctance of some customers to be inside of it, your experience is a cold steak in a styrofoam container delivered in a plastic bag with the logo from a multi-million dollar tech company that charges you 30% to own YOUR customer. The experience, which is the reason why people dine out, is gone.

Your dining room was your footprint but so was your listing on Google, your Instagram account, your Yelp reviews, and your ability to remarket to your customers in emails, texts and paid ads. **In the new better, successful restaurants, local and national, manage their brand everywhere it lives online, in store or in bag, and they live and die by customer communication transmitted by digital means.**

Replying to reviews, managing listings, first party digital ordering, re-marketing, sentiment analysis and the closest version of one-to-one marketing is the way to success.

If a customer that just came through your door, had a bad experience and told you about it, would you not work to correct the situation right there on the spot?

You know you would. So why wouldn't you do the same thing online? You know you should. What used to be a "table touch" is now a message sent via SMS 30 minutes after a delivery asking "how was your experience?"

When a guest hasn't dined with you in 30 days, you will have a data system that automatically sends them a note to say "we miss you." That message reminds them of how much they like your food which triggers them to place an order.

Why are the 3rd party delivery services so successful? Because they make ordering easy. They provide an easy to use and frictionless ordering system. Worst part is that when something goes wrong, they blame the restaurant and then the driver screws up, who gets the 1-star review on Yelp? The restaurant.

In the new better, a successful restaurant manages their customer journey from discovery to acquisition to a return trip and they do it in the smoothest possible way, surprising and delighting the customer throughout the process. Not only do they own the customer journey, but they own their customer's data and they leverage to surprise and delight more.

**What should I look for when evaluating the technology?**

Evaluating tech requires a very specific mindset. Most people instantly go into a cognitive bias where they try to find proof that something aligns with their already existing thoughts.

The best way to evaluate tech is with an open mind. Don't look for the faults, look for the possibilities.


Don't think "can i afford this?" think "what kind of efficiency could be gained with this?" Don't set your mind believing you don't need it, go into the discovery wondering what are the possibilities. If you get through a process looking for ways you could be successful and just can't see them, then, then maybe it's not a fit.

Likely you will see a way that it can help you and then you will know the right questions to ask to help you evaluate it.

- ➔ Do I have this problem?
- ➔ Does this solve my problem?
- ➔ What could I do if we solved this problem?
- ➔ How are other businesses like mine seeing success with this solution?
- ➔ How could I be really successful using this solution?
- ➔ If I was really successful using this solution, what would that mean for my business?



When you get through that line of question, then you can ask the tech and admin stuff:

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- Does this integrate with my current set up? If not, does it make sense to evaluate other parts of my tech stack and if so, what would I need to be successful then?
  - How long does it take to ramp up to full speed?
  - How do most businesses find success using this?
  - Can I manage this or do I need to assign or hire someone to run it? If it's the latter, would the cost of the labor offset the gain?

### What does Branded Strategic and Rev Ciancio do?

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**Branded Strategic Hospitality** “Branded” is an **investment and advisory** company that leverages its ecosystem of hospitality venues, expertise, and deep relationships to influence, redefine and evolve hospitality technology (“HI-Tech”) and innovation.

We are able to offer real insight to our Partner Companies of the most pressing challenges and opportunities that hospitality owners and operators face. We invest directly in early and growth stage companies as well as present unique investment opportunities to the Branded Syndicate and Strategic Connections.

Through Branded Strategic's Revenue Marketing Services I help

- ➔ Restaurants raise awareness, acquire and retain customers through digital marketing, social media and the use of incredible software.
- ➔ Technology and software companies help those restaurants to be successful in their business.
- ➔ Brands gain awareness from consumers and restaurant operators.
- ➔ Consumers find restaurants, food and beverage brands that deliver an incredible experience.

Learn more at [www.brandedstrategic.com](http://www.brandedstrategic.com)

Watch Kelly's  
interview here:



OR VISIT [OVATIONUP.COM/TABLE-FOR-10-VIDEOS](http://OVATIONUP.COM/TABLE-FOR-10-VIDEOS)



## CHAPTER 9

# Guest Feedback



Sponsored by: Ovation – Zack Oates, CEO

**Ovation**

This chapter is focused on the importance of real-time guest feedback, both in restaurant and off-premise channels. Zack Oates, CEO of Ovation will share his perspective on industry trends, best practices, and insights into how technology can enable a better guest experience that actually drives profits.

### What's wrong with the "old normal?"

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While almost everything a restaurant does is to create a great customer experience, most restaurants still don't have a great way to measure that customer experience. And while online reviews, table touches, and receipt surveys used to be the norm, there are significant issues. Online reviews have always been skewed, but now they're averaging 1.5 stars less if they mention delivery. Table touches make people feel uncomfortable or are impossible off-premise. Long surveys are frustrating to customers and have incredibly low take rates.

### What's wrong with the "old normal?"

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**Hospitality is not dead--it's just gone digital. And with the proliferation of ways customers can order, there needs to be a single point source of feedback** across all channels to meet the demand of creating that true sense of hospitality.



On-premise: while table touches may not be appropriate anymore, QR codes with a quick survey, tablets, and other contactless options should still be employed to allow for easy and short surveys. Technology can automate much of the responses for the happy and allow for ease of response to the unhappy.

Off-premise: if you have the customer information, send them a text or email follow up asking how everything was. If you don't, budget for bag stuffers that ask about their experience. These "digital table touches" are part of the new normal and, without them, 1-star feedback will usually end up online. Ouch.

### **What should I look for when evaluating a technology?**

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Make sure whatever technology you're looking at for guest feedback does 3 things:

- 01** Easy for customers. It gives them multiple options to give feedback and it is a short survey. Research shows that customers do not want to answer more than 5 questions-- in total.



**02** Fast to respond. Customers are demanding higher and higher personalization as well as feedback. If you want to “WOW” your guests, make sure you have a technology that makes it simple to address their concern in a fast time-frame (Gold- 5 min; Silver- 1 hour; Bronze- 1 day) and allows you at corporate to see that conversation.

**03** Omni-channel aggregation and trend analysis. Okay...sounds fancy, but really, it needs to work across drive thru, 3rd-party delivery, native online ordering, in-store, etc. to give you the insights you need. It also needs to aggregate all of that feedback and online reviews to allow you to see those trends without reading every piece of feedback.

### What does Ovation do?



Ovation is an actionable guest feedback loop. Not only can you collect feedback from customers in-store, delivery, or pickup, but Ovation gives you tools to resolve concerns in real-time and uncover the insights to improve brand-wide.



It is easy for consumers, simple for managers, and essential for leadership.

Ovation has an omni-channel approach to centralize guest feedback no matter how they order. Tools include automated text surveys through integrations (POS, loyalty, online ordering), bag stuffers with QR codes, signage on drive thrus, stickers on to go orders, table toppers, iPad kiosks, etc.

Consumers are only asked 2 questions (not 10, not 75): how was your experience and can you tell us more. Positive feedback goes online as public reviews, and all other feedback goes directly to Ovation's award-winning app where managers can respond in 3 clicks with a personalized text to the consumer to win them back.

Then, content from public reviews and private feedback goes into Ovation's algorithm to give an easy-to-see overview of how the locations are doing and uncover hidden insights to improve.

Learn more at [www.ovationup.com](http://www.ovationup.com)

Watch Kelly's  
interview here:



## CHAPTER 10

# Data Aggregation and Analytics



Sponsored by: Ingest – Kenneth Kuo, CEO



This chapter is focused on understanding how technology can deliver operational insights to help your restaurant become more profitable. Kenneth Kuo, the CEO of Ingest will share his thoughts on the industry challenges, new trends, and how to avoid the pitfalls of traditional business intelligence (BI) strategies.

### What's wrong with the "old normal?"

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The unfortunate reality with the "old normal" is that there is a persistent and pernicious lack of data visibility across the restaurant industry. A restaurant generates an incredible amount of data on a daily basis, but only a fraction of that data is readily available to the restaurant operators.

This speaks to two fundamental problems that permeate the restaurant technology landscape.

### Inaccessible Data

3rd-party software restricts restaurants from visibility into their own data. Nowhere is this more evident than the absolute data vice grip imposed by 3rd-party delivery apps like Seamless, GrubHub, and UberEats. These delivery providers restrict even the most basic data – customer information, product mix breakdowns, item quantities, etc.

### Fractured Data:

Even if a restaurant were to have the capability to readily access their data, the raw data from myriad sources are coming in at disparate levels of granularity; normalizing that data requires incredible amounts of manual consolidation. This usually means an individual (or team) manually consolidating from multiple POS Systems, Delivery Providers, Scheduling Software, and Time-in-Attendance Software just to create something as simple as a high level “Sales vs Labor” report.

#### How are things changing in the “new normal?”

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Now, more than ever, restaurants are acutely aware of their lack of visibility into their own operational data. The industry has been forced to become more data driven. Some new technologies have become increasingly savvy to the changing landscape and have made it much easier for restaurants to access their data. However, much of the restaurant technology landscape remains caught up in the old way of doing things. The hope is that those technologies that are unwilling to change, will get phased out by technologies that embrace the new realities of democratized data.

### What should I look for when evaluating a technology?

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Data accessibility and visibility are paramount. **The technology you choose should have your best interests in mind; this means that, at the most basic level, they will not withhold valuable operational data from you.** Furthermore, we are moving towards an integrated future where data sharing should be simple. A piece of technology should have a functional API where other approved software vendors can easily have read and write data access if the restaurant so authorizes.

### What does Ingest do?

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Ingest is the single source of truth for all of the data that your restaurant generates. We integrate with many 3rd-party software systems (POS, Labor and Scheduling, Time-in-Attendance, Reservations, Inventory Management), ingesting, aggregating, and normalizing all of your operational data. From there, we provide best-in-class reporting tools that deliver operational insights to help your restaurant become more profitable.

Learn more at [www.ingest.ai](http://www.ingest.ai)

Watch Kelly's interview here:



## Conclusion

There you have it.

10 of the best experts I could find in the space to help us all pull together the technology that we need to thrive in these times and the future. For it is critical to remember that the “new normal” is not something that has happened and is defined, it is something that is happening and will continue to be defined through the next couple years. Technology doesn’t change that, but it helps us adapt with the changes.

The new complexities of operating restaurants with the emergence of digital channels has shifted the mindset of not only operators but also the restaurant tech industry. It has sparked a refreshing approach of more collaboration amongst focused solutions to build the ideal “connected restaurant.”





Just like with teams, if you have a weak link in your technology stack, you need to make a change. No longer is it acceptable for platforms or partners not to play well with others. The solution providers that inhibit innovation, connectivity, and sharing of data will become irrelevant.

Technology needs to solve problems and provide the insights to make data-driven decisions. And while the basic principles have not changed, understanding the full picture of your business can only come through powerful and actionable insights.

This extends across platforms and the key to success is the consolidation, interpretation, and translation of all this information into actions. To create a superior experience with recruiting the right talent, making sure the right people are working at the right time, delivering the best online experience, ensuring proper safety checks and brand standards, engaging a customer with relevant offers, and guest feedback requires visibility and interconnectivity with your data.

Hospitality must be extended to the digital ecosystem.

Own your customer (and data) regardless of the channel.

Understanding the sentiment of your customers and engaging in meaningful 1:1 personalized conversation will lead to increased profits.

**Customers want to be “heard” whether in-restaurant or online.**

Solicit feedback in real-time and respond. We are a society of instant response; traditional means are no longer effective. Experience, convenience, and perceived value will continue to drive purchase decisions.

And finally, if there's one thing that is certain it is this: off-premise is not going away. New habits have been formed and having a seamless user experience online is as essential as the in-restaurant experience. Brands must focus on their digital experience and customer journey and leverage technology to manage in the most effective and efficient manner.

So I hope you were able to get value from this eBook. I'm grateful to Ovation for their help in creating this and all of the companies for their incredible support with this content.

Regardless of where your restaurant is at currently, it is my hope that you can leverage technology for a better future and take your place at the table of success.



**WATCH KELLY'S SUMMARY OF THE EBOOK HERE**





## LUNCH BOX

