



A STUDY OF THE FACTORS NEEDED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN FAST FOOD INDUSTRY IN INDIA

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INTRODUCTION

The fast food industry has become an important part of globalization as people spend many hours working or doing business. The need for quick food services has grown with apparent shortage of free time. With reduced disposable income, a consequence of the global

economic downturn, customers seem to shift from the fine dining and full service restaurants to quick service or fast food outlets since the latter are more cost effective. However, a widespread exposure to goods and services has produced a highly informed clientele, the fast food customer expectations seem to grow and follow global patterns.

Food service industry has expanded globally in recent years. This article provides an empirical study on the identification of the critical success factors of food service operations and the restaurant industry.

Fast food can be simply defined as easily available, reasonably priced and quickly served and nicely fits into the modern and busy life style. Even though it is not much preferred food by health aware people for them being high in calories, saturated sugar, fats and salt, still there is no shortage of fast food loving people in India as well.

Traditional Indian food cannot be completely catered under the category of fast food. The advent of fast food industry can be linked to United States of America where it is considered as a regular food item and is consumed in a large amount. Though the presence of fast food cannot be denied since ages and is being consumed in several countries in various forms and variations and are sold on small stalls, markets and are recognized by quick preparation and

convenient service. It is more like finding a normal samosa or vadapav on an Indian street. The revolution in the fast food industry was noticed somewhere around the beginning of twentieth century when Automats were introduced in America where customers could collect prepared food from a display cabinet or a vending machine which was a convenient and time consuming system for them.

Since then the phenomena of fast food boomed and several market players came on the floor and soon became huge national and then international fast food brands e.g. Mc Donald's, Burger King, white city were first few market leaders.

Indian Fast Food Industry

Indian fast food industry is of a significant size and has been growing at a rapid pace. It consists of several multinational and local brand outlets. While the nature of work in the multinational brands has widely been studied, studies in the Indian context are surprisingly low. Many studies have been conducted to determine the nature of work in the fast food industry. People have always debated about the dehumanizing nature of work in this industry. There is now a term "Mc Job" which reflects these types of jobs that has become a growing phenomenon around the world.

Success Factors in Fast Food Industry

Success in the fast food industry requires mastery of different parameters than fine dining. Customers who go to a fast food business are looking for speed, convenience and predictability rather than a memorable dining experience. Fast food entrepreneurs who understand this can master these elements of the business and perhaps make a profit.

Branding

McDonald's, Burger King and Wendy's are examples of extremely successful fast food branding. Their signs, logos and slogans are recognizable around the world. Fans of fast food like predictability and they want to know exactly what they are going to get before they go through the doors, according to the website Customer Service Zone. By providing consistent, easily recognizable and simple branding, a business reassures customers that nothing has changed. Simple slogans that lodge themselves in the brain are repeated endlessly on television and radio commercials, ensuring that when customers see the fast food outlet, they are primed to respond because the brand is already "inside" of them.

Location

Fast food is about convenience, so to be successful a fast food outlet should be located in a high-traffic area, according to the website Bplans. Fast food isn't considered a destination; customers won't travel into the countryside for a bag of fries in the same way that they would for a special restaurant experience. By locating outlets in shopping malls and on busy commercial strips, fast food companies gain business and impulse purchases from customers who had no preplanned patronage of the restaurant.

Speed

Fast food that lives up to its name gains more business than fast food that is actually slow. Many people grab fast food on the way to work or to another destination. The reason that drive-through windows are popular is that people don't even want to take the time to get out of the car. The faster a restaurant can deliver the ordered food, the happier the customer is. Setting up efficient and standardized kitchens and focusing on foods that can be cooked quickly are two of the ways that McDonald's became so successful in this competitive industry, according to Business Week.

Efficiency

Fast food restaurants run on thin profit margins and make their money by selling lots of product, according to the website Street Directory. In this commercial environment, functioning efficiently is critical. This means minimizing food waste, hiring help at minimum wage and benefiting from economies of scale when purchasing supplies. Every dollar that is unnecessarily spent on operations is a dollar subtracted from profits. Because of high employee turnover in the industry, training regimens for new employees need to be standardized, rapid and effective.

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