

Turning Tables

Using Visual Indicators at the POS to Manage Dine-In Service Performance



Dine-in profit gains are often directly proportional to improvements in table turnover. When speed of service improves the guest experience, everyone wins.

A map of the restaurant and an erasable marker does the job of assigning guests to tables. But the visual service cues and alerts in your POS system give your team new insight to help them serve guests faster, measure and improve staff performance, and ultimately increase restaurant profitability.

Service Cues

Visual cues speed service and simplify training. The graphical table service floor plans in a point of sale system such as SpeedLine POS are color-coded to show greeters and servers the status of every table: when guests are seated, ordered, and served. It is also obvious at a glance if a server is handling more than their share of tables or guests.

That makes training painless for hostess staff—and helps them do a better job.



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Alerts and Exceptions

On the POS screen, alerts appear on the tables based on predefined service metrics, making problems immediately obvious to staff from any terminal. This makes it easy to resolve issues quickly—before they can turn into a complaint or a poor review.

Managers stay on top of things by watching the exceptions: stopping by with an apology at a “red” table that has been waiting too long for an appetizer or a drink, or stepping in to assist or reassign staff. They also have instant access to move a party or change a server, or pull up the order totals and details for any table.

The floor plan and manager dashboard are visible from any terminal, or from a wireless tablet anywhere in the restaurant. Slowdowns are obvious to everyone. This additional visibility motivates servers and bussers to step up their own performance.

It makes it easy for the restaurant manager to demonstrate leadership, quickly spotting and resolving problems. And if your culture rewards teamwork, visual service cues also make it easy for staff to see where to lend a hand to help an overwhelmed teammate.

Managing Service Performance

Improving table turns is easier when you know your numbers. The POS system should be able to deliver key metrics instantly, whether you’re in the store or checking in from offsite.

Review detailed performance reporting to gauge improvement on key metrics such as guest counts and per-person average sales, section usage, table turnover, and server performance.

- See exactly where the bottlenecks are happening on the floor throughout each shift.
- Understand which servers are best equipped to handle large parties or specific sections.
- See which sections and tables are most popular.
- Watch table turns, bus times, and related stats over time to set service goals & recognize your team’s achievements.

Look at the data live throughout each shift, or review service performance for yesterday or week over week. With this type of information at your fingertips, you’re well equipped to adjust the schedule or coach staff to improve service performance and enhance the guest experience.



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Table Turnover Starts with the Greeting

Dine-in is a big part of the business at Toby Harris's four Oregon restaurants. His Fultano's Pizza locations are large, making it a challenge for host staff to keep track of table assignments and status.

Harris recalls greeter staff frequently being away checking the status of tables, "We used to have people walk up to the counter and the host not be there because they were at the other end of the building checking to see if tables were ready." Greeter staff were frequently away from the host stand, checking the other side of the dining room for open tables, or tables that needed bussing.

"We have a 5400-square-foot location," Harris adds, so this was quite cumbersome."

The new graphical table service features in his SpeedLine point of sale system help his staff seat and serve guests faster, increasing table turnover and customer satisfaction. This has been an extremely beneficial to Harris, who was a beta tester of the new toolset—a move that gave him direct input into the product pre-release.

Today, a display at the host stand gives greeters a clear view of all the tables in the restaurant, so a host is always available to greet staff.

Servers, bussers, and managers have the same instant access to visual service cues for every table, and managers can view the details of each table

and transaction, along with key service metrics, in a convenient dashboard view, or quickly check service stats anytime on their smartphone.

Harris's original decision to move from counter service to table service was an investment, and despite being prepared for the increase in labor cost, he felt the sticker shock in the first year. The upgrade to graphical table service has helped his service staff work more efficiently.

"The increased level of customer service has paid off," Harris adds, "we feel we have a better handle on caring for our guests."



"Our hosts can now let guests know accurately how long a wait they will have—because at any given time, they can see the status of every table in the restaurant."

- Toby Harris, Fultano's Pizza

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Efficient Table Turning Checklist

- Easily balance the number of tables and guests each server is handling when seating guests.
- Set service thresholds and alerts in the POS to catch and correct problems early.
- Manage the exceptions: train and coach supervisors and staff on how to identify and respond to service slow-downs.
- Take advantage of the increased visibility by rewarding team performance.
- Watch for service bottlenecks and slowdowns with live dashboard reporting.
- Review shift performance to coach day to day.
- Compare weekly performance metrics to note trends and where changes may be need to the schedule, section assignments, or table layout.

Improve Your Dine-in Efficiency Find Out How:



1-888-400-9185 | info@speedlinesolutions.com
www.speedlinesolutions.com

