

2.6: In the Spotlight

There is no denying that COVID-19 affected the entire economy, but fast-food restaurants were particularly hard hit when indoor dining was restricted. McDonald's quickly adapted during the pandemic by focusing on what it calls the 3 Ds: digital, delivery, and drive-through.

McDonald's had a strong position in terms of digital innovation even before the pandemic. Beginning in 2015, it installed self-order kiosks in its restaurants, and it launched its mobile app (Mobile Order & Pay) in 2017, allowing customers to browse the menu, find nearby restaurants, place their orders, and pay in the app. Digital sales exceeded \$10 billion in 2020, nearly 20% of system-wide sales.

The company also tackled the efficiency of its drive-through lanes by investing in dynamic menu boards and cutting its menu items to its "core menu." As a result, McDonald's was able to shave 30 seconds from its drive-through time. That time savings enabled the company to serve 300 million additional drive-through customers.



Figure 2.6.1: Understanding consumer purchasing decisions is important because it allows companies to better influence those behaviors. (credit: modification of work "Hong Kong Street Market" by Bernard Spragg. NZ/flickr, Public Domain)

The pandemic and the subsequent restrictions on indoor dining also led McDonald's to scale up its delivery platform and the number of restaurants that offer delivery. By ramping up the number of restaurants offering delivery from 28,000 to 41,000, it more than tripled delivery sales.

Focusing on the 3 Ds enabled McDonald's to weather the pandemic and create a faster, easier, and improved customer experience (Campos, 2021).

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