

SYNQ3 will serve you now: Lumen solutions helps technology company redefine restaurant industry



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SYNQ3 CEO Steve Bigari is the type of leader who moves fast even when he's sitting down.

After opening his 12th McDonalds restaurant in 2002, Bigari put four computers in a backroom and established a call center for accelerating takeout orders. He still takes pride in setting the world speed record for processing drive-through orders at one of his restaurants more than a decade ago.

"Watching those cars exit every nine seconds was like a symphony," he said.

Other restaurant owners noticed; soon Bigari was fielding questions about how he was using technology to reinvent customer service. He sold his franchise outlets and launched SYNQ3, a technology-enabled services company providing front-end ordering and backend fulfillment processes for over 30 national and regional restaurant chains. The company says it has handled billions in sales for its clients since it opened for business.

The company's motto says it all: "A little fun. A little crazy. Very smart."

Bigari joked that the restaurant business is the one industry technology forgot. That all dramatically changed last March, when the COVID-19 pandemic began to shut down dining



indoors. Ironically, only a month earlier, Bigari spoke at the International Franchise Association Convention and outlined his ideas of a frictionless future built around automation, take-out, and food delivery. The pandemic simply validated SYNQ3's technology vision for the restaurant industry.

"The restaurant challenge presented by COVID-19 caused us to reinvent everything with our customers," Bigari said. "It was a flat-out sprint."

SYNQ3 was clearly in the "right place at the right time" as its call volume doubled and sometimes tripled during the pandemic, equaling hundreds of thousands of new order volume.

Lumen was in the right place as well.

During the early stages of its growth trajectory, SYNQ3 decided it needed to consolidate its growing technology needs into the hands of one company. Lumen became an attractive partner, because in addition to networking solutions like MPLS/IP VPN and Dedicated Internet Access, Lumen was also able to customize a powerful suite of voice, routing, and analytic products within its Contact Center Services (CCS) and Routing and Call Control Platform.

With CCS, SYNQ3's restaurant clients "hand off" their calls to a centralized routing platform. Working closely with Bigari and his team, Lumen provided analytic tools that allow SYNQ3 to closely monitor call center performance. The technology lets SYNQ3 analyze significantly more calls than could be done manually by individual managers. It also replaces personal biases with scientific analysis and offers valuable lessons to improve customer experience.

Bigari sees a post-pandemic world in which restaurants will increase their reliance on take-out and delivery. Some establishments will eliminate eat-in dining entirely, dedicating reduced rental space to cooking facilities that cater exclusively to mobile customers. SYNQ3 is introducing new solutions, such as the NuThru locker, a next generation take-out experience, in which customers call their orders in advance and pick up their meal from a secure locker they open with their phone. The system tracks their transit time, so their food is available 30 seconds before they arrive—hot, fresh and ready to go.

Bigari expects the combination of human and artificial intelligence will drive the speed and efficiency of customer service to new destinations. He welcomes the day one of his clients breaks his old drive through record.

As SYNQ3's leadership continually spins out new technology ideas, the Lumen Customer Success team works closely with Bigari to help make them a reality. He feels the relationship succeeds because SYNQ3 and Lumen share the same mindset.

“We’re a nimble entrepreneurial company, while Lumen is a large company, but it looks at transformation, disruption and innovation the same way I do,” Bigari said. “Lumen’s teams are constantly working to solve my problems. That’s the real value of this partnership.”

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