

Five Technology Mistakes to Avoid



We all make mistakes... it's a part of being human. And like many of our mistakes, they can be undone or easily corrected without hardship. But when it comes to technology and your growing enterprise, one mistake—however well-intended—can have long-term implications as it relates to costs, effort, time, growth, and most importantly, your reputation.

Equating to a sports analogy, the mistake of using your first-round draft choice on a “safe” player from a big school but ignoring the superstar in the making because the player came from a smaller university (think: Walter Payton or Jerry Rice) can have lasting repercussions. Compared to the “big dogs,” our “smaller university” is really no different when it comes to tenure (35+ years), awards received (e.g., Gaming & Leisure’s Innovation Award for 2022, etc.), client base (Jimmy John’s 2700+ location franchise, etc.), and full-featured, comprehensive solutions. But where it truly matters, our key differentiators outshine the competition in myriad ways—especially when it comes to avoiding the following five technology mistakes:

Your technology provider is a vendor rather than a true partner. While the “big dogs” are very well-known and look good on paper, are they really a great match for your enterprise? Do they provide 24x7x365 live, domestic support during and after implementation? Are they willing and able to perform custom development from an in-house, domestic team of technology experts? Do they perform menu management services? Do they provide live, on-site training? Are they responsive, transparent, and easy to work with? After all, a POS provider may have great products and credentials, but if they aren’t willing to provide exemplary services and support on a holistic basis, they are not a true partner.

Their solutions aren’t integrated (properly). No comprehensive solution does everything on its own. That’s why the integration process is vital to the on-going (and sustained) success of your entire enterprise. Simply put, the solutions you need must work together cohesively. But all APIs are not created equal. While other providers are quick to tout their lengthy list of integrations, the integration process is akin to the famous E.T. movie poster in which E.T. and Elliott’s fingers touch—but never intersect. In a true integration, all digits must intersect—not only for strength, but also for added value. Assembling a tech Frankenstein from disconnected vendors may give you more data, but you’ll have less insight, as the ability to see this holistic data—joined together and parsed in meaningful ways—will be greatly diminished. By having an aligned system, you’ll maximize successes, minimize frustrations, and ensure your ability to make real-time decisions about the true health of your F&B operations.

Their tech tools are complex. It’s easy to fall for the bells and whistles of a new tech solution, but one of your top concerns should be whether it’s user friendly (powerful, yes... but easy to learn, use, and manage). If the solution is overly complicated, your staff won’t use (or like) it. Avoid solutions that are complex or have a steep learning curve. When you focus on intuitive, simple-to-use solutions, your daily operations will be simplified, your staff will save time and effort, and your guests will be empowered with resources that will enable them to seamlessly (and contactlessly) order more of your great food and beverages.

Security is an afterthought. While strict adherence to PCI DSS, the data security standards enacted by the Payment Card Industry, helps protect card data, non-card data cybercrime (exploits such as ransomware, viruses, malware, phishing, etc.) can also wreak costly havoc on your enterprise. Determine if (and how) a tech solution will increase your attack surface—and find out what security measures your POS provider takes. Best practice: Select a provider that is PCI DSS compliant as a company, utilizes in-house PCI QIR certified installers, and employs an in-house team of certified security experts who perform security essentials, including monitoring, testing, and issue remediation.

You didn’t consider the ROI. The right tech solutions can drive revenue growth, cut costs, attract new customers, ensure guest loyalty, increase productivity, and help elevate your most important asset: your valued brand. While tech solutions require an initial investment, the right option—especially those that are agile, innovative, and highly scalable—will pay for itself over time. Before investing in new technology, consider the ROI you’re expecting. Do you want to reduce food waste, sustainably increase sales, gain guest loyalty, adopt guest empowerment solutions, become more operationally efficient...? Determine whether the tech solutions you’re contemplating can help you improve these metrics. If they can’t, you’re likely considering the wrong solution for your F&B needs. But if you perceive they can, it’s up to your current provider to go the extra mile and create a custom solution—one that meets all of your diverse needs. *(Don’t be surprised if they immediately say ‘yes,’ only to entrap you within a time-consuming and costly technology roadmap maze.)*

The bottom line...

While the restaurant industry has historically been hesitant to implement leading-edge technologies, there’s been a measurable increase in restaurant tech since the Covid pandemic abruptly changed the rules of customer engagement (contactless, off-prem and on-prem delivery, mobility, self-service...). Harnessing the power of these tech solutions will certainly provide numerous growth-enabled benefits, but only if they come from the right partner. Fortunately, finding the right partner is easier than you think... you just need to peer a little deeper than the surface. But when you do, you’ll find your hall of fame player—the one who will help elevate your team to heights only previously imagined.