

HARNESSING THE POWER OF GUEST SENTIMENT

FARMERS RESTAURANT GROUP

Today's diners are the most sophisticated the restaurant industry has ever seen. Whether it's sourcing curiosity, knowledge of dietary restrictions, increased exposure to international cuisine, or a commitment to sustainability, today's restaurant goers are articulating their specific palates in more detail than ever. They also show no hesitation when sharing those opinions via the far-reaching Internet. So how do restaurants prove their guests are being heard?

SERVING THE MODERN DINER

For Farmers Restaurant Group, meeting the challenge of serving the modern diner is in their roots. When Farmers opened their first location - Founding Farmers - back in 2005, their top priority was creating a dining experience based on a robust made-from-scratch menu filled exclusively with responsibly sourced food. Its no surprise that this approach has won Founding Farmers the title of "Most Booked Restaurant on OpenTable" for 5 years running.

FRG has since expanded to serving thousands of guests across multiple concepts. This expansion has increased the number of potential opportunities guests have to leave feedback; and coupled with the expanded capability to do so (Yelp, Google+, TripAdvisor...), the sheer volume of guest feedback became overwhelming for the Farmers team.

To understand the exact challenges that Farmers Restaurant Group faced, we caught up with Marketing Director Meaghan O'Shea: "There are so many different ways for our guests to engage and give feedback and I think that specifically, being in the restaurant industry, you want to hear your guest and make sure they feel heard. For us, that means having our hand in every single one of those channels... which can be a little overwhelming!"

GETTING SENTIMENTAL

Luckily for [all of] us, Farmers Group came to Venga for a solution to this new challenge: help us harness the power of all our guests' feedback to succeed in our greater mission of providing an amazing dining experience.

With Venga's Sentiment Analysis feature, all reviews are aggregated and analyzed in one place, giving Farmers Group a new opportunity to take action on guest feedback. Developed with IBM Watson, Venga's sentiment analysis algorithm understands the detailed nuances of guest feedback and correlates those sentiments to term-groupings. Now, Meaghan and her team had access to group-wide and location-specific report cards, directly from FRG guests.

Meaghan referenced one example of Venga's Sentiment Analysis in action: "we were seeing feedback saying things like 'I got the fried chicken and it was wicked salty' - we'll take that and go directly to our chef or order it ourselves to do a quality assurance test."

QUALIFYING ALL FEEDBACK

But the value of thoroughly tracking guest feedback extends further for the Farmers team, as Meaghan points out: "having a software that aggregates all our reviews together in one place is not only a time saver, but it also helps us to easily identify trends, highlight what we're doing well, and call out areas that need more work or attention to detail."

Everything from fried chicken feedback, to Yelp comments raving about Founding Farmer's fried brussels sprouts, to Google+ posts mentioning the lovely outdoor seating at Farmers Fishers Bakers is captured and analyzed by Venga so the FRG Team doesn't have to. Meaghan added: "Now we can hold our restaurants accountable to two key success metrics - 'how is the food' and 'how is the service' - because we believe those are the two main things that affect the diner the most."

	OVERALL	FOOD	SERVICE	BEVERAGE	ATMOSPHERE	VALUE
All Locations	B	B 36,06 mentions	B 10,64 mentions	B 3,664 mentions	B+ 3,773 mentions	B- 1,003 mentions
Cafe ABC - Baltimore	B+	B+ 5,257 mentions	B+ 1,729 mentions	B+ 595 mentions	B+ 532 mentions	B 133 mentions
Cafe ABC - Boston	A-	A- 1,743 mentions	B+ 378 mentions	B+ 168 mentions	A 112 mentions	A- 56 mentions
Cafe ABC - New York City	B	B 2,632 mentions	B 637 mentions	B 189 mentions	B 217 mentions	A+ 56 mentions
Cafe ABC - Orlando	B-	B- 4,907 mentions	C+ 2,345 mentions	B- 672 mentions	B+ 763 mentions	C 196 mentions
Cafe ABC - San Francisco	B-	B- 5,978 mentions	B- 2,051 mentions	B- 728 mentions	B+ 812 mentions	B- 175 mentions
Cafe ABC - Seattle	B	B 6,069 mentions	B+ 1,169 mentions	B 497 mentions	A- 518 mentions	D+ 126 mentions
Cafe ABC - Washington DC	B	B 5,443 mentions	B+ 2,275 mentions	B+ 1,015 mentions	B+ 819 mentions	B- 266 mentions

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