

# TECHNOLOGY INTERNATIONAL

## Views from around the globe

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**W**e reached out to international franchise specialists to learn what technologies franchisors are using to enhance their customer experience, franchisee relationships, and improve franchisee profitability.

**Domino's Pizza** is using an AI chatbot called Dom to take orders, track deliveries, and answer questions, and an AI system called Dom Pizza Checker to scan pizzas to ensure they meet quality standards.

**McDonald's** is using an AI platform called Dynamic Yield to offer customized recommendations based on factors such as time of day, weather, and location, and an AI voice assistant called Apprente to take orders at the drive-thru.

**7-Eleven** is using an AI platform called Revionics to analyze customer data and demand patterns to adjust prices and offers in real time, and an AI system called Vera to automate its ordering process and reduce waste.

**Starbucks** is using an AI system called Deep Brew to power its rewards program, mobile app, and personalized recommendations, and an AI assistant called My Starbucks Barista to let customers order by voice or text.

Internationally, franchise organizations are benefiting from technology by adopting solutions from suppliers such as FranConnect, which has partnered with Lumin.ai, a tech platform that uses conversational AI to convert leads into sales opportunities; and has introduced an AI conversational bot that reaches out with SMS text messaging to franchise sales leads to book appointments, nurture leads, send reminders, and follow up with candidates who don't show for booked appointments.

### **The view from down under**

"Technology remains a key component of the franchisor's value proposition to their franchisees and acts as a multiplier upon

value crystallization at exit. That's why it's imperative for franchisors to stay abreast of technological advances," says Barry Money, Group CEO of Australia-based DC Strategy Franchise Consultants.

"The labor shortage and very high minimum wage in Australia continue to affect franchise businesses. AI and machine learning are enabling real-time decision-making, automation of routine tasks, and facilitation of scheduling, rostering, and supply chain optimization. AI software such as ChatGPT is also complementing the content generation and marketing function. In short, more technology, fewer humans," he says.

"Australian businesses have always been pretty keen on analytics. But predictive analytics is now taking great swaths of historical data and, combined with other technologies such as machine learning, turning that into business opportunities such as cross-selling, customer satisfaction initiatives, and demand and supply optimization."

### **The view from across the pond**

"Franchisors can greatly enhance the business efficiency and marketing success of their franchise through technology and AI-driven software. To get the most out of ChatGPT franchisors should continuously provide feedback to improve its performance over time. It is important to note that AI is not a magic solution, but rather a new asset to your balance sheet," says Alan Bradley, franchise digital marketing strategist at The Franchising Centre in the U.K.

"One such software for franchisors is from Social Places (South Africa). It manages all aspects of social media on platforms such as Google, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. In addition, it links with review software Trustpilot to handle reputation, brand social pages, reviews, ads, and much more via AI, making it a one-stop shop for franchisors looking to improve their digital marketing performance," he says.

"Another technology is from Ziik (Denmark), which helps digitize franchise operations manuals in real time with video and other interactive features. Franchisors can use it to improve the training process for franchisees, ensuring they have all the resources they need to succeed. The search functionality allows users to rid themselves of lengthy email trails and WhatsApp groups. Its early success and affordability speaks for itself, having secured McDonald's in Finland as a customer."

### **The view from Singapore**

"After Covid, there is a push from franchisees toward franchisors regarding technology as a key to maintain and attract customers. In Europe and in Asia, we see more brands investing in technology, not only in apps but also in other technologies. CRM technologies are increasingly requested by franchisees to monitor their customers," says Olivier Guerrero, CEO at Franchise World Link in Singapore.

"Another request from franchisees is for self-ordering kiosks, where McDonald's has been setting the standard. Customers love to use these kiosks, but also expect counter staff to be polite, friendly, and efficient. This has helped franchisees become better at handling operations and offering quick service," he says.

"In large cities with millions of visitors from abroad, a self-ordering kiosk helps customers read the ingredients in their native language. Self-ordering also ensures the order is accurate and served with speed. Japan and Korea have hotels with kiosks for check-in, allowing franchisees to free up staff to serve customers better."

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