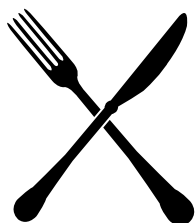# Restaurant Industry eBook

Location Data: How to Deliver More Customers to Your Restaurants

According to Google, half of your customers won't search for a nearby restaurant until an hour before they intend to eat.[1] As such, no other industry is as impacted by the variables of time and distance quite like restaurants. If your restaurants don't appear for these local searches, your potential customers will be dining somewhere else.

Properly managing your location data is the key to showing up in local search. This is especially true as search engines become increasingly adept at answering searches for location-specific attributes such as patios or live music. If you haven't made this information easy for search engines to process, you won't rank for these queries.

The problem is, the competition in the restaurant industry is incredibly fierce. Most major restaurant brands are already optimizing their location data, so it can be difficult to effectively target those moments when your customers decide where to eat.

That's where this eBook comes in. It will help you overcome the major location data challenges facing the restaurant industry, giving you an edge over the competition down the street.

Location Data Challenges for the Restaurant Industry

In some ways, restaurants have an advantage over other industries. Even if they aren't properly managing their location data, the quality of the data for restaurants usually starts out relatively high. After all, when customers don't show up to a location or the phone never rings, it's easy for a restaurant to realize some aspect of their location data is off. However, the restaurant industry does face three major location data challenges that they must overcome. They are:

1. Managing Third-party data
2. Restaurants within another building
3. Handling Multiple Sets of Hours

We'll describe each of these in turn and provide you with a comprehensive strategy to overcome them.

Managing Third-Party Data for Restaurants

CHALLENGE: Third-party websites that incorrectly display your listings

Managing third-party data, especially for enterprise brands, can be a major challenge for restaurants. This is particularly true with franchisees, who often own and manage their location data. Franchisees are rarely eager to give up control over their social media and Google My Business accounts, so trying to rein in your overall location data can be a nightmare.

You're also likely to encounter third-party data problems with platforms like Yelp and delivery services such as GrubHub. Unless you have enabled API connectivity, it can be difficult to correct menus, addresses and hours.

SOLUTION: Consolidate your location data into a single master database

Pull your location data from all of the disparate sources it comes from, including internal departments and third-party sources like franchisees. This database will act as your source of truth, from which you'll compare the accuracy of all the location data out there in the local search ecosystem about your brand.

If you have franchises, be ready for a battle as you try to consolidate your location data. We find that the most successful approach is to educate the franchisees about the importance of cleaning up your location data. When you tell them about how cleaning up their location data will improve their Google rankings, most will be fine with the change. Still, expect a few hold outs.

Restaurants Within Another Building

CHALLENGE: Restaurants sharing a location with another business

Restaurants often struggle to make sure that their map pins are in the right location, especially when they're located within another building. You often see this with food courts in malls, airports or when a restaurant is part of a gas station. Since you can't see inside these buildings, it can be difficult ensuring that the map pin is the right place. This often results in duplicate listings, which lowers your chances of appearing at the top of local search results.

SOLUTION: Manually verify your map pins in Google My Business

Manually verify your map pin placements. This requires you to go into mapping services like Google Street View to verify that the map pins actually lead customers to your locations. When in doubt, call the location to verify. Also create a GMB listing for each location. Don't combine brand names for a single location (e.g. "KFC/Taco Bell").

Handling Multiple Sets of Hours

CHALLENGE: Restaurants may have multiple sets of hours depending on services

Restaurants also must overcome the challenge of having multiple sets of hours. This is especially true for quick serve restaurants that have a drive-thru. The dining room might close at 10:00 p.m., but the drive-thru might be open later.

Restaurant brands often struggle to ensure that both sets of hours are accurately reflected in the local search ecosystem.

SOLUTION: Specify the full range of hours when syndicating data

Many third-party platforms won't take two sets of hours (dining room vs. drive-thru). The solution is to specify the full range of hours that the restaurant is open, regardless of hours of each service. To specify drive-thru hours, include the information on your local landing page and designate them using schema markup.

Best Practices for Managing Location Data

Consolidate your location data into a single master database. This will serve as your source of truth, from which you'll compare the location data quality of your local search ecosystem.

Once you've consolidated your location data, the next step is to cleanse and standardize your addresses. This is critical for platforms like Google My Business, which will generate your map pin placements based on your addresses. At Ignite we use USPS ZIP + 4, but feel free to use any other address tool that scales easily

After you've cleaned and standardized your location data, the next step is to begin syndicating your location data out to the local search ecosystem to data aggregators like Neustar Localeze, InfoNow and Acxiom. At the same time, you should be sending your clean data back into the various departments utilizing it, ensuring that they have the latest and most accurate information available.

It's also important at this stage to begin resolving duplicate and closed listings, as well as verifying that the information syndicated out is properly reflected in the local search ecosystem.

Forward Planning

It's unlikely that you'll have the capacity to address all of these issues at once. Apply the principles of triage and tackle the most egregious location data problems first, then work your way down to the smaller issues. Unfortunately, inaccurate location data and duplicate listings will inevitably creep up, so be vigilant and tackle new problems as they arise. Managing your location data is a continuous process.

Automating the Location Management Process

The only way to effectively manage the location data process for enterprise brands is through automation. It's likely that you are already automating at least some of the steps above. Continue down this path by creating a platform that consolidates, cleanses, standardizes and syndicates your location data.

Building a platform internally can be an expensive and time-consuming. That's why some of the biggest brands in the restaurant industry turn to Ignite's Placeable solutions to help automate and streamline the location data management process.

For More Information

Please contact us at success@ignitetech.com or visit www.ignitetech.com.