

Genki Sushi and the Kousoku Innovation—Still a Gimmick or a Game Changer?



Source: Unsplash (2019)

Background

The word ‘Gimmick’ refers to something that is used to attract people’s attention or interest (Cambridge University, n.d.). For many years, businesses across industries have come up with creative ways to make gimmicks to attract customers, including publicity stunts or adding unique elements to their products (Rachmad, 2024).

As one of the largest sushi restaurant chains in Asia, Genki Sushi introduced the concept of “Kousoku” (高速) from Japan to Hong Kong in 2015 (Genki Sushi, n.d.). Inspired by the Japanese Shinkansen (新幹線), the Kousoku system allows a bullet train-looking tray to operate on a fully automated track, and delivers sushi dishes straight from the kitchen to the customers’ table (Tan, 2018). At that time, Genki Sushi pioneered the whole industry by being the first sushi chain to adopt a fully automated operation model with a three-tier Kousoku express delivery system (Genki Sushi, n.d.). Together with the self-ordering system through iPad or mobile devices, Genki Sushi was able to streamline and speed up their service, as well as offering an unprecedented innovative dining experience to the customers (Genki Sushi, n.d.). Since then, “Kousoku” quickly became signature of Genki Sushi as many flocked to the restaurant to experience the latest addition to the store when it was first introduced.

Challenges

Nearly a decade after its debut, the Kousoku system is no longer the novelty it once was. Since its launch, many competitors have replicated similar technologies, diminishing Genki Sushi’s first-mover advantage. As a result, the uniqueness of the concept has faded, and customers are less impressed over time.

Moreover, the fully automated service model—including self-ordering—can be challenging for elderly customers or those less comfortable with technology. The brand has also faced criticism over inconsistent food quality and hygiene issues. These concerns have prompted some to suggest that the restaurant should prioritize improving food and service quality, rather than focusing solely on operational speed and technological novelty.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the benefits and potential drawbacks of introducing fully automated systems like the “Kousoku” express delivery system in Genki Sushi?
2. How can the restaurant address operational challenges like customers’ technological incompetence and inconsistent quality levels when adopting automated service?
3. What other technologies or innovations can Genki Sushi adopt to further differentiate itself from competitors?
4. How can Genki Sushi safeguard its innovations from imitation and maintain a competitive edge when launching new technologies or business models in the future?

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Keywords

- Food and Beverage
- Marketing
- Selling Point
- Innovation
- Automation
- Self-service

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元气寿司与“高速”创新——仍是噱头还是游戏规则改变者？



Source: Unsplash (2019)

背景

“噱头”一词指用来吸引人们注意力或兴趣的事物(Cambridge University, n.d.)。多年来，各行各业的公司都想出各种有创意的方法来制造噱头以吸引顾客，包括宣传活动或为其产品添加独特元素(Rachmad,2024)。

作为亚洲最大的寿司连锁餐厅之一，元气寿司于 2015 年将日本“高速”概念引入香港(Genki Sushi, n.d.)。受日本新干线启发，“高速”系统让一个看起来像子弹头列车的托盘在完全自动化的轨道上运行，将寿司菜品直接从厨房送到顾客餐桌(Tan,2018)。当时，元气寿司通过首家采用配备三层高速速递系统的全自动化运营模式，开创了整个行业的先河(Genki Sushi, n.d.)。结合通过 iPad 或移动设备进行自助点餐的系统，元气寿司得以简化和加速其服务，并为顾客提供前所未有的创新用餐体验(Genki Sushi, n.d.)。自此，“高速”迅速成为元气寿司的标志，在其首次推出时，许多人涌向餐厅体验这一最新店面设施。

挑战

在其首次亮相近十年后，高速系统已不复当初的新颖性。自其推出以来，许多竞争对手复制了类似技术，削弱了元气寿司的先发优势。因此，这一概念的独特性已逐渐消退，随着时间的推移，顾客的惊叹感也减少了。

此外，全自动服务模式——包括自助点餐——对于老年顾客或不太熟悉技术的顾客来说可能具有挑战性。该品牌还因食品质量和卫生问题不一致而面临批评。这些担忧促使一些人建议，餐厅应优先改善食品和服务质量，而不是仅仅专注于运营速度和技术的新颖性。

讨论问题

1. 在元气寿司引入像“高速”速递系统这样的全自动化系统有哪些好处和潜在缺点？
2. 采用自动化服务时，餐厅应如何应对诸如顾客技术能力不足和质量水平不一致等运营挑战？
3. 元气寿司还可以采用哪些其他技术或创新来进一步区别于竞争对手？
4. 在未来推出新技术或商业模式时，元气寿司如何能保护其创新免遭模仿并保持竞争优势？

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关键词

- 餐饮
- 市场营销
- 卖点
- 创新
- 自动化
- 自助服务

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元氣壽司與"高速"創新——仍是噱頭還是遊戲規則改變者？



Source: Unsplash (2019)

背景

"噱頭"一詞指用來吸引人們注意力或興趣的事物 (Cambridge University, n.d.)。多年來，各行各業的公司都想出各種有創意的辦法來製造噱頭以吸引顧客，包括宣傳活動或為其產品添加獨特元素 (Rachmad, 2024)。

作為亞洲最大的壽司連鎖餐廳之一，元氣壽司於 2015 年將日本"高速"概念引入香港 (Genki Sushi, n.d.)。受日本新幹線啟發，"高速"系統讓一個看起來像子彈頭列車的托盤在完全自動化的軌道上運行，將壽司菜品直接從廚房送到顧客餐桌 (Tan, 2018)。當時，元氣壽司通過首家採用配備三層高速速遞系統的全自動化營運模式，開創了整個行業的先河 (Genki Sushi, n.d.)。結合通過 iPad 或移動設備進行自助點餐的系統，元氣壽司得以簡化和加速其服務，並為顧客提供前所未有的創新用餐體驗 (Genki Sushi, n.d.)。自此，"高速"迅速成為元氣壽司的標誌，在其首次推出時，許多人湧向餐廳體驗這一最新店面設施。

挑戰

在其首次亮相近十年後，高速系統已不復當初的新穎性。自其推出以來，許多競爭對手複製了類似技術，削弱了元氣壽司的先發優勢。因此，這一概念的獨特性已逐漸消退，隨著時間的推移，顧客的驚嘆感也減少了。

此外，全自動服務模式——包括自助點餐——對於老年顧客或不太熟悉技術的顧客來說可能具有挑戰性。該品牌還因食品品質和衛生問題不一致而面臨批評。這些擔憂促使一些人建議，餐廳應優先改善食品和服务品質，而不是僅僅專注於營運速度和技術的新穎性。

討論問題

1. 在元氣壽司引入像"高速"速遞系統這樣的全自動化系統有哪些好處和潛在缺點?
2. 採用自動化服務時, 餐廳應如何應對諸如顧客技術能力不足和品質水平不一致等營運挑戰?
3. 元氣壽司還可以採用哪些其他技術或創新來進一步區別於競爭對手?
4. 在未來推出新技術或商業模式時, 元氣壽司如何能保護其創新免遭模仿並保持競爭優勢?

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關鍵詞

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- 市場營銷
- 賣點
- 創新
- 自動化
- 自助服務

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