



THE ROLE OF "EATERTAINMENT" IN RESTAURANTS' RENAISSANCE:

Six surprising ways TV screens can
solve your most pressing challenges.

The restaurant industry has endured a roller coaster over the past two years, displaying resilience through quick pivots that included a focus on takeout and delivery. Now as the nation appears to have collectively turned a corner, consumers are once again eager to dine outside the home; in fact, NPD Group forecasts that restaurants will recover 98% of their traffic by the end of this year. But which brands will earn that pot of dining dollars?

Mike Neri, Senior Vice President for distribution of Atmosphere TV, said he believed locations that prioritized an exciting experience along with great food would be the winners, as patrons clamored for “eatertainment,” which combines dining out with an interesting activity. But restaurants don’t need to go through a complete overhaul to provide appealing elements of “eatertainment” that will resonate with guests. In fact, the answer might be as simple as providing enhanced visual content, Neri said.

In a world of constant and competing digital material, leveraging your TVs to display a mix of engaging content is the easiest way to invite your customers to interact with what they see, without spending money on print resources, marketing agencies, or paying for display space.

Wondering how this concept can elevate your experience, while eliminating current pain points?

Read on to find out how your TVs can help you.





01. ALLEVIATE THE WAIT.

The issue: Most restaurants continue to be short-staffed; in fact, half of operators said employee recruitment and retention was their top challenge in the [“2022 State of the Restaurant Industry Report”](#) from the National Restaurant Association. That’s leading to longer-than-average waits, which can make patrons testy.

The solution: If you’ve ever waited in line at a Disney theme park, [you’ve experienced a revolution in queuing](#), with entertainment that often includes story vignettes, enhanced by digital signage, that make the wait fly by.

Reducing customer wait times is essential to maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction. Digital screens play an integral role in social interactions and can have a huge effect on your customers' overall experiences. You can transform your screens into a robust set of entertainment that “engages and even pacifies waiting clientele so you don’t have them becoming impatient over a delay to get a table or their food,” according to Neri.

It’s a key benefit for Kyle Archer, owner and chief financial officer at Elevated Inc., which operates 20 Cheba Hut locations and will soon add SkinnyFATS to its portfolio. “With our counter order concept, we sometimes have customers queuing up at peak periods to order and then wait for the food to be delivered. On-brand entertainment through Atmosphere has played a large role in keeping them occupied so they’re not counting the minutes.”



02. GIVE CUSTOMERS SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT.

The issue: Call it "social amnesia" or just plain awkwardness, but some of us are finding our social skills a touch rusty. In fact, nearly 40% of Americans reported nerves surrounding post-pandemic social interaction. That can lead to focus on their phones, limiting interaction.

The solution: There's nothing like a shared experience to improve an outing, and that's where a streaming service for business provides a low-key visual experience patrons can coalesce around, whether they're on a first date or dining solo and wanting to make connections with fellow guests. The lighthearted fare provides a reprieve from regular cable TV, which typically revolves around news (almost guaranteed to provoke anxiety these days) or sports, which many consumers don't care about unless there's a big game. And of course, no one wants to be bombarded with commercials.

The scrolling problem isn't new, of course... while people might be a bit more introverted because of COVID-19, phone immersion has been with us since the inception of cellphones. But the issue is even more acute today, Neri pointed out, because many diners use their phone to call up a menu, then default to their social media.

For example, Cheba Hut customers tend to gravitate toward content that show a selection of viral videos, and exclusive channels like the Bob Ross Channel, which turns your restaurant into a mesmerizing paint studio. "On the surface, the channel might not seem overly captivating, but it's one of those things that just draws you in, and you can't stop watching it," Archer said.



03. HELP PACE TABLES.

The issue: With many restaurants experiencing limited hours or capacity, they aim to strike a happy balance of encouraging dwell time, without having patrons linger indefinitely at a table that could be used for a lucrative new party.

The solution: Great short-form content can accomplish both goals: Its cadence keeps diners around to order one more beverage, yet it won't tie up a table like a long sporting event or scripted show might.

By providing better entertainment, you keep your customers happy and comfortable in your restaurant, thus increasing the likelihood they'll spend more and dwell longer. When Archer plays the Bob Ross channel, he said, customers tell him they could watch it for hours. "That's great for us because we'll show it in the bar where we'd like them to linger, but they can also exit it after any period of time, as opposed to a football game," he said.

"We know there are businesses that need to flip tables and get people in and out, but there are even more that would love to have their customers buy one more drink or stay to have dessert at the end of the meal," Neri said. "It's really cool to have a product that solves both of those issues. In particular, we know that getting customers to stay for that one more drink has been really impactful to the business. Keeping people there just a little bit longer has proven to increase ticket values when restaurants need it the most."



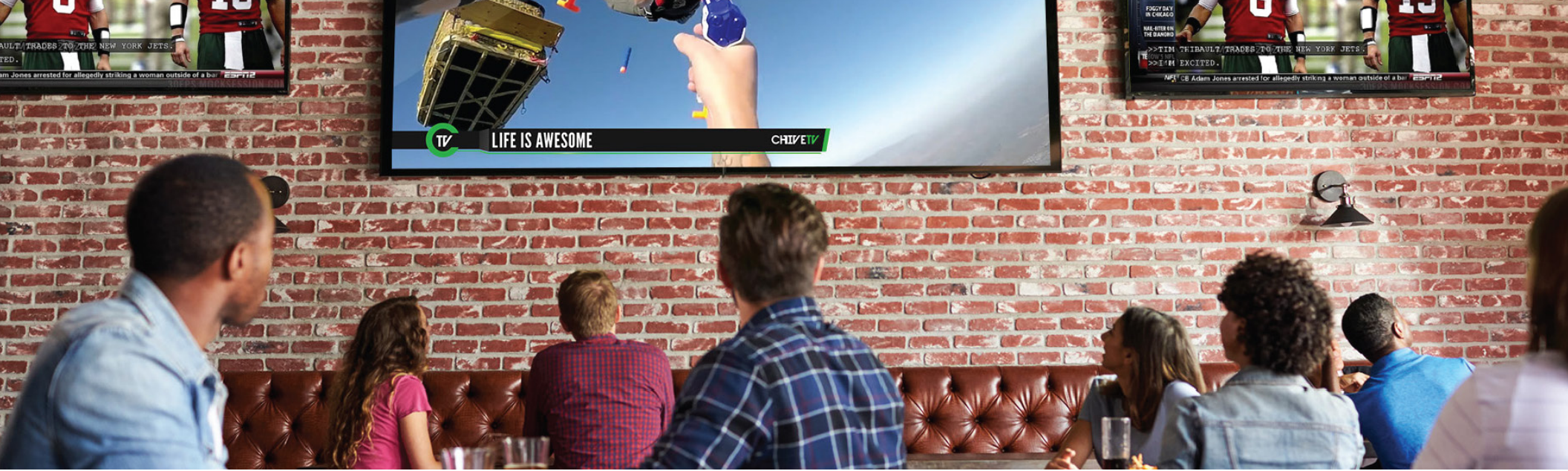
04. PROMOTE YOUR OWN SPECIALS.

The issue: Print materials are expensive and lack flexibility, yet restaurants today often need to pivot their menus to manage rising costs and supply chain hiccups.

The solution: Digital displays are easy for consumers and business operators to use and offer the chance to create a two-way interaction between customer and business. It allows operators to run their own promotions in a format that's simple to create. The messaging can include new menu items and specials or notices of events such as trivia night. Many are even leveraging it to find future employees.

Archer has seen how custom messaging gets the attention of customers. "While we have had success running promotional and hiring messages, for us it's more of a branding platform, rather than an immediate call to action," he said. "We use a longer-term vision to create our own content that sets the tone and what we're about."

The benefit to operators compared with static messaging is that it runs seamlessly, Neri pointed out. "Diners will be engaged in the TV screen — maybe they're laughing at dogs cuddling with ducklings — then it cuts out of our content and delivers our customer's message when they already have the attention of their customer base," he said. "They can then share their call to action or message to people who are already looking at the screen."



05. EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY THAT'S EASY TO IMPLEMENT.

The issue: Many technology solutions put a burden on overtaxed, short-staffed managers.

The solution: The restaurant industry has been traditionally slow to adopt and implement technology solutions.

As the industry continues to deal with labor shortages in the post-pandemic world, business operators need to look into ways they can leverage TVs and technology as an extension of the services they provide to help create supportive environment that makes their staff feel valued, while also keeping into consideration ways they can preserve their margins and still maximize profit potential.

As previously mentioned, leveraging you TVs to entertain guests and boost your brand, but it will alleviate your staff from dealing with impatient customers. By allowing technology handle the details, you allow your staff to focus on making the customer experience more meaningful, less stressful, and overall more efficient. In return, business operators can meet their primary goals: higher ticket volumes, larger check sizes, and increased profitability.



06. ENCOURAGE THE VIBE THAT DRAWS IN YOUR IDEAL GUEST.

The issue: Your eatery attracts different types of groups at different times; for example, families during the day and younger groups in the evening, so one-size-fits-all entertainment often doesn't work.

The solution: To create a great guest experience, business operators will need to forge healthy relationships with technology experts who understand the industry and have the solutions to meet the expectations of their guests.

With locations open from 10 a.m. to midnight or later, Archer struggled with finding channels that resonated and could be adapted to everyone from lunchtime business diners to the late-night crowd. That's when he decided to partner with Atmosphere TV to zero in on the ambiance they wanted and create a vibe that draws in their ideal customer.

Now managers can choose the right content to match the overall vibe given the time of day. "It really sets the tone and helps our restaurants stand out," he said.

"You wouldn't necessarily think people would notice, but we've gotten several reviews from our customers about how unique channels like Bob Ross really added to their experience."



WHAT **ATMOSPHERE** DO YOU WANT TO CREATE?

Restaurants are enjoying a renaissance as diners rediscover the joy of socializing and mingling while enjoying great food and company. As they visit old favorites and new options, they're creating fresh patterns that will inform their future experiences. The time is now to make a winning impression, and Atmosphere can help.

"We're a content-first company," Neri said. "Every dollar we make, we reinvest back into building bigger, better products and more engaging content for our customers."

Want to see how Atmosphere can elevate your brand?

Visit [ATMOSPHERE.TV/HOW-IT-WORKS/](https://atmosphere.tv/how-it-works/)