

Restaurant, tech experts share AI, automation, dining experience predictions for 2025

Tech and restaurant pros share predictions for what's to come in AI, dining experiences and automation technology in 2025.



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The restaurant industry is undergoing a technological revolution. AI-powered voice assistants are transforming customer interactions, enabling hands-free ordering, reservations, and inquiries. Cloud kitchens are gaining traction,

offering a flexible and cost-effective model for food businesses. Robotics are increasingly integrated into kitchens, automating tasks like food preparation and delivery, enhancing efficiency and potentially lowering labor costs. Contactless payments and mobile ordering are becoming the norm, providing convenience and safety for both customers and staff.

These technological advancements are not only streamlining operations but also enhancing the overall dining experience for customers.

As 2025 kicks off, QSRWeb reached out to restaurant tech industry professionals to learn what they're expecting in 2025.

Automation and AI on the rise

The restaurant industry will experience a lot of transformation next year, and that includes more businesses tapping into automation tools across their front-and back-of-house. Restaurants will continue to face high labor costs that are causing strain across multiple areas of their business. To address this, restaurants will look to integrate more technology whether it's self-service kiosks, automated SMS marketing, catering tools, delivery management, QR code or mobile ordering. All of these options will help operators streamline operations, improve efficiency, and grow profitability so they can focus on delivering high quality food and service. Among the plethora of restaurant tech offerings, though, the biggest challenge will be finding and understanding which tools are worth the investment.

—Ming-Tai Huh, head of food and beverage at Square

In 2025, I predict that pizzerias will leverage AI more in several areas, including phone ordering and online ordering. For online orders, AI can provide recommendations on pairings, such as adding on specific appetizers or desserts, based on customer trends and data acquired from the POS system. We anticipate seeing a shift to more off-premises dining, with an uptick in customers picking up their own food, versus leveraging third-party delivery services, because customers are trying to cut back on additional fees. With an increase in off-premises dining, restaurants are analyzing how they are packaging to-go food, so that it doesn't get soggy or become inedible. Food costs will continue to be a challenge next year, but we are seeing shifts in the right direction. Cannoli Kitchen Pizza will remain focused on catering to the customer by providing high-quality, consistent food options at an affordable price. Overall, it seems that

people are more positive going into this next year, they're optimistic about the economy and their jobs, and we anticipate more discretionary spending.

—Austin Titus, president of Cannoli Kitchen Pizza

QSRs go immersive and interactive with dining experiences

The design — and redesign — of QSRs and fast casual restaurants has accelerated as brands respond to shifting consumer habits and dining preferences. Many big brands in the QSR and fast-food spaces are undergoing a technology-fueled transformation that is designed around improving customer experiences, boosting order accuracy and limiting wait times. In 2025, QSRs will build on this technology footprint and identify touchpoints in which they can win consumers using immersive and interactive engagements. For example, self-serve kiosks and smartphone order and payment options in which content is updated and experiences personalized based on who is using the kiosk. Or interactive menu boards that connect customers' social media and dining experiences, allowing for photo sharing, song selections and even post suggestions. And, capturing data from these digital and touchscreen engagements to spur analytics and make for better business decisions and more efficient order processing. It's about meeting the needs of all customers — whether a family needing a swift drive-thru order on the way home from a busy day or the group of college students who want to catch up, dine in and invest time in a sit-down meal.

— Misty Chalk, vice president of sales, Americas, at BrightSign

Tech investments center on elevated experiences

In 2025, technology investments made in the QSR space will focus on customer experience and choice to improve satisfaction. QSRs are on this journey, revamping drive-thrus, augmenting counter service, deploying technology tools to assist staff and more. Every customer is unique and is driven by their own set of motivators. As a result, restaurants will lean heavily on technology to improve experience and choice for the widest range of individuals possible. For example, self-service kiosks and IoT-enabled POS systems provide real-time menu and

loyalty options for patrons, while giving them the freedom and flexibility to order what they want at their own pace.

Similarly, technology deployment in the drive-thru, such as HD communication solutions, line-busting tablets and digitized menu boards improve the speed, accuracy and fulfillment of orders. This is critical to overall satisfaction and repeat dining. And, in many cases, rethinking signage and content strategies to keep consumers engaged when in a physical restaurant location, enticing those who are looking for social and communal experiences where dining isn't strictly based on price or the quality of food. At the end of the day, meeting consumer expectations at every different touchpoint with a consistent experience is challenging. This is where technology can have the most impact in the new year.

— James "Jay" Burdette, senior director of the Enterprise Process Innovation Center, Panasonic Connect North America

In 2025, the restaurant industry will continue to embrace cloud-based POS systems as the new standard, providing flexibility, real-time updates and scalability that empower businesses to manage operations and access data from anywhere. This shift complements advancements in self-service kiosks and digital menu automation, which are increasingly tailored to customer preferences and local offerings. These technologies not only boost efficiency and accuracy but also free up staff to focus on delivering exceptional guest experiences. While robotics adoption in QSRs will grow, the human touch will remain central to food preparation in most U.S. restaurants, blending technology with tradition.

— John Maieli, channel sales manager for Star Micronics