



Tropical Smoothie Cafe® growth required a new recipe for technology support

Capgemini's Agile Store delivers a better franchisee experience by streamlining support

Born in Florida, Tropical Smoothie Cafe opened its first location in Tallahassee in 1997. The first cafe was known for blending fruits and vegetables to create unique and refreshing smoothies. From its inception, Tropical Smoothie Cafe was guided by a simple belief: when you eat better, you feel better.

Tropical Smoothie Cafe is one of the leading fast-casual restaurants in the U.S., known for its better-for-you food and smoothies with a tropical twist at more than 730 locations nationwide. In 2018, the brand opened more than 110 locations, with over 60 per cent of new cafes opened by existing franchisees.

Managing technology and franchise growth

As the Tropical Smoothie Cafe franchise system expanded, its technical support requirements grew more complex. The system was accustomed to the support of an in-house technical team that escalated franchisee calls to the appropriate vendors for resolution. This model often required franchisees to speak with several technology vendors before a problem was resolved, a process that could take more than a day.



When our franchisees can focus on operating their cafes and delivering a wonderful, convenient guest experience rather than having to deal with technology issues, that is the experience we want both for the employees in our cafes and for our guests."

Marina O'Rourke

VP, IT, Tropical Smoothie Cafe, LLC.



Recognizing the need of an enhanced technology support model, Tropical Smoothie Cafe created a task force consisting of franchisees, IT resources, support team members, and other business stakeholders to explore options. They conducted a competitive RFP process to determine how to strategically evolve the support structure. The process led them to choose Capgemini.

Finding the right support blend

After a successful pilot, Tropical Smoothie Cafe rolled out Cafe Tech Support to provide franchisees with technology assistance seven days a week. Powered by Capgemini's Agile Store help desk, franchisees who encounter a technology issue now have a single point of contact to call and a dedicated website to submit and track issues.

Agile Store allows retailers to quickly implement new in-store technology while maintaining the reliability needed to run store operations. It improves the efficiency, availability, and reliability of the entire store technology stack, addressing disruptions so locations can quickly return to business-as-usual.

Smooth support leads to better experiences

Franchisees have responded positively to the new system. The dedicated support line and website often result in issue resolution with the first contact.

The Agile Store help desk is also building a searchable knowledge library that franchisees can reference for self-help issue resolution. By aggregating the information collected by the support team via phone and the website, valuable insights are being shared across the Tropical Smoothie Cafe network.

"With one place to go for help with their cafe technology issues, franchisees can really focus on the operations of their business and serving their guests," says Amy Drooker, director of technology strategy, Tropical Smoothie Cafe, LLC. "Franchisees now rely on Capgemini to help manage their technology infrastructure and resolve issues."

Though the company is in the early stages of this new approach to support, it has already received directional data to help make decisions, improve the support model, and inform the business on potential opportunities. This aids the company's rapid expansion plans and makes owning a Tropical Smoothie Cafe franchise even more attractive to potential investors.

"Capgemini has depth in retail and quick-service restaurants, as well as the experience of working with similar franchise businesses," says Drooker. "Today, more than ever, prospective franchisees appreciate when a franchisor has enterprise-class technology solutions to support them."

"Before we started the RFP process, we really took the time to understand the problem, work with our franchisees and bring in the right domain expertise to find the best solution," says Marina O'Rourke, VP, IT, Tropical Smoothie Cafe, LLC. "Now we can be more proactive in supporting our franchisees, rather than reacting to issues as they arise."

Technology

- Agile Store
- ServiceNow

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