

# Call Centers:

*Excellent Investment, Endless Possibilities*



**Granbury**  
Restaurant Solutions

# Call Centers: Excellent Investment, Endless Possibilities

Restaurant operations today are faced with tough issues: keeping customers satisfied in a competitive marketplace, reducing costs through greater efficiency, and finding new ways to grow their business. Many concepts are turning to call centers as a way to better manage their order taking process, freeing them to focus on their business. With the flexible options available, call centers can be adapted to fit nearly any size of restaurant operation, from local concepts with two or three locations to national chains.

Whether you create a call center operation yourself, outsource to a professional provider, or just allow your “main” restaurant to take orders for other locations, centralizing customer service in a call center makes sense for many restaurant operators.

## WHY SHOULD I USE A CALL CENTER?

Beyond providing greater efficiency and improving customer service, call centers can help a restaurant operation in many, often unexpected, ways:

### 1. A better, more consistent customer experience.

“With the introduction of the call center, we saw the average number of complaints about wrong orders and confusion in conversations drastically decrease,” says Brandi Babb, director of training for zpizza, a nationwide franchisor that uses Exit41 as an outsourced call center with integrated point-of-sale technology from Granbury Restaurant Solutions. “At one of our highest volume locations we saw these types of complaints decrease 75%.”

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*“FireFly POS’s one-number ordering lets us serve customers in bigger and better ways than before at less cost.”*

KELLY KNUDSON, DAVINCI’S,  
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

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- 2. One-number marketing allows you to advertise to customers across a large geographic area** without making the customer choose the correct delivery location. You can build your brand recognition with a single phone number.
- 3. Increased order accuracy and order taking capacity.** Data maintained by a call center tends to be more accurate and complete. Plus, a call center is equipped to handle a potentially limitless call volume.
- 4. Labor savings, which includes base salary, taxes, insurance, benefits, and uniforms.** “We’ve seen a 2.5% overall decrease in our labor percentage,” says Kris Adam of Pizza Fusion in Weston, Florida, who uses QSR Delivery Solutions, a Florida-based call center provider.

*“We set up the call center nearly two years ago to improve customer service by offering a single phone number for all our locations. We decided to close the dedicated call center earlier this year and offer one-number ordering through the stores. One-number ordering definitely gives me better control, is convenient for advertising, and allows me to process more orders with three or four fewer employees.”*

HECTOR, PIZZA STUFF

- 5. Better allocation of labor resources.** Instead of taking orders, more employees can deliver orders or perform other duties. “The call center has allowed us to lower the amount of cashier hours,” says Babb. “Instead of paying for someone to take orders on an hourly basis, we are paying on a per-order basis. Many of the locations have been able to decrease by one cashier during call center shifts.”
- 6. Increased check averages through “completing the order”,** as Lise Lahood, director of sales for Exit41, which is based in Andover, Massachusetts, puts it. “It’s not so much upselling as making sure customers have everything they need, such as drinks.”
- 7. Enhanced marketing and sales generation** through e-mail or mailing promotions, and loyalty/rewards programs based on customer data. For instance, Exit41 launched a marketing campaign based on customer ordering data that yielded a 20% return.
- 8. Added services,** including menu maintenance, inventory setup, and corporate reporting, if you choose a third-party provider.
- 9. Streamlined complaint and error tracking.** Call center personnel are well trained to handle customer service issues and can provide overall tracking on store performance; if certain stores regularly make product errors or late deliveries you will know about it.

## Case Study:

### daVinci's



**Headquarters:** Lincoln, Nebraska

**POS System:** FireFly Point-of-Sale

**# of Stores Using the Call Center:** 5

**One-number Ordering?** Yes

**Former Call Center Solution:** Dedicated, proprietary call center

**Current Call Center Solution:** Decentralized one-number ordering; all stores act as a call center

- 10. Provide customer feedback** through outbound/inbound customer survey calls and e-mail survey requests.
- 11. Comprehensive reporting,** such as call volume, average hold times, and rates of abandonment. This information can assist in labor planning and measuring the effectiveness of marketing campaigns.

## CALL CENTER: DO-IT-YOURSELF OR OUTSOURCE?

If you've decided a call center would benefit your operation, your next decision is whether to establish one yourself, or to outsource to a professional call center provider. Generally, there are three options to choose from:

- **Create your own call center operation** in a designated facility that is separate from your stores. This could be an additional building or part of your corporate headquarters.
- **Create a "hybrid" call center**, in which one or more stores takes in-store orders plus phone orders for multiple locations. "FireFly has been a blessing to work with as we decentralized our call center to all of our stores," says Kelly Knudson, co-owner of daVinci's, a FireFly user in Lincoln, Nebraska. "Each store has two or three phone lines, for a total of 18 lines across the city. When things get busy, an employee just pushes a button to add a phone line. The order taker simply enters the customer's phone number into the FireFly system, and the order is automatically routed to the right store."
- **Outsource to a professional provider**, who handles all the logistics of call center operations, from training agents to taking orders to tracking store performance. zpizza uses its third-party call center for 20 of its locations during dinner four days a week. "We look forward to increasing this as more stores open," says Brandi Babb of zpizza. "During the call center's hours, 70% of business goes through the call center." For maximum flexibility, zpizza franchisees have the option to use the call center during weekend rush hours or during more expanded hours throughout the day.

You will also need to decide how you will integrate your call center operations into your business. For instance:

- Will you go full time, or just use the call center for the busy dayparts?

## Case Study:

### zpizza



**Headquarters:** Irvine, California

**POS System:** FireFly Point-of-Sale

**One-number Ordering:** No

**Call Center Solution:** Outsource to Exit41, a third-party call center provider

**# of Stores Using the Call Center:** 20

- Will all your stores use the call center, or just a select few?
- What about franchise locations?

## CRITERIA FOR SELECTING A THIRD-PARTY CALL CENTER PROVIDER

Should you decide to outsource your call center operation, do your research to ensure a good match between your organization's business methods and culture and a potential provider. A good way to simplify the evaluation process is creating an RFP (Request for Proposal) for potential providers. You may want to consider the following factors:

- **Reputation and industry experience.** What is the call center's reputation from both a corporate and store-side perspective? Ask for references at both levels. Also verify that call center employees have experience in the restaurant environment.
- **Performance.** Ask to see the numbers. "The provider's track record should match any claims made during the sales process," says Robert Swartzelder of QSR Delivery Solutions. He recommends checking for:

- Average talk times
- Average queue times
- Average abandon rates
- Number of customer service complaints and method of reporting
- Feedback on most common customer requests
- Ticket averages

- **Flexibility.** A good call center provider will offer a variety of solutions that can adapt to the particular needs of your business, such as one-number ordering or the ability to use the call center only during certain hours.
- **Brand representation and communication skills.** Your provider should train agents on your brand and menu, for a seamless transaction both for customers and store operators. In addition, agents should be able to effectively communicate with customers from all geographic areas, especially if market offerings vary by region. "Ensure that you train and treat the call center team as an extension of your restaurant staff," says Babb of zpizza.
- **Technical criteria,** including scalability, security, backup and recovery procedures, PCI-compliant payment systems, and customer support.

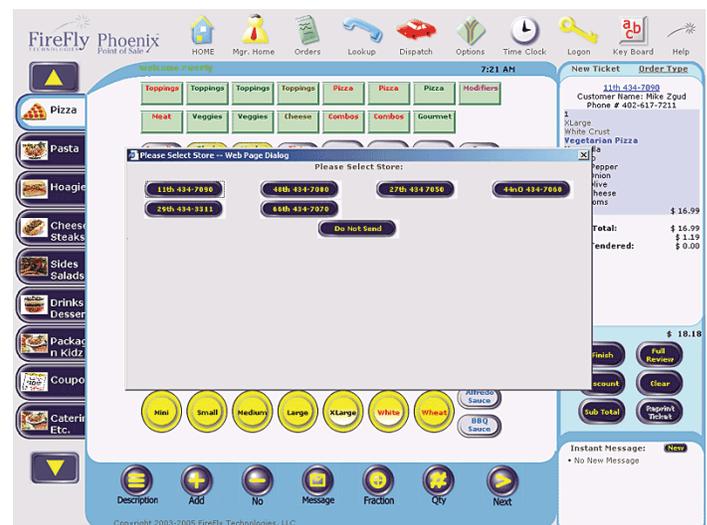
## INTEGRATING A CALL CENTER INTO YOUR OPERATION

Whether you do it yourself or outsource, implementing a call center into your operation requires a careful plan. Be sure to factor in time for:

- Developing procedure manuals and training documentation for call center personnel.
- Coordinating with your phone company to forward calls to the call center.
- Running tests at a designated store.
- Going live across your operation. Give your employees time to adjust to the new system—and time for your

provider to resolve any issues in the system.

- Marketing the "one number" to call, if you are implementing this as part of the call center initiative.
- Ongoing communication and training between call center personnel to make sure they are aware of any planned marketing initiatives, menu changes, or operation changes.



When a customer calls in, the agent asks for the customer address, and the POS system will automatically select the correct store location.

Implementing a call center solution can vary, from a week to two weeks or more, says Lahood of Exit41. "The longer rollouts usually involve a centralized phone number, since the concept has to establish in-store marketing. Our strategy is to make the transition as quick and easy as possible for the client."

## TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

With today's Web-based communication technologies, implementing a call center is easier than ever before. Ideally, the call center agents will have the same type of POS order taking system as your store, and it will be seamlessly integrated so that orders flow easily from call center to store.

For example, the FireFly POS system by Granbury Restaurant Solutions offers integrated call center management tools. "At the call center, agents use the same software as store personnel would use to take an order," explains Duessa Holscher, Marketing and Solutions Manager at GRS. "However, the call center has added functionality to automatically route orders to the correct store, to vary pricing or menu item availability by store, to monitor order status once it is at the store, and to analyze and track store volume."

"It was critical that the integration was as seamless as possible and caused little to no disruption to the business," says Brandi Babb of zpizza. "We tested the integration between FireFly and Exit41 in the corporate stores initially and then slowly introduced franchise locations. A critical part to a successful integration is having all parties actively communicating. Weekly conference calls with all involved parties helped us stay on top of issues."

Another advantage of the FireFly POS system is that it can be used as a "hybrid" call center, where one particular store will take in-store orders as well as phone orders for multiple locations.

Sometimes call centers will use a separate system or an "online ordering"-type system to place orders. However, this can add challenges in maintaining synchronized menus between the call center and the store, and in giving the call center the information they need about the order status after it is initially placed.

In evaluating a POS system that will work for both store and call center, keep in mind:

- **Flexibility:** Does the system give you options to automatically route orders to appropriate stores, or reroute if needed? "It's a testament to the flexibility of the FireFly system that we were able to shuffle workstations from our service center to our store locations without problems or additional cost," says

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*"FireFly has been great to work with on developing the integration between the POS system and our call center."*

BRANDI BABB,  
DIRECTOR OF TRAINING, ZPIZZA

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Knudson of daVinci's. "Whatever configuration our service center and stores have, we can rely on FireFly to back us up."

- **Visibility:** Does the system give you visibility to the order status if a customer calls back to change it?
- **Menu and pricing maintenance:** Is it easy to keep stores synchronized with the call center?
- **Security:** Do you have a secure network infrastructure to ensure seamless communication between the call center and the store?
- **Payments:** Do you have the ability to take credit card payments over the phone, then modify the order when the customer picks it up at the store? Can the stores add a tip to the order? Is the point-of-sale's payment system PCI-compliant?
- **Backup and recovery.** Does the POS system have redundancy built into the hardware in case of a system crash?
- **Technical support and product lifecycle.** How committed is the POS provider to call center support?

*“We recently opened a second location that’s more centrally located to the housing district and that is ideal for delivery. We use FireFly’s mapping feature to automatically divert an order from one store to another. Or, we can manually switch the order. So if a delivery order is phoned in to Store A, we can route that order to Store B, which is closer. The order will print at Store B, ensuring the customer gets their meals hot and on time.”*

JENNIFER DOWLING, BIG CHEESE PIZZA, GALLUP, NEW MEXICO



## CONCLUSION

A call center, whether in-house or outsourced, can streamline your business, improve customer service, and provide a platform for growth. As you plan your call center, remember that there’s no one-size-fits-all solution. Talk to other restaurant operators, carefully evaluate your options, and ensure you have all the tools and technology needed to move ahead.

## FIREFLY’S PREFERRED CALL CENTER PROVIDERS



**Exit41**

[www.Exit41.com](http://www.Exit41.com) | 978.749.9000



**QSR Delivery Solutions**

[www.qsrdelivery.com](http://www.qsrdelivery.com) | 888.846.3845



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