App that makes food more accessible amidst social distancing restrictions

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Sandwich bars and workplace restaurants are among many businesses struggling to operate amidst ongoing government restrictions during this pandemic, however, food ordering app LunchMate made by Tasty Apps has been designed to overcome social distancing obstacles and help businesses operate in a safe and secure manner.

The app, available for both android and apple devices, was first developed to offer lunch-time customers a way around the frustration of queuing for their favourite sandwich by ordering their lunch via the app and collecting it at their best convenience at lunch time. While customers pay credit into the app's 'wallet' for their orders, the Epson TM-T88VI receipt printer receives data from the app's cloud service (SDP – Server Direct Print), prints it out and sends a confirmation to the app user. The receipt printed by the Epson TM-T88VI is used for the establishment to prepare the order, it can also show any allergens on it and it also provides the order number to the customer so they know which meal to take at the collection point. LunchMate can also connect with die-cut or liner-free label printers, such as the Epson TM-L90, , whereby order receipts can be printed on an adhesive and stuck to the lunch bag rather than stapled/taped to it or left in the bag itself.

The app has been a great success across workplace restaurants and has been installed at Epson's UK head office in Hemel Hempstead for over three years now.

Sotos Mandalos, Business Development Manager for Business Systems at Epson UK, said: "By introducing the Lunchmate app our employees can order from their own device and the food is prepared and ready to collect in time for their lunch break. Whilst the Epson TM-T88VI printer is familiar to staff and ideal for the demanding hospitality environment, once connected to the internet it can receive orders and print receipts with no need for extra drivers or POS infrastructure. Lunchmate are a dream to work with and have built a great solution for the Epson printer."

While the concept of pre-ordering has already made LunchMate a more practical solution for businesses in adapting around to social distancing restrictions, a series of new features have been added to make the app even more user-friend during the current climate. For example, collection time slots have been added to minimise the risk of overcrowding food collection points, while another feature called Lunch Mule enables one person to collect food on behalf of their colleagues to offer more flexibility. The app can also provide users with allergens notifications for orders they make, it has a messaging system in case the business needs to communicate with the app user for any reason, and it can also include loyalty schemes, meal deals, special offers and vouchers.

Trevor Loveland, founder of Tasty Apps and LunchMate, said: "We've been continuously building LunchMate for the last 4 years now based on how the demand has developed from across corporate companies and sandwich shops. We saw lots of new demand from businesses during the first lockdown while they were planning how they could adapt to social distancing once they could open up again, and we worked to make LunchMate a more optimal solution for new customers and existing customers that had been unable to put the system

LunchMate

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Trevor Loveland

Founder

Key Facts

The LunchMate app from Tasty Apps, featuring the Epson TM-T88VI, enables customers in corporate canteens and sandwhich shops to order and collect their lunch without the risks and bother associated with crowding and queuing.

https://lunchmate.co.uk/

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into effect yet due to the pandemic.

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LunchMate has allowed contract caterers to help other businesses. For example, a company next door to Epson's office in Hemel Hempstead didn't have their own catering facilities, so Talkington Bates were able to offer them catering services via LunchMate. Their employees use LunchMate to place their food orders, which print out on the same TM-T88VI printer as the Epson orders. The orders display appropriate logos, so that the Talkington Bates catering staff know where to place the orders for collection. A single representative from Epson's neighbour picks up all their food orders at a scheduled time every day

Paul Cooke, Operations Director at Talkington Bates, said: "Working in collaboration with LunchMate has not only "added value" to our business, through offering an additional service and smart innovation, but has enabled us as a contract caterer to navigate through a challenging time with COVID restrictions. We can offer our clients and customers a smart and flexible pre order system from their mobile device, with a comprehensive menu which you simply shop from, pay, click, and collect. The solution creates customer convenience, effective promotion of our services, menu, and discounts offered, coupled with push notifications to drive sales and reward customer loyalty. Back of house software and hardware is spot on and has a clear checking system. Labelling detail and the product quality is a great match and sits well with the fab food offer, created by our Chefs. Our production chef's feedback is extremely positive, and we have at hand a "flexible" solution with a "One Stop Shop" for a personalized offer in the workplace."

LunchMate can be tailored with the establishment's branding and while users can make their choice on the app as to what establishment they'd like to order from, the app can also be used for exclusive audiences such as workplace restaurants.

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