

Space Utilization and Time Management

Retail rent is the most expensive rent type; over-rented space is not only wasteful, but it also adversely affects the customer journey. When a shop is packed, customers may choose to leave. If such a situation persists, customers may never come back.

Therefore, optimizing space utilization and maximizing the number of customer visits per day are common challenges for retailers. Providing online purchases, take-outs, and deliveries are standard solutions.



A Case Study



A popular restaurant in Toronto that specialized in giant lobsters, queen crabs and aged steaks was always packed. Their booking policy only allowed patrons to reserve a table for dinner for a maximum of two hours, with intervals available from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm, 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm, and 8:00 pm to 10:00 pm. They had pre-set combos to speed up the ordering time.

Once I booked a table for 6 pm, and we arrived there on time. However, the table was not ready until 6:30 pm. We placed our order within one minute after being seated, but we had to wait over an hour for the dishes to arrive. There were nine dishes, and they arrived almost simultaneously. I believe that was because the restaurant wanted to shorten the patrons' eating time so that they could finish their dishes and leave as soon as possible. Their cooks should be praised, as all dishes were cooked well and efficiently. However, the restaurant's table booking policy created a bottleneck for itself.



Like us, all the patrons who booked tables at 6 pm were seated and ordered at approximately the same time. In other words, the cooks must prepare dishes for over 50 tables simultaneously. That was the reason why we had to wait for over an hour for the dishes to come. On the other hand, the cooks would be idle once the dishes for the 6 pm interval were delivered. They would wait for another wave from the 8 pm patrons. Again, most tables, seated around 6:30, were delayed and could not check their bills until 8:45 pm or later.

What they should have done was to take reservations at 15-minute intervals, allowing their cooks to prepare dishes continuously without idling and ensuring that patrons would not have to wait for over an hour. The dining time could then be shortened to 1.5 hours, instead of 2.5 hours, allowing them to serve 50 more tables each night.



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