

SUMMIT INNOVATIONS:

Australian-developed drive-through management system using analytics to take the fast food industry by storm.

“We knew the market would soon start to look for aggregated reporting and more in-depth analysis so we decided to expand what customers could obtain from the system. For example, we wanted brands to be able to look at more than just one restaurant. We wanted them to be able to monitor and compare ten restaurants, all in real time.”

Kim Redstall,
DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT AND
STRATEGY, SUMMITINNOVATIONS.



The company

Summit Innovations is the Australian developer of a leading drive-through management system for the quick service restaurant (QSR) industry. Within Australia its sensor-driven technology is used by more than 95 per cent of all new drive-through restaurants. Globally, the Summit QSR management system has been installed in more than 4,000 sites across 20 countries. Its customers include Subway, Starbucks, Oporto, Coffee Club, Dunkin Donuts, Red Rooster, Burger King, McDonald's, KFC and Hungry Jacks.

The road to success

Summit's technology uses driveway sensors to monitor vehicle activity from the moment each car enters the driveway, through to ordering, payment, receipt of food, and ultimately, departure. The information is displayed visually on monitors within the restaurant, keeping management and staff informed of speed of service, helping them to identify and respond to bottlenecks. The system provides alerts, management reporting and enables brands to compare efficiency live, in real time, across different properties.

The aim of the Summit solution is to encourage perpetual best operational performance at each drive-through operation. The information it provides helps restaurants to improve speed of service, reduce waiting times, serve more cars per hour and increase profitability.

Kim Redstall, Director of Corporate Development and Strategy at Summit explains, “Customers using Summit's technology report improving speed of service by between 30 seconds and one minute for each customer. It may not sound like much but when you extrapolate that out, depending on the restaurant brand, it can equate to a potential 20 extra transactions per day. And if the average ticket value is between seven and ten dollars, that adds up to another \$200 or so dollars per day.”

More visualisation for easy comprehension

Almost three years on, the addition of Yellowfin has helped take the drive-through management program to a new level of sophistication.

With Summit's technology capturing up to 50 pieces of non-personal, non-identifying information about each transaction there is a significant amount of data available to be processed. The data is pushed to the cloud where, Redstall says, "Restaurants carry out all manner of analysis."

Sensors still map and time the progress of all stages of the customer experience, and restaurants installing the Summit solution are equipped with screens that provide a graphical representation of what's occurring outside. Staff and management can "see" the driveway, the number of cars and the wait times being experienced, even when the store operates a dual lane drive-through. This increased visibility makes it exceedingly easy for managers to identify when traffic is banking up or when service is not keeping up with demand.

The Summit Panorama platform manages a wide range of store-level reporting using dashboards, reports, push notifications and exception reports. Automatic alerts are sent out when restaurant performance falls outside key performance indicators, as well as when key targets have been met. The immediacy of information allows remedial action to be taken within moments of problems arising – an essential capability when dealing with drive-through customers who expect service within minutes.

Data can be analysed at a single location level, or it can be aggregated across multiple stores. The flexibility of the system allows data capture based on virtually unlimited business rules. Brands use the reports to identify and learn from high-performing stores, and to rectify efficiency problems where necessary. reporting is useful, it's only part of the picture as far as McKenzie is concerned.

Adding value every day

Simple reports include the number of cars passing through per hour or day, the most efficient time of day, and the best or worst performing restaurants in a brand during a specified time period. But the real value of Summit QSR lies in its exception reporting and in its immediacy, for example identifying the number of cars that have had to wait over "x" minutes for service during the last hour. Questions such as these can be posed from remote locations, when managers are off site and staff may not be on their "best" behaviour. It provides a more accurate, more truthful view of performance.

"There's no point producing a report showing how badly or well your restaurant is performing today if the report won't be seen until tomorrow. What we do is provide on-screen data and push notifications that allow restaurants to make adjustments in real time. They can substitute or add people where staff are

struggling to make time. Managers can receive alerts when a location is excessively busy or even suddenly goes quiet, when demand falls below an expected rate. This allows them to proactively look at what may be happening at the site," Redstall states.

Having conquered the challenge of immediate, comprehensive drive-through reporting, Summit Innovations is now looking at ways to improve drive-through planning by introducing easy comparison of projected and actual data.

A growing interest in data

In the early days, data recorded was held on the individual Summit timer in each restaurant. Reporting was built into the system but was limited to activities occurring on site. However, with awareness of the value of corporate data on the rise, Summit management realised there was the potential to make the system do much more.

A white-labelled solution

To achieve this, the company decided to integrate the cloud-based Yellowfin BI platform into its Summit QSR solution, in a new product now marketed as Summit Panorama. This would enable far more data to be captured, analysed and shared at multiple sites. It would also bring mobility to the data – management could receive push notifications and alerts at any time, in any location.

Redstall explains, "Partnering with Yellowfin accelerated the development curve, allowing us to bring an enhanced offering to market much faster. We like their commercial approach. Their pricing is good value and the ability to white label the platform – to include it under our branding – is essential. Summit QSR is a device-dependent solution. It's nothing without the timer, so the market wasn't going to be interested in a separate BI solution. We had to have something that could become an integrated part of the Summit offering, which required significant development and customisation from both our internal software development group and from the Yellowfin team."

Technically, he adds, "Yellowfin meets our need for flexibility. The BI platform can be customised to meet the reporting needs of different clients, and it has more functionality than many of its competitors."

The fact that Yellowfin's development team is based in Australia, not far from Summit's developers, is another positive. This was especially important during integration and as reports were being developed. Unlike most companies, Summit's key measures must be captured in seconds and minutes rather than units and tens.



For more information on Yellowfin, visit www.yellowfinbi.com