
METRO INTENSIFIES DRIVING DIGITALISATION FORWARD

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- METRO launches digital platform for the hospitality sector offering digital tools, advice and support as well as a platform for dialogue and sharing insights
- By 2020, METRO wants to digitally empower half a million restaurateurs in Europe
- METRO will start rolling out digital solutions offering a direct value added for restaurateurs to 13 countries in 2018
- The first package comprises a modern, simple and individual Internet presence as well as an online reservation tool – both value-added services can be used free of charge
- Already 15,000 active users, mainly in Germany and France

Düsseldorf/ Munich, 12 December 2017 – METRO is significantly extending its commitment regarding the digitalisation of the hospitality sector. The wholesale and food specialist launches the platform “Digital Club” to digitise restaurants, hotels and caterers internationally. Today, the vast majority of restaurateurs basically do not use any digital solutions. Although the number of solutions available that could make them more successful and at the same time also enhance the gastronomic experience of their guests has increased rapidly in recent years their use has not grown. The Digital Club now provides the required simple access to such solutions: in addition to free digital tools the Digital Club also offers advice and support for all questions relating to the tools and a digital platform for dialogue, knowledge sharing and community building to independent restaurateurs. The rollout of the first free digital solutions offering added value to restaurateurs, their businesses and, in particular, also to their guests now starts in 13 countries.

“The hospitality sector can greatly benefit from the use of digital solutions. With the Digital Club, we create a platform that connects independent restaurateurs with innovative solutions. With this offer, we want to actively contribute to digitalisation”, says Olaf Koch, Chairman of the Management Board of METRO AG. “By 2020, we want to reach half a million restaurateurs in Europe and provide them with digital solutions. In this context, METRO’s extensive international reach represents a crucial advantage for both entrepreneurs and innovators.”

METRO established the independent digital entity “HoReCa.digital” to identify and validate digital solutions for the hospitality sector. Its task is to take care of both self-developed digital solutions and also innovative digital solutions developed by start-ups. Since 2015, METRO has been promoting selected start-ups offering digital solutions for the hospitality sector with the METRO Accelerator powered by Techstars. METRO

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implements these solutions in 500 pilot businesses in Berlin, Paris, Milan and Vienna and tests them for their added value and acceptance on the part of the restaurateurs. The project involves a large variety of services: from online reservations to checkout systems to HR management through to hygiene documentation. "The response from our customers in the 500 pilot businesses is very positive. Together, we developed the different tools further and demonstrated their economic benefit for the restaurant owners", says Koch. "The opportunities leveraged by digital solutions are extensive: more customers, higher sales, relief from administrative tasks, reduction of operational costs and, last but not least, significant time savings. This gives them the flexibility to look after more important things – their guests and the gastronomic experience."

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Great impact: internet presence and online reservation tool at no charge

The first digital solutions to be rolled out internationally are an individual internet presence and an online reservation tool. 15,000 customers, mainly in Germany and France, are already using the internet presence at no charge. Both tools are considered to be basic tools – but with great impact because many restaurant businesses are not yet visible online. In many cases, they simply lack the time and resources to intensively look into digital solutions. Their websites are usually not optimised for search engines and therefore do not appear directly in the search results. Moreover, a large number of restaurateurs don't have an internet presence of their own. This is where the individual internet presence from METRO comes into play: with this tool, restaurant owners can build their own professional website in a few minutes and with only a few clicks. It is directly integrated into Google Maps thereby significantly improving the digital visibility and locatability of the restaurants – the first step towards digitalisation. The next step is to offer an online reservation tool: one of the main functionalities that restaurateurs wish to offer. The benefits for the customers, in turn, are high because an online reservation tool makes it much easier to book a table.

METRO is offering both tools free of charge and plans to grant the users of the Digital Club access to a broad range of other solutions, reference examples and events in future. The goal of Digital Club: create a digital community for the hospitality sector. In addition to the digital solutions offered, the platform will also provide many other benefits: networking, sharing experience and a continuous update on the variety and capabilities of progressing innovation.

METRO is a leading international specialist company in wholesale and food retail. The company operates in 35 countries and employs more than 150,000 people worldwide. In financial year 2016/17, METRO generated sales of approximately €37 billion. The company provides custom solutions to meet the regional and international needs of its wholesale and retail customers. With its sales brands METRO/MAKRO Cash & Carry and Real and as well as delivery services and digitisation initiatives, METRO sets the standards for tomorrow: for customer focus, digital solutions and sustainable business models. More information is available at www.metroag.de.

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