

Investing in consumer-facing technology

Famous Brands has invested in consumer-facing technology for several years. This investment is increasingly relevant post-COVID-19 as consumers interact with brands in the digital space.

The restaurant industry has evolved over the past decade and at a rapid pace, primarily due to new technology and evolving customer preferences. Customers do not want to wait long for their food. They want the option of delivery, collection, or dining in the restaurant.

The planning cycle for technology projects follows a one-year roadmap, which leads into a three-year strategy. A cross-functional working group manages technology projects at Famous Brands, coordinates the allocated budget and aligns projects to the overarching corporate strategy. The working group consists of senior management from different brands and disciplines.

COVID-19 has accelerated some technology projects that were not on the original plan. These are not new developments but rather enhancements to current technology platforms. An example of this is the popular Kerbside Collect option.

Quick fact

In 2022, we revamped the Debonairs Pizza website to provide customers with a fresh and intuitive experience.

We invested in search engine optimisation to improve our search rankings on Google. We ensure that all our brand websites are easily discoverable on Google.

Source: Internal management disclosure.



INVESTING IN CONSUMER-FACING TECHNOLOGY continued

Enabling the delivery environment	We have invested in delivery technology solutions to enable the delivery environment. We continue to invest in enhancements, especially in the Quick Service Restaurant space, including driver tracking. Most customers interact with the brands through their smartphones, so Famous Brands needs to consider a mobile-first approach. As data is expensive, we also need to offer different channels, including the call centre and website. Customers use the most convenient channel at the time and use different channels at different times. Our brands' mobile applications are promoted in-store, on product packaging, and through advertising activities.
Better data for decision making	We have moved to formalise our database infrastructure in the cloud, to bring all customer data onto one platform. This will allow us to analyse data and compare data between brands. We are compliant with POPIA. We use our customer data to segment our customers. We communicate the right message using the right channel to reach the right customer.
Rewarding customers with loyalty programmes	In an industry that is so closely tied to economic fluctuations, restaurants depend on customer loyalty for survival. Our customer loyalty programmes, especially at Casual Dining Restaurants, boost revenues by providing upselling opportunities. Customers seek out rewards programmes when the economy is weak. Our e-vouchering capabilities allow brands to remove plastic card-based vouchers that are simple to purchase and issue and apply to all brands within the Famous Brands ecosystem.
Minimal contact solutions	Contactless payment options are becoming more important to customers. These options help keep customers age by letting them tap or swipe to pay for their orders. This prevents unwanted physical contact between customers and employees at a time when safety and social distancing are critical. Safety, speed, and efficiency have always been essential pieces of the dining experience, and COVID-19 has amplified the demand for these factors. Order and pay at table technology allow customers to order and pay for the meal from the convenience and safety of their device. This also improves table turn times and hospitality while providing valuable data to better understand customers. Self-service terminals are a growing trend and becoming a major feature of Quick Service and Casual Dining Restaurants. These provide a top-notch digital experience through easy-to-use interfaces. They also give customers more control over the ordering process, making it easier to customise their orders and reduce errors. A well-designed terminal can increase the average transaction size using upsell prompts, and order volume while shortening queues.
Improving operational efficiencies at restaurants	We investigate and implement back-of-house technology solutions to help franchise partners and Company-owned restaurants run better businesses. For example, there is technology to manage the queues in the drive-thru by identifying bottlenecks. We support franchise partners and managers in Company-owned stores with training on using the technology. Point-of-sale is no longer simply the cash register but is becoming the brain of a restaurant operation. Point-of-sale has migrated to the cloud, allowing for cost savings, efficiencies and better data insights. This includes monitoring stock management and security footage through the point-of-sale. We trialled a new point-of-sale with positive results and will be rolling it out for new stores and revamps for specific brands. We will continue to investigate new point-of-sale solutions as the technology changes, and renewal cycles come up.