



HOW RESTAURATEURS RECLAIM FOCUS ON CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES WITH OUTSOURCED ACCOUNTING

Whether fast food, casual or fine dining, restaurateurs thrive on a bustling kitchen, clinking silverware and murmuring conversation in a full house. Creating memorable customer experiences is the reason every restaurant owner and manager gets into the business. But running a business requires close attention to the transactions that keep the doors open—forcing restaurateurs to spend too much time in the back office.

As any business grows, so do the complications and distractions. While focused on creating reports, calling vendors and reviewing payments, owners and managers can lose sight of the key drivers to the business. Food quality, service excellence and facility ambiance can suffer when the person with the true vision is distracted. And, in the connected, social world, there is little room for error. Customers pass judgement and share their story based on a single experience. The digital age has profoundly impacted the restaurant business (mistakes can be disastrous).

Adept restaurateurs, especially those with ambitious growth plans, recognize the risks of losing focus. They understand the importance of vigilance in protecting the customer experience and look for the best way to keep the financial foundation of the business strong.

The challenges of internal accounting teams

For most growing restaurants, an internal accounting or financial management team grows out of necessity. The requirements of running the business become so time-consuming, the owner hires a bookkeeper. Transaction volumes increase, leading to more staff and bigger headaches. Typically, the challenges compound, including:

- **Difficulty attracting and retaining reliable bookkeepers.** In today's competitive job market, experienced professionals are expensive and likely to be lured to higher paying positions. Finding qualified, reliable replacements is time consuming and difficult. All the while, payroll needs to be processed and bills need to be paid.
- **Finding people with business acumen that extends beyond the balance sheet.** Accounting isn't just about recording transactions and creating reports. The people who are managing the restaurant's transactions should understand how the numbers translate to the health of the business. They should be watching for signs of trouble as well as trends that could indicate opportunities.
- **Entrusting people to safeguard the business and reduce risk.** From customer credit cards to payroll taxes, the business needs people in place who understand how to follow safe processes that comply with government and industry regulations. Checks and balances should be in place to reduce the risk of employee fraud in every aspect of the business.
- **Ensuring vendors are treated fairly.** The accounting team has a direct impact on the relationships restaurants have with suppliers and employees. Payments should be handled promptly and respectfully.

Through outsourced accounting services, restaurant organizations can avoid all of these staffing pitfalls. Working with experienced professionals who use proven financial management practices, owners and managers can focus on customers with full confidence the back office is running smoothly.

New technologies to keep pace in a changing world

In addition to hiring the best people, restaurants today need to keep pace with modern technology to support the expectations of customers, vendors and employees. The traditional software, like QuickBooks, most restaurants use to get the business started doesn't support the needs of a growing organization. Limitations that hold back the business include:

- No integration with other systems, such as Point of Sale and Payroll, to provide a unified view of operations.
- Too many manual processes required, like emailing invoices to get manager approvals.
- No ability to provide reporting at both the store and corporate level, making it difficult for managers to see the big picture.

To thrive in the restaurant business today, forward-looking restaurateurs are working with outsourced accounting firms to take advantage of the latest technology that provides true business intelligence with actionable information. Fortunately, the cloud offers every size of business the opportunity to tap into the power of their data to drive operational excellence and competitive advantage. Through the modern, cloud-based systems outsourced accounting firms use, restaurant owners can:

- **Get meaningful reports across multiple locations.** With accurate multi-company consolidations, owners get a clear view of performance of the organization. District managers can get detailed insights by locations, concepts, sales categories, and time.
- **Implement practices best suited to unique operations.** Many restaurants have unique operating and reporting requirements. Flexible, cloud-based systems can manage multiple charts of accounts, taxation rules and financial reports at corporate and store locations.
- **Support a geographically dispersed workforce.** Making administrative tasks easy has become an important factor in employee retention. Workers want to enter their time and find their schedules online. Only modern, connected financial management systems can meet the expectations of the digital workforce.
- **Distill large volumes of data to provide actionable insight.** Absence of data is no longer a challenge. Instead, bringing meaning to the large volumes of data collected by organizations is what's difficult. Restaurateurs need to be able to visualize and analyze their business' performance quickly to respond to an ever-changing marketplace.

- **Reduce compliance risks.** Through automated processes and up-to-date software, taxes and reporting are accurate and timely. Complex payroll is handled efficiently, and customer data is protected properly.
- **Manage vendors proactively, capitalizing on economies of scale.** To realize a key benefit of growth, restaurants need centralized purchasing to take advantage of economies of scale. Consolidated purchasing provides negotiation power to cut costs.
- **Automate review and approval processes.** Save managers time and simplify vendor relationships with automated receivables and payables workflows.

Information to make better decisions

While restaurateurs don't need to be distracted by the day-to-day financial management, they do need to receive timely, actionable information to steer the business. With more moving parts to the business, decision making becomes more complex—and the delivery of insightful information critical.

Through the modern software used by their outsourced accounting partner, restaurateurs can receive the insight to grow and thrive, with:

- **Operational statistics compared with financial metrics** to give more meaning to the numbers.
- **Easy-to-read reports** that allow managers to catch mistakes immediately and make any necessary adjustments such as better menu choices and appropriate staffing.
- **Accurate inventory and costing** that delivers the true cost of creating a dish, operating a shift and opening a new location.
- **Cash flow projections** that precisely reflect the position of the company, now and into the future. Owners need the ability to see cash flow at a high level and dig into the details of sales, inventory, accounts receivable, financing, and more.
- **Financial analysis** to identify seasonal, monthly or daily trends, helping managers align resources to meet demand. With better data on the seasonal requirements of the business, managers can proactively make adjustments in staffing and purchasing.
- **Consolidated information** that helps to spot trends and flag exceptions across the organization. Providing district and regional managers more precise metrics to compare locations allows them to fine tune operations across regions.
- **Information delivered to devices** allows owners and managers to be where the action is, not stuck behind a desk. Cloud-based financial management systems provide easy access to information where and when it is needed.

Many professional bookkeepers cannot provide the kind of insight that modern business requires today. An outsourced accounting department brings the breadth of experience and understanding of modern financial management systems to support effective information delivery.

Financial management in trusted hands

Working with outsourced accounting partners often delivers more than the restaurateur expected. Along with better insight and financial management, professionals who know the industry can provide advice and guidance to further improve the business. Working with a trusted advisor, owners and managers get assistance through:

- **An objective point of view** to provide advice untainted by politics or agendas.
- **CFO level perspective**, providing guidance on important decisions and in unfamiliar situations.
- **Guidance on process improvement** to eliminate inefficiencies and improve productivity across the organization.
- **Risk reduction** through a comprehensive understanding of regulations, tax laws and employee fraud prevention practices.

Restaurateurs take back their time

With outsourced accounting and financial management, forward-thinking restaurateurs can focus on the most important aspects of the business—customer experience. Detailed financial reporting at the store, group, district, brand, and enterprise levels provide restaurateurs with the insight to make informed decisions quickly, without investing all their time and energy on the numbers.

Efficient management of accounting processes and financial management allows owners and managers to focus on the front of the house, while supporting:

- **Improved business processes** for bank reconciliations, audit schedules, fixed assets, financial statements, outside audit support and taxes.
- **Less paper in the office** with simplified bill payments, online invoicing and cash management.
- **Effective budget planning** and review to build profitability.
- **Digital records and document management** to reduce storage costs and simplify the process of gathering documents for year-end tax work.
- **More transparent cash flow management** to stay on top of daily balances and projected cash flows both into and out of the business.

[Gray, Gray, & Gray](#) has 70 years of experience working with a variety of restaurants, from white linen bistros to fast food franchises. Using cutting-edge, cloud-based technology, Gray, Gray & Gray provides outsourced accounting services, freeing restaurant owners from the burdens of day-to-day financial management.

Familiar with the daily pressures and demands of the restaurant business, Gray, Gray, & Gray professionals work hand-in-hand with restaurateurs. Owners take advantage of financial reporting, monthly account reconciliations and bill payment services, while maintaining control over approval

of payments and payment scheduling. Concise, up-to-date financial information is always available to owners and managers from virtually anywhere using a smartphone, PC or tablet.

With current financial information and objective guidance, owners can regain focus on customers to build growth and lasting profitability. Contact Gray, Gray, & Gray at 781-407-0300 or beyondthenumbers@gggcpas.com to find out how you can spend more time in the front of the house.