

ChefTM

MAGAZINE

CELEBRATING
58
years

The Magazine for Foodservice Professionals

chefmagazine.com



NICK BERARD

Chef Tory Miller

Tory Miller
Executive Chef



Duck Moussaka at
Nerai in New York City



Hyatt Regency Atlanta's Polaris
Holiday Cocktail



Alto-Shaam

Inside this issue:

Making the Season Bright

How to gear up for the winter holidays. *pg. 8*

Dall'Italia con Amore

Chefs modernize pizza while staying true to its heritage. *pg. 11*

Cheesy Cultures

American cheeses are flourishing. *pg. 14*

Chef
EDUCATOR
INSTITUTIONAL NEWS & VIEWS
TODAY

Mobile Apps That Increase Profits *pg. 17*

Educational Programs *pg. 19*

EQUIPMENT & TECHNOLOGY FOR SUCCESSFUL FOODSERVICE OPERATIONS

EQUIPMENT SOLUTIONS

Pizza Ovens *pg. 21*

Labor Saving Solutions *pg. 24*

Chef

EDUCATOR

INSTITUTIONAL NEWS & VIEWS

TODAY

6 APPS TO BOOST Restaurant Efficiency

Mobile apps and online tools are streamlining every imaginable front and back-of-house need.

By Megan O'Neill

Teetering on the restaurant management seesaw, chefs, managers and restaurateurs alike can sleep at ease knowing that more apps, software solutions and online tools exist now for restaurants than ever before. Tedious and complicated tasks are streamlined, and in an effort to create a more efficient, productive and serviceable restaurant industry, app producers are constantly updating and innovating. Here's our list of online tools making your restaurant life a little less hectic and a little more profitable.

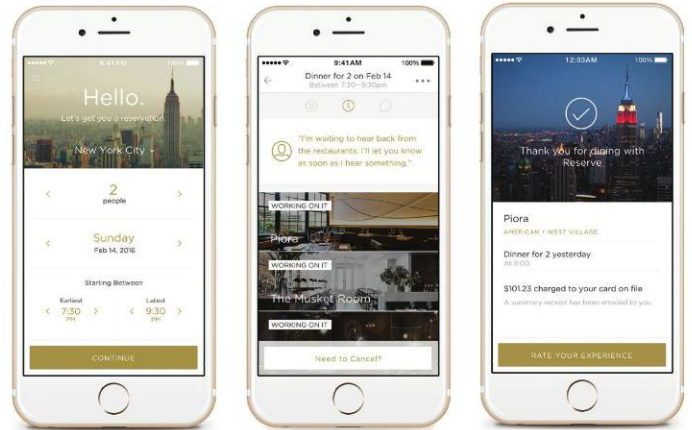
7shifts \$-\$\$

Scheduling headaches—they're all too common in the restaurant industry as reliance upon employees can sometimes take its toll. A company with all its chips in serving restaurants, 7shifts features employee scheduling

software that makes pen and paper shift organization look like something from the Stone Age. If you're spending precious time texting or emailing staff to sort out shifts, finding replacements when someone can't work, or wasting energy building schedules in Excel, 7shifts might be your scheduling answer.

The software allows managers to calculate weekly and daily labor targets—are you over or under budget for labor costs? Staff availability is also easily calculated, so scheduling conflicts are avoided. Staff is immediately notified of their shifts through unlimited text messages and email notifications, a feature that's improving communication among everyone involved.

The online software, which also includes a user-friendly mobile app, keeps the manager in control. Give your staff the permission to drop or swap shifts using the app, and get notified



Free for restaurants to take part in, the Reserve app is a concierge-type service that puts the reservation power back in the restaurants' hands.

should you need to approve the change. When an employee can't work a shift, they request to give it away while other workers are allowed to bid on it. The manager then chooses the bidder he or she wants working.

NoWait Host \$-\$\$\$

This is certainly more than just a waitlist app, it's one that simplifies the host stand. Made for casual dining restaurants, NoWait Host is an iPad waitlist and seating tool that has seated more than 206 million guests to date.

Through table management, a host or hostess can easily oversee seating with a customizable and easily adjustable floor map so there's no need for printed seating charts. The interface allows you to splitscreen the waitlist and floor map and adjust table combinations on the app to accommodate large parties. There's also a progress bar to quickly view

which tables should be turning soon as well as customizable server sections and server rotation counts and stats.

Tools available include a general stat header with total parties and quote times, specific party details, and a one-touch notification system via text—customers provide a phone number, and a customized text is sent out to indicate the table is ready. The text-back option reduces confusion, and guests can confirm or cancel upon being messaged.

NoWait Host also provides a daily stats email, so it's easy to measure over-quoting. Is your average quoted wait less than your average actual wait time? If so, lower the wait burden and retain more guests.

Where NoWait truly thrives is with its integration with diners—the app is available for the restaurant guest to download. Users select a restaurant, add a name to the waitlist, and get in

6 APPS TO BOOST Restaurant Efficiency

line from their phone. It's free for restaurants that have fewer than 200 waitlist parties per month. After that, it increases based on restaurant volume, so even the payment plans are fit to your specifics.

Reserve Free

A digital dining concierge app, Reserve promises its customers restaurant recommendations, reservations and great service all for a \$5 concierge fee. What does that mean for its partner chefs and restaurateurs? It's completely free.

Customers simply browse top restaurants from a curated list of Reserve's partners, request a reservation, and Reserve works directly with the restaurant to secure an available table. The app sends updates to the user along the way, but more importantly, it empowers the restaurants who can see real-time diner requests and time slot preferences, so they can keep dining rooms full and maximize the number seated.

What's more, partner restaurants are not required to hold tables.

"This industry runs on very small margins," says Nadja Blagojevic, director of content and communications at Reserve. "So when we design and build features and policies, we take into account our restaurant partners." One such feature is its cancellation policy. If a user cancels a reservation within 2 hours of the seating time, a \$10 cancellation fee is charged and given right to the restaurant—\$25 is handed over for a no show.

The company's app is currently available for diners in New York City, Los Angeles, Boston,

San Francisco and Chicago, and for those fans of the no-fuss payment processes of apps like Uber, Reserve automatically bills the check to the customer's card for an easy and seamless process for all involved. "We know that dining rooms are very fluid," says Blagojevic. "And unlike other services, we don't sell the reservations." The \$5 concierge fee at the end of the meal covers the entire experience including payment fees.

The company's software, a command center of sorts, offers restaurants better information about diners and their preferences so you can deliver an unrivaled experience. Reserve provides restaurant partners with an iPad to run a special version of the software—a digital dining concierge for all.

Waitlist Me \$

A cross-platform app that thrives on simplicity, Waitlist Me streamlines managing waitlists and reservations without a clunky pager. Hosts and hostesses can quickly add customers or reservations to a waitlist and view important details—how long have they been waiting? Are they celebrating a birthday? Do they need a high chair?—all at a glance. The host stand can quote estimates using historical averages and actual wait times by group size. And with the press of a push-notification button, an automated message can be sent out via call or text to alert customers their table is ready. Color coding also indicates VIP statuses, whether guests are ready to be seated, whether they called in and more.

Waitlists and reservations require simplicity and demand or-

ganization, and it's all being met with digital methods. There's no loss of money when pagers aren't returned, and tech-savvy patrons appreciate the efficiency. Waitlist Me provides a competent experience for both the customer and restaurant, and it creates a sense of transparency around wait times as customers can check their status from a phone. What's more, the app provides comprehensive data analysis for restaurants that want to track customer loyalty, order history and visit metrics. Export reports on activity, demographics, visit logs and more.

Previously known as NoshList, the company became Waitlist Me in early 2015 to better reflect its growth into business segments outside the restaurant industry—its blog highlights success everywhere from urgent care centers to educational businesses and bowling alleys. At the NRA Show this past May, the company debuted new mobile and digital signage integrations through partnerships with BrightSign and Clover. One new way the app was being used was to display a public view of a restaurant's waitlist on customizable digital signage—it can become as much of an extension of the brand and marketing literature as say, the menu.

HootSuite \$

If you have any sort of social media presence, chances are you've heard of HootSuite. If your restaurant has made its mark on the social sphere—or is still looking to do so—finding a tool to quickly integrate social profiles is a must. Beyond being able to sync multiple networks, schedule posts, publish photos, and

engage your ever-present audience all in one place, HootSuite also provides you with a listening platform—what are customers saying, what's your competition posting, and what are industry influencers talking about? Enhanced analytics mean that you'll see an in-depth view of your social media efforts and how they work with your audience, your restaurant, and your return on time investment. Although a free basic plan exists, Pro and Enterprise options are also available at a price for businesses.

ReviewTrackers \$\$

The thought that an unwanted review or one-star rating can have any effect on revenues is a gasping one, but it demonstrates the importance of monitoring restaurant review sites when it comes to your bottom line and booking frequency. The link between online star ratings and booking decisions is certainly there, but who realistically has time to monitor those influential Yelp ratings and reviews?

ReviewTrackers does. Empowering your restaurant with easy-to-use software—one dashboard!—ReviewTrackers keeps a steady eye while monitoring major review websites like Facebook, TripAdvisor, OpenTable, Yelp and more. Leverage this insight and interpret customer chatter to improve your restaurant's performance. Receive email notifications of new reviews and even request further insight from your happy customers. Built into the company's platform is an outreach tool that does just that: it requests that your happiest diners raise your ratings and review your locations, service and food. 