Enhancing the Customer Experience with Advanced Analytics

How Smart Asset Management can Deliver Improved
Quality Control and Cost Savings

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Restaurants now compete in what Deloitte calls a "guest-first environment"

where delivering a memorable customer experience is the primary driver for increasing customer traffic, whether that be sit-down, carry-out, or curbside delivery dining engagements. More than 40 percent of customers surveyed by Deloitte say that they recommend restaurants to others at which they've had good experiences.
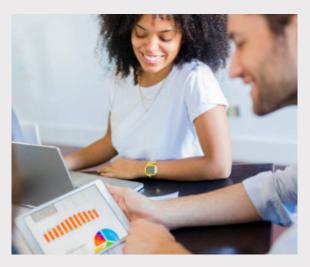
As good food quality has become a table stakes expectation for customers, the ability to deliver on that promise has shifted the focus to how well a facility's equipment performs in that mission. Customer experiences are ruined by inconsistencies. Disruptions to environmental equipment like lighting and heating or variations in food quality due to equipment malfunctions are the true Achilles Heel in a bad customer brand experience.

This shift has made data analytics an essential tool for managing these valuable assets. Advanced analytics gives facility managers the ability to make smarter decisions regarding repairs, maintenance, and life cycles so that they can continuously ensure quality control. Beyond improving the customer experience, analytics also helps restaurants save money and drive efficiencies.

Three steps to data-driven asset management

1) Select Data

To roll out an effective asset management program with analytics, facility managers first need to determine what data they need to collect and analyze. Equipment needs to be tagged for data capture to understand how it performs over time.

Some restaurant owners may want to take the "Big Bang" approach in which they tag every asset with sensors or other data collection devices across all their locations to create an immediate, complete analytic ecosystem. But this approach requires a significant upfront investment. Others may prefer to start small with pilot projects focusing on certain assets or locations and gradually expand their asset management system over time.

While the majority of restaurant equipment today lacks built-in intelligence, going forward, data collection should become easier and more economical as modern restaurant equipment joins the Internet of Things (IoT) with machine-to-machine communication and real-time update capabilities.

2) Set Goals

Next, facility managers need to set goals. What do they hope to achieve with the data? Some may want to start with simply gaining a firm understanding of asset inventories and monitor activity. From there, they can move on to predictive analytics to do preventative detection. Predictive analytics can help them detect and prevent asset failure before it happens, as well as discern what factors may cause reliability or performance issues in the future. They can understand what parts fail most frequently so that replacement parts are always at the ready when a technician or supplier is called in for a repair.

The data can also be used to build more robust warranty management programs. Often when a piece of equipment needs to be fixed or replaced, a lack of understanding of what the warranty covers results in business owners paying for fixes that they shouldn't. Data gives them the insights and evidence to ensure they develop effective warranty programs that work for them.

3) Activate Analytics

The next step is to use analytics to manage spend and reduce maintenance costs. Facility managers can gain complete cost visibility, discovering exactly how much their assets are really costing their businesses with detailed reporting down to the individual part level.

Understanding how an asset performs over time gives them the knowledge to realize when it is best to replace or repair a vulnerable asset because sometimes it is more cost effective to replace ailing-but-currently-working equipment that requires frequent services. Managers can also use those insights to develop better capital expenditure programs with more predictable budgets by identifying and segmenting equipment that is approaching the end of its useful life.

Analytics can also help better understand the total cost of delivering the service. Because facility managers often don't have visibility into industry-standard parts costs, service duration times, trip charges and other service expenses, they don't realize suppliers may be taking advantage of them. A good analytics system can provide that visibility, giving facility managers comparative data on all service cost elements so that they know when to accept or challenge an invoice. For example, analytics solutions that offer geo-fencing capabilities can let managers know exactly when a technician arrived, serviced and departed a location so that they can a) compare that time to what's charge on the invoice, and b) compare the service time against industry standards.

The same data can be used to control preventative service costs. Facility managers may over-engineer their preventative maintenance programs to err on the safe side, scheduling more service visits per year than is truly necessary to keep equipment running optimally. Analytics can help them identify the sweet spot that balances the cost with the return on the investment for the preventative service.

Final thoughts

Restaurant equipment has become an essential focal point in keeping customers happy and coming back for more.

Something as seemingly innocuous as a broken ice machine can make or break a customer experience.

Business owners and facility managers who employ advanced analytics can reduce maintenance costs, improve service delivery and streamline asset uptime so that they can create positive experiences for their customers.

About the Author, Warren Weller

As Chief Client Officer for Vixxo, Warren helps industry-leading companies tap into the technology, services, and products that reduce maintenance costs, improve service delivery, and increase asset uptime with real-time facility and asset data that leads to actionable insights.

About Vixxo

Vixxo is a facilities management leader focused on providing a seamless, intuitive experience for a vast portfolio of brands across North America. Driven by exceptional insights, the company enables clients to reduce operational burdens, control spend and empower business growth. By delivering transparency and high-quality service, Vixxo is changing the way the world sees facilities management.

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