



# Mobile Wait List & Hosting Technology Buyer's Guide

*Published by CAKE, a Sysco company*



## INTRODUCTION

# Got Waits?

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Choosing a mobile wait list system isn't easy. That's why CAKE - a Sysco company - has created a buyer's guide to help you make an intelligent and informed decision. Currently, there are many different providers racing to build apps and platforms to harness the powers of technology around the front-of-house. This buyer's guide was created to arm casual dining restaurants with the necessary knowledge to make an informed decision on a hosting management technology.

## A 'GOOD PROBLEM' SOLVED WITH MODERN DAY SOLUTIONS

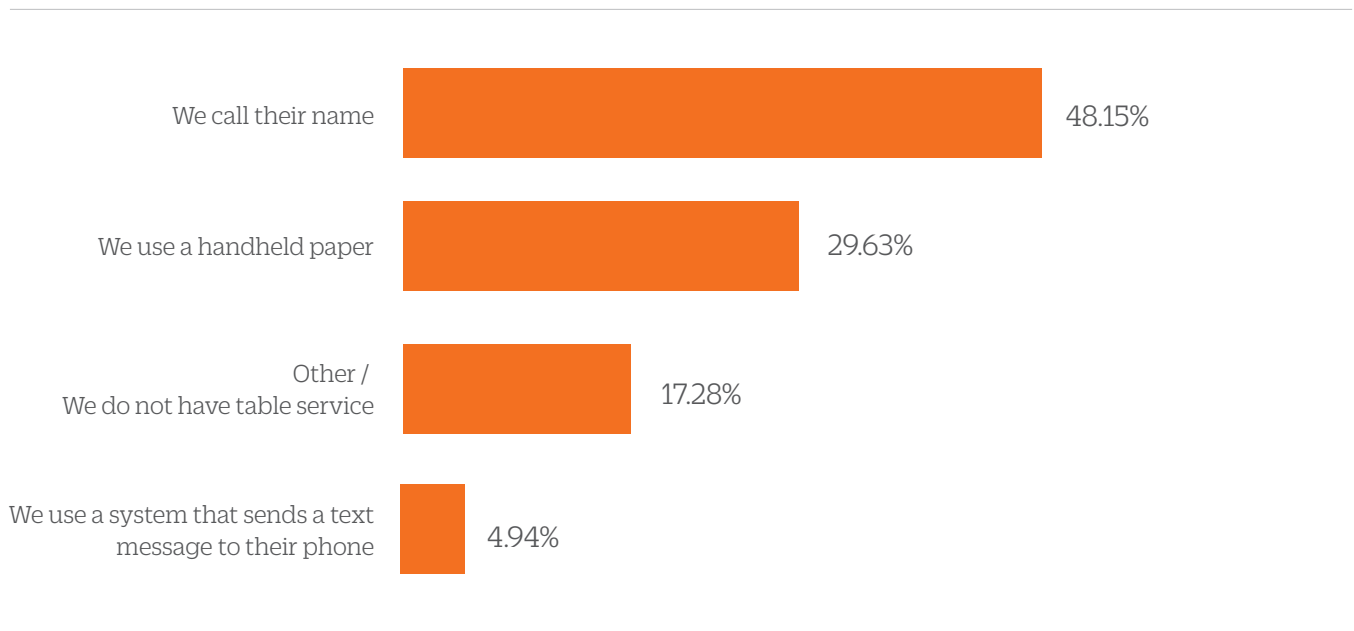
If you are fortunate enough to have the "problem" of too many guests wanting to eat in your restaurant at the same time, congratulations! However, this can backfire and lead to negative guest experiences made public via online reviews if left unsolved. Furthermore, everyone who leaves your restaurant because the wait is too long is a missed opportunity at incremental revenue. Thankfully, there is a new wave of affordable and easy-to-use technology, powered by innovation in cloud computing and mainstream mobile hardware, available for you to start using today with minimal impact to existing operations and traditional hosting procedures. You will be surprised at how easy the transition will be.

## WAITLIST & HOSTING MARKET ANALYSIS

Front of house operational processes and guest experience are undergoing the biggest shakeup since the invention of the digital cash register (POS) system. The major contributor is the rise of consumer mobile phone usage and the invention of the tablet computer. These advancements create a great opportunity for casual dining restaurants to significantly improve the efficiency of their operations while also creating a vastly improved guest experience.

## HOW DO RESTAURANTS CURRENTLY ALERT DINERS WHEN THEIR TABLE IS READY?

Don't worry, if you are still using old-school pagers or pen and paper, you are not alone. Less than 5% of the market has adopted a mobile notification system, but as you will learn in the next section, those that have made the switch are seeing incredible benefits and overall results.



# Mobile Waitlist vs Restaurant Pagers

There are a number of factors that ultimately tip a restaurateur's decision to switch from using traditional waitlist and notification systems, such as paper lists or pagers, to the use of mobile notifications.

	Mobile Waitlist	Pagers
COST SAVINGS		
Upfront Costs	\$0 - \$400 <sup>1</sup>	\$1,500 - \$5,000
Monthly Fees	\$0 - \$100	\$50 - \$500 <sup>2</sup>
STREAMLINED OPERATIONS		
Wait Time Estimates	✓	X
Two-Way Communication	✓	X
Table Cancellation	✓	X
Seating Suggestions	✓	X
GUEST DATA		
VIP Guest Notifications	✓	X
Guest Profiles & Preferences	✓	X
Email Collection	✓	X
Private Guest Feedback	✓	X
GUEST EXPERIENCE		
Wait Anywhere (no range anxiety)	✓	X
Receive Status Updates	✓	X
Overall Sentiment	😊	😞

<sup>1</sup> Includes iPad.

<sup>2</sup> Includes pager replacement costs (\$45 per pager).

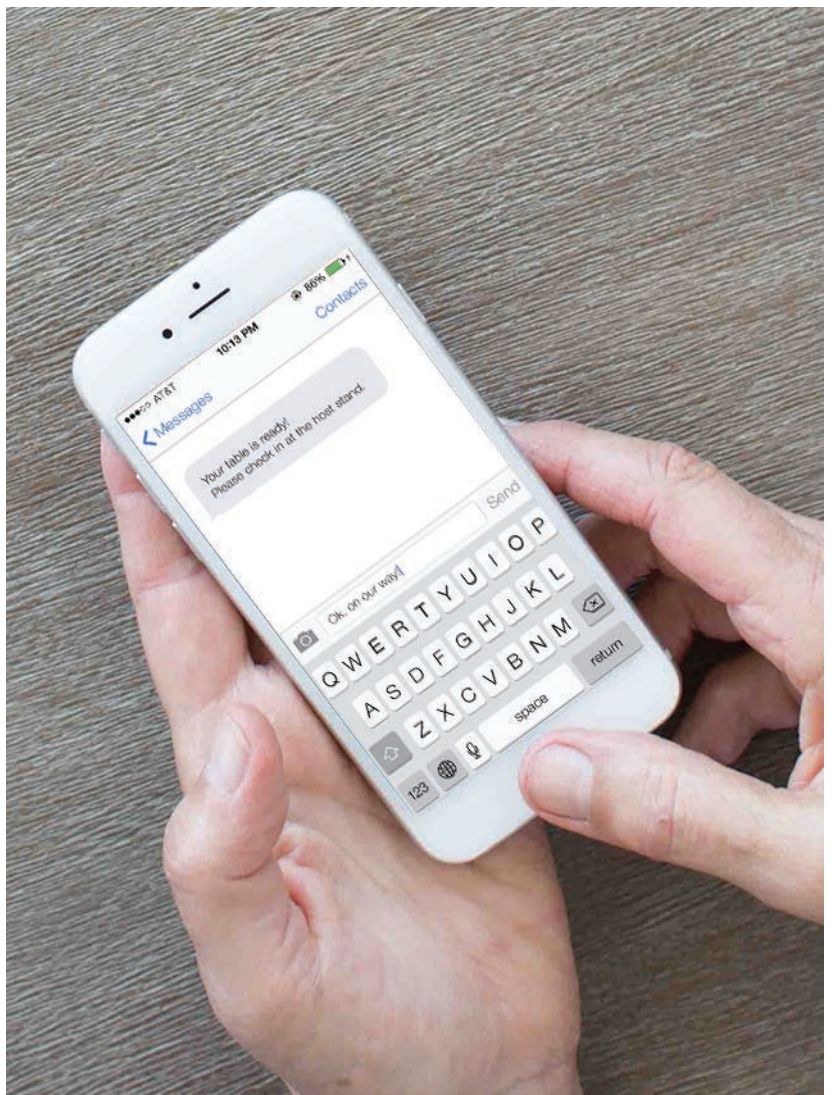
# Enhanced Operations and Guest Experience

According to Hospitality Technology's 2015 Restaurant Technology Study, the top drivers for IT projects are business efficiency and guest engagement/loyalty.

One of the easiest and most simple ways for a busy restaurant to accomplish both goals is to implement a mobile wait list and hosting solution. Traditionally, hosts become overwhelmed during rush periods, often giving false quotes for estimated wait times and then waste time searching and shouting for parties. How many times have you heard, "John, Party of 5! John, Party of 5!"?

Restaurants that utilize pagers still need to keep a separate list, but worst of all, they feel the pain of replacing multiple lost or broken pagers every month — at fifty dollars a pop!

A mobile wait list and guest management system will allow hosts to remain focused on greeting and seating guests - often requiring 25% fewer staff - while decreasing customer complaints by over 50%. Your front of house will run smoother than ever.





# Calculating the Return on Investment

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## DECREASE IN GUEST WALK-AWAYS

"Should we wait?" is a common question posed between a party of guests when they walk into a restaurant and are provided with a quoted wait time. Some will immediately turn away, others will patiently wait, but a portion will add themselves to the list but walk away at some point. This is what we call a "walk away."

It's proven that when restaurants implement a mobile wait list solution there is a lowered perceived wait time, resulting in a decrease of guest walk aways.

### BOTTOM LINE

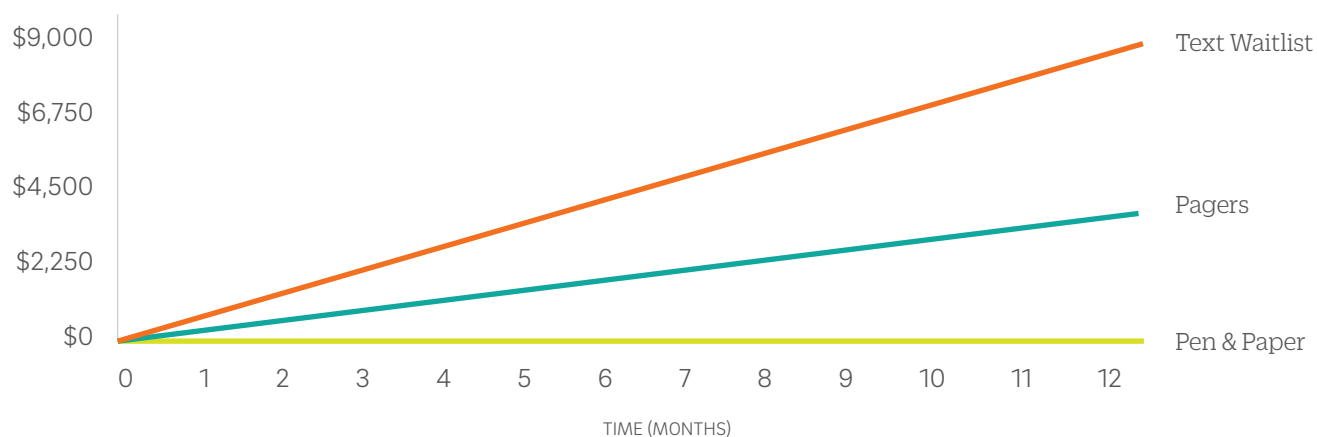
*A mobile waitlist system will result in more tables sat.*

After implementing a mobile wait list system restaurants are able to decrease guest walkaways by up to 28%, increasing your table turns and adding **more money to your bottom line**.

Lets take a look at what type of incremental revenue you can expect once you make the switch:

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### INCREMENTAL REVENUE BY WAITLIST SYSTEM



# Choosing the Right Hosting App

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## EASE OF USE

It is important that hosts are able to enter parties into the list as quickly as possible. Adding a party should take no more than 10 seconds and should be completed on one screen (no clicking through to multiple pages).

## OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS

A wait list should do more than just page guests. There is an opportunity to help hosts and managers make better decisions by collecting operational data. Some examples include: predictive wait time quotes based on historical data and table management with suggested seating assistance based on real-time cover counts in each section.

## DATA COLLECTION & MARKETING

Make sure your partner offers guest data collection with the ability to export to your existing databases. The arrival period can be a great time to collect customer data and even convert guests to loyalty club members. It is important to understand what data the vendor can deliver in addition beyond basic "text marketing" features, which have very limited and constrained results.

## GUEST EXPERIENCE

It is important to understand what additional features the vendor offers to improve the guest experience. Is there a way for the guest to check their place in line? Can guests check out a visual menu? Provide feedback? Can guests text back the host with a status update? All these features are important to have and lead to a better guest experience.

## ANALYTICS

Actionable guest analytics can help you quickly improve your bottom line. It's important to pick a partner that provides a dashboard to create operational baselines and see improvements. One example is quoted to actual wait times. Having accurate quote times can materially decrease walk-aways and increase revenue.

## BOOKING

Do you take reservations or call-aheads? If so, you may want this functionality integrated in your guest management vendors technology. This allows hosts to view separate lists for the waitlist, reservations and call-aheads, or combine them into a single list that provides a view of all waiting and expected guests.

In addition to being able to record and track each booking type, some systems provide the tools for your restaurant to offer online booking - from your website or a mobile app. While online booking typically includes reservations, a new option allows guests to use their phone to add themselves to a restaurant's waitlist. This essentially allows them to "get in line" before leaving their home, so they can skip the wait when they arrive.

## PRICE

Every partner should offer a limited free trial. Make sure you evaluate all available features while considering price. The average system costs between \$50 - \$100 per month with basic features, but some partners offer twice the amount of features.

## The Top Players (A to Z)

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**CAKE Guest Manager**  
Redwood City, CA  
Parent Company: Sysco



**FRESHTEXT**  
Princeton, NJ  
Parent Company: Heartland Payment Systems



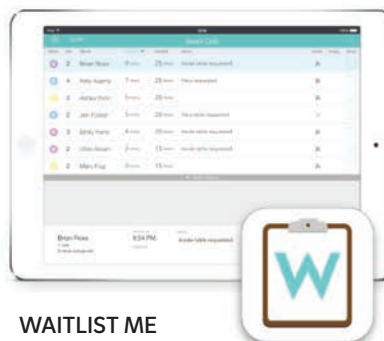
**NOWAIT**  
Pittsburgh, PA  
Parent Company: Private Company



**OPENTABLE**  
San Francisco, CA  
Parent Company: Priceline



**SEATME**  
San Francisco, CA  
Parent Company: Yelp



**WAITLIST ME**  
San Francisco, CA  
Parent Company: Switch Communications



# The Top Players (Side by Side)

	CAKE Guest Manager	Fresh XT	NoWait	Opentable	SeatMe	Waitlist Me
PRICING						
Setup Fee	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Monthly Fee	\$0 - \$99	\$40+	\$0 - \$199	\$0 - \$99	\$0 - \$99	\$0 - \$20
Free Plan Option	✓	X	✓	X	X	✓
WAITLIST FEATURES						
Notification Texts	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Monthly Fees	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Upfront Costs	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X
Monthly Fees	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
TABLE MANAGEMENT FEATURES						
Floor Maps	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Server Sections	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Table Assignments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
GUEST EXPERIENCE						
Marketing Platform	X	X	X	✓	✓	X
Guest App	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Check Wait Status	✓	X	✓	X	X	X
Loyalty Program	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓
BOOKING						
Website Booking	✓	✓	X	✓	X	X
Guest App Booking	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
Virtual Call-Ahead	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓
Auto Text Reminders	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
ANALYTICS						
Estimated vs Actual Quote	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X
Guest Demographics	✓	X	X	X	X	✓
Export Data	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓

## CONCLUSION

# Making a Choice

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Mobile technologies are becoming increasingly common in the restaurant industry for both operators and their guests. These technologies have a direct impact on shaping your guests experience while making their dining decisions at home and once they arrive at your venue. Making the right selection on a guest management system for your restaurant will have lasting effects on the way diners perceive your level of service. More times than not, the right system is one that is the easiest for your staff to pick up and use, best engages and delights your guests, and gives you the operator the most data/insights on your customers. We hope this buyer's guide was helpful in your decision making process, and that you consider CAKE Guest Manager during your search. Good luck!