



**An insider's perspective on focused, fresh, quick-service restaurant coverage.**

## QSR Marketing Shifts Full Gear to the Mobile Space

by QSR Buzz

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Most quick-service restaurant (QSR) marketers recognize that in order to gain share from competitors, ramping up entry into the mobile space is a no-brainer. Using the latest technology for social media marketing and guest improvement strategies can make a crucial difference.

### Mobile Applications (Apps) for Restaurants Grow in Value, Functionality

O'Neals Pub, a fast-paced grill and bar in Philadelphia, takes advantage of the flexible abilities of SinglePlatform. SinglePlatform, started in 2010 by CEO Wiley Cerilli, provides a platform that distributes one feed simultaneously onto several social media and dining sites.

"SinglePlatform empowers restaurant owners by providing a user-friendly portal to update their pertinent information including specials, events, menus, what games are playing on their TVs, etc., across the web through its ever-growing Publisher Network of social networks, restaurant directories, review sites, mobile applications, hotels and more," Cerilli says.

Quick-service restaurants, as well as those in any segment, use technology like SinglePlatform to create efficiencies by eliminating the need to post multiple updates to multiple sites. Marketers in smaller companies and family-run QSRs can take advantage of the mobile dashboard application and compose posts and events "on the go" with just a few key strokes.

Phil Sparagna, social media manager for O'Neal's Pub, also often takes advantage of the mobile application features. He raves about the scheduler, which allows posts to be slated at future times. Because sporting events are a large part of Philly culture, Sparagna says the ease of updating events on the fly are a boon to business.

Backed by owners of Restaurant.com and SeamlessWeb, ranked the top fastest growing company in New York City by Deloitte, SinglePlatform's chief executive officer is in a full court press to service restaurateurs in the Northeast and beyond. "QSRs save time, effort and money, by managing [their] digital presence in one place," says Cerilli.

Moto Message, based in the Chicago area, has developed a different type of mobile marketing application that uses text-based messaging to get promotional information to customers. The QSR marketing technology supports the restaurant strategy of staying connected with the young, tech-savvy, on-the-go mobile QSR consumer.

The application uses SMS-based (Short Message Service) messaging. Restaurant customers are able to subscribe by sending a message to short numeric text code provided by the company. Moto Message's features include the distribution of various quick-service restaurant campaigns, promotions and subscription elements to customers. A clearly stated opt-in and opt-out method, along with additional incentives, reassures customers that they will not be spammed and leads to greater QSR marketing success.

"For small chains, there's nothing that can provide the ROI (return on investment) and foot traffic that matches text message marketing," says Chief Operations Officer Shane Farrell. He adds that there are additional economies of scale for large chains and brands that can share the technology with franchisees.

### Mobile Restaurant Apps in the Hands of Customers

"When looking at apps, you need to look at the future," says Joel Cohen of restaurantmarketing.com. Cohen, a veteran marketing consultant, is a proponent of restaurant applications for mobile devices and the connection that these apps help restaurants build upon with their guests.

The Pogo Corporation builds applications for food-service clients so that they have a customized application on the cell phones of their guests. The MobiDines platform, as the company brands it, provides features such as ordering, reviewing menu items and obtaining restaurant location information.

"We're now leveraging our brand on mobile phones to increase customer interaction, awareness and orders," says James Stewart, brand manager of Elevation Burger. Diners can use MobiDines to place food orders directly on his phone. The application has a replicated version of the menu and can transmit the order to the restaurant using fax, e-mail or through a direct link to the point-of sales (POS) system.

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Backpocketmobile, based in the Greater Atlanta area, is another developer of mobile applications servicing QSRs. The company's focus is on iPhone, iPad and ITouch application development for small to medium-sized restaurant companies. With push technology and additional information tools to load onto the application, Backpocketmobile provides features that are appealing and value-driven for the QSR marketer and technology head.

Like Pogo's MobiDines app, Backpocketmobile also has various levels of restaurant customization, including multi-media messaging and instant campaign alerts.

Robert Gilbert, Backpocketmobile's co-founder says "As people move away from typical mediums like television, print magazines and radio, businesses must adjust and also move their marketing over to platforms like the web, mobile devices and social networks."

### From Marketing to Improving the Guest Experience

Aprisa, a restaurant specializing in Mexican fare, and Hot Lips Pizza, a five-unit chain, both based in Portland, OR, use Opiniator to survey customers about their dining experiences. Restaurant customers completing their orders text a code on their phones and then are able to take a short survey. The QSR guest can take the survey in about a minute through either text or a mobile web browser. If the restaurant sets up the incentive, customers are rewarded for completing the survey. For example, a future meal discount is typical.

Opiniator has been in business for nearly two years and boasts a diverse clientele that includes Hotlips Pizza, CircleK convenience stores, Nestle water, BP and Aprisa Mexican Restaurant.

The service's value is highlighted by processing guest feedback in real-time. "Data is a vital component of the service so that restaurants can respond, fix and retain the customer and prevent other customers from being exposed to any issue," says Matt Selbie, chief executive officer of Oberon 3, the company that builds the Opiniator program. He notes that alerts can be established so that the restaurant will be notified immediately of negative comments or feedback at any location and at any time so that the situation can be resolved. The data that is captured can be compiled and managed in a way that allows the quick-service restaurant to learn from trends and then review and create action plans in response to them.

According to Lou Hajar, operations director for Holips Pizza and Soda Company, "We were able to analyze data quickly and efficiently. Immediate response was given to store managers to help them in setting expectation levels or focus points."

Whether running marketing campaigns, executing strategy that makes your QSR ubiquitous, or getting instant feedback from guests, mobile technology is quickly becoming the place to develop and deploy. With consumers spending so much time in the mobile arena, the faster quick-service restaurants can make inroads in that space, the more likely they are of gaining market share from less-savvy QSR competitors.