

USE CASE

IMPROVING DRIVE-THRU EXPERIENCE AND SPEED OF SERVICE

Leading fast-food operators report that about 70% of their sales now occur at the drive-thru window, a number that has led to an increase in traffic, wait times, and order mistakes. Average speed-of-service times – meaning the time between the customer placing his or her order and then receiving it – have largely slowed across the industry. As consumers demand increased speed and convenience from restaurants, operators must find a way to deliver positive customer experiences through accuracy and speed of service.

Challenges

One of America's largest fast-food brands needed greater visibility into their drive-thru performance. Their goal across all of their 650 locations was to keep the number of cars in the drive-thru to 4 or fewer, expecting that 5 or more cars waiting would cause potential customers to leave without making a purchase for fear of a long wait time. To ensure that they're not missing sales opportunities, they decided to focus on decreasing the average time of the drive-thru experience to ensure that cars can effectively be served and the queue does not rise above their ideal threshold.

Solution

Utilizing the granular reporting of Agilence's data analytics platform, the corporate office measured the drive-thru experience time for each location and found that the average was 242 seconds (or just over 4 minutes). They also found that 5 or more cars were in the queue during 10.1% of all transactions across all locations. By pinpointing operational issues at the slowest locations, analysts determined that they could reduce the average drive-thru experience to 220 seconds, saving 22 seconds per car on average. Achieving this goal would allow operators to serve 11 cars in the same amount of time it had previously taken to serve 10 cars, and free up space in the queue for an additional car.

Benefits By the Numbers

- Analysts estimated that in just 30 days, 29,450 cars across all locations had left due to long drive-thru queues. Multiplying this by the average sale size (approximately \$9.34) revealed the lost sales that could be regained by reducing the length of the average drive-thru experience across the enterprise to 220 seconds.
 - Increasing average drive-thru speed of service revealed the opportunity to increase sales by approximately \$275,000 in just 30 days (\$3.3 million annualized).

Fast-food restaurant operators must ensure that their drive-thru is both accurate and fast. One of the largest fast-food chains in the country utilized Agilence to gain deeper insights into their drive-thru's efficiency.