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How can Chipotle's service line, utilize their different strengths and weaknesses to work together to achieve a common goal?

English 1001



Introduction

The topic of research is a Colorado based company Chipotle. This company is an Mexican inspired fast casual eatery. They serve food such as tacos, burritos and burrito-bowls. The food is prepared in the kitchen of the restaurant and is served with many customization options, the service is an assembly line process

where you hand pick your ingredients to be included in your meal. Our group's main goal was to determine how Chipotles service line utilize their different strengths and weaknesses to work together to achieve a common goal. With this in mind are group set out to study the inner workings of chipotles employees and how they interact with one another and how that affects the customer experience.

Methodology

The main goal of this research report is to attempt to find the answer to our research question. How can Chipotle's service line, utilize their different strengths and weaknesses to work together to achieve a common goal? Chipotle is a very popular fast casual restaurant chain that revolutionized a unique form of food service. They brought a food ingredients line, which can usually be found in the back of house kitchen, to the front and included full transparency to its customers. We sought to attain a greater understanding of how this service line is able to function and what kinds of factors work into its success. Our initial approach was to seek out information on Chipotle business practices in order to have a general understanding before diving into specific information relating to our question. We did this by exploring business articles written about Chipotle's success and also articles about its controversies. These articles helped to show us a trajectory of Chipotle's overall success in the business world. Our next step was to see if we could pick up any details relating to our question from various reviews found on aggregate sites such as yelp and google reviews. These reviews were unable to provide many meaningful and informative critiques, but they did display a general

public perception of Chipotle and described a few detailed encounters that customers had. Our next step was to make personal trips to various chipotle stores and gather more specific information related to our question. By asking employees questions and observing movements of customers through the service line, we began to create our data sets with both quantitative and qualitative data. One of the members of our research group has been a chipotle employee for about a year and was able to provide us with insider knowledge on the activities that occur within the restaurant. These various sources of data helped us begin to draw conclusions and connect back to our question.

Discussion

Much of our data revolved around the speed at which customers are able to move through the line and the possible factors that speed it up or slow it. Chipotle has its own methodology on the analysis and study of this information.

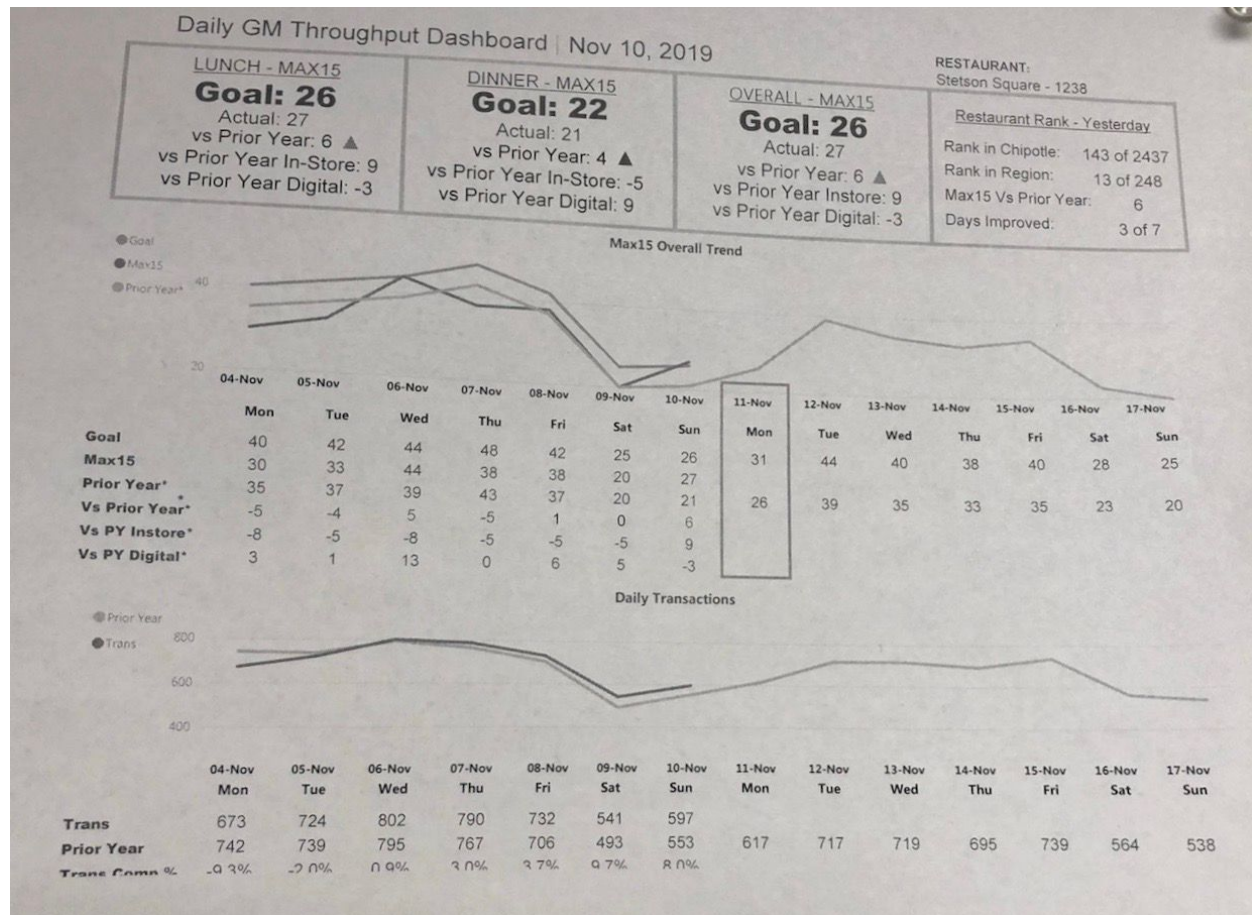
“Throughput” is the amount of customers that move through the line and check out with the cashier in a 15 minute interval. This information shows which days of the week a store reaches a higher throughput. Using this info we can observe the reasons that throughput might be higher on those days. The most direct and likely factor that was observed was the number of employees working the service line at a given time. During times with 5 people on the line, including a cashier, throughput was able to reach highs such as 40 and 55. This is also dependent on the amount of customers that come into the store and peak lunch rush hours seemed to be the

only time these numbers were possible at the specific Chipotle observed. A chipotle service line has each employee performing a different role when operating at 5 possible people. The roles include tortilla, linebacker, salsa, expo, and cash. Tortilla and salsa serve hot and cold food respectively based on customers specific request. A linebacker communicates the amount of food to the grill worker and switches out food when low. An expo helps bag food and asks customers if they would like chips or a drink. Finally, the cashier receives payment from the customer. This specialization of tasks seemed to allow each employee to have total focus on their role and allowed the service line to move efficiently resulting in higher throughput. When asked which roles were most important, employees stated that tortilla and salsa were most necessary. While, linebacker and expo varied depending on the speed and experience of the cashier or the other employees serving food. If the cashier was faster, a linebacker would be better utilized. If the employees serving the food are faster, an expo would result in higher throughput.

Findings

Sub question- "How many people were visibly unsatisfied with the service line"

- We found, with in a span of an hour, during lunch rush, 8 people were visibly upset. Two customers were upset because the line had not yet started their online orders, two customers were upset because the service line had messed up their order, and four were upset with the slow pace of the service line.



We found service line rules from a Chipotle service line employee, "Drain the juice out of the beans & meats before serving them, especially on burritos.

Repeat back to the customer what they said they want on their entree, especially on salsa. "Would you like any sour cream, cheese on your bowl?" "No sour cream" "Sour cream?" "No I said no sour cream." Some customers may be a little annoyed, but it's better than having to remake their entire bowl."

Conclusions

Finally, after many trips to chipotle, a lot of research, and interviewing a former worker, our group has come to a conclusion that there are a few different ways that chipotle can utilize their different strengths and weaknesses to work together to achieve their common goals. By interviewing a former manager of chipotle, we got some insight on how it really is to work there and how difficult it is. The former manager claims that it is actually the hardest job she has ever worked. She also told us about the culture of working there and how everyone is trained to know all about the food and where it comes from. In conclusion, we've established that the biggest thing about working at chipotle, is being invested in it and taking pride in the job you are doing. Another thing for being successful in the line is mostly team work, being on top of what you are in charge of, and also helping your other workmates at the same time.