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QSR E-Newsletter: Best Practices

Indispensable?

Could something as simple as a coin dispenser dramatically improve your business?

When it comes to improving speed of service, many folks like to talk about the nifty technologies -- wireless headsets for the drive-thru, glowing menuboards, and the like -- that can help in that regard. But improving speed of service, either at the drive-thru or the front counter, can also be a matter of attending to mundane details.

One such detail is making change at the cash register. Especially during peak hours, being slow with change slows down your through-put. So, if you can speed up change-making, you can serve more people and make more money.

How do you get your cashiers to make change faster? You can train them to predict the coins that will be required as change on a given order, but that's complicated and there's no real guarantee it will help. Or you can go the technology route with a change dispenser.

To be sure, change dispensers aren't "technology" in the same way, say, drive-thru timers are. In fact, there aren't many companies making change dispensers these days, but one that does is Telequip. They have 135,000 units in the field, many of which are in quick-serves, including such concepts as Subway, Quiznos, Cold Stone Creamery, Moe's Southwest Grill, and Dunkin' Donuts. And to hear those users talk, you wonder why everyone doesn't have a change dispenser.

When multi-unit Subway franchisee Bob Grewal was first approached with the idea of installing a coin dispenser, he was hesitant. "I didn't think it was going to be such a big deal in terms of speeding up service," he says. "Boy, was I ever wrong. After a couple weeks' usage, I noticed we were speeding up service a great deal. The bottleneck used to be at our registers, and the coin dispenser solved all our problems."

Quiznos and Cold Stone Creamery franchisee Renny Goldstein had a similar experience. “In a business with heavy rushes,” he says, “we’ve found coin dispensers to be literally indispensable. Speedier transaction times easily rationalize the cost of these units for our Cold Stone stores.”

In addition to incremental sales, Telequip’s users say there’s another benefit to the increased through-put, namely more efficient use of labor. As Subway franchisee Carl Rosberg says, “The coin dispensers speed the line up about 10 seconds per transaction. It’s almost like you have that extra half-person on the line.”

There’s also a benefit in loss prevention, as the coin dispenser reduces cashier mistakes and opportunities for theft. And, of course, when it’s in use at the front counter, the customer picks up the change herself.

According to the folks at Telequip, their coin dispenser requires almost no training, which they see as a huge plus, since many other products aimed at improving speed of service require lots of training. They also point out the fact that it is one of the least intrusive pieces of equipment an operator can add, and it boasts an incredibly low failure rate, with no preventative maintenance required. Software does need to be written into your POS system to know a coin dispenser is there, but Telequip has enough experience working with various POS providers that it can be essentially plug-n-play.

For more information about Telequip and it’s Transact 2+ coin dispenser, visit their web site at www.telequip.com.

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