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Forget Cooking! Delivery Will Become the New Standard

The Future of Food Delivery Services

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far.rabobank.com

Floris van der Sman

Analyst – Consumer Foods
+31 (30) 712 2759

In the near future, cooking at home will become a rare occasion, while food delivery will be the new standard. At least, that's if it's up to the online delivery platforms, which have already stolen the hearts of many consumers.

There are four key trends that will support the emergence of food delivery services—not only making them an ordering platform for consumers, but also a branding tool for restaurants. Now it's up to restaurants to decide and join the platforms... and not to miss the bus.

1: It will become easier to be great in delivering food

In general, when consumers order food online, they want to get it delivered as fast as possible. That's why delivery services are constantly looking for ways to improve delivery time without running at a loss. The process of lowering delivery costs can already be sped up by combining orders instead of going back and forth for each delivery. Also, thanks to self-learning algorithms, platforms know when a restaurant is busy and when it is not. They can then provide customers with real-time ETA indications or flexible pricing. The most recent development in delivery is the opening of central kitchens outside of city centres. These kitchens host dozens of different food concepts in one space. Sharing a space with colleagues and competitors lowers delivery costs for restaurants and improves the amount of orders: each customer now gets the chance to order their own favourite food, knowing everything will be delivered at the same time.

2: Eater experience will improve significantly

And the choice may be even broader, as apps will become personalised to every single customer as they learn the customer's individual preferences. In this way, fixed menus will disappear, and customers will receive truly personalised menus, leading them to try more and more cuisines. What's more, for example, the platforms can remind customers to order a protein-rich meal after a workout at the gym. This personalisation will increase the customer's experience significantly. Next, live and real-time track-and-trace options and transparency in preparing the food will also help to improve customer experience.

3: Virtual restaurants are on the rise

The barriers to opening a new restaurant are becoming very low. Already now, any cook can start cooking and start selling food on platforms. No restaurant is needed, just a kitchen. And we will see restaurants opening kitchens in which no guests are allowed—extremely efficiently designed and fully equipped kitchens at the edges of cities.

Also, restaurants that are normally too expensive can consider offering one or two meals via online platforms, just to become more accessible to the average customer. At last, asset utilisation can be achieved by renting idle kitchens.

4: Data-driven restaurants will be winners

Using data can help restaurants improve their success in two ways: customer satisfaction and operational excellence. First, by gaining access to online delivery platforms, restaurants are able to anticipate customers' feedback on a product level in real-time. This can help them improve food quality and eating experience, and they will be able to iterate faster at lower costs. Restaurants can adjust menu prices instantly, and data can help by way of automated promotions to specific target audiences. Secondly, restaurants can have detailed insight into in-store operational performance. For instance, insight in revenue losses due to understaffing can help them decide whether it is profitable to hire some extra staff on busy nights. Or optimal kitchen location and maximum delivery distance can be monitored.

The emergence of food delivery services is well-known. More and more restaurants are joining these platforms in order to expand their potential reach to customers. This can be achieved by improving the restaurant's performance via data and insight given to them by self-learning algorithms on the platforms. Restaurants can also significantly improve customer experience through hyper-personalised menu offerings, and they can stimulate ordering in. The emergence of super-kitchens will cut costs, making ordering in easier than going to the supermarket and preparing your own meal, as well as making it easier to provide all at the table with their personal preferences. Time will tell if food delivery services will actually become the new standard, making cooking at home the exception—but as we follow the latest trends, restaurants need to adjust their operational and strategical plan now in order not to lose out on opportunities in the near future.

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Floris van der Smán

Analyst – Consumer Foods

floris.van.der.sman@rabobank.com

+31 (30) 712 2759

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