

2025

LOYALTY REPORT

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The World of Loyalty is Multi-Layered and Changing

I Overview of Key Points

1 AI-Powered Personalization Boosts Engagement and Retention

- a. AI-driven loyalty programs increase engagement by 10-20% and retention by 15-25% (McKinsey).
- b. 80% of marketers will rely on AI for CX by 2025 (Gartner).

2 Seamless Digital Convenience is Essential

- a. 76% of customers expect frictionless omnichannel experiences (Adobe).
- b. Restaurant loyalty programs with online ordering see an 18% boost in order frequency (Paytronix).

3 Consumer Demand for Healthier, Customizable Options is Growing

- a. Trends include organic, plant-based, globally inspired, and hyper-local foods.
- b. Food quality, personalization, and CX now matter as much as speed.

4 Dining is an Experience, Not Just a Meal

- a. Personalization, ambiance, and digital self-service tools enhance guest loyalty.
- b. Brunch, late-night dining, and kid-friendly options are key 2025 trends.

5 Solving Consumer Pain Points Creates a Competitive Edge

- a. Many want to eat healthier but face cost, stress, and time barriers.
- b. Affordable, convenient, and personalized solutions drive loyalty.

Loyalty isn't just about transactions—it's about **trust, connection, and experiences** that keep guests coming back. In 2025, the landscape of restaurant and convenience store loyalty is evolving at an unprecedented pace.

Guests no longer tolerate one-size-fits-all rewards or impersonal interactions. They expect brands to understand them, anticipate their needs, and deliver seamless, hyper-personalized experiences that feel effortless yet deeply meaningful.

The stakes have never been higher. Brands that embrace **AI-driven personalization, seamless digital interactions, and authentic sustainability efforts** will build lasting relationships, drive higher revenue, and turn casual visitors into lifelong fans. But those that fail to adapt risk losing relevance in an increasingly competitive market.

This report explores the forces shaping guest loyalty in 2025, offering **data-backed insights, real-world case studies, and actionable strategies** to help you—whether your brand is an independent restaurant, large chain, or convenience store—harness the full potential of your loyalty programs.

Here's what you'll discover:

- ⓧ **How AI is revolutionizing loyalty**—from predictive analytics that anticipate guest preferences to real-time personalization that boosts engagement and spending.
- ⓧ **The digital shift**—why mobile-first, contactless, and omnichannel experiences are now the baseline expectation, not the exception.
- ⓧ **How emerging trends like ghost kitchens, virtual brands, and gamification** are reshaping loyalty and creating new revenue opportunities.
- ⓧ **The power of sustainability in loyalty**—why eco-conscious values aren't just a trend but a loyalty driver, and how your brand can integrate sustainability authentically.

You'll also find several instances of **new, exclusive Paytronix data** that proves loyalty programs aren't just a guest engagement tool—they're a revenue engine. Loyalty program members don't just visit more often; they **spend more per check**, with loyalty-driven sales growing year over year across all industries.

The future of guest engagement belongs to those who act now. Whether you're looking to refine an existing loyalty program or build a new one from the ground up, this report will give you the insights, strategies, and tools to **elevate your guest experience, drive higher revenue, and stay ahead of the competition.**

Let's dive in.

How Brands are Using Personalization In 2025 and Beyond

The impact of personalization on buying behavior is undeniable, with studies showing that **brands delivering tailored experiences see significantly higher engagement and revenue growth:**

- ⌚ **80% of marketers** will rely on AI for personalization and CX initiatives by 2025 (Gartner).
- ⌚ **53.9% of consumers** say brand recommendations make them feel **recognized and appreciated** (eMarketer).
- ⌚ AI-driven loyalty programs **increase customer engagement by 10-20%** and boost **retention by 15-25%** (McKinsey and Co).
- ⌚ AI-powered chatbots improve **customer satisfaction by 20%** and reduce churn (iSmart, 2025).
- ⌚ **Predictive analytics boosts customer engagement by 10-20%** and **retention by 15-25%** (McKinsey and Co).

The AI revolution has significantly impacted both restaurants and c-stores, bringing about dynamic changes in customer experience (CX) in 2025. These changes are opportunities for sustaining guest loyalty and meeting CX expectations.

What do these changes look like in the real world, and how can you adapt to them? Consumers are leveraging omnichannel devices and dedicated digital apps daily, propelling online meal and grocery delivery orders to \$1.4 trillion in 2025, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.83% over the next five years.¹

This digital acceleration is reshaping how consumers engage with restaurants and c-stores. The expectation for convenience now extends beyond fast service—guests demand frictionless, omnichannel experiences that seamlessly integrate ordering, loyalty, and payments.

The widespread adoption of contactless payments, mobile-first loyalty programs, and AI-powered ordering systems reflects this shift, making it essential for brands to optimize their digital experiences or risk losing customers.

Here's what the latest data shows us

79%

of global consumers have switched to contactless payments for everyday purchases (Mastercard).

76%

of customers expect seamless digital experiences across all channels (Adobe).

18%

Restaurant loyalty programs that integrate online ordering see an **18% increase in order frequency** (Paytronix internal data).

This surge in digital convenience doesn't mean consumers have abandoned their desire for high-quality, thoughtful dining experiences. In fact, quite the opposite—as **technology streamlines access to food and beverage options, guest expectations around food quality, customization, and experience are rising in parallel.**

It's no longer just about speed and accessibility; guests want offerings that align with their evolving preferences, from vegan and organic options to globally inspired flavors. Restaurants and c-stores that balance **frictionless digital interactions with fresh, high-quality, and personalized food experiences** will be the ones to capture market share.

This shift is evident in the rapid transformation of menus and product selections. While digital convenience is the gateway to engagement, **what's on the menu—or the store shelf—must still meet elevated consumer expectations.** Let's look at how these trends are already playing out in the industry.

In-restaurant dining menus lean toward:

- ⓧ Plant-based smaller portions (appealing to the growing number of vegetarians, vegans, and flexitarians).
- ⓧ Always organic, health-centric customized dishes (thanks to big data analytics insights).
- ⓧ Innovative fusion and authentic ethnic presentations for adventurous palates.

It's a diversification gaining massive market traction, emphasizing the need for continuous creativity to stay ahead of the game. Serving great food isn't enough anymore. Restaurateurs who fail to deliver a themed CX, dismissing atmosphere, personalization, and ambiance as secondary, are at risk of turning loyal guests into lapsed ones.

Other market drivers swaying buyer loyalty include:

- ⌚ Hours of operation that coincide with preferred dining times. In 2025, two surging trends are brunch and late-night eating cultures.
- ⌚ Thoughtful kids' menus with "mini-me" versions of adult tastes. These meals are healthy and low calorie yet highly nutritious.
- ⌚ Technology-based self-service kiosks and ordering from digital menus with QR codes.
- Hyper-local sourcing of ingredients.

More restaurant-centric trends are merging with c-store inventory planning to cater to consumers' adventurous, exotic, health-conscious, gourmet, organic, and fresh food tastes.

The challenges restaurant and c-store owners face in 2025 offer opportunities for long-term growth when tackled wisely. Marketing teams must focus on the evolving needs of their target audiences to avoid being left behind or merely maintaining their existing guests and revenue levels.

Consider the following:

An overwhelming majority of respondents in an expansive surveyⁱⁱ want to follow a healthy diet, but it's out of reach. Why?

- ⌚ A combination of non-affordability, stress, and time constraints slow down their good intentions.
- ⌚ Businesses that can effectively address these pain points will gain a significant marketplace advantage.

In short, understanding and meeting customers' needs is crucial for success. In this regard, loyalty programs are the go-to resource for tying c-stores' and restaurants' meaningful and unique touchpoints to long-term guest needs.

Businesses who demonstrate extraordinary innovation to deliver a balanced, personalized, and sustainable CX will rise above competitors who stick to a "one-size-fits-all" mantra.

| Action Steps for Restaurants and C-Stores

- ☐ Use AI-driven personalization to tailor offers and predict customer behavior.
- ☐ Ensure seamless omnichannel CX with mobile ordering and AI recommendations.
- ☐ Expand healthy, customizable menu options to align with consumer demand.
- ☐ Improve the dining experience with digital self-service and loyalty-driven events.
- ☐ Remove barriers to healthier choices with affordable, convenient solutions.

The Three Pillars of Guest Loyalty

I Overview of Key Points

1 Personalization is No Longer Optional

- a. 71% of consumers expect personalized interactions, while 76% get frustrated when they don't get them (McKinsey).
- b. Well-targeted campaigns drive 760% revenue increases and 50% higher conversion rates (BusinessDasher).
- c. AI-driven analytics uncover hidden patterns, improving engagement and retention.

2 Innovation is Redefining Loyalty Programs

- a. AI, gamification, and immersive AR/VR experiences are increasing loyalty engagement.
- b. Contactless payments, mobile ordering, and digital loyalty cards are now industry standards.
- c. Successful brands are merging technology with experiential rewards to drive deeper emotional connections.

3 Sustainability is a Core Loyalty Driver

- a. 55% of consumers—and 73% of Millennials—will pay more for sustainable products (McKinsey).
- b. Authentic sustainability efforts boost brand perception, loyalty, and can increase revenue by 20%.
- c. Brands that fail to meet sustainability expectations risk losing customers to eco-conscious competitors.

| The First Pillar: Personalization

71%

of consumers expect companies to deliver personalized interactions.

76%

get frustrated when this doesn't happen. — McKinsey

In 2025, personalization in restaurants and c-stores has transcended simple gestures like sending birthday wishes or using guests' first names. Today, it involves using data analytics to deeply understand and cater to the emotional and cognitive factors that create a seamless customer experience. ⁱⁱⁱ

True personalization is more than only recognizing guests; it's about being relevant to them. Consumers are bombarded with offers daily, yet most offers miss the mark or never get seen.

Today's guest expects highly tailored experiences that align with their habits, preferences, and real-time behaviors. When brands get this right, the impact is undeniable: data-driven personalization can drive exponentially higher revenue, engagement, and conversion rates.

- ⊗ **91% of consumers** prefer brands that provide **relevant offers and recommendations** (Accenture).
- ⊗ **83% of customers** welcome personalized promotions, but **only 44%** receive relevant ones (PYMNTS, 2024).
- ⊗ Well-targeted campaigns can drive a **760% increase in revenue** (BusinessDasher). **What must your brand and marketing team/s focus on?** Creating relevant and engaging themes, messaging, services, product ranges, pricing policies, rewards, and recognition scenarios that credibly:
 - Resonate with your guests' preferences.
 - Align with their lifestyle priorities.
 - Merge with (not contradict) meaningful influencer impact.
 - Counteract pain points.
 - Sync with patron aspirations.

Efficiently mining data for insights is like finding diamonds in your own backyard. With the right tools, you can easily extract purchase patterns, browsing behavior trends, hot-button engagement magnets from your records, short virtual surveys, quizzes, or quickly accessible third-party reports with just a few clicks.

Consider the following:

- ⊗ AI-enhanced data analytics is a 2025 game-changer. It gets to the crux of your customer motivations more accurately than a room full of employees and in a fraction of human time.
- ⊗ Modern algorithms curate the data while sorting it, erasing errors, and rectifying incomplete or repetitive entries.
- ⊗ Qualitative behavior feedback has stormed into 2025 with a new analysis dimension. This is software dedicated to scanning guest reviews across social media and analyzing voice/text messages, using sentiment analysis algorithms to read between the lines. It goes beyond spoken or written words to read the emotions behind them, indicating that the guest was frustrated, angry, severely stressed, friendly, or enthusiastic.

Customer segmentation has a new face in 2025. Restaurant and c-store marketers have greater visibility into which segments will respond best to value-based offers with precision, empowering them for optimal results.



Segmented campaigns can result in a 760% increase in revenue and up to 50% increase in conversion rate. Segmented, well-targeted email campaigns generate 77% ROI

BusinessDasher ^{iv}

Exploring different demographics, whether B2B, B2C, generational, or lifestyle-based, can create excellent opportunities. For example, astute strategists are quickly building brands that appeal to Gen Zs, Millennials, and Baby Boomers, families with kids, happy hour lovers, brunch-goers, corporate event organizers, and different types of parties. Don't be reluctant to create various combinations of the above either, which leads to hyper-relevant offers.

Other directions include categorizing customer preferences from:

- ⊗ High frequency buying to one-offs.
- ⊗ Genuine prospects to casual tire-kickers.
- ⊗ Theme-centric diners for foodies.
- ⊗ Diet-conscious eaters to ethnic food fans.
- ⊗ In-store purchasers to take-out and pick-up.

Some go deeper into psychographic segmentation [∇], aiming at buyer groups motivated by “being seen with celebrities or influencers,” “afraid of missing the latest action,” or adventurous individuals willing to risk money on emerging establishments to lead opinions. It’s all possible in 2025.

Interpreting the personalization concept correctly will significantly alter marketing initiatives and loyalty programs. In what way? **Savvy strategists optimize their resources to:**

1. Present dynamic offers that hit segmented guests' “hot buttons.”
2. Provide exclusive access to events customers want to attend.
3. Send bigger discounts or freebies for the products they want most.
4. Remove the hassle of fighting the crowd by giving your most loyal guests the earliest chance to buy when genuine interest exists.

These four directions urge you to use data-centric insights to customize, customize, and when you think you’ve done enough, customize even more.

It involves a comprehensive omnichannel focus, covering every digital and wearable technology device your customers rely on, syncing with their favorite apps and social media references, and monitoring in-store visits. In other words, steep competition in the restaurant and c-store markets means you must cover every touchpoint to optimize personalization.

- On average, smartphone users deploy 4.2 go-to apps consistently
- 58% of the public shop via an app
- Nearly 50% of shoppers depends on apps to find discounts
- 37% admit to downloading an app when they have a specific purchase in mind
- 58% of millenials prefer using an app to the web
- 71% of app users praise it as a rewarding part of RX

I The Second Pillar: Innovation^{viii}

Is your loyalty program an innovation? In the purest sense, no. Why? When American Airlines launched the first modern customer rewards program (the AAdvantage frequent flyer program) in 1981, it was innovative, though the overall concept of loyalty dates to the 19th century.

Today, over 90% of restaurant and convenience store businesses have loyalty programs,^{ix} so they are no longer unique. However, **innovation within loyalty programs is thriving**, showing that leading restaurants and c-stores continue to excite their customers by being different.

The following are the most critical innovative developments within these industries:

a. AI-Powered Personalization:

We covered this extensively in the first pillar of personalization. It's fascinating from another viewpoint. Why? Because loyalty program innovations rely on cutting-edge technology like generative AI, **which is still evolving**.^x AI-enhanced algorithms are in their early stages and have a long way to go. Therefore, insights from AI applications in restaurants and c-stores also have massive potential for deeper perspectives.

b. Immersive Technologies Integrated with Gamification:

The main goal of any loyalty program is keeping guests highly engaged. One effective way of doing that is awarding points in entertaining, fun ways that ultimately lead to price benefits or bonus rewards. Here's where augmented and virtual reality (AR and VR) supports gamification, providing you with all the digital resources you need to create unique omnichannel engagement that simultaneously earns loyal customers points. **The primary benefits are:**^{xi}

- Higher guest retention.
- More vivid brand perceptions.
- Faster and more accurate data collection and insights.
- A more engaging CX.

^{vi} Sogolytics and a GoGlobe Report (updated in 2025) ^{vii}

The best way to demonstrate this is with six examples (with real-world information removed due to confidentiality requirements):

- 1 A reputable deli catering mainly to the Baby Boomer segment—a traditionally “slow-to-accept-change” group—nonetheless decided to transition customers from its long-standing waiter attendance to using self-service kiosks and digital menus.
 - ⌚ The stakeholders recognized it as a core challenge, requiring guests to move out of their comfort zones.
 - ⌚ So, to make it an engaging experience (versus a hassle), the company used AR features to award points to registered loyalty program members every time they completed this new task—at least for the first few months until the self-service method became second nature to everyone.
- 2 A family-oriented restaurant introduced digital AR-driven puzzles, quizzes, and games as a Sunday brunch feature designed to accelerate engagement. **Its software had multiple features that included:**
 - ⌚ Using the company's devices or merging the entertainment with customer's mobiles.
 - ⌚ Automatically allocating points (with bells, whistles, and fanfare) when pre-teens completed each task.

Here's a thought: When the next family outing is planned, who do you think the kids will vote for?

- 3 A new c-store chain, presenting its value proposition at a public consumer festival, invited stall visitors on a **VR 3D tour to interact dynamically with its:**
 - ⌚ Store layouts.
 - ⌚ Product range.
 - ⌚ Inviting personalized features customers can expect when shopping in-store or online.

Every VR participant received introductory coupons they could apply to purchases and an invitation to the loyalty club.

- 4 A Miami pizza chain, diversifying into high-end Italian fare under a new store layout and brand name, launched with a grand opening to loyal pizza customers in a gala-like evening atmosphere.

One of the outstanding features involved inviting guests to enjoy VR immersive experiences, including:

- ⊗ Celebrity brand ambassador interactions.
- ⊗ Fun contests.
- ⊗ Future menu additions.
- ⊗ The new brand story.

The stakeholders topped off the event with personalized gifts and AR-driven point allocations to each patron as they left the celebration.

5

A company promoting its Brooklyn c-store opening deployed AR to:

- ⊗ Automatically credit every customer entering the premises with points in the first two weeks of operation.
- ⊗ Award additional points for every purchase.
- ⊗ Introduce patrons to a virtual dashboard, allowing them to conveniently view their loyalty status and potential rewards.
- ⊗ Gather valuable customer data for further personalized marketing in the future.

6

An Austin c-store chain initiated a loyalty program contest to award prizes for the best ideas on the topic "Promoting sustainability with AR technology" as an initiative to improve the company's ESG rating. The panel evaluating submissions included recognized personalities aligned with VR/AR tech and the green movement. The winner and those honorably mentioned left with benefits in the thousands of dollars, thus underlining the contest's significance.

c. Immersive Technologies Integrated with Gamification:

These are technology-centric applications at the stakeholders' fingertips (mainly AI-powered) to ensure—via a dedicated app—that all loyalty program advantages are accessible on mobile devices.

This Includes:

- Guaranteeing ID security with non-fungible tokens (NFTs) and blockchain encryption.
- Mobile ordering convenience.
- Contactless payment options.
- Digital loyalty cards.

| The Third Pillar: Sustainability

In the context of convenience stores and restaurants, sustainability means meeting the needs of today's market without compromising future generations' ability to meet their needs. It involves protecting our environment from both human and market-caused harm.

Sustainability is now a core driver of guest loyalty. Consumers, particularly younger generations, actively choose brands that prove real environmental responsibility.

In addition to important ethical considerations, your company's sustainability initiatives significantly affect revenue and brand perception. As eco-conscious consumerism grows, businesses that incorporate sustainability into their loyalty programs will see stronger guest engagement and long-term retention.

Consider the following:

- ⌕ While driving revenues, the rapid growth of online food delivery (see above) has added to the sustainability crisis in 2025. **For example:** ^{xii}
 - Consumers routinely order more than they can eat, leading to food waste.
 - Every order comes with packing materials and utensils that must end up somewhere (i.e., landfill and ocean pollution issues).
 - Distributors find it challenging to get their inventories right, passing sell-by dates without shelf movement, driving high carrying costs.

Restaurants and c-store businesses are the forefront of the sustainability conversation. Our loyal or prospective customers—especially in the Gen Z and Millennial segments—make buying decisions based on how their preferred brands address green-centric pain points. What do they expect from your business?

Focus on the following three sustainability drivers:

1 Avoid “greenwashing” ^{xiii} at all costs

This is the easily detectable practice of convincing consumers that one's environmental initiatives are authentic when they're not. This can quickly erode customer loyalty. How? Several environmental watchdogs like Environmental Working Group (EWG) and Toxic-Free Future (TFF) aggressively look for irregularities. Once they get a whiff of greenwashing and products that are easily revised with green materials, even the consumers who don't click immediately will soon know about brands that:

- a. Make vague claims.
- b. Resort to misleading labels or false certifications.
- c. Divert readers and buyers away from the truth, such as upholding minor sustainability benefits while generally remaining a greenwasher.
- d. Playing around with environmental authenticity in your brand values is a dangerous game. A compelling rule of thumb is don't conceal any sourcing or manufacturing facts that guests sense or know should be transparent; it's not worth the risk.

2 Maintain eco-friendly products and packaging

When marketers can prove their strategies support the environment, it's a win, fair and square. Show how your brand contributes to cleaner food, water, air, land, and consumer products with waste, energy usage, and materials distribution solutions that make real-world impact.

3 Involve yourself proactively with green activity

Actively implement these types of solutions to earn customers' respect; it may deliver that competitive edge you're looking for. Don't take our word for it, big data later in this report verifies revenue takes off based on green initiatives you can claim as your own. **Here are five examples:**

1. Donations to relevant environmental causes.
2. Offering bonus discounts for recyclable and reusable containers.
3. Participation in community cleanups.
4. Partnering in events with reputable environmental brands.
5. Arranging loyalty program contests around sustainability ideas for the brand.

Still not convinced? Consider the following KPIs and big data metrics in the sustainability arena:

- 🕒 Sustainable products sold 270% more successfully than those that were not in 2024 (BusinessDasher), with SandP 500 company eco-protectionists reflecting 18% higher ROIs. Why? ^{xiv}
 - 92% of buyers trust green-centric brands (BusinessDasher).
 - 55% of all consumers and 73% of Millennials are willing to pay higher prices for authentic eco-driven products and services (McKinsey and Co.).
 - The theme directly generates 25% more customer retention, with 88% of consumers being more likely to be loyal to an ESG-friendly company than one that's not.

- ⊗ Globally, 85% of consumers purchase with more sustainable consciousness in 2024 than they did in 2020 (Simon-Kucher and Partners).
- ⊗ Corporate America has caught on to the trend by taking responsibility for sustainability initiatives that led directly to 20% revenue growth.
- ⊗ 33% of businesses have launched sustainability strategies to lower costs and improve efficiency.
- ⊗ Between 73 and 76% of Americans expect their brands to fight climate change actively or will jump ship from any company that doesn't (Sustainable Brands).
- ⊗ In a review of the top 50 USA company reports, 46 provide detailed content on their sustainability efforts, with 92% of North American businesses across the board reporting on their initiatives. **In these reports, between 61 and 69% underlined that their:**
 - Brand value benefited (measured by recommendations).
 - ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) ratings increased.
 - Employee/supplier engagement and commitment escalated.
- ⊗ 85% of global consumers make more sustainable purchasing decisions than five years ago.
- ⊗ 88% of consumers are more likely to be loyal to a company that supports social and environmental causes.
- ⊗ Advertising related to authentic sustainability claims expanded promoters' reach from 24 to 33 percentage points, confirming that 81% of shoppers favorably respond to these communications.

I Action Steps for Restaurants and C-Stores

- ☐ Tap into AI-driven personalization to craft tailored experiences and targeted campaigns.
- ☐ Innovate with gamification, AR, and mobile loyalty tools to increase engagement and visits.
- ☐ Integrate sustainability into loyalty programs by rewarding eco-friendly behaviors and reducing waste.
- ☐ Expand omnichannel experiences to include contactless ordering, seamless payments, and frictionless loyalty.
- ☐ Make personalization, innovation, and sustainability the foundation of your loyalty strategy for long-term growth.

The New Era of Loyalty: Building Relationships Beyond Transactions

Loyalty programs have evolved well beyond basic point collection and discount redemption. With the rise of AI, immersive experiences, and multi-channel engagement, the loyalty landscape has become more interactive and data driven. Restaurants and c-stores that use these tools discover that loyalty is now about building dynamic, ongoing relationships that adapt to shifting consumer expectations.

As B2C hospitality and retail businesses integrate personalization, innovation, and sustainability into their loyalty strategies, they position themselves as industry leaders in guest engagement and long-term retention. The following analysis highlights how loyalty movers and shakers' efforts are reflected in recent growth of loyalty program members throughout restaurant and c-store brands.

Active Loyalty Membership Growth

Loyalty Membership Growth Across Restaurants and C-Stores

Category	Fastest-Growing Loyalty Membership (YoY Growth Above 30%)	Steady Growth (10-30% YoY)	Largest Declines in Loyalty Membership
Full-Service Restaurants (FSR)	A barbecue brand saw 62% growth in 2025 , continuing its strong trajectory.	A pizza-focused chain rebounded with 37% growth in 2025 after previous slow periods.	A burger and diner-style brand saw a 67% decline in 2024 , likely due to program disruption or changing consumer habits.
	A Mexican-inspired casual dining concept experienced 46% growth in 2025 .	A fast-casual breakfast and lunch chain maintained 29% growth in 2025 .	A family-style chain declined 48% in 2024 , continuing a downward trend.

Quick-Service Restaurants (QSR)	A regional taco chain grew 82% in 2025 , showing strong local engagement.	A smoothie and juice bar grew 17-28% YoY , maintaining steady customer loyalty.	A regional dessert chain saw a 70% decline in 2024 , indicating major retention challenges.
	A premium coffee and bakery brand saw a 49% increase in 2025 .	A pizza and wings franchise maintained 22-25% YoY growth from 2024 to 2025.	A fast-growing burger chain lost 39% of its members in 2025 , following prior strong acquisition years.
Convenience Stores (C-Store)	A regional c-store brand experienced a 41.8% increase in 2025 , continuing strong multi-year growth.	A regional c-store chain grew 7.9% in 2025 , after a 33.6% rise in 2024 .	A regional c-store brand declined 10% in 2025 , after consecutive years of negative growth.
	An enterprise-level c-store brand expanded loyalty 32.2% in 2025 .	Some brands displayed stagnation, indicating shifts in consumer behavior.	A different regional c-store saw 5.2% in 2024 and 18% in 2023 , signaling ongoing struggles.

I Key Takeaways Across Industries

- ⊗ **Strongest Loyalty Growth:** Barbecue, taco, smoothie, and premium coffee concepts lead restaurant loyalty expansion, while fresh food-focused and enterprise c-stores also show strong engagement.
- ⊗ **Sustained Growth:** Pizza chains, breakfast brands, and smoothie bars maintained 10-30% YoY growth, signaling consistent brand loyalty.
- ⊗ **Largest Declines:** Bakery, dessert, and burger-focused brands have seen the biggest losses, likely due to shifting preferences, economic factors, or program misalignment.
- ⊗ **C-Store Loyalty is Divided:** Some brands are rapidly growing, while others face year-over-year membership loss, underscoring the importance of engagement strategies, seamless omnichannel loyalty experiences, and one-to-one promotions.

| What Should You Do?

If you want to land in the “fastest-growing” loyalty category instead of fighting year-over-year decline, **here's what works—and what to do next:**

Focus on retention over acquisition

New guests are expensive, but keeping your current ones engaged is where your loyalty program proves its worth. Brands losing traction are often chasing growth without nurturing the members they already have. Prioritize consistent, personalized engagement that keeps your best guests coming back.

Use the data you already have before asking for more

You're sitting on a goldmine of insight. Purchase patterns, reward redemptions, visit frequency—it's all there. Use it to segment your audience, test offers, and uncover which behaviors drive ROI. Don't let untapped data stunt your results.

Stick to principles, not fads

Success isn't about jumping on every trend. **It's about doing the essentials better than your competitors:**

- ⌚ Send relevant, timely offers.
- ⌚ Match your brand's voice to your audience's expectations.
- ⌚ Promote loyalty with clear value and seamless experiences.

Commit now because waiting costs more

Loyalty growth doesn't happen by accident. If you delay optimizing your program, you delay results. Start with small, impactful upgrades—targeted messaging, visit challenges, surprise bonuses—and watch engagement compound over the next 90 days.

Bottom line

Loyalty is a *long-term play* with *short-term wins* if you act now. Start today with the resources and data you already have and scale from there.

AI and Data Contributions to the C-Store and Restaurant Loyalty Paradigm

I Overview of Key Points

1 Loyalty is About Relationships, Not Just Transactions

- a. Successful loyalty programs go beyond point collection and focus on ongoing engagement and emotional connection.
- b. Brands that integrate personalization, innovation, and sustainability into their loyalty strategies lead in customer retention.

2 Data-Driven Personalization Drives Growth

- a. AI-powered segmentation and predictive analytics identify guest preferences and behaviors with unprecedented accuracy.
- b. 91% of consumers prefer brands that provide relevant offers, yet only 44% feel they receive them (Accenture).

3 Omnichannel and AI Transform Guest Experiences

- a. Predictive AI improves guest engagement, optimizes promotions, and automates real-time loyalty interactions.
- b. AI-driven micro-segmentation allows brands to create hyper-personalized offers that drive higher spending and visit frequency.

4 Sustainability is a Loyalty Growth Accelerator

- a. 55% of consumers—and 73% of Millennials—are willing to pay more for eco-friendly brands (McKinsey).
- b. Sustainable practices increase brand perception, boost retention, and generate up to 20% revenue growth.

AI-Powered Innovations Create Competitive Advantages

- a. AI-driven chatbots, voice recognition, and sentiment analysis improve customer satisfaction and reduce churn.
- b. Immersive technologies like gamification, AR, and VR keep guests engaged while increasing loyalty program value.

We've looked at the impact of AI and data analytics on guest loyalty in both c-stores and restaurants. Undoubtedly, these technologies are creating brand new B2C experiences, offering untapped potential for growth and innovation with innumerable use cases. Let's look at these principles in practice.

I A. The Power of Data: Fueling the Future of Loyalty

Under personalization, we showed the advantages of broad data coverage available to marketers. Here is a more detailed exposure, providing a step-by-step process to get the most from your analytics.

Step 1: Ensure you have best-in-class data analytics software at your disposal. ^{xv}

The real concern of "garbage in, garbage out" appears often regarding data. **To address this, compile a technology suite with IT and professional guidance that:**

- ④ Complies with privacy regulations (e.g., General Data Protection Regulation [GDPR], California Consumer Privacy Act [CCPA]).
- ④ Offers transparent policy, simplifying your understanding of how you're protecting guests' personally identifying information (PII).
- ④ Curates the raw material for repeat entries, incomplete fields, and outdated information.
- ④ Includes in-house or contracted data scientists for data security confidence.
- ④ Contains the best-verified AI technology your budget can afford.

When running full steam, your software will generate "diamond in the rough" insights your competitors will never know about, guiding you to better, faster, and more proactive loyalty-driven strategies.

Step 2: Use data to segment your marketplace demographically. ^{xvi}

Here's where one creates a broad segment definition by age, gender, location (zip code, city, state), education level, household income, family status, and more.

For example, we've referred several times to the following segments in the content above, which you can quickly derive from your purchase history records, survey results, and third-party reports.

- ② Gen Zs, Millennials, and Baby Boomers, (i.e., age demographics).
- ② Families with kids, celebrators (i.e., a lifecycle demographic).
- ② People who want to eat healthily but can't afford the cost (i.e., an income demographic).
- ② Event organizers (a B2B demographic).

Step 3: Attach data-generated behavioral characteristics to your most prominent segment targets. ^{xvii}

This is where you add meat to the bone and discover what loyalty genuinely signifies. **It will show you:**

- ② Touchpoints that work and those that obstruct customer journeys.
- ② When a customer crosses the line from casual to loyal.
- ② Why long-term guests jumped ship.
- ② Whether your customer onboarding is effective or not.
- ② The 20% of your value proposition that covers 80% of revenue (and vice versa).
- ② Who your loyal guests are, why, and how they account for nearly 70% of your revenue.

In other words, it's the data analytics stage where the rubber meets the road, delivering more profound insights into how your guests behave, think, and feel under different circumstances.

Sophisticated AI insights encourage you and your stakeholders to define projections via key performance indicators (KPIs) and then compare real performance to projections. It's the best way to adjust your tactics and adapt to changes, coming to terms with the SWOT factors (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) driving business performance.

a. Purchase History Data

- Brands purchased.
- Average order value (to divide segments into high- and low-value).
- Buying frequency to determine loyalty ratings (from one-offs to consistent repeat purchases).
- Time of purchase (day, week, month) to derive seasonal influences, high points, and low points.
- Payment methods, including cash, cards, and contactless options.
- Omnichannel purchase preferences (e.g., online, in-store, mobile, website, or app).
- Takeout or delivery versus in-restaurant dining.

b. Engagement Data

- Website visits (pages viewed, time spent).
- Email opens and clicks.
- Social media interactions (likes, shares, comments).
- App usage (features used, frequency).
- Loyalty program activity (points earned, rewards redeemed).
- Survey participation, measured by responses.
- Feedback submitted.

c. Other Behavioral and Psychographic Data

- Abandoned shopping carts.
- Browsing behavior on your website (products viewed, categories explored).
- Location data (if opted-in).
- Device usage (mobile vs. desktop).
- Reviews on social media.
- Call center recordings.
- Net promoter score (NPS), customer satisfaction score (CSAT), and customer effort score (CES) surveys to understand guest responses to promotions and agent support.

d. Third-Party Data:

- Market research statistics.
- Enterprise surveys.
- Professional, dedicated investigation results one can buy subscriptions for.

I B. The AI Revolution: Transforming Loyalty Programs

Predictive Analytics ^{xviii}

Predictive analytics involves AI and ML machine learning (ML) technology, leveraging data to forecast future events and performance levels. How does it work? In a fraction of human time, **AI can**:

- ④ Analyze historical data to highlight patterns; the more data, the better.
- ④ Connect diverse data using complex processes to highlight opportunities that even large human teams are unlikely to find.
- ④ Use established algorithms and create new ones to predict future outcomes in most industries.
- ④ Save businesses time, eliminate 99.9% of errors, reduce overheads, and generate more revenue.

Agent Enhancement, Chatbot Inclusion, and Personalized Recommendations ^{xix}

AI tech is now integrated in almost every software designed for customer retention, including voice over internet protocol (VoIP), customer relationship management (CRM) integration, interactive voice response (IVR), skills-based routing, call queuing, screen pop, predictive dialing, call analytics, conversational AI apps, and voicemail to email (VTE).

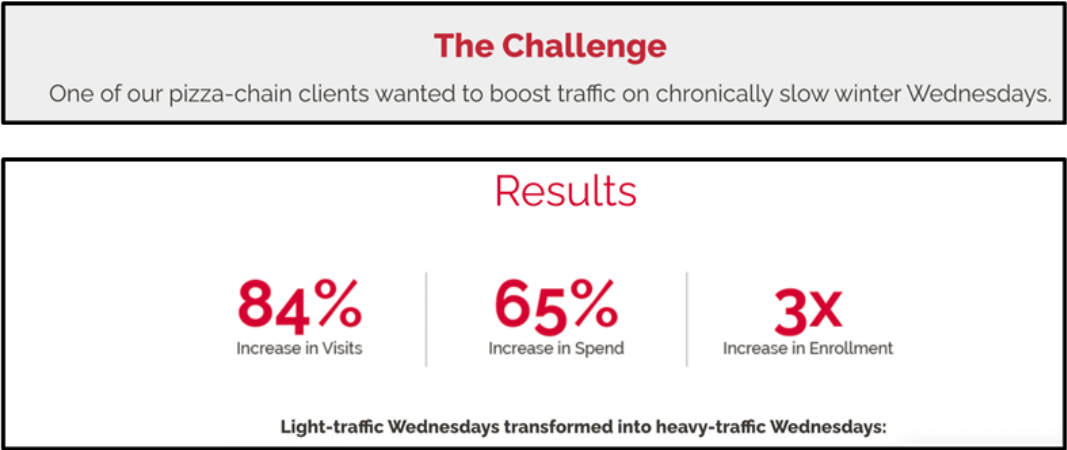
Currently, personalization suffers because restaurant reservations and store purchases for delivery are frequently automated across multiple channels. If a business hasn't properly integrated its technologies and trained employees to use them, many things can go wrong, resulting in poor CX. **For example, in 2024, customers still complained about:**

- Dropped calls.
- Inaccurate call routing.
- Malfunctioning chatbots.
- Long queuing times.
- Unengaging or incompetent agent communications.
- Circular bot conversations that preclude live agent connection.

Addressing the depressing picture above, AI-powered help has never been more robust. Consider salespeople or support agents who harness the tools for maximum engagement and deliver a completely different CX. AI developers have made big strides in the past few years, so 2025 should take the following shape:

- ⌚ All routine matters or issues with predictive answers fall into the self-service column—fast, efficient, and conclusive—managed by upgraded sophisticated website and call center chatbots offering incredible “human-sounding” responses.
- ⌚ Moreover, customer interactions remain AI-automated until a prompt signifies handing the baton to a human agent. **As a result:**
 - There’s been a massive reduction in:
 - Time spent waiting to speak to live support.
 - Frustrating connections to the wrong support agents.
 - In parallel, the value of screen pop technology has grown. Why?
 - It “pops” customers’ relevant data onto the agents’ screens at the moment of their phone call, giving the conversation a running start for vastly improved personalization.
 - It takes customer communication up a notch with product recommendations based on purchase history at agents’ fingertips.

Three Paytronix Case Studies Showcasing AI



How Paytronix did it:^{xx} We integrated AI-enhanced algorithms with the chain's POS system, activated at the push of a button to automatically add rewards when guests swiped their loyalty cards. The AI flexibility on a user-friendly dashboard was easy for the employees to navigate.

The overriding instruction was "only on Wednesdays from 4 pm to closing." In short, the loyalty promotion ran on four specific days in a winter month. Also, tracking the analytics simultaneously enabled management to evaluate promotional success (or failure) in real-time.

The segmentation shaped the benefits even further, limiting the rewards (discounts on checks in this case) to registered guests dining in the restaurant (i.e., not takeout).

In summary, Paytronix AI technologies helped management:

- ④ Identify the members who qualified for the promotion.
- ④ Set strict timing and segmentation parameters.
- ④ Turn the promotion on and off like clockwork.
- ④ Communicate the promotion to the entire loyalty member list.
- ④ Load rewards onto registered loyalty cards in real time.

Smashburger

This iconic burger²¹ brand asked our team to advise on "micro-segmenting" its customer base as a platform to develop a robust, data-driven loyalty program. Once they understood the benefits, management had no problem embracing the options offered by Paytronix's AISM to do the job.

The Smashburger data-driven and AI-powered campaigns moved into full swing to propel profitability based on personalized rewards that resonated quickly with brand loyalists. Clustering algorithms with laser-accurate focus fostered guest engagement beyond expectations.

| Action Steps for Restaurants and C-Stores

- ☐ Use **AI and predictive analytics** to personalize loyalty experiences and optimize promotions.
- ☐ Develop **omnichannel loyalty strategies** that integrate mobile, online, and in-store interactions.
- ☐ Use **micro-segmentation** to craft highly targeted, personalized offers for different customer groups.
- ☐ Incorporate **sustainability into loyalty initiatives** by rewarding eco-conscious behaviors and reducing waste.
- ☐ Invest in **AI-powered automation** for seamless loyalty engagement, improving guest satisfaction and retention.
- ☐ Implement **gamification and interactive experiences** to keep members engaged and returning.

How AI-Driven Loyalty Engagement Relates Spending Behavior

The success of AI-powered loyalty programs shows a shift in how brands engage customers through seamless, data-driven interactions that increase participation and repeat visits. However, engagement alone doesn't guarantee profitability.

To truly measure the impact of loyalty programs, brands must analyze **average loyalty check size**, a key metric reflecting customer spending within these programs. Different industries are seeing varied trends in loyalty-driven spending, influenced by factors like economic conditions, pricing strategies, and the effectiveness of rewards.

The following insights reveal how different sectors are doing in maintaining and increasing **loyalty member spending per visit**, highlighting both growth opportunities and potential challenges.

Average Loyalty Check Size Across All Industries

Loyalty Check Findings Across Restaurant and C-Store Segments

Category	Fastest-Growing Loyalty Check Sizes	Steady Growth (3-10% YoY)	Largest Declines
Full-Service Restaurants (FSR)	A regional taco chain saw a 227.58% increase , likely due to menu expansion and promotions.	A national pizza chain experienced 7.98% growth , highlighting effective loyalty incentives.	A seafood restaurant saw a 7.66% decline , likely due to pricing adjustments or shifting preferences.
	A BBQ smokehouse reported 9.74% growth , showing strong customer engagement.	A popular breakfast spot grew 3.81% , reinforcing morning dining demand.	A high-end steakhouse reported a 4.22% decline , indicating reduced spending on premium dining.

Quick-Service Restaurants (QSR)	A regional buffet chain saw a 24.9% increase , reflecting higher per-visit spending.	A premium frozen dessert chain experienced 7.03% growth .	A national bakery franchise saw a 90.14% drop .
	A gourmet burger brand recorded 16.65% growth , showcasing successful menu innovation.	A fast-casual Mediterranean eatery grew 5.46% , reinforcing demand for fresh, customizable meals.	A frozen yogurt chain declined 91.01% , suggesting major disengagement or pricing shifts.
Convenience Stores (C-Store)	A regional c-store saw a 139% increase , marking a significant shift in guest spending.	A specialty coffee and snack c-store saw 10-12% growth , indicating strong consumer engagement.	A discount convenience retailer experienced a 20.5% decline .
	A fresh food-focused c-store chain achieved 39% YoY growth , reflecting higher spend-per-visit.	A grocery-convenience hybrid chain grew 13.9% , signaling successful upselling strategies.	A regional fuel station network dropped 12.8% , possibly due to changing consumer habits.

| Average Order Size In Loyalty Spend

C-Store Loyalty Order Size Trends (2023–2024)

Category	Largest Declines
Fastest-Growing Loyalty Order Size (>10%)	31% of C-Store brands saw over 10% YoY growth in average loyalty order size.
Steady Growth (3–10%)	25% of brands experienced modest but healthy growth in check size, reflecting stable program performance.
Negligible Change (±3%)	31% of brands showed minimal YoY change, indicating either market saturation or consistent transaction behavior among loyalty members.
Largest Declines (–3% or worse)	13% of brands reported meaningful declines, which are often caused by reduced pricing power, smaller baskets, or limited loyalty-driven spend strategies.

FSR Loyalty Order Size Trends (2023–2024)

Category	Largest Declines
Fastest-Growing Loyalty Order Size (>10%)	50% of brands analyzed saw over 10% YoY growth.
Negligible Change (±3%)	25% of brands had little to no movement in average loyalty check value YoY.
Largest Declines (–3% or worse)	25% of brands saw meaningful declines, which may indicate lower loyalty spending among higher price points.

QSR Loyalty Order Size Trends (2023–2024)

Category	Largest Declines
Fastest-Growing Loyalty Order Size (>10%)	44% of QSR brands analyzed saw over 10% YoY growth in average loyalty check size—often driven by strong bundling, upselling, or premium loyalty strategies.
Steady Growth (3–10%)	20% of brands landed in this band, reflecting consistent performance gains potentially fueled by improved personalization or product mix.
Negligible Change (±3%)	24% of brands showed little to no change YoY, suggesting either plateaued program engagement or stable pricing with minimal loyalty influence.
Largest Declines (–3% or worse)	12% of brands experienced meaningful declines in loyalty check size, pointing to shrinking basket sizes, lower ticket value, or loyalty fatigue.

Key Takeaways Across Industries: Loyalty Check Size and Average Order Size

While loyalty check size growth is promising, it's important to understand what this number means. **Loyalty check size** measures per-visit spend among loyalty members—not overall average order value (AOV). This distinction matters because a growing check size within loyalty programs doesn't always mean members are spending more than non-loyalty guests or that programs are driving net-new profitability.

So, what *does* matter? When loyalty check sizes increase alongside **increased visit frequency, AI-powered personalization, smart upsells, and relevant offers**—that's when your program turns participation into revenue.

Overall Findings

⊗ Loyalty check sizes are growing—but not universally.

- **50% of FSRs, 44% of QSRs, and 31% of c-stores** saw loyalty check sizes rise by more than 10% year-over-year.
- However, **12–25% across segments** saw declines, showing that without good strategy, check size can stagnate or shrink, even as membership grows.

⊗ Flat check sizes are common

- Around a **quarter of QSR and FSR brands** saw little movement, clarifying loyalty alone isn't enough to grow spend.

Strategic Insights

Loyalty ≠ Bigger Baskets by Default

Many loyalty programs drive visits but fail to influence what guests purchase. **In some cases, regular guests outspend loyalty guests per visit due to:**

- ⊗ Larger, less frequent orders.
- ⊗ Impulse-driven behavior.
- ⊗ Lack of discounts or redemptions reducing ticket size.

Strategy Matters for Increasing Loyalty Check Size

Programs that succeed at growing check size use:

- ⊗ **AI-driven personalization** to surface high-margin products.
- ⊗ **Strategic bundling and exclusive offers** that add perceived value.
- ⊗ **Gamification, tiers, or spend challenges** to encourage upsizing.

Emotional Value Equals Economic Value

Loyalty check growth correlates with stronger emotional brand ties. Brands that make a memorable impression and convey individually relevant experiences within their programs win more spending and longer-term engagement.

| What Should You Do?

Loyalty check size is more than a number; it's a direct reflection of how much your members *value* their experience with your brand.

Here's how to make your program effective for both your business and guests:

Stop rewarding visits alone—start rewarding value.

Brands seeing the biggest check size jumps are incentivizing premium purchases, bundles, and higher-tier menu items—not just return visits. Layer in loyalty rewards that scale with spend to move guests toward larger order value.

Promote high-margin items through personalized offers.

Use your data to surface product recommendations and incentives tailored to member preferences. A frozen dessert fan doesn't need a generic BOGO—give them a surprise bonus for trying your newest high-margin treat.

Make every dollar count with upselling tactics.

Whether through gamified experiences, app-based add-ons, or AI-driven prompts, give your loyalty program the power to guide guests toward the next best purchase before they check out.

Intervene quickly for declining checks.

If your check sizes are dropping, your value prop may be off. Review pricing, loyalty program clarity, and promotional alignment. Test bounce-back offers or bundled incentives to reverse the trend.

Capitalize on the power of fresh, premium, and customizable.

Fresh food-focused concepts, gourmet brands, and customizable menus are leading overall check size growth. Consider how your business can mirror these trends in a way that's authentic to your brand.

Bottom line

Don't aim only for more visits. Aim for more valuable ones. Your loyalty program can do both if it's built to engage, upsell, and evolve.

Sector-Specific Loyalty Trends

Amplified Restaurant Industry Trends

I Overview of Key Points

1 Tech-Driven Experiences Are Essential for Loyalty

- a. Contactless dining is now an expected convenience, not a novelty.
- b. Guests demand seamless, digital-first experiences from reservations to payment.
- c. AI-driven personalization drives engagement and boosts revenue.

2 Data-Driven Personalization Drives Growth

- a. 75% of restaurants now use QR codes for menus and ordering.
- b. Guests prefer digital menus that offer real-time updates, customization, and ease of use.
- c. QR code adoption has led to a 40% increase in customer engagement.

3 AI-Powered Customization Is the Future of Ordering

- a. Advanced AI allows guests to personalize orders without staff intervention.
- b. Smart menu recommendations based on purchase history and preferences increase conversion rates.
- c. AI-driven sentiment analysis improves guest satisfaction and loyalty.

4 Contactless Payments Improve Efficiency and Security

- a. CNP (Card-Not-Present) transactions are streamlining the checkout experience.
- b. Digital receipts, tipping options, and seamless POS integration increase security and convenience.
- c. Reduced reliance on manual processing lowers labor costs while improving speed.

Sustainability and Digital-First Dining Go Hand-in-Hand

- a. Digital menus reduce paper waste, conserving resources and lowering costs.
- b. AI-driven forecasting minimizes food waste and inventory inefficiencies.
- c. Eco-conscious guests favor brands with sustainable tech solutions.

Creating a meaningful difference that resonates with your guests should be the focus of every restaurant owner's loyalty strategy. Pay close attention to the latest trends in engagement, technology, and sustainability impacting your market segments.

Many of your competitors are already adopting these trends, so leveraging them might not give you a unique advantage. However, if you ignore them, you'll stand out for the wrong reasons. Earlier in this report we highlighted that guests are increasingly favoring sustainability-conscious restaurants that offer personalized experiences. These offerings are strengthened by AI-powered, data-driven tech, off-premises dining, dietary precision, and contactless benefits. In the next sections, we'll explore these market-shifting trends to provide practical guidance for your guest loyalty planning in 2025.

1. What is Contactless Dining, and How Does It Work?

In the restaurant context, "contactless" means **allowing guests to make reservations, order, and pay online without direct human interaction**. It begins with making a reservation, which is the simplest part of the contactless experience and the lowest risk of something going wrong.

Restaurant reservation apps provide your guests the option to:

- ⌚ Show real-time table availability aligned with their party size on days and times that reasonably meet their preferences.
- ⌚ Record relevant personal details of the guest making the reservation and any loyalty privileges, if applicable.
- ⌚ Generate automated email and SMS confirmations and reminders.
- ⌚ Send the reservation details instantly to your team, enabling it to:
 - Anticipate and manage the reservation volume.
 - Streamline your labor resources to meet or exceed your guests' expectations.

The reservation system creates a smooth guest transition from reservation to entry without anyone in your business talking directly to the customer. **This tech sophistication accommodates more complex situations such as:**

- ④ Large birthday celebrations and other large gatherings.
- ④ Personalized diet-centric menu items.
- ④ Of course, if your guest requires more customization, the system's AI component will shift the interaction to your live rep to conclude the reservation in real-time or with a brief follow-up.

From there, your guests

- ④ Can seamlessly browse and select items.
- ④ Confirm choices with a click.
- ④ Trigger an automated order process from POS to the kitchen.
- ④ Complete a contactless mobile device payment simultaneously. ^{xxii}

This system is scalable, as demonstrated by restaurant brands everywhere in the US—with many applying it in multiple locations to deliver a customer experience (CX) that earns rave reviews.

How can you quickly transition your restaurant guests to an engaging, contactless dining experience? Don't let the jargon surrounding contactless tech sway you from seeing through the process that will skyrocket your guest satisfaction.

Connect with the right software providers or consultants. **Their professional expertise in this vertical gives you a running start and helps you:**

- ④ Avoid the frustration of trial-and-error attempts.
- ④ Figure out the ins and outs of low-priced or free do-it-yourself (DIY) solutions on Google that look straightforward but are just the opposite.

1 Start with your point of sale (POS) system

It's the central hub that connects all your contactless components, linking your digital menu to your kitchen. Imagine the chaos if guests' orders don't reach the kitchen staff! **It could seriously damage:**

- ⌚ Your brand image, which promises upgraded, faster service and hospitality.
- ⌚ Your guests' experience, as they might leave in frustration if their orders, placed half an hour earlier, never made it to the kitchen.

Therefore, it's crucial to install the right software from day one.

2 Create an online menu

Traditional printed menus need to be delivered and removed by waitstaff multiple times a day. After being handled by hundreds of guests, a printed menu can become worn and frayed. In contrast, a digital menu is available 24/7/365 and always looks pristine.

3 Install customization tools to replace human intervention

This is one of the most challenging aspects of going contactless. Your contactless menu must allow guests to change their selections without hassle. **However, that's the minimum you can expect:**

- ⌚ For example, imagine a guest who wants the Farmer's Burger without the cheese, or wants to switch from cheddar to Swiss, wants it medium-rare instead of medium, and with cabbage wraps instead of a bun. **So, consider our recommendations as follows:**
 - Build or buy AI modifier algorithms, to handle cart additions, removals, and changes according to different tastes.
 - Design these tools to subtly guide your guest's choices within acceptable variations without needing staff intervention.
 - Avoid making guests feel like they are compromising on their preferences.
 - Put yourself in your guest's shoes to understand their ordering process, feelings, and thoughts.
 - Ensure flexibility in your tools to instantly switch items, change the flow, erase, add, or redescribe items, and customize the entire experience.
 - Include a user-friendly dashboard in your software that the least tech-savvy employee can use with ease.

If you're asking yourself, "How do I achieve all the above without headaches?" **Here are five proven guidelines:**

1. Test your menu's readability with a sample of existing guests.
2. Group and pair items that, based on predictive AI-enhanced technology, go together in categories like:
 - a. "Our best sellers."
 - b. "Our most-ordered wine selections."
 - c. "Our winter specials."
 - d. "Our Happy Hour Bargain Specials."
 - e. "In Season Dishes."
3. Ensure your written descriptions are informative on calorie count, diet-centric, organic, and locally sourced ingredients.
4. Most crucially, create the vision of a delectable, mouthwatering taste experience with photos, thoughtful font selection, and the backdrop of an eye-catching design^{xxiii}.
5. Use your data analytics to adjust daily or weekly menu options, thus maximizing audience responsiveness.

For example, if your records reflect Stella as the beer of choice in the summer months during happy hour (4pm to 7pm), enjoyed with a dozen wings, ride that wave with vivid images and special discounts according to the guest data you acquire.

4

Create custom QR codes for your menu.

It's one thing to have a gorgeous-looking and easy-to-read menu online; it's another to offer effortless availability. Look no further than the ingenious QR code that has been in the wings since 1994—re-emerging with grand fanfare during the pandemic and now going viral

- ⊗ In June 2023, adult guests reflected a 45 | 45 in percentage split of those with or without QR code experience accessing restaurant menus in the last 12 months.^{xxiv}
- ⊗ A 2021 study^{xxv} showed that 37% of diners preferred QR code-centric digital menus. Although it's not a same-study overview, it reflects that QR code popularity in only two years registered a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10%+.

- ⊗ This shift aligns closely with loyalty trends, making a mark on the US hospitality footprint driven by streamlined, contactless dining solutions.
- ⊗ It's the ticket to making your versatile menu a quick-and-easy-to-access advantage—*the epitome of restaurant automation.* ^{xxvi}

Here are some interesting QR statistics ^{xxvii} that show you why the QR code has had lasting impact on guest behavior and restaurant owner strategies:

Smartphone use is behind the surge in QR code popularity. **Consider that US smartphone users scanning QR codes in 2025 will reach 99.5 million, which covers:**

- ⊗ 45% of all American shoppers using this technology to access brands and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG).
- ⊗ 43.9% of total global scans in 2023.
- ⊗ 72% of at-least-once-a-month scanners and 32% weekly scanners.
- ⊗ In 2022, US businesses generated 200,000 new QR codes, a 248% jump from 2021.
- ⊗ The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 triggered a 50% QR code usage spike for contactless payments.

In 2025, 75% of restaurants will use QR codes for:

- Menu access, cutting out menu investment costs by around 30%, with a measurable rise in customer engagement of 40%.
- Downloading apps, noting a 45% increase of apps within this channel.
- 42% of brand stakeholders who rely on mobile marketing to gain customer traction include QR codes in their loyalty strategies. Why?
- Relevant KPIs signify that QR code technology investments yield a 23.7% ROI.
- 87% of QR code users globally rate it as “easy to use.”
- 42% of brand stakeholders who rely on mobile marketing to gain customer traction include QR codes in their loyalty strategies.
- Around 65% of Americans have seen at least 1 QR code in the past year.

How does the QR code system work?

Think of it like barcodes you see on products in a supermarket, but instead of identifying items like ketchup, it corresponds to your menu. **Here are three specifics:**

1. The menu pops up on the mobile screen when the guest scans your QR code, provided on every table.
2. It allows your customers to navigate it like holding a printed version but with more features, as described above.
3. You're online without adding a URL or downloading an app to scan your code, if the user's smartphone includes a QR code reader, as most today do.

Creating a custom QR code for your menu is as easy as counting 1-2-3. Several QR code generators exist online for free.^{xxviii} So how do you use one?

- ② Enter your restaurant's online menu URL.
- ② Insert your entity's logo as a .jpg or .png image.

And voila! The tool automatically delivers a custom QR code for the table display, ready for your guests to scan.

5 Establish a Contactless Payment Process

Receiving a payment is a key part of the tech puzzle. Don't confuse this with portable payment terminals where cashiers ask guests to hover their credit cards (not touching) above the reader. Remember, contactless means no staff involved.

Have you ever heard about CNP? It stands for card-not-present transactions.^{xxix} To make the payment process contactless and minimize face-to-face interaction with staff, you need a payment processing solution that accepts card-not-present transactions (CNP). **It works like this:**

- ② Your guests enter their card information into your contactless ordering platform, and the software digitally processes it without any card reader involvement.
- ② You can send digital receipts and provide spaces for receiving tips.

A primary aspect of payments is to exclude staff from checking on bills paid and unpaid. **The only way to do this is:**

- ⌚ Integrate payment with your POS to ensure complete security of guest payment details.
- ⌚ Reducing manual entries day by day until you've reached zero.

6 The Benefits of Contactless Dining

Following the pandemic, contactless dining offers significant benefits. It provides faster, more efficient service, leading to quicker table turnover.

By relying more on AI technologies and less on human labor, it reduces labor costs and allows staff to focus on more productive tasks.

It eliminates the need for printed menus, offering a flexible format that can accommodate real-time menu changes and price updates. **It includes the triple whammy benefit that arrives with:**

- ⌚ Reduced paper usage.
- ⌚ Transparent resource conservation.
- ⌚ A smaller carbon footprint.

Contactless dining improves your menu with incredible descriptions, vivid images and details on guest-demanded statistics.

This tool resonates with tech-savvy audiences, boosting customer satisfaction, trust, and brand loyalty, especially among Gen Z and Millennials.

Guests appreciate the convenience, and the other benefits highlighted above, supporting a growing group of brand ambassadors.

I Action Steps for Restaurants

- ☐ **Invest in a robust POS system** to seamlessly integrate digital menus, ordering, and payments.
- ☐ **Adopt AI-powered customization tools** that let guests modify orders without staff involvement.
- ☐ **Use QR codes for menus and promotions** to foster engagement and simplify ordering.
- ☐ **Ensure secure, contactless payment solutions** that integrate smoothly with your loyalty program.
- ☐ **Prioritize AI-driven insights** to optimize menu offerings, pricing, and personalization.
- ☐ **Reduce paper and printing costs** by fully transitioning to completely digital dining solutions.

Ghost Kitchens and Virtual Brands: Loyalty Strategies for Off-Premise Dining

I Overview of Key Points

1 Ghost Kitchens Are Reshaping the Restaurant Industry

- a. The ghost kitchen market is projected to hit \$156.60 billion by 2030 with a 12.1% CAGR.
- b. Success hinges on digital-first engagement, in-house ordering, and loyalty-driven promotions.
- c. Personalized marketing, rewards programs, and social media engagement build brand loyalty.

2 Dietary Inclusivity Drives Guest Loyalty and Market Expansion

- a. Guests expect Vegan, Keto, Gluten-Free, DASH, and Low FODMAP options on menus.
- b. Commit fully (Score 4 or 5/5) or not at all—partial adoption won't drive impact.
- c. Loyalty incentives, exclusive discounts, and educational content boost engagement.

3 Premium Meals and Snacks Fuel C-Store Loyalty

- a. Specialty meals and health-focused snacks are driving consumer preference.
- b. Gen Z's \$360B spending power is shifting demand toward premium, better-for-you products.
- c. Private label (PL) offerings are growing as a high-retention, high-profit loyalty strategy.

4 Sustainability and Food Waste Management Are Now Core Loyalty Drivers

- a. 38% of U.S. food is wasted, and customers expect brands to act.
- b. AI-driven inventory management reduces waste and optimizes stock levels.
- c. Eco-friendly packaging, portion control, and food donation programs boost retention.

- a. First-party online ordering is a key loyalty driver, with growing consumer demand.
- b. Authentic sustainability efforts are essential; greenwashing erodes brand trust.
- c. Organic, sustainably sourced products attract eco-conscious shoppers.

Ghost kitchens are a viral trend taking the restaurant industry by storm.

In 2023, the global ghost kitchen market represented \$70.37 billion, projected to rise to \$156.60 billion by 2030 at a mind-boggling 12.1% CAGR. ^{xxx}

54% of US adults, including 72% of millennials and 66% of Gen Zs, depend on food takeout or delivery as essential to their lifestyles. ^{xxxi}

Ghost kitchens remove the need for physical dining space and traditional guest safety/cleanliness practices because they're entirely virtual. You can operate from anywhere without worrying about a visible storefront, ambiance, decor, music, servers, or any other elements of a typical restaurant experience.

As a ghost kitchen operator, your focus is solely on selling, fulfilling, and delivering meals. How?

- ⊗ **Delivery:** Mainly via third-party apps like Grubhub, Uber Eats, and DoorDash. It may include an integrated in-house delivery advantage if you're part of ghost kitchen chains like Unfurl, Kitchen United, Virt Brands, and Maya Eats.
- ⊗ **Fulfilling:** When your guests—nearby consumers who love the localized ghost kitchen culture—look at any of the food delivery apps mentioned, they see a string of different restaurants. Your kitchen is likely among many other GKs on relatively low-cost premises.
- ⊗ **Selling:** Interact with customers on a dedicated website, SM platforms, live chat, and phone to:
 - Encourage favorable reviews.
 - Initiate surveys and feedback.
 - Generate a stream of contests, polls, and behind-the-scenes content.

In addition to the above, your most powerful promotional and personalization tools are targeted email marketing, data analytics to customize your promotions, deals, and deliveries, and a loyalty program. In this respect, your business is no different from a brick-and-mortar establishment. Why? **Because you have the leverage to offer:**

- ② **A points-based system** that customers can accumulate as their order frequency accelerates or they show brand loyalty, referring your brand to others.
- ② Point redemption allows access to freebies, discounts, and other rewards.
- ② **Paperless menu presentations** with incredible imagery and digital descriptions stand hugely in your favor, reducing overheads and amplifying images simultaneously.
- ② **Above all else, your retained customer KPIs depend on** consistent, high-quality food production, excellent customer service, and a seamless online ordering experience (see description of the latter under contactless ordering above.)
- ② **Don't hesitate to maximize your local community connection** at every opportunity, highlighting meaningful partnerships and your sustainability/charitable initiatives to bolster positive brand perception.

Traditional restaurant chains are climbing on the ghost kitchen bandwagon. **Consider the following associations, partnerships, and alignments:**

- ② Conviction Chicken is owned by TGI Fridays.
- ② Cosmic Wings and Neighborhood Wings is owned by Applebee's.
- ② Dockside Charlie's, Coop and Run, and Underground Chuck's is owned by O'Charley's

The advantage of joining an enterprise ghost kitchen chain:

Let's look at Kitchen United as an example: It works with you to reach new customers and create your brand awareness as part of the family. It supports staffing, fast launches, low-cost delivery services, and convenient real estate locations in busy cities such as Pasadena, CA, San Jose, CA, Austin, TX, and Chicago, IL.

I 2. Dietary Inclusivity In Restaurants in 2025

The key diets playing a role in your targeted segments:

⊗ Guests' dining habits align with sophisticated diet dishes that address various health pain points and competitors recognize diet consciousness as a growing trend on several levels, **including segments that are strictly:**

- **Vegan**^{xxxii} — Plant-based, excluding animal products from all types of meat as well as dairy, eggs, and honey.
- **Keto**^{xxxviii} — For consumers who believe in leading a state of ketosis induced by a diet high in fat and low in carbohydrates.
 - » In short, it includes everything vegans exclude, plus avocados and nuts.
 - » Its no-nos are sugary drinks, breads, pastries, rice, most fruits, beans, lentils, and grains.
- **Gluten-Free**^{xxxiv} — Rejects wheat, barley, rye, pasta, and bread; favors whole foods like fruits, vegetables, meat, and eggs.
- **DASH**^{xxxv} or **Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension**—Advocates eating fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, fish, poultry, beans, nuts, and seeds and cutting out high-salt, saturated fat, and sugary food categories.
- **Low FODMAP**^{xxxvi} (i.e., fermentable oligosaccharides, disaccharides, monosaccharides, and polyols) or short-chain carbohydrates that are indigestible for many. It covers anything low in FODMAPS, mainly:
 - » Fruits, including cantaloupes, kiwis, mandarins, oranges, pineapples, grapes, strawberries, and blueberries.
 - » Veggies like eggplant, green beans, carrots, cucumbers, lettuce, potatoes, and zucchini.
 - » Eggs, firm tofu, plain cooked meats/poultry/seafood, tempeh.
 - » Most grains and several cheeses.

Reviewing the above may seem daunting. However, you don't have to know what diets do for your guests' health. Why? Ask them, and you'll see they agree that eating as directed by the diet makes them feel healthier and minimizes their ailments. All you need to do is serve these clear trends to increase guest loyalty. **Here are our recommendations:**

- ⊗ Decide how specialized you want to be on any of the above on a scale from 0 to 5, where zero is no involvement, and five is "full steam ahead."
- ⊗ Scores of 2 and 3 are the same as zero when planning dietary segmentation. In short, you either do it as a five/four or a zero. There's no in-between.
- ⊗ **With scores of four and five**, you must have the culinary skills to deliver the best in taste, ingredients, sustainability, personalization, and menu creativity. These are the key points on which your guests esteem their favorite restaurants. **While this increases your menu complexity, it also gives you an opportunity to:**
 - Promote yourself as catering to vegans, keto adherents, etc.
 - Offer diet-centric deals, discounts, and rewards to guests who join your loyalty program.
 - Develop content around new recipes and expert advice via social media and your app.
 - Position your brand with meaningful differences, especially if your competitors are not following suit.
- ⊗ **A zero score doesn't mean you won't cater to the guests' tastes.** It only signifies leaving it to your customer to decide what to order from your menu. However, if you take a hands-off approach to diet segmentation, the promotional pivots, as described, are not in the cards.

a. With a bird's eye view over the dietary landscape

This is what you should see as the latest dynamic trends:

- **Gluten-free:** A common offering most guests will discover at fast casual and chain restaurants.
- **Low-calorie:** These options are less common but quite prolific in all restaurant categories.
- **Vegetarian:** Specialty restaurants pop up most places these days, especially large cities. Aside from that, many middle-of-the-road eateries offer veggie burgers and vegan options.

| Unique Loyalty Drivers in the C-Store Sector

Specialty Meals and Premium Snacks: Rewarding Purchases of High-Quality Items

What does this food category include?

- ④ Gourmet sandwiches with high-quality ingredients.
- ④ Freshly prepared salads, artisan pizzas, and tasty protein bowls.
- ④ Organic fruit and vegetable cups.
- ④ High-end branded chips and crackers.
- ④ Locally sourced baked goods.

C-stores have strategically responded to the fast-growing consumer demand for high-quality specialty meals and premium snacks as an on-the-go food option, with eye-level shelf positions to boot. This shift signals that you should focus intensely on the many customers leading busy lifestyles who don't see accessing quick meals that are also high on taste, health, and quality as an impossibility.

For example, our research ^{xxxvii} found that:

- ④ New flavors and high-end snacking brands drive the buying habits of Gen Zers, representing \$360 billion in spending power. It's a trend that will propel c-stores that prioritize it into the limelight.
- ④ Health is alive and well in snacking, with health/energy bars up by 13.2% year-over-year, reflecting a major shift toward nutrient-first diets.

Specialty meals and premium snacks provide a solid platform for you to:

- ④ Compete with restaurants and traditional c-stores on the back of a more diverse value proposition that ignites customer loyalty.
- ④ Align with consumers' shift to gluten-free, vegan, and organic snacks, thus connecting your brand to a broader customer base with various diet-centric needs.
- ④ Record higher profit margins than basic convenience store items, bolstering the bottom line.

- ⊗ Private label (PL) a range of 5-star quality products. Why?
- ⊗ 76% ^{xxxviii} of your customers who bought a private label as a first-time CX in 2023 will repeat the purchase when needed.
- ⊗ The data shows PL strategies holding their own against household brand names as dominant attractions and a compelling customer retention magnet

Target your high-loyalty customers, offering:

- ⊗ Special deals on gourmet packages for repeat purchases.

Reward-earning contests focused on:

- ⊗ Private label brand suggestions.
- ⊗ Best new food items in this category.
- ⊗ Food product and consumer packaged goods (CPG) innovations.
- ⊗ Increased prevalence of online ordering: Integrating loyalty programs with eCommerce platforms.

Jeff Hoover, Director of Strategy and Analytics for convenience store brands at Paytronix, said this about online ordering at a recent webinar on *"2024 Online Ordering Trends for Convenience Stores"* ^{xxxix} : "I don't know that we've reached the peak of this adoption curve ... but it's really becoming more pervasive."

Findings from our 2023 Online Ordering Report ^{xl} show:

- ⊗ Convenience stores are improving their systems to include first-party online ordering in response to:
 - Around 43% of c-store shoppers taking advantage of c-store delivery.
 - More than 50% considering it as an omnichannel option in 2025.
 - Feedback marking it as a highly positive and differentiating benefit for loyalty program members.

Although this trend is in the early adoption stages, it's gaining traction alongside BOPIS (Buy Online, Pick Up In Store) and will make a gigantic impact in future years. **There are strong indications that stakeholders see this channel as a compelling loyalty program enrollment booster based on:**

- ⊗ Robust personalization characteristics
- ⊗ The ability to deliver a sophisticated and streamlined digital experience.

Many contactless technologies that drive online restaurant ordering apply here (see above). To give you a deeper insight into the possibilities, **your guests interacting with a first- or third-party ordering and delivery service app should have an experience offering:**

- Seamless menu navigation.
- Easy-to-follow add-to-cart features.
- Several virtual and credit card payment options.
- Registered loyalty program special deals, triggered as member ID logins enter the app, highlighting personalized:
- Rewards.
- Discounts.
- Freebies.
- The opportunity to choose preferred delivery times.
- Real-time feedback on items out of stock and alternatives available.
- No staff involvement—a contactless process from end to end.
- Automatic credits for buy-cart adjustments during the process.
- POS, email, and text confirmations as part and parcel of the process and after logging out.

Growing Use of Sustainability Related to Restaurants and C-Stores

Underestimating your guests' desire for cleaner air, land, water, and food are glaring missteps that may harm your brand value.

Here are some added details underlining “green” as a core loyalty ingredient:

1 Greenwashing

- This is something you want to avoid at all costs. **To emphasize a previous point:**

“Greenwashing is the easily detectable practice of convincing consumers that one’s environmental initiatives are authentic when they’re not. Hoodwinking people who trust your brand can dissolve customer loyalty in the blink of an eye.”

Unfortunately, greenwashing is a sensitive landscape that lures in unassuming restaurant operators as surely as deliberate wrongdoers into making claims that may taint your guest loyalty forever. **Did you know that in a November 2023 Zipra report:** ^{xli}

- ⊗ 68% of US executives agree their companies are guilty of greenwashing.
 - ⊗ 88% of Gen Z respondents distrust brands' ESG claims.
 - ⊗ More than four of every 10 green claims you interact with online are deceiving.
- b. According to Wikipedia,^{xlii} maintaining a true eco-conscious brand requires focus and diligence that many brands aren't willing to invest. Be one of the few that does.
- c. **Here are the primary greenwashing “don'ts” you should be aware of: Don't claim to:**
- ⊗ Contribute to environmental milestones without corresponding plans that are capable of getting you there.
 - ⊗ Have environmentally beneficial practices or materials in your marketing campaigns when they don't exist.
 - ⊗ Be environmentally supportive when public third-party data can prove you aren't.
 - ⊗ Highlight one green-centric thing your company does well to divert attention from many others you ignore or, worse, counteract with harmful practices.
 - ⊗ Include a “green sounding” property in your value proposition that's irrelevant to a target audience looking for a sustainability solution.
 - ⊗ Use a product revolving around a green benefit if facts don't support it.
 - ⊗ Promote yourself as meeting industry-minimum eco standards by emphasizing it's a meaningful difference. In other words, inferring your competitors do not when they also do.
 - ⊗ Rely on redefining anything it genuinely doesn't represent. For example, using “all-natural” in your promotional content to hint at “biodegradable”; they're not necessarily the same.
 - ⊗ Have a reputable, environmentally conscious following based on a combination of words and images when, in reality, it doesn't exist.

2

A Sustainability Focus on Food Waste

- ⊗ Global food waste in the food and beverage industry, which is primarily restaurants, is around \$2.6 trillion annually,^{xliii} mainly during meal preparation and distribution.
- ⊗ Approximately 38% of consumable food in the US ends up unsold or uneaten,^{xliv} enough to feed 2X the number of people globally recognized as food deprived.

- ⊗ **Restaurants routinely waste 10% of the food they purchase**, but that's not the disruptive issue. Guests unfortunately don't eat 31% to 40% of their food. **In this regard, consider:**
 - Highlighting this tactfully in an upcoming campaign.
 - Address it with smaller portion sizes, different size options, and biodegradable takeout containers.
 - Tell the story so your loyal customers know about your contributions.
- ⊗ 72% of people have become aware of their own food waste habits ^{xlv} and levels, more than double the percentage before 2020, so much so that 60% admit to feeling guilty about it.
- ⊗ In 2022, online searches around the food waste subject jumped by 80% versus 2021, alongside a trend where consumers plan their food consumption more thoughtfully.
- ⊗ A growing number of consumers have moved into the segment of buying imperfect, lower-priced produce.
- ⊗ 56% of social media conversations about food waste lean negatively toward businesses' inept response to this issue.
 - Conversely, 90% favor purchasing from businesses that drive a food waste management initiative, and more than 50% are willing to spend more with those businesses.
 - So, as a restaurant stakeholder, a multi-dimensional food waste program will position your brand as eco-conscious, resonating robustly with market segments across all generations, especially Gen Zs and Millennials.
- ⊗ You can expect a substantial \$14^{xlvi} benefit for every \$1 you invest in food waste reduction, an exceptional ROI, hanging on the coattails of \$9.14 billion^{xlvii} invested in food waste since 2014.
- ⊗ 56% of food and beverage businesses agree that cost reduction is the primary benefit,^{xlviii} with positive environmental impact a close second.
 - **They advocate a three-pronged approach ^{xlix} for restaurants specifically, as follows:**
 - » Prevention
 - » Reuse
 - » Reduction
 - » Redistribution

- ⊗ You must look at the food waste pain point comprehensively across your entire lifecycle of food from production to consumption for a multifaceted and meaningful strategy.
- ⊗ 51% of respondents use technological inventory tools as their go-to resource¹ to reduce food costs and waste, followed by professionally guided food costing and inventory controls.

3 AI-Driven Inventory Management in Restaurants and Convenience Stores as a Wastage Solution

- ⊗ Efficient inventory management that can adjust and adapt in real-time is at the core of reducing wastage. Brand names like Lightspeed, MarketMan, NetSuite, and Revel Systems are among the most robust competitors against Paytronix in this space. **Here are the latter's primary features as a reflection of what you can expect:**
 - The significant advantages of a system integrating with vital data streaming on your POS, helping your restaurant or c-store manage inventory, process payments, and synchronize online ordering.
 - Paytronix software tracks your inventory, alerts you when stock shortages are likely to emerge, manages reorder points, sends real-time data to all relevant departments, and more. **This includes:**
 - » Showing orders to the kitchen as they're confirmed.
 - » Confirms customer orders when ready.
 - » Facilitates online ordering, including cross-sells and other revenue-driving features.
 - **This application specializes in catering situations with dedicated tools connected to:**
 - » Order acceptance.
 - » Deposits.
 - » Calendar views.

Finally, it processes payments securely and protects sensitive data.

Do Convenience Store Organic Food Offerings Support Sustainability?

- a. Yes, if you source your products from organic farms that use sustainable practices. In that case, let your customers know—it's a massive plus on your eco-friendly scorecard. **Take it as far as you can by explaining that your source farms focus on:**
- ⊗ Using renewable energy.
 - ⊗ Capturing and storing carbon.
 - ⊗ Releasing fewer emissions.
 - ⊗ Fertilizing the soil with pure nutrients.
 - ⊗ Reducing pesticide and herbicide use.
 - ⊗ Leveraging biodiversity.
- b. **Sustainability aside, the organic food industry is growing in leaps and bounds**, with certified organic cropland acres spiking by 79 percent to 3.6 million acres over the ten years ending 2021—a commendable 8% CAGR. **According to a USDA report,**¹¹ **they helped certified organic farms to:**
- ⊗ Achieve a 90% escalation, topping at 17,445 operations over the same period.
 - ⊗ Generate \$52 billion sales revenue in 2021, around 5.5% of total retail food turnover.
- c. **The same report reflects that c-stores and supercenters accounted for 56% of all organic foods sold** off the shelves to consumers, citing the Organic Trade Association, 2021 as a source. Your guests fuel the organic trend despite significant price premiums (versus non-organic), with American farms contributing nearly 20% of the volume and the rest imported from Mexico, Canada, and other countries.

| Action Steps for Restaurants

- ☐ Integrate **loyalty-driven ghost kitchen strategies** with exclusive online order perks.
- ☐ Fully embrace **dietary inclusivity** with personalized promotions and menu segmentation.
- ☐ Expand **premium snack and meal offerings** to match shifting consumer demands.
- ☐ Use **AI-powered inventory systems** to cut waste and support sustainability.
- ☐ Strengthen **online ordering and sustainability initiatives** to build long-term guest loyalty.

Actionable Strategies for Building Loyalty

Loyalty programs are crucial to your success. We shown their vital relationship to financial ROI and customer retention, supported by reliable metrics and statistics, showing that acquiring new customer is much more expensive than retaining loyal ones.

A 5% increase in guest retention can lead to at least a 25% profit improvement. ⁵² McKinsey ⁵³ supports this, noting that loyal guests generate 80% of your revenue. **Loyal customers are more receptive to new products, dishes, and theme changes than first-time buyers.** They forgive strategic errors more easily and are willing to pay premium prices. Customer loyalty drives your restaurant's or c-store's ongoing profitability and growth.

Consistent interactions with loyal customers encourage their feedback, adding to a purchase history data pool ready for analytics software evaluation. **How does this function?**



To make up for the loss of one existing customer, companies have to require three new customers.

Automated data analytics works in a fraction of the time it takes humans and many times more accurately. **It begins by defining demographics around key CX touchpoints relevant to guests':**

- ⊗ Aspirational motivations.
- ⊗ Reactions to promotional offers.
- ⊗ Buying patterns.
- ⊗ Ratings of customer support and services.
- ⊗ Personalization needs.

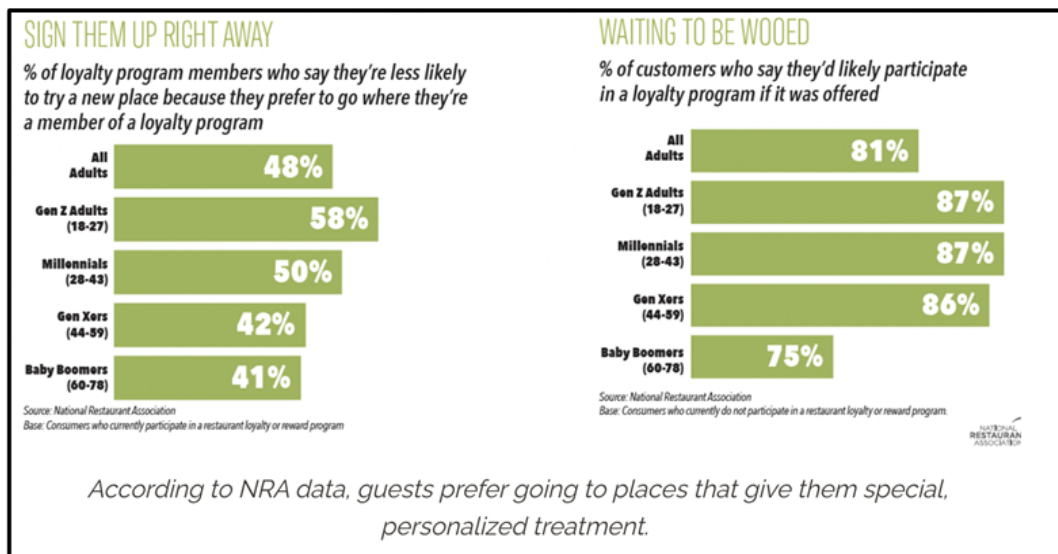
From there, you can use the algorithms to springboard off the derived insights and develop a fundamental 10-pronged loyalty framework. The latter will help you:

1. Adjust **loyalty program features and tiers**.
2. Create **better segment targeting** and needs-based relevance.
3. Make **real-time adjustments** to the loyalty program.
4. Drive **repeat business**.
5. Increase **customer lifetime value**.
6. Identify **churn triggers** and the **exclusive offers** that deflect them.
7. Structure **time-sensitive promotional campaigns** and rewards.
8. Time **upsell** and implement **brand revisions**.
9. **Integrate your loyalty program data** with your point-of-sale (POS) and (customer relationship management) CRM platform.
10. Channel your budgets to focus on the **most engaged customer categories**.

Paytronix CXP's Capabilities and Alignment with 10 Loyalty Benefits

We recognize that loyalty program engagement is about guest-first experiences and continues to pay dividends for both consumers and businesses. **Did you know that:**

- ⌚ US consumers are, on average, members of 16.7 programs across all industries and 3.6 in the restaurant category, with Gen Zs' 4.4 in the latter. ^{liv}
- ⌚ Activity is dynamic, with nearly 50% and 33% of restaurant loyalty program members using their point benefits several times monthly and weekly. ^{lv}



Source: National Restaurant Association

The digital era has transformed loyalty programs format from simple punch card systems to sophisticated, omnichannel engagements that offer personalized rewards ^{lvi}, continuously adapt to member preferences. A Deloitte report ^{lvii} shows that 86% of hospitality loyalty program members believe the value of points and the innovative features for earning and redeeming them significantly impact their emotional connection and buying behavior.

What are our teams doing with our AI-empowered CXP to help you drive loyalty?

Our platform's capabilities cover every aspect of guests enrolling, lapsing or leaving, and engaging in your loyalty program. **It involves a complete overview that includes:**

- ⊗ The percentage of total guests that are loyalty program members – loyalty program penetration.
- ⊗ The rate at which members join or abandon the program.
- ⊗ More crucially, the real-time implications of member behavior; for example:
 - Store/restaurant visits.
 - Reward redemption trends.
 - Spend per visit.
 - Passivity (a lack of program activity).

Your guest data is a valuable resource that would remain untapped without sophisticated software to gather it ^{lviii}, find the key issues, define patterns, and adjust program strategies to keep members engaged. The Paytronix value proposition focuses on bringing as many guests as possible into profitable loyalty program tiers. The last thing you want is a large number of guests signing up for your program without effective follow-up.

Our AI-powered features work around the clock, alongside our guest experience platform, to help your c-store or restaurant engage guests cost-effectively. **It promises and delivers a new level of loyalty program ability designed to:**

- ⊗ Improve personalization in promotions and reward quality focused on:
 - Surprise events.
 - Unexpected bonuses.
 - Upgrading memberships to higher tiers with substantially more benefits.
- ⊗ Gift- and discount-centric contests and challenges. ^{lix}
- ⊗ Integrate loyalty program components with online ordering, reward dollars, private events, and any other brand-specific offer.
- ⊗ Address membership lapses with limited-time reactivation incentives.
- ⊗ Send reminders at specific times to remind members of the benefits they're missing with inactivity.
- ⊗ Reveal previously undiscovered micro-segment opportunities.
- ⊗ Advance contactless processes to cement dine-in or take-out safety and efficiency.

Maximizing Loyalty Engagement: Why the 90-Day Active Rate Matters

Your loyalty program's strength lies in its active members. While enrollment numbers provide an initial measure of success, the true health of the program is determined by how frequently members engage, return, and spend. This is where the 90-day active loyalty rate becomes crucial.

By tracking how many members stay engaged over a three-month period, your brand can evaluate the effectiveness of loyalty incentives, digital engagement efforts,

and retention strategies. A high 90-day active rate indicates that members consistently find value in the program. Conversely, a lower rate suggests the need for re-engagement tactics or program adjustments.

The following analysis examines 90-day active loyalty trends across full-service restaurants (FSRs), quick-service restaurants (QSRs), and convenience stores (c-stores), highlighting which brandsexcel in retention and where challenges remain.

90 Day Member Active Rate

FSR 90-Day Loyalty Member Active Rate by Segment

Category	Highest 90-Day Active Rates (Above 80%)	Steady and Sustainable Rates (60-80%)	Loyalty Challenges and Declines (Below 60%)
Fine Dining and Upscale Casual	Some premium dining concepts maintained 90%+ active loyalty rates , driven by exclusive rewards and premium guest experiences .	Several fine dining brands retained 60-80% of members , leveraging personalized engagement .	Some upscale brands fell below 60% , struggling with price sensitivity and economic conditions .

Casual and Family-Style Dining	A few high-performing casual brands achieved 80%+ active loyalty rates , reflecting strong guest retention .	Many traditional casual dining restaurants sustained engagement between 60-80% , ensuring steady loyalty participation .	Certain family-style chains saw active rates drop below 60% , indicating customer disengagement .
Regional and Mid-Sized FSRs	Some growing regional operators reached 80%+ active rates , benefiting from local brand affinity and tailored loyalty programs .	Most mid-sized FSRs maintained 60-80% active membership , ensuring steady engagement .	A few regional brands saw less than 60% participation , hinting at loyalty program inefficiencies .

QSR 90-Day Loyalty Member Active Rate by Segment

Category	Highest 90-Day Active Rates (Above 80%)	Steady and Sustainable Rates (60-80%)	Loyalty Challenges and Declines (Below 60%)
Premium and Specialty QSRs	Several specialty and niche QSR brands maintained 90%+ active rates , driven by highly personalized incentives and mobile-first engagement.	Many fast-casual fresh food brands retained 60-80% engagement , leveraging customizable menus and targeted promotions.	Some premium QSRs fell below 60% , struggling with customer fatigue or inconsistent value propositions.
Coffee and Beverage Chains	Some high-traffic coffee brands reached 80%+ active loyalty rates , benefiting from frequent visits and app-based rewards.	Several mid-sized beverage and breakfast concepts sustained 60-80% retention , reflecting steady visit frequency.	Certain legacy coffee chains saw active rates dip below 60% , indicating shifts in consumer preferences.
Traditional and Value QSRs	A few highly engaged quick-service chains hit 80%+ , leveraging loyalty-driven discounts and strong brand affinity.	Many quick-service burger and sandwich concepts maintained 60-80% engagement , showing ongoing customer loyalty.	Some value-driven QSRs saw less than 60% engagement , suggesting weaker program effectiveness or pricing concerns.

C-Store 90-Day Loyalty Member Active Rate by Segment

Category	Fastest-Growing Loyalty Engagement (Above 80%)	Steady Growth (60-80%)	Loyalty Challenges and Declines (Below 60%)
Small and SMB C-Stores	Some smaller operators achieved over 80% engagement with strong digital loyalty adoption.	A variety of small c-stores saw engagement rates between 60-80% , indicating steady participation.	A few independent c-stores struggled to reach 60% engagement , highlighting program awareness challenges.
Regional C-Stores	Several regional brands exceeded 80% loyalty engagement , reflecting consistent multi-year increases.	Many regional c-store brands maintained 60-80% engagement rates , signaling stable program adoption.	Some regional operators reported engagement rates below 60% , struggling with customer retention.
Enterprise and Multi-State	Large c-store chains with premium product offerings and fuel-integrated programs saw 80%+ engagement.	Enterprise brands focusing on convenience and fuel loyalty maintained steady growth.	A few enterprise brands saw engagement dip below 60% .

QSR Loyalty Order Size Trends (2023–2024)

Category	Largest Declines
Fastest-Growing Loyalty Order Size (>10%)	44% of QSR brands analyzed saw over 10% YoY growth in average loyalty check size—often driven by strong bundling, upselling, or premium loyalty strategies.
Steady Growth (3–10%)	20% of brands landed in this band, reflecting consistent performance gains potentially fueled by improved personalization or product mix.
Negligible Change (±3%)	24% of brands showed little to no change YoY, suggesting either plateaued program engagement or stable pricing with minimal loyalty influence.
Largest Declines (–3% or worse)	12% of brands experienced meaningful declines in loyalty check size, pointing to shrinking basket sizes, lower ticket value, or loyalty fatigue.

| What Should You Do?

Your 90-day active rate is a key indicator of program health, telling you whether your loyalty members are actually coming back. High-performing brands aren't just acquiring members; they're keeping them engaged with smart, personalized, and timely offers.

Here's how to act on what your data is telling you:

Don't chase new members if you're losing the ones you have.

Before using budget to land new guests, plug the leaks. If fewer than 60% of your loyalty members are active in a 90-day window, focus on re-engagement. Your existing members should be your most reliable revenue drivers.

Use incentives that matter—and time them strategically.

High-active brands are nailing frequency-based rewards, VIP perks, and surprise bonuses that give members a reason to return within specific timeframes. Tap into visit cadence data to schedule the right nudge at the right time.

Identify who's slipping and intervene early.

Don't wait for members to disappear. Use your AI or analytics platform to spot drop-off trends and trigger targeted "We Miss You" campaigns with bounce-back offers. Brands with 80%+ active rates are doing this in real time.

Connect engagement to emotional value.

Premium QSRs, upscale FSRs, and enterprise c-stores with top-tier 90-day active rates all have one thing in common: they make loyalty feel worth it. Your rewards, app experience, and branding need to feel personal, elevated, and consistent across channels.

Don't settle for "steady" when you can grow.

Even if your active rate sits in the 60–80% "safe zone," it's a signal to improve, not stagnate. Test more engagement tactics, optimize timing according to historical data, and double down on your top-performing segments to push toward best-in-class.

Bottom line

A loyalty program without strong 90-day engagement is just a list. Take action today to turn data into momentum and members into loyal brand advocates.

From Numbers on a Dashboard to Real-World Results

I Overview of Key Points

1 Guest Retention Directly Impacts Revenue Growth

- a. A 5% boost in retention increases profits by at least 25%.
- b. Loyal guests generate 80% of revenue and are more receptive to new offers.
- c. Brand ambassadors forgive mistakes more easily and are willing to pay premium prices.

2 AI-Driven Data Analytics Foster Loyalty Performance

- a. AI algorithms analyze guest behavior to improve promotions, segmentation, and program adjustments.
- b. Real-time insights help identify churn risks and optimize campaign timing.
- c. Integrating AI with POS and CRM streamlines guest engagement and increases retention.

3 The 90-Day Active Rate Determines Loyalty Program Success

- a. A high 90-day active rate signals strong engagement and program value.
- b. Tracking active members helps pinpoint trends, optimize incentives, and improve re-engagement efforts.
- c. Low engagement rates highlight the need for personalized outreach and reward restructuring.

4 Personalization, AI, and Micro-Segmentation Drive Higher Guest Spend

- a. Personalized visit challenges and tier-based rewards increase engagement.
- b. AI-driven reminders, gamification, and automated promotions boost spending and frequency.
- c. Micro-segmentation helps deliver relevant offers to the right guest at the right time.

5 Omnichannel Loyalty Programs Elevate Guest Engagement

- a. Mobile-first loyalty programs ensure accessibility and convenience.
- b. Integrated online ordering, digital payments, and app-based rewards improve loyalty retention.
- c. Combining loyalty with CRM and POS enables seamless tracking and optimization.

6

AI-Powered Loyalty Success Stories Showcase Real Results

- a. Targeted visit-based challenges increased guest frequency by 15-20%.
- b. AI-driven loyalty initiatives boosted sales by up to \$1.9 million for key brands.
- c. Personalized offers and strategic reactivation campaigns resulted in 23% incremental revenue.

7

Paytronix Innovation Fuels Measurable Loyalty Growth

- a. Paytronix supports 35,000+ locations and 1,800+ brands with AI-driven engagement.
- b. AI technology enables seamless personalization, gamification, and dynamic campaign execution.
- c. Clients see double-digit revenue growth, higher guest satisfaction, and increased online orders.

Understanding how many loyalty members stay active over a 90-day period reveals whether or not your program is on the right track. But how do you turn this data into financial wins? **The true power of loyalty programs lies in turning these insights into action by implementing strategies that increase visit frequency, boost check sizes, and re-engage lapsed members.**

Let's explore seven case studies showing how brands have used our technology to achieve measurable results. These examples highlight proven tactics such as personalized reminders and challenge-based promotions to AI-powered micro-segmentation that have helped brands increase engagement and maximize revenue.

7 Paytronix Clients' Loyalty Program Results

Here are several verified examples and case studies of what you can expect from this software brand:

- a. **Quick-serve restaurants' (QSR) experience with Paytronix as a resource:** ^{1x}
 - ⊗ One QSR's "almost there" reminder encouraged members to spend a few dollars more at its outlets to qualify for a significant reward. **It accelerated visits by 5.5%.**
 - ⊗ A challenge promotion that rewarded larger QSR orders **resulted in check sizes jumping by 14%.**
 - ⊗ A reactivation initiative to revive a QSR's lapsed member activity **generated 23% incremental revenue.**
 - ⊗ A QSR launching an extended reminder campaign as an integral part of its LP education **saw a 15% increase in triple-visit members.**

b. AI-Driven Micro-Segmentation and Automated Campaigns:

- Paytronix signature clients ^{lvi} —Smashburger being one—**generated up to 20% and 16% spend and visit increases** by following a two-prong micro-segmentation campaign. In particular, Smashburger's ^{lvii} adoption of our AI-driven loyalty campaigns **increased sales by \$1.9 million**—6.5% of the brand's nearly \$30 million annual sales growth.

- Numerous marketing campaigns ^{lviii} with our automated AI automations at their center **nearly doubled guest visits with 50% spend improvements** after replacing somewhat sterile “same-old, same-old” email campaigns.



- PDQ ^{lxiv} relied on our advanced micro-segmentation algorithms, enriched by personalization features, **to propel their members' average spending by 15.5%.**

Our software's ability to generate customized visit challenges to nano-segments of PDQ's macro market is a leading feature.



c. CRM and Omnichannel Messaging:

Paytronix clients agree ^{lxv} that the AI tools provide 360° customer perspectives to deliver increased personalization and customer satisfaction metrics.

d. Smooth-Operating Gift and Comp Programs:

Store and restaurant reward value lost due to fraudulent market transactions has reached as high as \$1 for every \$10 ^{lxvi} spent, based on failure to draw a line between comp and gift card transactions. Our programs confidently tackle this problem, showing results that erased most of this pain point's destruction. How do we do this? By reducing (up to 12%) overstated sales and income tax burdens.

e. Reduced errors in the data analytics:

A Paytronix gas station and c-store client—The Filling Co^{lxvii}—leveraged our online ordering solution to streamline its outdated system. The latter enabled them to capture 1,800 weekly orders with their POS, thus erasing old inefficiencies.



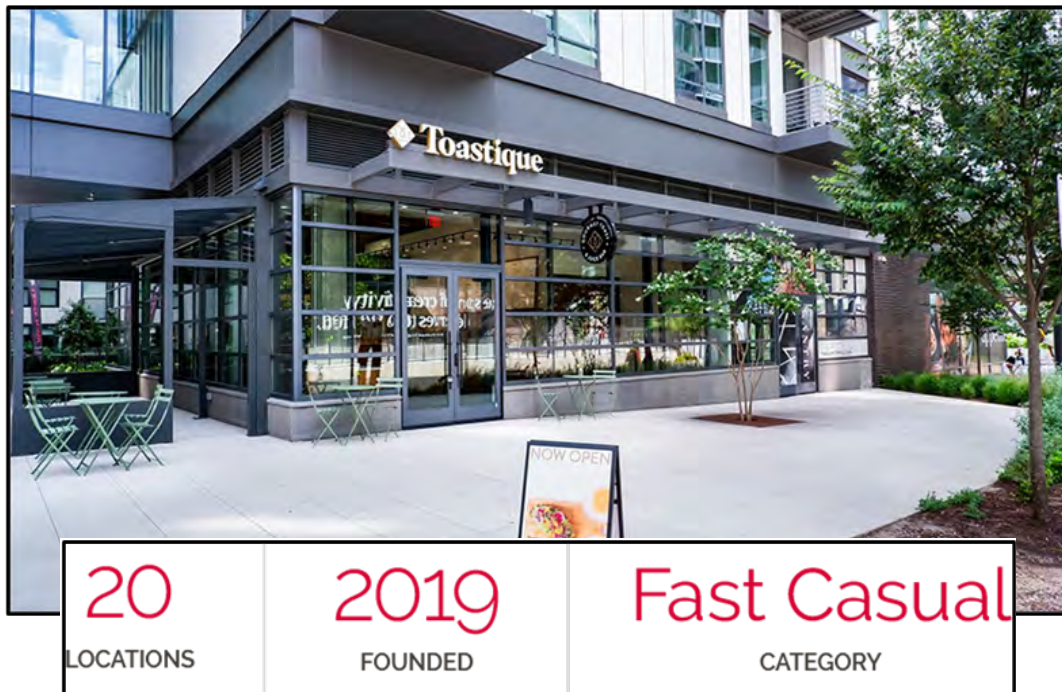
f. Personalized features (like visit challenges) and dynamic pricing models Consider the cases where:

- **HuHot Mongolian Grill** ^{lxviii} deployed a Paytronix-driven subscription program. It achieved an unimagined six-fold guest value uplift that enriched customer experiences, increasing revenue.

- **Great Harvest Bread Company** ^{lxix} trusted PX's AI-driven and personalized visit challenges to escalate loyalty member interactions online and in cafe-bakery outlets, rewarding stakeholders with a 35% increase in revenue and retention.
- **Following a significant membership lapse, Primanti Bros** ^{lxx} activated Paytronix's "Missed Visit Score" feature to engage more members during the pandemic. The company achieved remarkable performance thanks to the software's fast and seamless automated data analytics evaluation in a crisis. The net result drove guest visits and revenue up by 90% and 50%, well beyond stakeholders' expectations.

g. PX's integrated digital guest engagement and customized online ordering platform

- **Lion's Choice** ^{lxxi} enjoyed a 110% bump in online orders, aligned with significantly higher guest satisfaction ratings and sustainably improved retention KPIs.
- **Rutter's** ^{lxxii} Paytronix online ordering linked to unique c-store loyalty rewards shook the old loyal member visitor frequency to the core with a 25% increase.
- **Toastique's** ^{lxxiii} revised Paytronix-influenced loyalty program, jumped to an 87.5% and 15% increase in membership and visit frequency, via strategic guest engagement.



- ⊗ **Pump N Pantry's** Paytronix's online ordering and loyalty program integration boosted digital receipts to an unprecedented 20% of total sales. Doing so resolved a long-term imbalance between fuel and store service expectations,^{lxxiv} alongside greater customer convenience and satisfaction.

Paytronix's Influence Over Restaurant and C-Store Loyalty Strategies

- a. The content above represents an enlightening but understated vision of Paytronix's value proposition and dynamic role in the marketplace. **It conclusively shows the substantial benefits customer loyalty includes by delivering comprehensive reporting and double-digit growth in:**

- ⊗ Revenue.
- ⊗ Online ordering.
- ⊗ Customer engagement, satisfaction, and retention.
- ⊗ Employees contentment.

- b. Here's a more profound, big-picture view of Paytronix's dynamic influence over our 20 years in the restaurant and c-store software solutions business:

- ⊗ **40,000,000+** transactions.
- ⊗ Nearly **100% uptime**.
- ⊗ **225,000,000** guest profiles created.
- ⊗ **300+** team members.
- ⊗ **35,000** client locations.
- ⊗ **One new campaign** launched every minute.
- ⊗ **1,800+** client brands.

- c. Paytronix Innovation—based on our *2024 Loyalty Report*^{lxxv}—**highlights how our new AI methods have enabled our clients to seamlessly and painlessly use real-time data as they effortlessly:**

- ⊗ Personalize campaigns.
- ⊗ Transform customer retention quickly and sustainably.
- ⊗ Gamify loyalty programs to offer extraordinary engagement.
- ⊗ Capture market share.
- ⊗ Accelerate subscriptions.
- ⊗ Personalize the ordering experience.
- ⊗ Find and compare performance benchmarks to industry-best standards.
- ⊗ Streamline POS interactions.

| Repeat Order Frequency

From AI micro-segmentation that boosts spend by 15–20% to subscription programs that multiply guest value sixfold, we equip brands to turn first-party online ordering into repeat behavior—and repeat guests into lifelong customers. These tools and strategies support repeat order frequency, which is how often guests return to order online instead of in store.

See how brands across segments and industries are faring:

C-Store Repeat Order Frequency Trends (2023–2024)

Category	Fastest-Growing Online Order Frequency (YoY Growth Above 30%)	Steady Growth (5–30% YoY)	Largest Declines in Online Order Frequency
Small and SMB C-Stores	A small c-store brand grew online order frequency by 94% .	A local convenience operator increased frequency by 9.4% , suggesting improved reordering.	A rural c-store group saw a 21.1% decline , indicating guest drop-off or digital gaps.
Regional C-Stores	A regional brand with fuel and fresh food offerings increased online frequency by 27.6% .	A growing mid-sized operator improved from 5.7 to 6.7 orders/guest, a 17.5% gain .	A multi-location regional store saw frequency fall by 29.6% .
Enterprise C-Stores	A high-volume chain improved from 5.8 to 7.4 orders/guest—a 27.6% YoY increase .	A large brand held steady growth from 5.6 to 5.8 orders per guest, reinforcing digital strength.	A national brand dropped from 2.4 to 1.5—a 37.5% decline .

FSR Repeat Order Frequency Trends (2023–2024)

Category	Fastest-Growing Online Order Frequency (YoY Growth Above 30%)	Steady Growth (5–30% YoY)	Largest Declines in Online Order Frequency
Small and SMB FSRs	A niche upscale café saw a 54% increase in digital frequency, from 1.5 to 2.3, signaling improved loyalty and mobile adoption.	A local brewery chain grew online frequency from 2.4 to 2.6 (+8.3%), reflecting guest stickiness.	A boutique concept declined from 2.3 to 2.1 (–8.7%).
Regional FSR Chains	A healthy casual chain jumped from 3.3 to 3.9 orders per guest (+18.2%).	A coastal casual dining group maintained strong growth at 4.5 to 4.6 repeat frequency (+2.2%).	A family dining group dropped from 2.6 to 2.1 (–19.2%), signaling online churn.
Enterprise FSR Brands	A top-performing multi-location chain grew from 3.3 to 3.7 online frequency (+12.1%).	A large online-leaning restaurant brand held steady at 4.3 , maintaining high loyalty frequency.	A national full-service brand saw a drop from 2.6 to 1.9 (–26.9%).

QSR Online Order Frequency Trends (2023 vs. 2024)

Category	Largest Declines
Rapid Growth (10% or More YoY)	One QSR saw a 11.3% increase in online repeat order frequency—demonstrating strong gains in digital loyalty and potential expansion of first-party ordering.
Steady Growth (5–10% YoY)	A single QSR grew online order frequency by 6.6%, indicating moderate gains possibly driven by app engagement or exclusive online rewards.
Flat or Negligible Change (0–5% YoY)	The majority of QSRs fell into this group, with online repeat order frequency either unchanged or shifting by less than 5%, signaling plateaued digital behavior.

These online ordering frequency trends across c-stores, QSRs, and full-service restaurants underscore a key point: **the brands winning now and tomorrow are those investing in smarter, more connected guest engagement.**

So, what separates short-term gains from sustainable growth? It's the strategy behind your software. The following are core principles and actions driving revenue, retention, and long-term loyalty success across thousands of Paytronix-powered brands.

I What Should You Do?

Repeat order frequency shows you whether or not your business has become part of your individual guests' routines. Our data indicates brands with personalized, first-party experiences pull ahead in both frequency and revenue.

Here's how to act on what your data is telling you:

- ☐ **Focus on first-party ordering to deepen guest habits.**
The strongest repeat frequency gains come from brands with seamless, direct-ordering experiences. Prioritize your own app or website to control the experience, collect data, and build long-term behavior—not just one-time transactions.
- ☐ **Make your loyalty program do the heavy lifting.**
Use AI to deliver meaningful visit challenges, reorder prompts, and exclusive offers. Guests are far more likely to come back when they're nudged with something tailored, timely, and tied to a reward.
- ☐ **Use micro-segmentation to target high-potential segments.**
Don't treat all members the same. Segment based on past visit behavior, spend, product interest, or time of day. Offer deals that actually match what that guest is likely to say yes to.
- ☐ **Track and optimize your 90-day active rate.**
Your most valuable guests are the ones who stay active. Monitor engagement over time, and proactively re-engage lapsed users with limited-time offers, bounce-back promos, or "we miss you" bonuses.

- ☐ **Bridge loyalty, online ordering, and CRM for unified execution.**
The best-performing brands aren't running siloed systems. When your loyalty engine talks to your CRM, POS, and ordering platforms, you can track, optimize, and personalize every touchpoint—online or in-store.
- ☐ **Use personalization to keep the flywheel spinning.**
Automated emails and generic messages are no longer enough. Drive repeat visits with hyper-personalized content, reordering nudges, and dynamic offers that evolve with guest behavior.

Bottom line

Don't only build a loyalty program. Build a repeat order machine. When every visit, click, and reorder feels personal and rewarding, frequency follows, and so does long-term growth.

"When you choose Paytronix, you not only equip your business with the ideal hospitality tech stack but also gain a partner committed to your success."

Paytronix's Commitment to Partner with Clients' Sustainability

Initiatives: Building Loyalty Through Eco-Conscious Practices

Throughout this report, we dug deep into crucial sustainability strategies that prioritize world-class guest experiences and retention. **We left no stone unturned to:**

- ⦿ Give you a realistic perspective of how greenwashing can derail your communications and downgrade brand images.
- ⦿ Demonstrate that food waste is a severe and sensitive issue for your guests and stakeholders.

Where there's an unsolved pain point, you have a massive opportunity to present viable solutions. In this case, ESG solutions strike a highly responsive chord that could give your establishment a head start.

We pointed out that Gen Zers and Millennials integrate their personalization needs with green consciousness. In short, the goal of capturing targeted customers' attention in 2025 can use sustainability as a pivot point for meaningful differentiation.

Still, the eco-centric conversation is still a double-edged sword. It's an emotional arena where perceived or real promotional mistakes may kill your brand's image in the blink of an eye.

Now, we'll dig into Paytronix's role and contribution to clients' ESG strategies in intensely competitive markets.

| Paytronix and Sustainability

Many case studies and examples under Paytronix's AI CXP software benefits imply sustainability as a core ingredient, prioritizing this crucial aspect in our restaurant/c-store branding and digital loyalty program projects. **They reflect our major influence on restaurants and c-store clients to:**

- ⊗ Reduce paper waste through digital receipts and promotions.
- ⊗ Launch targeted marketing campaigns that highlight sustainable menu options.
- ⊗ Attract environmentally conscious guests by promoting eco-friendly practices through their digital platforms.

Several Paytronix clients focus on the younger generation segments—those highly sensitive to brands' climate control and ESG contributions. As a result, partnering with our team comes with much more than online AI software programs to make guest engagement a realistic goal; it's overlaying ESG to be on the right side of customer sentiment in 2025 and beyond.

The five Paytronix supports sustainability are to:

- 1. Provide digital onboarding platforms** for c-stores and restaurants to go paperless.
- 2. Promote environmentally friendly guest engagement** from end to end.
- 3. Innovate contactless technologies** for maximum safety against viruses through:
 - a. Minimum human connection in restaurant reservations (online ordering).
 - b. Selecting from virtual menus.
 - c. Paying with modern money disbursement options.

4. **Educate clients on the latest in green menu and c-store food items**, emphasizing that claiming to love the organic trend is not enough; your message must reflect c-store products and menu ingredients come from verified organic farmland that:

- a. Uses renewable energy.
- b. Captures and stores carbon.
- c. Releases fewer emissions.
- d. Fertilizes the soil with pure nutrients.
- e. Reduces pesticide and herbicide use.
- f. Use and biodegradable packaging.



5. **Maximize Data-Driven Insights:** The one thing every client knows about Paytronix is that detailed customer data analysis is a core ingredient of its promised CX. In other words, everything it stands for when delivering benefits to restaurants and c-stores is accurately identifying trends. **So, it follows that we're first in line to:**

- a. Know the sustainability characteristics in your market segments that'll move the needle.
- b. Show how to adapt marketing strategies to further promote sustainable practices based on customer feedback.

Digital and Contactless Options, Personalization, and Ghost Kitchens: Paytronix's Role

I Overview of Key Points

1 Sustainability is a Key Loyalty Driver

- a. Younger generations prioritize eco-conscious brands, making sustainability essential for differentiation.
- b. Greenwashing damages brand credibility, so authenticity in ESG efforts is critical.
- c. Reducing food waste and promoting eco-friendly practices strengthens customer loyalty.

2 Paytronix Supports Sustainability Initiatives

- a. Paperless onboarding, digital receipts, and eco-friendly promotions reduce waste.
- b. AI-powered data insights help brands promote sustainable menu options based on guest preferences.
- c. Contactless technology minimizes human interaction, increasing safety and efficiency.

3 Digital and Contactless Dining Solutions Increase Engagement

- a. QR code menus, online ordering, and mobile payments support guest convenience.
- b. AI-driven personalization improves retention, with segmented campaigns delivering up to 760% revenue increases.
- c. Data-driven menu optimization ensures offerings match real-time guest demand.

4 Ghost Kitchens are Transforming the Restaurant Industry

- a. The global ghost kitchen market is projected to reach \$156.6 billion by 2030.
- b. 54% of U.S. adults rely on food delivery, driving demand for virtual-first brands.
- c. Paytronix helps ghost kitchens scale operations, optimize menu management, and improve digital marketing.

Paytronix Delivers Proven Ghost Kitchen Success

- a. AI-driven capacity management and real-time menu updates streamline operations.
- b. Seamless first- and third-party integrations improve customer experience and delivery efficiency.
- c. Case study: Zukku Sushi launched a ghost kitchen in two days, leveraging Paytronix for online ordering, email marketing, and menu adjustments.

Earlier chapters covered these topics in considerable detail. Aside from detailed, in-depth descriptions of what they are and how they function, we backed their impact with vital statistics. **For example, we showed the following among several pages of supporting metrics and statistics:**

| Ghost Kitchens

- ⊗ In 2023, the global ghost kitchen market represented \$70.37 billion, **projected to rise to \$156.60 billion by 2030** at a mind-boggling 12.1% CAGR.
- ⊗ 54% of US adults, including 72% of Millennials and 66% of Gen Zs, depend on food takeout or delivery as essential to their lifestyles.

| Contactless Options

- ⊗ June 2023, adult guests reflected a 45 | 45 in percentage split of those with or without QR code experience accessing restaurant menus in the last 12 months.
- ⊗ A 2021 study showed that 37% of diners preferred QR code-centric digital menus. Although it's not an exact same-study overview, it reflects that QR code popularity in only two years registered a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10%+.
- ⊗ This shift aligns closely with loyalty trends, making a mark on the US hospitality footprint driven by streamlined, contactless dining solutions.

| Personalized Digital-First Experiences

- ⊗ “Segmented campaigns can result in a 760% increase in revenue and up to 50% increase in conversion rate. Segmented, well-targeted email campaigns generate 77% ROI”—BusinessDasher
- ⊗ “71% of consumers expect companies to deliver personalized interactions. 76% get frustrated when this doesn't happen.”—McKinsey

The earlier case studies covered our impact on personalization similarly to “creating seamless guest experiences.” We covered all the fundamentals with practical insights into restaurants and c-stores deploying our resources.

The last item under these chapters where we can provide take-home value is ghost kitchens and Paytronix's impact on that vertical. So, let's dive into an illustrative case study and amplification of content covered extensively in the chapters above.

Ghost Kitchens

“Ghost kitchens aren't just a flash in the pan. Hungry consumers are turning to digital channels in unprecedented numbers to answer the age-old question “What's for dinner?” For restaurateurs, this offers an opportunity to build brands without having to invest in costly storefronts,” says **former Paytronix CEO and Chairman Andrew Robbins**.

Paytronix helps ghost restaurants expand their reach to align with different customer preferences with only a digital storefront as a promotional spearhead. Our resources focus intensely on minimizing or erasing typical ghost-kitchen pain points to draw the most from your innovative brand. **This includes:**

a. Capacity Management:

- ⊗ The Paytronix software scales up to accommodate any ordering and delivery acceleration so that your team is never underprepared and can withstand any pressure build-up.
- ⊗ When you use our customized digital solutions, there's no cancellation or confusion about orders. We understand all the stresses around labor shortages and supply chain disruptions. ^{boxvi}
- ⊗ As a result, we've combined our collective intelligence into AI-powered algorithms to support first-party online ordering and communicate effectively with your guests.
- ⊗ The Paytronix Menu Throttling feature is your staff's go-to feature for seamlessly toggling delivery status that goes to the heart of kitchen backup and error prevention.

- b. Easy Set Up for Ghost Kitchens:** We use your ideas and visions with hardcore solutions to deliver a virtual kitchen that can compete in even the most intense local markets. Our best-in-class Order Experience Builder intuitively and flexibly aligns with organizing a thriving and fully functioning ghost kitchen. It allows you to:
- Easily edit menu items through an omnichannel platform that works across all devices.
 - Conveniently integrate your activities with selected first- and third-party delivery services to provide accurate estimated delivery times.
 - Update menus automatically.
- c. Menu management:** With Paytronix software supporting your efforts, customer frustration exits the picture:
- Digitally display your menus on third-party delivery service apps to stand out as exceptional.
 - Our proprietary real-time “Handoff” tool updates customized menu pricing and items from a central hub. It also streamlines your customer communications on menu changes to prevent canceled orders.
 - One of the outstanding advantages is its integrated features, allowing you to experiment with menu dishes ^{lxxviii} and pricing to test guest responsiveness.
- d. Data control:** The Paytronix platform centralizes your ghost kitchen control over data, delivering real-time insights that guide strategy toward better customer experiences.
- e. Scalability:** Our modern AI solutions meet ghost kitchens' customized needs with scalability and flexibility that allows you to include management of multiple virtual brands and menus from a single virtual kitchen. They also sync seamlessly with your existing system.

A Paytronix ghost kitchen case study: ^{lxxix}

The Problem

Zukku Sushi faced a unique dilemma during COVID-19, with its three locations in a food hall reduced to zero business (including unavailability for staff), bringing revenue to a standstill.



The Solution

Ferdian Jap, a Zukku partner, connected with Paytronix to convert the operation along ghost kitchen lines. Our online ordering platform was the groundbreaking software that turned a crisis into a success story.

How did this happen?

- ⊗ We helped Zukku tap into their past guest email addresses collected from previous online orders and a website pop-up to direct guests to the new virtual kitchen for takeout and delivery only.
 - Communication to 800 email addresses on hand (plus social media promotions).
 - Announcing the ghost kitchen's grand opening with loyalty reward incentives.
- ⊗ Next, we helped develop a menu that resonated with a ghost kitchen audience. Adjusting the menu using the Paytronix software "was a cinch," says Ferdian.
- ⊗ Another massive advantage of working with us was our versatility, proven by proprietary technologies syncing seamlessly with Zukku's Focus POS system.
- ⊗ Speed was a telling consideration: Paytronix helped get things up and running in just two business days. "It was the fastest launch I've ever experienced," Ferdian said.
- ⊗ The Paytronix feedback system provided real-time monitoring and confirmed everything resonated with guests in the right way. It showed Zukku how every comment creates insights that can make a meaningful difference as we advance.
- ⊗ Finally, Zukku management loved that it could experiment with prices and different dishes. Adjusting content in real-time with our technologies at their fingertips on a user-friendly dashboard that every employee can learn to use in minutes is a huge agility advantage.

| Action Steps for Restaurants and C-Stores

- ☐ **Implement sustainability initiatives** with transparent, authentic messaging to avoid greenwashing.
- ☐ **Use contactless tech** to improve safety, streamline service, and boost guest engagement.
- ☐ **Fully adopt AI and data analytics** to optimize digital menus, personalized rewards, and targeted promotions.
- ☐ **Consider launching a ghost kitchen** to expand reach, reduce overhead, and meet growing off-premise dining demand.
- ☐ **Partner with Paytronix** for best-in-class loyalty, personalization, and sustainability solutions to drive long-term success.

Summary of Loyalty Trends in 2025

I AI Automation and Data Analytics

In 2025, your most valuable asset is accessing relevant data and using AI-enhanced analytics to interpret it.

This allows you to:

- ① Define your expectations through KPIs.
- ② Compare them to your c-store or restaurant performance in real-time.

Your most powerful data insights come from purchase history records, engagement data, and third-party reports. By combining the insights from this report with modern tools that can extract crucial information in minutes, your efforts become unstoppable.

Loyalty program goals are essential for personalizing your brand and driving real guest engagement. However, achieving these goals without the help of AI-equipped software is like buying a lottery ticket and relying on luck.

That's why **predictive analytics (PA)** is a key advancement revolutionizing the hospitality industry. It uses AI and machine learning (ML) to clarify historical data and define near-term patterns that you can use immediately.

PA technology is now more robust than ever, shaping and influencing every aspect of c-store and restaurant loyalty strategies. It handles routine matters, providing answers to expected questions and shifting them into the contactless self-service category. PA ensures speed and efficiency, connecting to best-in-class websites and apps, and using text algorithms and chatbots that deliver increasingly "human-sounding" responses.

Measuring Your Restaurant or C-Store's Customer Loyalty Success

Ensuring lasting success for your loyalty program requires continuous effort and maximizing everyday impact. As a top-tier operator, you know that **true loyalty isn't just transactional; it's emotional, habitual, and deeply ingrained in guest behavior.**

Leading brands have built loyalty strategies that encourage **repeat visits and higher spending** and **create brand ambassadors** who advocate for their favorite restaurants and c-stores. Achieving this next level of loyalty requires seamless integration across channels, accessibility on multiple devices, and designing for **diverse consumer preferences**—including digital-first guests, premium experience seekers, and those who care deeply about sustainability.

Today's top-performing loyalty programs aren't just rewarding transactions; they are shaping how consumers engage with brands in an omnichannel world. Across full-service restaurants (FSRs), quick-service restaurants (QSRs), and convenience stores (c-stores), the operators seeing the highest growth are those who have tapped into three **critical drivers of loyalty success**:

- ② **Personalization:** The ability to deliver customized experiences, targeted rewards, and tailored messaging that resonates with individuals.
- ② **Innovation:** The use of AI, gamification, digital ordering, and emerging technology to create must-have loyalty experiences.
- ② **Sustainability:** Real commitment to environmentally sound practices and materials, matching the corresponding growth and shift in consumer values.

Our latest data on loyalty check penetration growth illustrates how these strategies impact real business performance:

Loyalty Check Penetration Trends Across All Industries

FSR Loyalty Check Penetration Trends

Category	Fastest-Growing Loyalty Check Penetration (YoY Growth Above 30%)
Casual and Family-Style Restaurants	A breakfast and brunch chain saw a 35.3% increase in loyalty penetration, benefiting from strong repeat business.

QSR Loyalty Check Penetration Trends

Category	Fastest-Growing Loyalty Check Penetration (YoY Growth Above 10%)
Frozen Desserts and Snacks	A frozen dessert and snack chain saw a 5.8% increase, reflecting strong customer engagement and repeat visits.

Category	Largest Declines in Loyalty Check Penetration
Health-Focused and Fresh Meal QSRs	A fast-casual eatery specializing in fresh, made-to-order meals saw a -3.0% decline, suggesting shifts in consumer behavior or promotional effectiveness.

C-Store Loyalty Check Penetration Trends

Category	Fastest-Growing Loyalty Check Penetration (YoY Growth Above 30%)	Steady Growth (10-30% YoY)	Largest Declines in Loyalty Check Penetration
Small and SMB C-Stores	A small c-store group saw a 41.8% increase in penetration , driven by digital loyalty engagement and in-store incentives.	A specialty convenience brand grew 12.6% YoY , maintaining customer interest through premium offerings.	A local c-store operator saw a 10% decline , struggling with customer retention.

Regional C-Stores	A mid-sized fuel and c-store chain expanded loyalty penetration by 33% , highlighting strong program effectiveness.	A growing c-store network increased penetration by 7.9% , following a 33.6% gain in 2023 , showing long-term sustainability.	A convenience store brand saw a 5.2% decline , reflecting possible shifts in consumer habits.
Enterprise C-Stores	A large, multi-state c-store chain achieved a 32.2% rise in penetration , continuing multi-year growth.	A premium c-store operator sustained 10.1% YoY growth , reinforcing steady loyalty adoption.	A discount-driven c-store network lost 12.6% penetration , facing customer disengagement.

I What Should You Do?

Loyalty check penetration, which is how often loyalty guests use their benefits, is one of the clearest signals of your program's success.

If your penetration is flat or falling, it's time to take action:

- ☐ **Prioritize usage, not just enrollment.**
A loyalty program with big membership numbers but low usage won't move the needle. Your goal isn't signups; it's check penetration. That means giving guests financially valuable, repeatable reasons to scan, swipe, or redeem on each visit.
- ☐ **Incentivize the second (and third) visit.**
Casual loyalty members don't become ambassadors overnight. Use your loyalty software's marketing tools to deliver small, strategic nudges—like bounce-back offers, double-point days, or reward countdowns—that turn occasionally interested folks into dedicated supporters.
- ☐ **Focus your offers where they matter most.**
The brands leading loyalty penetration aren't throwing generic discounts at the wall. They're aligning rewards with genuine buying behavior. Examples include rewarding premium snack purchases, fuel fill-ups, or high-margin meal add-ons. Use your data to reward what drives financial success.

- ☐ **Modernize your in-store experience.**
Penetration often slips when digital loyalty feels disconnected from the in-person experience. If guests can't easily engage at the counter, the pump, or the register, they won't. Train staff, use signage, and integrate POS to make loyalty feel like part of the complete experience, not an afterthought.
- ☐ **Act now or fall further behind.**
Brands with 30%+ loyalty check penetration are winning because they've already invested in personalization, automation, and omnichannel engagement. If you're not there yet, start today. Even incremental improvements can spark meaningful growth in 30 to 60 days.

Bottom line

Your loyalty program should be doing more than collecting names; it should be influencing behavior. Focus on usage, relevance, and convenience, and you'll see penetration climb.

Deepening your guests' emotional and personal connections to your brand requires a combination of the right techniques plus staying true to your brand. Let's review practical steps with loyalty program personalization, sustainability, and innovation you can take immediately to transform casual participants into dedicated ambassadors.

1. Personalization

Effective personalization means delivering relevant experiences—offers, products, services, and messaging—that match your guests' preferences, lifestyles, and emotional triggers. It addresses pain points and aspirations while seamlessly integrating with influencer trends.

Powerful personalization combines demographic, behavioral, and psychographic data to uncover micro-segments and build emotional resonance. Your goal is deepening loyalty by offering outcomes like exclusive access, early ordering windows, and high-value rewards.

2025 strategies emphasize:

- ⌚ Personalized value propositions that increase engagement.
- ⌚ Segmentation that drives repeat purchasing and brand commitment.
- ⌚ Guest-centric data models that support accurate marketing efforts.

Ghost kitchens are a strong example. Their digitally native, Gen Z- and Millennial-focused audience responds to:

- ⌚ Visual-first, contactless menus.
- ⌚ Delivery from communal low-rent kitchens.
- ⌚ Diverse cuisine options for convenience and quality.

Our AI-centric tools support ghost kitchens by:

- ⌚ Managing multiple virtual brands and menus.
- ⌚ Preventing cancellations and confusion.
- ⌚ **Powering end-to-end automation via:**
 - Menu throttling
 - Dynamic pricing and visibility on third-party apps
 - Order Experience Builder
 - Real-time performance insights

| 2. Innovation

Paytronix drives loyalty success with an AI-powered Customer Experience Platform, helping brands avoid trial-and-error while boosting ROI. Our system integrates analytics, personalization, gamification, and contactless tech to:

- ⌚ Trigger high-value member actions (spend, tier upgrades).
- ⌚ Support seamless online ordering and payments.
- ⌚ Revive lapsed members with well-timed offers.
- ⌚ Identify and eliminate fraud.

Case studies show these tools in action:

- ⌚ **Smashburger:** Micro-segmentation grew revenue by nearly \$2M.
- ⌚ **PDQ:** 15.5% increase in average member spend.
- ⌚ **The Filling Station:** Captured 1,800 weekly orders through POS integration.
- ⌚ **HuHot Mongolian Grill:** 600% boost in guest value from subscriptions.

- ⌚ **Great Harvest Bread Company:** 35% increase in revenue and retention from personalized visit challenges.
- ⌚ **Primanti Bros:** 90% lift in visits, 50% in revenue, after resolving loyalty lapses.
- ⌚ **Lion's Choice, Rutter's, Toastique:** Surged in orders, visits, and new member sign-ups.
- ⌚ **Zukko:** Transitioned to a thriving ghost kitchen using Paytronix tech.

I 3. Sustainability

Sustainability is a loyalty expectation—especially for Gen Z and Millennials. Guests demand more than "organic" labels. They want transparency, proof of eco-friendly sourcing, and programs that reflect climate-conscious values.

Top expectations include:

- ⌚ Verified sustainable farming practices.
- ⌚ Compostable packaging and reduced waste.
- ⌚ Lower emissions and regenerative agriculture.
- ⌚ Renewable energy use and permaculture techniques.

Your loyalty program can support this by:

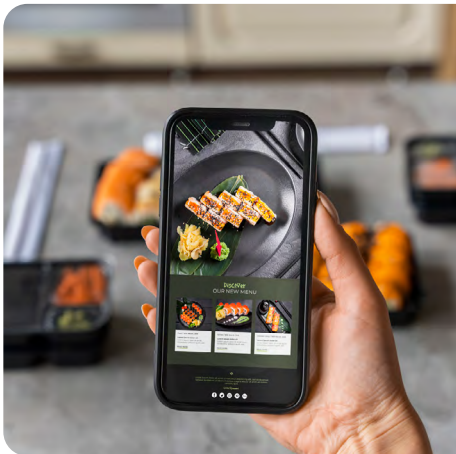
- ⌚ Rewarding members who opt for smaller portions or use recyclable packaging.
- ⌚ Encouraging sustainable behaviors through contests and gamified rewards.

Greenwashing erodes trust quickly. Clear, authentic messaging and reward alignment are essential to avoid backlash and retain environmentally aware consumers.

Crafting Your Most Successful Loyalty Experience Yet

The 2025 loyalty landscape demands a focus on personalization, sustainability, and innovation. For brands that embrace these trends, the opportunity to foster deep, lasting guest relationships and unlock new revenue streams has never been greater.

By leveraging Paytronix's end-to-end guest engagement platform, your business remains ahead of the curve, turning insights into action and loyalty into measurable success.



[Request a demo](#) now to discover our platform firsthand and see how it can transform your loyalty strategy.

- i [Statista](#)
- ii [A Research America Report](#)
- iii [A McKinsey Report](#)
- iv [BusinessDasher Report](#)
- v [Sogolytics](#)
- vi [Sogolytics](#)
- vii [Goglobe](#)
- viii [Ideascale](#)
- ix [QueueIt](#)
- x [TheNewStack](#)
- xi [Rose](#)
- xii [Modern Restaurant Management](#)
- xiii [Wikipedia](#)
- xiv [BusinessDasher](#) citing reputable sources, such as [SHRM](#), Capgemini Research Institute, Deloitte, GreenBiz, and Statista.
- xv [CambridgeSpark](#)
- xvi [Sogolytics](#)
- xvii [Sogolytics](#)
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- xix [Calldesk](#)
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- xxvii [Coolest Gadgets](#), [OneHubPOS](#), [Touchbistro](#)
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