

# Kiosk Deployment Guide for Quick-Service Restaurant (QSR) Businesses

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## Executive Summary

This guide provides a comprehensive framework for Quick-Service Restaurant (QSR) businesses considering the deployment of self-service kiosks. By strategically implementing kiosk technology, QSRs can achieve significant improvements in key performance areas, including reduced wait times, increased order accuracy, and higher average ticket sizes. This document outlines the primary objectives of kiosk deployment, offers a step-by-step pilot program for implementation, and details the expected financial and operational impacts. With data-driven insights and industry benchmarks, this guide serves as a strategic tool for QSR leaders aiming to enhance operational efficiency, elevate the customer experience, and boost profitability in a competitive market.

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# 1. Defining Key Objectives for Kiosk Deployment

To ensure a successful kiosk implementation, it is crucial to clearly define the business objectives from the outset. The following are common goals for QSRs deploying kiosk technology:

- **Reduce Wait Times:** A primary commercial driver for QSRs is speed of service. Kiosks can significantly decrease customer queue times, aiming for a near-ideal wait of under 30 seconds.
- **Increase Order Accuracy:** Automating the order-taking process minimizes human error.
- **Drive Higher Order Value:** Kiosks consistently present upselling and cross-selling opportunities through a visually engaging interface.
- **Improve Customer Throughput:** By processing orders more efficiently, kiosks can increase the number of customers served, especially during peak hours.
- **Reduce Labor Dependency:** Automating front-counter tasks allows for the strategic reallocation of staff to other value-added functions.
- **Expand Order Points:** Kiosks increase the number of simultaneous orders that can be sent to the kitchen, better leveraging its capacity.
- **Enhance Customer Experience:** Offering a convenient and autonomous ordering process improves customer satisfaction and loyalty.
- **Increase Brand Appeal:** Modern, tech-forward solutions like kiosks appeal to key demographics, particularly younger, digitally native customers.

## 2. The Impact of Kiosks on QSR Operations



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## 2.1. Reducing Customer Wait Times

Reducing wait times is a critical factor in the QSR industry, where speed is paramount. Studies have shown that one in five customers will leave if the queue is longer than three minutes.

### Industry Benchmarks for Wait Times:

Channel	Industry Average (Queue Wait Time)	Total Service Time (Order + Prep + Delivery)
<b>Counter (in-store)</b>	1-3 mins	3-7 mins
<b>Drive-Thru</b>	30-90 sec	4-5 mins (full cycle)
<b>Kiosk / Mobile Order Pickup</b>	0-30 sec (queue)	2-5 mins

### Best-in-Class Kiosk Wait Times:

Channel	Industry Average (Queue Wait Time at Kiosk)	Total Service Time (Order + Prep + Delivery)
<b>Kiosk (In-Store)</b>	10 - 60 seconds (very short queue)	3 - 5 minutes
<b>Kiosk (Mobile Order Pickup Zones)</b>	Often zero queue	2 - 4 minutes
<b>Kiosk (Peak Periods - High Volume Stores)</b>	1 - 2 minutes	4 - 6 minutes

A reduction of just 30 seconds in kiosk queue time can increase throughput by approximately 10% for a busy QSR.

## 2.2. Increasing Order Accuracy

While top-performing QSR brands achieve order accuracy rates of 96-98%, the industry average is lower, between 88% and 94%. Kiosks help improve this by eliminating verbal order entry errors.

### Financial Impact of Improved Accuracy:

A 1% improvement in order accuracy can result in approximately

**\$6,000 per year in direct savings per store.** For a 500-unit chain, this translates to

**\$3 million in annual system-wide savings.** This does not include indirect benefits such as higher customer satisfaction and loyalty. In fact, a 1% gain in order accuracy has been linked to a 0.5% to 1% lift in same-store sales.

### Order Accuracy Benchmarks:

Brand	Recent Benchmarks
Chick-fil-A	~97%
McDonald's	~94%
Wendy's	~92%
Industry Average (Drive-Thru)	~88%-92%

## 2.3. Upselling and Increasing Average Ticket Size

Kiosks are highly effective at upselling due to visual merchandising and a non-pressured environment for the customer. On average, kiosks can drive a



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**10% to 20% higher ticket value** compared to staffed counters.

**Industry Data on Upsell Impact:**

Brand / Study	Reported Uplift from Kiosks vs. Counter
<b>McDonald's</b> (global average)	+20% higher average ticket per kiosk order
<b>Taco Bell</b> Digital Forward Stores	+10% to +15% higher ticket value
<b>Panera Bread</b>	~12% higher average check size
<b>Wendy's</b> (early kiosk pilots)	~15% increase in upsell acceptance
<b>QSR Industry Benchmarks</b>	+10% to +25% ticket increase is common

A 15% uplift on an average check of \$10 can translate to approximately **\$180,000 in additional annual revenue per store processing 500 transactions per day.**

**2.4. Improving Customer Throughput**

Self-service kiosks can process a significantly higher volume of orders compared to traditional counters, with some data suggesting a **30% to 80% increase in throughput per hour.**

**Throughput Comparison: Counter vs. Kiosk**

Metric	Traditional Counter	Self-Service Kiosk
<b>Average customers processed per ordering station per hour</b>	50-70	90-120
<b>Average time per order (ordering phase only)</b>	45-75 sec	20-45 sec
<b>Orders handled simultaneously</b>	Limited (1 per staff)	Multiple kiosks run in parallel



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<b>Peak load capacity</b>	Labor dependent	Easily scalable by adding kiosks
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This increased throughput can have a substantial revenue impact. An increase in throughput during peak hours could potentially generate an **additional 40% in revenue**.

## 2.5. Reducing Labor Dependency

Kiosks automate the order-taking and payment processes, which can reduce the need for front-of-house staff by 1-3 full-time employees. This leads to direct labor cost savings.

Furthermore, staff can be reallocated to more value-added activities like food preparation and customer service, enhancing overall efficiency.

## 3. A Phased Approach to Kiosk Deployment: The Pilot Program

A structured pilot program is essential for a successful system-wide rollout.

### Step 1: Select Pilot Locations

- Choose 1-3 representative restaurants.
- Key criteria include medium to high foot traffic, a mix of dine-in and takeout, and tech-savvy management.

### Step 2: Scope the Pilot

- **Duration:** 4–8 weeks is a typical timeframe.
- **Hardware:** Determine the number of kiosks per store (e.g., 2–4).
- **Integration:** Plan for integration with POS, loyalty, and kitchen display systems.
- **Training:** Develop a comprehensive training program for staff.

### Step 3: Plan the Kiosk Experience

- Design a user interface that is optimized for speed and clarity.
- Include features like a visual menu, clear upsell prompts, and multiple payment options.

### Step 4: Implement Metrics and Success Criteria

- Establish quantifiable metrics aligned with the initial objectives.

#### Core Success Metrics for Pilot:

Category	Metrics	Target or Benchmark
<b>Operational</b>	Avg. order time at kiosk	Equal to or faster than counter orders
	% of orders via kiosk vs. POS	Target 20–40% in pilot phase
<b>Financial</b>	Avg. check size (kiosk vs. counter)	Kiosk should show +10–20% lift
	Reduction in labor hours at front counter	Track time reallocation or reduction
<b>Customer Experience</b>	CSAT / NPS scores from kiosk users	Maintain or improve baseline
	% order accuracy	Equal or better than traditional POS
<b>Technical</b>	Uptime & reliability of kiosks	>99% uptime
	Integration errors / failed transactions	<1% failure rate

## Step 5: Pilot Execution and Monitoring

- Complete all necessary site surveys and enabling works before installation.
- Conduct a "soft launch" for 2-3 days to identify and address any initial issues.
- Continuously monitor customer behaviour and system performance to make iterative improvements.

## Step 6: Evaluation and Decision

- At the conclusion of the pilot, compile a comprehensive report comparing results against the established metrics.
- Make a data-driven decision to either proceed with a wider rollout, make further adjustments, or discontinue the initiative.

## Step 7: Scale with Learnings

- If the pilot is successful, use the insights gained to inform a phased, system-wide rollout strategy.

## 4. Enhancing the Brand and Customer Experience

Beyond the operational benefits, kiosks play a vital role in modernizing the QSR brand and meeting evolving customer expectations.

### Appealing to Key Demographics

- **Gen Z & Millennials:** These demographics show a strong preference for self-service technology. 67% of Gen Z and 58% of Millennials prefer kiosks over counter ordering. Over 70% of customers aged 18-24 are more likely to visit a QSR that offers kiosks.
- **Gen X & Baby Boomers:** While not their preferred method, the availability of kiosks still positively influences their decision to visit a restaurant. It is crucial to maintain traditional cashier options and provide support to ensure these customers feel comfortable.
- **Households with Children:** Families often appreciate the autonomy and clarity that kiosks provide, making the ordering process smoother.

## Improving the Customer Journey

- **Convenience and Speed:** Kiosks can reduce wait times by up to 50%.
- **Accuracy and Customization:** Customers have direct control over their orders, which is particularly beneficial for those with specific dietary needs or preferences.
- **Comfort and Autonomy:** A significant 87% of customers report feeling more relaxed when ordering via a kiosk compared to a traditional counter.

## 5. Potential Risks and Considerations

While the benefits are substantial, QSRs must also consider potential challenges:

- **Production Bottlenecks:** The kitchen's capacity must be able to keep pace with the increased order volume from the front-of-house.
- **Upfront Investment:** Kiosks require an initial capital investment for hardware and software.
- **Customer Adoption:** Adoption rates can vary by region and demographic.
- **Maintenance:** A plan for maintenance and addressing potential downtime is crucial to ensure reliability.

## Conclusion

The deployment of self-service kiosks offers a powerful opportunity for QSRs to drive significant financial returns, enhance operational efficiency, and elevate the customer experience. The total potential financial uplift per store can exceed

**\$1 million annually** when considering gains from increased throughput, labor savings, and higher ticket values.

By adopting a strategic, data-driven approach that begins with a well-defined pilot program, QSRs can successfully integrate this technology to meet the demands of the modern consumer, strengthen their competitive position, and achieve sustainable growth.



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