



10 Guiding Principles

for Kiosk Interactions and Experiences



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Executive Summary

Our Methodology

10 Guiding Principles

1. Readability > Brand Awareness
2. Plan Around Product Photos
3. Pay Attention To Prospects
4. Be Informative
5. Don't Overdo It On Loyalty
6. Give Them Options
7. Keep The Basket Visible
8. Reduce User Stress
9. Get Out Of Your Own Way
10. Let The User Make Mistakes

Your Action Plan



Introduction

Over 15 years ago, ACRELEC began as a software company on a mission to make restaurants more digital. We've been leading the way ever since.

2004 — We pioneered the self-ordering kiosk

2006 — We rolled out drive-thru solutions

2015 — We unveiled our Smart Hardware platform

We work with titans like Burger King, Dunkin', KFC, McDonald's, Starbucks Coffee, Walmart, and more. You've probably seen the ACRELEC hardware as a consumer and not even realized it—at the drive-thru for your morning coffee, ordering a meal at the touch of a button, or ringing up your purchases in the self-checkout line.

We've tested your platforms to be tried-and-true, conducted interviews, and compiled hundreds of data sets into this guide so you can implement these insights into your own use cases.

We know tech talk can get complicated when it doesn't have to be. When it comes to self-ordering and kiosk technology, intuitive software and hardware are key for nurturing purchases and eliminating abandonment.



Executive summary

We created these 10 guiding principles that any business can apply to kiosk and self-ordering experiences for maximum impact and consumer ease.

You can provide a reliable customer experience and grow your business at the same time. Life is busy, and our kiosk experiences take every factor into account as customers interact and make decisions with your product.

Whether you're an executive or a marketing associate, these best practices apply beyond the kiosk environment in critical ways. Simplifying the path to purchase, eliminating points of confusion, and giving the user control of their path are all proven ways to streamline your experience.

Odds are you already know some of your user pain points with kiosk technology, but you may not know how to understand and solve their discomfort.

That's where we can help.



Our methodology

Over 15 years ago, we made 275 observations in three quick service restaurants and conducted nearly 50 quick interviews to understand consumer behavior. We also conducted 16 face-to-face interviews with individuals.

As people interacted with our kiosks, we discovered some pretty key findings, like the hurdles big and small that impact order placement. Our team had a few ideas about what would happen and what we could prove, but we needed the data to back up (and disprove!) our theories.

We identified the key performance indicators (KPIs) that we wanted to test, then used a four-phase approach as the foundation for our recommendations:

1. We conducted a user experience (UX) audit of the kiosk to form a hypothesis that could be validated or nullified in Phase 2 and 3.
2. We observed consumers interacting with the terminals in participating restaurants (in situ observations)
3. We conducted user tests to see if common obstacles and sources of discomfort persisted across the observations
4. All those observations were gathered to establish a new UX/UI that erased all the possible pain points

We created 10 guiding principles that anyone using ACRELEC products can implement and test on their consumer base. Think of these as your best practices for kiosk management, and ways to break down the common obstacles we've discovered.

Sure, some are about looks. Some are based on navigation troubles that hindered order completion, and a few are about getting crystal clear on your offer.

Let's get started.



10 Guiding principles

1. Readability > Brand Awareness

Looks do matter in the customer experience journey. The average consumer doesn't see any added value to branded graphics in the kiosk environment, which can hinder access to your products.

Overly branded kiosk visuals come across as cluttered, especially during the self-ordering process wherein the consumer can feel flustered if they take "too long" to complete their purchase.

More than likely, a consumer visiting your kiosk knows what store or drive-thru they are in. For marketers and designers out there it's important to avoid over branding. This may remind you of the "K.I.S.S." principle — "Keep it simple, stupid."

TAKEAWAY

Use a white background instead of branded visuals to reduce the sense of overwhelm. Users prefer it.

2. Plan Around Product Photos

Most developers, product marketers, and managers already know that images of your products help user recognition and increase engagement, but only to a point. If your product photos are too large, they take up valuable real estate on your interfaces. Too small and you run into readability issues.

Images should always include clear calls-to-action. Try to make your offer simple without excess navigation. Cluttering the page won't help drive sales to specific bundles or products.

Image size depends on the size of your hardware's screen. We've found there are no one-size-fits-all guidelines. The key to success when you're planning to include product photos is to visualize the offer and the total amount of space you'll use on the screen all at the same time.

TAKEAWAY

Be very intentional with visuals. It must be clear what the product is. Keep the wording of your offer simple.

3. Pay Attention to Prospects

If growing brand loyalty and repeat business is one of your strategic business goals, you may be thinking, "We should focus on our established customers' kiosk experience!"

From the technology side, however, we recommend putting your prospects first. They're indifferent so this may be your one chance to capture a first-time customer with a seamless experience.

Prospective customers who are multi-brand users need to be guided to go deeper into the menu experience; they don't have as many preferences of the product, and unlike your loyalists, they probably don't know everything you offer.

If you want to attract a prospect, consider engaging them by adding a loyalty enrollment page with promotional incentives.

TAKEAWAY

Always include a generic icon or text label to signify a product family or category. If you use a product image, your prospects won't understand your offer and will get confused.

4. Be Informative

Giving your customers information on deals and bundles was not seen as too pushy if the following conditions were met:

- The cost of the product, whether that's a deal or a combo, promotes savings or economic value to the consumer
- Call-to-action buttons are eye-catching
- The consumer can always see options to exit the interface

Don't trap people at your kiosk by not giving them options to abandon cart. We learned that people don't feel overwhelmed when you're giving them helpful information, or helping them make a decision.

TAKEAWAY

Frame the decision to push products around what is most informative and helpful for the customer. Let them choose freely.

5. Don't Overdo It On Loyalty

Loyalty accounts are not the rule but the exception, and it's best to make navigation simple as part of a quick ordering process. Sending your customer to your website may distract them from their central call-to-action: to complete their kiosk order. All things being equal, assume that most users who participate in a loyalty program and are adamant about their points will make the extra step to access their loyalty benefits. Here are a few ways to promote loyalty as part of the experience:

- Make any buttons directing to a loyalty program smaller, bringing primary focus to an order completion CTA
- If you force a user to input their loyalty information when they aren't a member, make it obvious they can bypass this step
- Provide information on loyalty after completed purchases, not before

TAKEAWAY

Use the kiosk experience for loyalty enrollment, but prioritize completing interactions in as few navigations as possible. You can make loyalty accounts visible, but not the central focus.

6. Give Them Options

Every action in your customer journey should be complemented with the confirmation of that action so that the user will understand they're doing everything correctly in the purchase sequence.

Must-Have Kiosk Feedback Checklist:

- A basket or cart that fills up as you order
- Visuals indicate a sequence, so the user knows they're in the correct progression. For example: "Order > Checkout >Receipt"
- Always give the option to change or cancel their order
- Summarize each and every transaction with a summary page
- Always include both product photos and text so the user knows exactly what they ordered

TAKEAWAY

Confirm the order sequence from the beginning of the transaction to the end. Positive reinforcement and user feedback will make it clear to the user they're completing their order correctly, and reduces confuses for kiosk users.

7. Always Keep the Basket Visible

Users have gotten used to the little basket that appears when ordering online or on mobile. It's how they verify they're doing everything correctly. It's how we check orders before pressing "send." While basket localization is important, it is not critical that the basket be open or large.

When we build interfaces and customer experiences without the basket, we bewilder the user unnecessarily.

- Make the basket prominent throughout the customer journey.
- Keeping the basket out of sight increases order times and confuses the user, which can lead to errors and order abandonment.
- Avoid any sort of vertical or horizontal scroll that could hinder visibility of the basket, especially when the user is ordering multiple products.

TAKEAWAY

Don't hide the basket or cart. Users are accustomed to seeing the basket on the upper right hand side of the screen. Follow that rule as you create and test your journeys.

8. Reduce User Stress

Standing in line pretty much anywhere ranks highly on the list of things that can make people irritable. Like when you're paying at a store, and you can feel the person behind you looking at you? They're waiting for you to pay, or grab your bags, or put your credit card back in your wallet.

Well, the same is true for kiosks, and when things aren't simple to navigate, people lose patience. Automation is an art as much as a science, and we've tested our kiosks for maximum efficacy.

Bumps in the road are bound to happen with any technology—no one is perfect—but our findings point to the fact that users need a stress-free experience to place their order.

Reduce stress by:

- Provide positive reinforcement, through buttons or a sequence, to indicate everything is going smoothly for the customer
- Use the screen fully. Vertical or horizontal arrows will not seem clickable, confusing the consumer
- Make any scrolling or arrows clearly visible
- Understand that a touch screen behaves differently than a mobile device

TAKEAWAY

Users won't make it to payment if the path to purchase is stress-inducing.

9. Get Out of Your Own Way

Sometimes we overthink things when we want technology to be perfect and meet all our business needs. Instead of making the experience perfect for the user, we try to achieve quarterly goals or push new products at the wrong place and time.

In our tests, we discovered users will doubt the customer journey you've created if:

- They think the products they want are unavailable
- They think the terminal will function incorrectly or glitch
- They think they can't navigate the technology comfortably

TAKEAWAY

Let the user control their own path, and eliminate obstacles. If the buttons validating their purchase compete with one another, you'll introduce doubt into the journey.

10. Let the User Make Mistakes

The beautiful thing about terminal technology is that it gives you the chance to change and modify your order without correcting yourself or explaining what you need to a salesperson. It's a simple act of free will and choice that can't be understated.

When the kiosk user is comfortable with navigating, they'll change their mind or correct an error without getting flustered because you've optimized the sequence to accommodate this desire.

TAKEAWAY

Always, always include a button to modify an order or provide customization to aid the user with task completion.



Your action plan

We discovered something critical— What isn't seen isn't looked for.


Your next step? Decide what KPIs matter most to your business case. Whether you're in the quick service restaurant industry, retail or beyond, your kiosk and terminal interfaces need to meet the needs of your users or you will lose customers due to confusion and frustration.

ACRELEC operates in four industries across 70 markets in our 20 offices around the globe. From our custom hardware to our proprietary software across 8 product lines, we've mapped the journey every step of the way.

You can assign levels of discomfort your users experience when navigating through your customer journey using our rating system:

Level of Discomfort:

- 0 No discomfort!
- 1 Hinders an ideal and fluid experience, but isn't often expressed
- 2 Slows down task completion or makes the user unsure of themselves in the process
- 3 Forces the user to repeat a task, presenting a real obstacle to completion



Reimagine your customer experience today

ACRELEC began as a software company. Then, we quickly realized the industry's need for smart, intuitive hardware and solution services to make the digital restaurant of the future a reality. Our strategies enable 360-degree experiences in QSR kiosks from implementation to ongoing strategy.

As a business with your own customers to care for, we get it. You juggle knowing your own product lines inside and out, hitting your corporate goals, and then you have additional hardware to consider.

That's why we create materials to inform and educate you on best practices and the latest developments in UX. After all, staying ahead of ever-changing technology is a full-time job.

For questions, comments, feedback, custom solutions and more, [email us at info@acrelec.com](mailto:info@acrelec.com)



Technology that drives
your business forward