

Drive-Through Service Optimization & Customer Flow Analysis

Panda Express — Columbia, SC (2025)



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Context

Drive-through operations in quick-service restaurants face increasing pressure from labor shortages, service inefficiencies, and rising customer expectations.

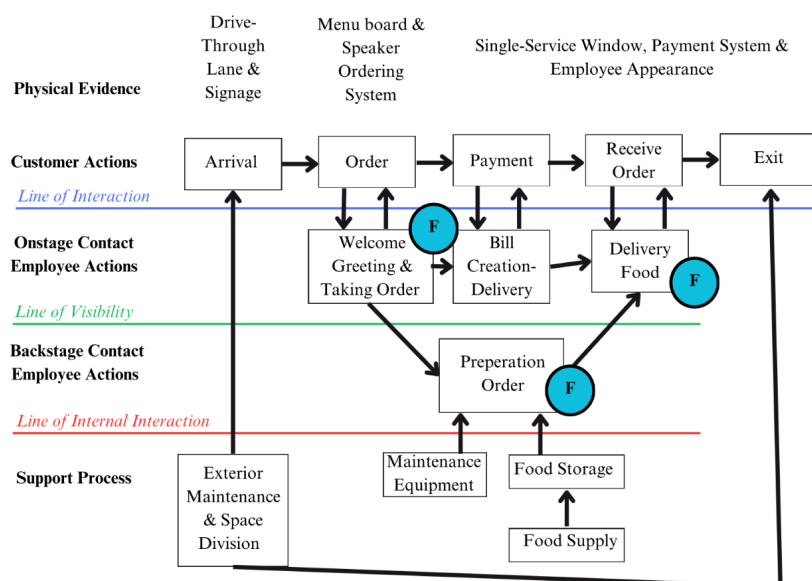
At this Panda Express location, recurring operational issues such as excessive wait times, order inaccuracies, and drive-through congestion significantly impact customer satisfaction and service performance.

Service failures are not isolated but interconnected across key stages of the customer journey, creating compounding inefficiencies and negative customer experiences.

Situation Audit

The current landscape and level of perception & exposure

The Service Blueprint Approach



Analysis based on customer sentiment data and operational service mapping across the drive-through journey (2025).

Key Insight: Service Failures Are Systemic, Not Isolated

The primary service failures are not individual issues, but interconnected breakdowns across the ordering, preparation, and delivery stages of the drive-through process.

Key Gaps & Constraints

Operational efficiency is not determined by speed alone, but by coordination across the entire service system.

Panda Express Drive-Through

Issue or Gap	Current Impact	Value if Resolved
Inefficiencies at order-taking stage (communication & speed)	High	High
Bottlenecks in food preparation and timing	High	High
Congestion and poor drive-through line management	High	High
Single-window service design limiting operational flow	Medium	High

Strategic Direction

Steps to take to improve service flow and organization

Service performance improvement requires treating the drive-through as an integrated system rather than isolated touchpoints.

Improving service performance requires addressing the drive-through as an integrated system rather than isolated touchpoints.

Implementing technology such as AI-assisted ordering and digital menu boards can improve accuracy and reduce wait times, while operational redesign — including dual-lane systems and improved traffic flow — can reduce congestion and increase efficiency.

Enhancing coordination among the order-taking, preparation, and delivery stages is critical to reducing delays and improving the overall customer experience.

A combination of technological investment, process redesign, and staff training will enable more consistent and efficient service delivery.



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Full report, tailored service optimization, and customer experience analysis available upon request.

Available for consultancy engagements in hospitality and service operations.