

Four Benefits of Using an In-Store Nutritional Kiosk

Besides legal compliance, nutritional kiosks offer marketing opportunities, customer service rewards, and more.

By Sara Thompson
Contributing editor,
Kioskmarketplace.com

Sponsored by:



Starting in 2012, federal law will mandate that every restaurant with twenty or more locations must make calorie information on food items available to customers, as well as language about the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2,000-calorie diet guidelines.

National chains, such as Panera and Starbucks, have already begun posting calorie information on their menu boards. Another option, the in-store nutritional kiosk, offers operators a way to stay compliant with federal regulations, educate the customer without cluttering menu boards, build loyalty and distribute resources.

“A growing consumer acceptance and use of kiosks is helping drive the introduction of these products in all facets of our lives,” said Schuyler Lininger, president and CEO of Healthnotes Inc., a provider of health and lifestyle information for kiosks. Lininger continues, noting that kiosks, such as those offered by Healthnotes, give retailers a sophisticated yet user-friendly system that they can use in-store to educate shoppers on healthy living information at the point of decision.

Compliance

Integrated to a restaurant's existing POS system, nutritional kiosks are designed to

address FDA obesity and nutritional labeling concerns. This federal law could result in mandates to more than large chain stores. Establishments, large enough to fall under



In-store nutritional kiosks, offer operators a way to stay compliant with federal regulations, educate the customer without cluttering menu boards, build loyalty and distribute resources.

the federal law, will face penalties of up to \$2,000 per store for not disclosing calorie information prominently on their menus.

While there are no regulations in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which deal specifically with self-service kiosks, the most relevant guidelines are those related to ATMs. The ADA standards for ATMs include screen visibility, floor space clearance, and general height and reach requirements.

Education and marketing opportunities

Interactive menus that automatically up-sell, list the most popular menu items first and advertise specials are a potent weapon for operators. Kiosks typically encourage guests to spend more and order more than those who order from a salesperson.

Kiosks can easily highlight special dietary foods, such as diabetic, gluten-free and reduced calorie options. Highlighting specialty items and allowing users to build an entire meal (entrée, beverage, side, and dessert) that fits their dietary or caloric needs, can boost sales by as much as 60 percent.

Kiosks allow the restaurant to present information and graphics exactly as they wish. Potential customers can be walked through a demo, or guided through a series of steps to obtain a desired outcome – capturing valuable personal and contact information along the way. Loyalty programs may require registration that includes a user's email address or postal address. They can opt-in to surveys and other information-gathering activities.

People can self-serve to find the informa-



Upselling via an in-store kiosk can be perceived as less invasive than a salesperson.

tion they want in an interactive manner. Kiosks also can give customers an activity to complete while they wait for their orders to be prepared.

“Kiosks are proven to be more effective on upselling. A lot of it may be human nature. The pictures on the kiosks, for example, help. When I see a beautiful picture of a shake, as opposed to just seeing ‘shake’ on a menu, I will consider spending an extra dollar to buy it. We eat with our eyes, after all,” says Tommy Woycik, president of NEXTEP Systems, a kiosk supplier. “And when someone’s trying to sell to me, I kind of put my guard up a little. When a machine is selling something, it’s a little less invasive. We put our guard down.”

Brand perception and loyalty

Kiosks can also draw the attention of potential customers by streaming a variety of messages or visual images. Corporate part-

ners also can take advantage of the kiosk's ad space, or generate additional revenue by incorporating advertisements from other companies. The possibilities for messaging are endless: feature a new product or hold a contest or a giveaway, for instance.

According to an interview with Kiosk Marketplace, Troy Janisch, president and founder of Icon Interactive, an interactive agency providing web-based communications and marketing solutions, suggests that for service companies, the brand perception and perceived quality of service often hinge on a few key, low-paid employees that have direct interaction with customers.

"A customer survey kiosk provides the ability for customers to provide immediate feedback," said Janisch. "The kiosks also provide a physical reminder to employees that the level of service they provide in each transaction is important."

Efficient resources

Restaurants using kiosks can shift staff from being order takers, to order fillers and service providers. In fact, the restaurants that have introduced kiosks did not have to cut any staff because order volume went up significantly.

There is a fear that kiosks will replace people, but that is not the case, as proven by companies such as McDonald's Europe. "Self-order kiosks are not designed to replace front-counter service," a spokesman

Corporate partners also can take advantage of the kiosk's ad space, or generate additional revenue by incorporating advertisements from other companies.

for McDonald's Europe said in an email. "Front counters remain a focal point of service where we have installed self-order kiosks, and customers can decide whether they wish to place their order at the counter or through kiosks. Staff is on hand in the dining area to assist customers using the kiosks."

This mimics the experience of Michael Verdeska, interim-CIO and division vice president of Jack in the Box. "We actually do not take any labor out of the restaurant," Verdeska said. "In our labor guide for restaurants that have kiosks, we want those restaurants to redeploy that labor to actually produce more food, which we do see in busy restaurants. We have actually increased the output of restaurants by having kiosks there, so managers actually end up getting more labor."

About the sponsor: *Visual Impressions specializes in the design, manufacturing, fabrication and installation of print and digital signage merchandising solutions. Visual Impressions offers large format printing and digital menu boards for the dining industry, and in 2011, introduced out its integrated nutritional touch screen kiosk. For over 17 years, Visual Impressions has provided personal customer service and innovative strategies to fulfill the signage and merchandising needs of its clients.*