

Improving product quality, customer satisfaction and emerging technology for a major American restaurant chain

HCLTech served as the restaurant chain's technology partner to deliver operational agility without disrupting the business and depleting the bottom line

A prominent American quick-service restaurant chain wanted to transform their business operating model, fast food manufacturing process and food quality assessment. The client's existing business model was heavily dependent on manual interventions and traditional and legacy methodologies, which hindered the chain's ability to harness emerging technologies to empower their 14,000-strong workforce. Consequently, they lacked scalability for expanding the business without compromising product quality.

The Challenge:

Migrating to an agile and scalable digital solution

To meet ever-changing customer expectations, with rising commodity and labor costs, the client had to rapidly acquire new customers, while retaining existing ones. To deliver this, continuous product innovation, presentation consistency and agile delivery was needed. Achieving real-time visibility into their fast-food production cycle was also crucial to these goals.

Addressing the company's inadequacies with a forward-looking business model came with its share of challenges:

- Undue dependency on manual processes.
- Lack of objective-driven inclusion of new technologies.
- Absence of an organized business process and consistent customer journey.



The Objective:

Stable and sustainable sales growth

Like any other business, the chain's fundamental objective was to increase sales in a stable, sustainable way. To accomplish this goal, their imperatives were to increase the variety of products, maintain high quality across all products and expedite the production line.

The client was ready to explore the untapped potential of cloud, analytics, AI/ML and IoT in achieving these business outcomes. They partnered with HCLTech to accelerate business growth via innovation, scalability, customer loyalty and stable growth.

The Solution:

Automation-driven agile delivery models and AI/ML-based analytics



HCLTech's expertise in modernizing legacy infrastructures, while making the most of existing components, made HCLTech the chain's preferred partner with proven capability in implementing automation-driven agile delivery models and AI/ML-based analytics what the client was looking for. An end-to-end support was offered deploying a full-stack agile model encompassing all platforms, operations and data.

First, a thorough assessment of the client's business and competitive environment and their technology landscape to determine the hardware and software used in food production and related operations was conducted. We then:

- Laid the foundation for the steps required to organize, re-skill, operate, measure and co-innovate to enhance production quality and efficiency.

- Introduced a fully automated, AI/ML-based quality grader system for product standardization across all outlets.
- Deployed agile methodology tools and processes to ensure product compliance.
- Mobilized data and platforms to monitor applications, product quality, operational efficiency and delivery timeliness.
- Implemented comparative cost and performance matrices, including:
 - An insight-driven platform with built-in microservices.
 - Automation-driven perpetual testing, integration and delivery pipelines.
 - An automated regression test suite for online and POS-based purchases.

The impact:

A recipe for successful transformation at scale



Delivering transformation at scale without service disruption, HCLTech enabled the client to achieve:

- Enhanced and consistent product quality using an automated grader that measures established quality characteristics of real-time product images via AI/ML algorithms.
- Precise traffic prediction and proactive stocking of inventory.
- Accurate understanding of customer expectations and enhanced customer retention through direct feedback.
- Recognition and incentivization of high-quality outlets.

The new operating model rewarded the company with a full menu of successes: reduced opex, greater control over food production and quality, enhanced efficiency and sustainable growth.