



Nando's new digital payment processing platform is hot stuff

When local restaurant chain Nando's needed to implement a new digital payment processing platform, it turned to Transaction Junction. The result is a service that is as hot as the company's flame grilled PERi-PERi chicken.

In the restaurant industry, the importance of good customer service is balanced by the need to ensure the customer can easily pay for their meal at the end of their experience – and these two areas inevitably converge at the point-of-sale (PoS).

When the South African Nando's business embarked on a journey to implement new PoS devices, there were specific requirements from the financial sector that had to be met regarding the implementation of integrated cards, as well as critical issues around security. For the former, the key requirement was that whoever supplied the new PoS devices needed to be an Oracle partner, while with the latter, the demands were focused around the protection of customer data.

Nando's is a South African restaurant chain co-founded in 1987 in the Johannesburg suburb of Rosettenville by Fernando Duarte and Robert Brozin. The business

specialises in Afro-Portuguese food and is particularly renowned for its flame grilled PERi-PERi chicken. Today, the company operates well over 1,200 outlets across 23 countries.

Change is good

According to Daniel Harmse, Casa Technology Manager, responsible for IT in the Nando's SA restaurants, when a company like Nando's works with a payment partner – whose role is to ensure that payments are delivered at the PoS securely and timeously – tight integration is required. After all, he explains, this third party provides middleware connecting the restaurant's PoS platform to the relevant financial services provider. This, in turn, enables end-customers to undertake quick and easy transactions while ensuring a simple financial reconciliation between the bank and the store.

“We chose Transaction Junction, which is a business-enablement platform that delivers innovative solutions that provide the link between the end-customer, the restaurant and the bank facilitating the transaction. What sets them apart is the fact that they are both bank- and device-agnostic. This meant we had flexibility both in terms of the financial services provider utilised and the end-user devices we chose for our stores.”

The service offering as well as the ease of access reporting system was some of the factors for Nando's to move to Transaction Junction. In addition, he continues, the single biggest deciding factor was the need for the payment processor to be an Oracle partner - This was required for the new Point of Sale which was to be installed in the near future.

"Once we had studied the Transaction Junction offering, which encompasses not only the technology and bank agnosticism already mentioned, as well as good software and a strong reporting functionality, we quickly began trialing the system in a few selected stores for a period of about nine months. This test provided us with a lot of clarity around the system's benefits, and so we began rolling it out to the majority of stores at the beginning of 2019."

New features

Harmse points out that Transaction Junction also added new features to the solution, including a reporting functionality that provides real-time reporting on transactions, which neither stores nor the company's finance department had access to before.

"In the past, a store that received a query on a transaction had to take this to the service provider and then wait for a response. With the new solution, individual stores now have direct access to the system, using secure log-ins to ensure that the customer data remains secure."

"Transaction Junction also offers mobile integrated cards, a facility that ensures that when payment is made by card, it can only register as such. In the past, non-integrated card payments required the cashier to choose between a cash and a card payment, and if they accidentally pressed cash, it could cause difficulties during cash up. However, with the integrated set-up, the card is only activated after the 'card' button on the PoS device is pressed, eliminating errors and at the same time acting as a barrier against fraud."

"Integrated cards also talk directly to the bank in real-time, which means that if the customer has no funds in the account, or the card is stolen, it immediately informs the device, which will then refuse to allow the transaction to go through. This is a huge step forward from the non-integrated cards, where any issue would only be discovered at the end of the day, when the transactions

were processed after closing time."

He adds that Transaction Junction also offers two types of PoS device - one that uses a store's WiFi to connect, and another that uses 3G connectivity, and is thus ideal for deliveries. With deliveries being a large market, both in SA and across the globe, this is functionality that is increasingly sought after by restaurants.

Tackling the challenges

There were inevitably a few snags during the implementation phase, he continues. This caused several teething problems and meant that Transaction Junction had to jump in and assist in those situations.

"The challenge for us as Nando's was that some snags were only discovered during the roll out to the corporate estate of stores and were going to be both complex and time-consuming to

solve. This had the potential to create havoc with our systems, so we were especially pleased that Transaction Junction chose to tweak its own software for us, to solve these difficulties as quickly as possible. This, I believe demonstrates that what we have is a genuine partnership. As Nando's our partners all go to great lengths to work with us, here Transaction Junction also showed they were prepared to go to the lengths they did, to ensure that the system works optimally for us."

One of the other challenges was that of employee resistance, but he adds that this was to be expected, since it is human nature to not want to switch to something new when you are comfortable with what you know.

"It goes without saying that once the system was in place and the reporting functionality came to the fore with its ability to provide immediate access to transactions, employees quickly grew to appreciate it."

The future is bright

"There have been numerous benefits for Nando's. Not only do we receive an excellent level of service from Transaction Junction, but the regular security updates they provide are crucial, particularly with news about hacking and cybercrime prevalent in today's headlines. Transaction Junction also has made inroads into security certifications, which gives us greater peace of mind."

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Harmse also points to the mobile integrated cards as offering a massive benefit, as it makes cash ups quicker and simpler and decreases the potential for fraud and theft. Productivity is increased due to having to balance fewer errors and the reporting functionality means that it is a simple matter to check past or current transactions, so in the case of, for example a refund query, this can be undertaken quickly and easily.

He adds that although it is difficult to gauge whether it has improved customer satisfaction, the fact is customers in any industry are always quick to point out if they are unhappy, and there seems to be very little noise from a customer perspective. This is important, he says, as customer satisfaction is Nando's' number one priority.

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Craig Duggan, Head of Commercial at Transaction Junction, says. "We are proud to be associated with the Nando's brand and pleased that our technology proved itself successfully in a large food and beverage deployment. Working with Oracle to provide a fully certified OPI Solution into Micros and now Simphony, means that we are able to work according to our customers' requirements, providing them with both a technological as well as commercial edge."

"Nando's knows what they need, are able to express their requirements, and the flexibility in our technology stack enables us to exceed expectations. We are continuously working on new and innovative ways of being able to ensure digital payment acceptance in all areas of their business."

"Our investment in the areas of P2PE, as well as technology, means that Transaction Junction brings quality solutions to merchants without adding additional and unnecessary hardware and communications overheads to their environments," Duggan concludes.



About Transaction Junction (TJ)

Transaction Junction (TJ) focuses on the digital payments journey, using technology and innovation to enhance the overall customer experience.

TJ is a business-enablement transaction platform that delivers digital payment solutions to suit the needs of businesses across diverse markets, while ensuring that the regulatory requirements are taken care of.

TJ provides services that encompass every level of touchpoint in the payment chain, ensuring that payments are delivered at the point of sale (POS) securely and timeously. TJ solutions provide retailers with the flexibility they need when it comes to choosing the financial services provider, digital product ranges and end-user devices they require.

TJ consistently delivers innovations via the introduction of new technologies, payment types and economies of scale, all positively influencing the integrity of the overall transaction flow.

www.transactionjunction.co.za

