PolyAI

CUSTOMER STORIES

How Big Table Group automates £140k in reservations each month

CHALLENGE

The Big Table Group was missing 60% of calls to their restaurants, potentially missing revenue from new bookings.

SOLUTION

A voice assistant that answers every call, takes reservations, and answers customer questions over the phone.

RESULTS

Big Table Group is now answering every call with PolyAI, booking 3800+ reservations worth £140,000+ in revenue to the Group

Industry	Restaurants
Use cases	Bookings & Reservations; Frequently asked questions
Featuring	Devon Trew, Head of IT Projects & Operations at Big Table Group

The Big Table Group is the operator of a group of restaurant brands, including Amalfi, Banana Tree, Bella Italia, Las Iguanas, Frankie and Benny's, Chiquito, and Café Rouge. The group operates more than 230 restaurants across the UK and Ireland.

Challenge

The Big Table Group was receiving over a million calls per year across all of their restaurant brands. The business is committed to providing exceptional dining experiences, which meant that staff prioritised guests on-site, with little time to answer the phone. As a result, the restaurants were missing 60% of all calls, leading to potential lost revenue from missed new booking calls.

Sarah Pope, CIO/IT Director at the Big Table Group, began looking at ways to innovate and digitise their phone lines. She wanted to deliver a competitive customer experience, take the pressure off restaurant staff, and increase the amount of reservations they could take over the phone.

Approach

Designing a voice assistant to take reservations without staff

Scaling across brands, locations, and use cases

The deployment began small, starting with ten sites across the Bella Italia and Cafe Rouge brands. PolyAI is now taking reservations for the Big Table Group in 130 restaurant locations across 3 of their core brands around the UK, with more due to roll out in 2024.

As part of the expansion, additional use cases were developed, including the ability for restaurants to take a card guarantee for large parties and for their popular bottomless brunches.

Integrating with booking platform Zonal

The Big Table Group manages reservations through Zonal, so it was vital that the solution could integrate with the platform. PolyAI was an easy choice for them, having already proven their success in the UK restaurant industry with other deployments also taking reservations on the Zonal platform.

> "The initial build and deployment of the voice assistant was seamless , - all we needed to do was provide the information and a few API keys. The rollout to other locations and brands has been really easy too, it's like a well-oiled machine now."
>
> Devon Trew
> Head of IT Projects & Operations at Big Table Group

Understanding customers however they talk

PolyAI worked with the Big Table Group to develop a customer-led voice assistant that can take, amend, and cancel restaurant reservations, as well as answer FAQs throughout the conversation.

Together, we created a custom voice for the assistant that provides a consistent, friendly, and welcoming conversational experience that feels like talking to a real-life member of staff. The voice assistant is designed to allow customers the flexibility to speak naturally while guiding them through the booking process. Callers can speak as they would with a real member of staff, saying things like "next Thursday at noon" or booking for "me and my partner" instead of explicitly stating a date, time, and number of guests.

When no tables are available, the voice assistant can negotiate with the caller to find another time or location that suits, ensuring that no opportunity is missed. The voice assistant also collects information about which menu guests would like to dine from, as well as allergy information to note on the booking.

Results

PolyAI is now live across Amalfi, Bella Italia, Cafe Rouge, and Las Iguanas brands, talking to customers and taking reservations every day. The Big Table Group is now able to answer every call, booking on average 3,800 reservations per month and contributing £140,000+ from bookings made over the phone across the three restaurant brands.

Restaurant staff are now dedicated to providing great customer service on-site without their phones constantly ringing in the background.

Through the voice assistant, the Big Table Group now has access to detailed conversational data into why customers are calling and what they're asking about. The data also shows excess demand, showing what day of the week and time of day customers are requesting to book tables when locations are fully booked, uncovering opportunities for the Big Table Group to maximise reservations.

3,800
reservations per month

£140,000+
from phone bookings

"The restaurant staff love it. They're able to focus on the guests in front of them instead of worrying about phones that are constantly ringing. It makes their jobs easier, and it's a better experience for our customers."

Devon Trew
Head of IT Projects & Operations at Big Table Group