

# Unique Ways Restaurants Can Use QR Codes to Drive Sales



Modern Restaurant Management Magazine — As the impact of the pandemic wanes, restaurant owners should evaluate the contactless service options they implemented to keep customers and staff safe to see how they can help drive sales.

When restaurants got the green light to reopen their dining rooms, they implemented a host of safety procedures to prevent the spread of germs. Restaurants across the country shelved their paper menus and turned to digital options to reduce touchpoints. To go contactless, customers scanned a small black and white square called a QR code on their mobile device to see a digital copy of the menu. Although the new tool required many restaurant staffers to serve dual roles as waitstaff and technical consultants, using QR codes was a resounding success. Some restaurants even took safety a step further by eliminating in-person ordering and offering contactless payment.

At least 45 percent of Americans preferred reading the menu, ordering, and paying with their phone to reduce touch points during the pandemic, according to an online survey of 2,081 people conducted by **Appetize**. Contactless options are also helping restaurant owners weather the labor shortage. Nearly three out of four restaurants said automated tools and integrated apps are helping them fill the

gaps during the current labor crunch, **Square** reported. The digital provider recently partnered with Wakefield Research to survey 500 restaurants and 1,000 consumers.

QR codes are nothing new. QR codes were invented in 1994 by Denso Wave, a Japanese-based subsidiary of Toyota, to track vehicle parts during manufacturing. They hit the mainstream back in 2002 when technological advancements enabled a QR-code reading feature to be added to mobile phones. While the adoption of QR codes ramped up gradually, they became ubiquitous during the pandemic as people relied on their phones to do business.

While QR codes are a great tool for contactless service, they have a wide variety of uses, particularly when it comes to marketing. Restaurants can capitalize on the growing familiarity of QR codes to help drive sales. Here are a few easy ways you can provide better customer service and increase profits by using QR codes.

**Feedback.** One of the best ways to connect with your customers is to listen to their feedback about their dining experience. Having great online reviews can also help drum up business. At least **63.6** percent of consumers are “likely” to read a Google review before visiting a business. Restaurants can use QR codes to solicit feedback by guiding them to Google, Yelp, Facebook, and TripAdvisor, where they can type their opinion on your restaurant’s food and service. QR codes are a great way to collect data on customer experience. Direct customers to an online survey regarding their dining experience by using a QR code.

**Direct Mail Campaigns.** Despite the growth in online marketing through email and social media, direct mail remains one of the best tools for promoting your restaurant. Zoom fatigue and crowded email inboxes make a tangible postcard that arrives in your mailbox stand out. Every Door Direct Mail® (EDDM) **postcards** and **new mover marketing** campaigns are great tools for getting the word out about your business. EDDM allows you to send postcards to an entire zip code or filter your options by age, income, or household size. New mover marketing gives your restaurant the chance to capture new customers before they form loyalties to other businesses. Adding a QR code to your mailer can provide customers with more information about your eatery. The landing page for your QR code might be your menu, your location details, or get creative and showcase a video clip of your chef creating a new dish in the kitchen. The opportunities are endless.

**Boost Social Media.** Approximately three out of 10 United States adults are “online almost constantly,” the **Pew Research Center** reported. Facebook has more than **2.9 billion users** worldwide, including nearly **177 million people** in the U.S. Clearly, social media allows you to reach potential customers where they spend their time, but growing your following can be an uphill battle. Add a QR code to your marketing materials leading people to your Facebook page. If your restaurant is on multiple social media platforms, you can create a QR code that displays multiple platforms on one mobile-optimized page.

**Promotions.** Drum up traffic to your restaurant by using a QR code to guide people to a new special or BOGO offer. Having the offer on their phone will make redemption a breeze.

**Book Reservations, Join Waiting List.** As new technology advances and customers are able to book reservations and join your waiting list online, make their life easier by providing them with a QR code to point them in the right direction.

**Housekeeping Details.** In addition to digital menus, ordering, and contactless payment, QR codes are a great tool for other housekeeping concerns, such as Wi-Fi login, hours of operation, directions, and dress code suggestions.

QR codes are no longer just for menus. The consistent application of QR codes can help you maintain safety standards, streamline operations, fuel marketing efforts, and improve customer service.