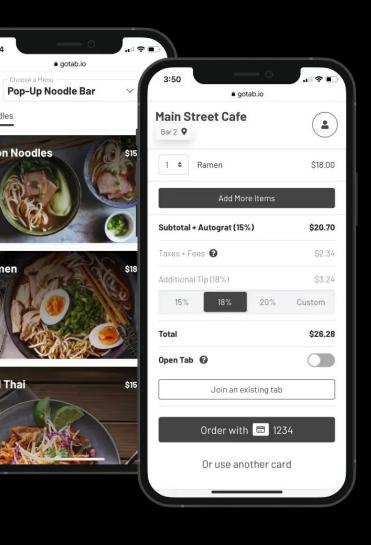GoTab

Creating a Seamless Operational Model for Food Halls

As food halls evolve into complex, multi-faceted hospitality venues, operators must adopt smarter technology solutions to keep up with guest expectations and vendor demands. This guide explores the key technologies and operational models necessary to streamline ordering, payment, vendor coordination, and guest experience—based on real-world insights from GoTab's experience in the industry.

*Disclaimer: This checklist is for informational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for any audit, tax or other professional advice, consultation or service.

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1. Centralize Orders Without Sacrificing Vendor Autonomy

In a multi-vendor environment, operational success often hinges on balancing centralized guest experiences with independent vendor operations. Point of sale technology should allow guests to:

- Place orders from multiple vendors in a single transaction.
- Receive unified receipts and track their orders in real time.

Meanwhile, each vendor should retain:

- Control over their own menu and pricing.
- Individual kitchen display systems (KDS).
- On-demand sales and payout reporting.

This structure simplifies the guest journey while preserving vendor autonomy.

2. Improving Payment Flow and Revenue Distribution

Food halls face the challenge of collecting payments across multiple businesses while maintaining financial clarity. Features like **shared tabs** and **automated tip splitting** support:

- Group ordering with flexible bill splitting.
- Automatic allocation of payments and tips based on item sales.
- Daily vendor payouts with integrated deductions (e.g., house fees or rent).

These features reduce manual tracking, improve transparency, and minimize potential disputes between operators and vendors.

3. Reducing Friction Through Self-Service Technologies

With high foot traffic and limited staff, food halls benefit from reducing bottlenecks in ordering and payment. The integration of self-service solutions such as:

- **QR Code Ordering**
- **Self-Ordering Kiosks**
- **RFID-enabled tabs (e.g., GoTab Pass)**

...helps guests move freely through the venue, ordering and paying when and how they prefer. The RFID system, as seen at The Golden Mill food hall case study below, enables guests to open a tab and add purchases from food stalls and self-pour beverage walls—all tracked in real time and closed automatically upon exit.

4. Real-Time Communication and Operational Visibility

To further improve service speed and accuracy, operators can integrate systems for:

- **Two-way SMS communication** (for order updates or guest inquiries).
- **Real-time kitchen updates** through KDS and printers.
- **Unified reporting dashboards** that provide rollup sales data, tip breakdowns, and vendor performance metrics.

This level of visibility supports both daily execution and long-term business strategy.
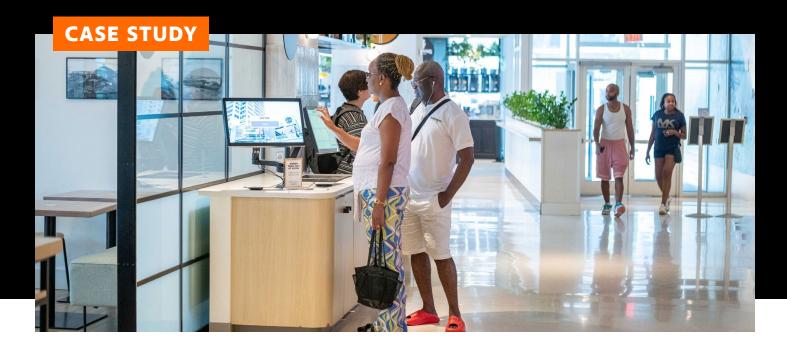
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The Golden Mill

The Golden Mill in Golden, CO, implemented a modern food hall tech stack including:

- GoTab's multi-operator POS platform.
- RFID-enabled GoTab Pass.
- Integration with PourMyBeer for real-time beverage tracking.

The result was a smoother guest experience, fewer lines, streamlined payments, and improved vendor coordination—all contributing to increased sales and reduced operational complexity.

"The trust and transparency that [automatic remittances] creates between us and our vendors is invaluable and not something we'd ever give up for any reason."

– Brett Russell, Director of Operations

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CASE STUDY

Upside on Moore Food Hall

GoTab revolutionized the dining experience at the Upside on Moore Food Hall, a 20,000-square-foot food hall in Arlington, VA, by implementing its flexible, guest-centric technology platform. With seven diverse culinary vendors and three bars operating under one roof, GoTab's system streamlines operations by enabling vendor-specific kitchen management and reporting, and easy guest ordering through mobile and kiosk solutions.

This implementation significantly improved efficiency, enhanced the guest experience, and empowered each vendor to maintain brand autonomy while operating within a cohesive, tech-enabled environment.

"With 12,000 residents residing within a six-minute stroll, our goal is to become a beloved 'third place' for our community. GoTab has helped us transform our guest experience with user friendly kiosks and table ordering, so our guests can seamlessly work, dine, and relish the atmosphere without any wait time."

– **Nick Freshman, Founder, Mothersauce Partners**
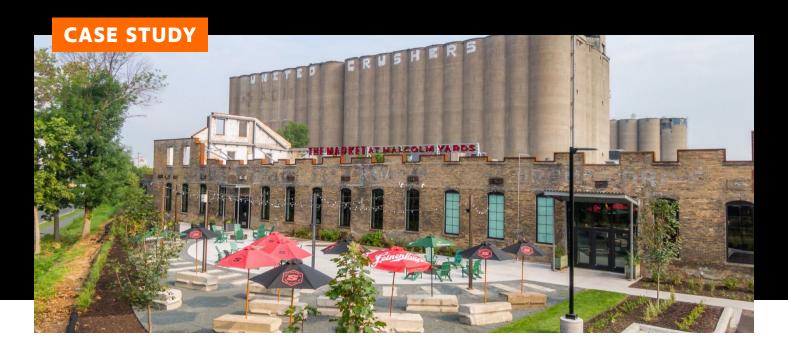
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Foodie Labs

Foodie Labs, a dynamic culinary ecosystem in St. Petersburg, FL, transformed its operations with GoTab's versatile technology platform. Designed to support multiple virtual kitchens and rotating culinary concepts, GoTab enabled Foodie Labs to streamline order management, offer seamless in-person and digital guest experiences, and provide detailed vendor-specific reporting.

By integrating kitchen display systems, mobile ordering, and centralized control, GoTab empowered Foodie Labs to efficiently manage its diverse food offerings while giving chefs and entrepreneurs the flexibility to scale their concepts in a low-risk, tech-enabled environment.

"After exploring a dozen different providers, GoTab stood out as the only one with a truly seamless multi-vendor ordering system."

– James Pachence, Owner, Foodie Labs

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The Market at Malcolm Yards

The Market at Malcolm Yards, a bustling food hall in Minneapolis, MN, featuring nine kitchens and a central bar, partnered with GoTab to reimagine its ordering and payment experience. By implementing GoTab's contactless technology, the Market empowers guests to browse menus, order, and pay directly from their phones, eliminating traditional lines and wait times. The platform's ability to consolidate orders across multiple vendors into a single transaction simplifies both guest interactions and backend operations.

As a result of implementing GoTab, the Market enhanced guest satisfaction, increased operational efficiency, and provided each vendor with detailed sales insights while maintaining a seamless, unified dining experience.

"... the RFID card technology is especially great for family and group dining, with the ability to pre-allocate funds, set spending limits for younger guests, or easily split tabs at the end of the visit."

– Patricia Wall, developer of Malcom Yards, Owner of restaurant concepts in the Market

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Conclusion

Food hall operators aiming to scale or improve guest experience need to look beyond traditional POS systems. Centralized ordering, shared payments, and self-service technologies are becoming essential tools. By integrating modular, scalable systems that support both operators and vendors, food halls can meet evolving customer expectations while improving internal efficiency.

GoTab

Ready to Run a Seamless Food Hall?

Running a food hall is complex—but with the right tech, it becomes streamlined, scalable, and highly profitable. GoTab helps you manage every vendor, order, and guest experience with ease.

Get a personalized demo of GoTab and turn your food hall into the ultimate destination for diverse tastes and smooth operations.

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