

**Wunderkind**

# Who's Lurking on Your Menu? Turning Anonymous Visitors into Loyal Diners

*A guide for restaurant brands navigating the digital future*



# Digital Transformation at the Heart of Hospitality

The restaurant industry is undergoing a profound evolution. It's no longer enough to serve great food and provide excellent in-store service. Restaurants must now deliver equally compelling digital experiences — experiences that not only attract new diners but convert them into lifelong loyalists. Websites and apps have become revenue-critical touchpoints. And yet, most restaurants are flying blind when it comes to understanding who their digital visitors are.

Up to 95% of website traffic remains anonymous. Many customers peruse menus, consider catering options, or browse loyalty benefits without ever identifying themselves. As third-party cookies fade into obsolescence and privacy regulations tighten, traditional ESPs and marketing tools are failing to keep pace. Additionally, when customers order through third-party apps, 0% of that customer data goes to the actual restaurant. This means missed connections, untapped opportunities, and underperforming digital investments.

If the modern diner expects personalization, recognition, and convenience at every turn — why are so many restaurant websites still guessing?

**Wunderkind encourages customers to order via restaurant brand websites by retargeting customers to lead them back to your site and fueling your marketing list growth with our best-in-class capture experiences.**

# Reclaiming Revenue Through Identity

For restaurant marketers, identity resolution is one of the most valuable tools for unlocking the full potential of digital channels. It's the foundation that transforms fragmented guest behavior into cohesive, actionable profiles. Why does this matter? Because a large portion of your website traffic —yes, even guests who've ordered before or signed up for offers — may still appear as anonymous when they return.

This disconnect isn't just a tech issue — it's a revenue one. Guests who abandon a catering order or browse loyalty rewards without being

recognized, you lack the ability to retarget, personalize, and convert. That's where identity resolution comes in.

At its core, identity resolution is the ability to recognize returning site visitors — even when they don't log in, switch devices, or clear their cookies. It tracks their click and browse behaviors which are then added to a customer profile in your database so you can trigger personalized communications based on their actions and intent, turning visits into transactions.

Here are a few common reasons why a returning restaurant guest might appear anonymous:

**First-party cookies expired:** Visitor tracking cookies may have timed out.

**Guest cleared cookies or used private browsing:** Incognito mode wipes tracking history.

**Different device or browser:** Someone may browse the menu on mobile, then order on desktop.

**Logged out of their account:** Without login, the system can't match them to a profile.

**IP address changes:** Common with mobile networks or VPN use.

**Ad blockers or privacy extensions:** These can block tracking scripts entirely.

To solve for these challenges, identity resolution platforms use a combination of techniques: from server-side tracking and cookie stitching to matching emails and phone numbers across devices and sessions. More advanced solutions tap into massive identity networks—built from activity across thousands of websites and partners—to enhance match rates and accuracy.

For restaurant brands, this means being able to:

- **Recognize repeat visitors whether they're on mobile, web, or app**
- **Trigger abandoned cart or catering reminders even without a logged-in session**
- **Suppress redundant modals for known loyalty members**
- **Personalize promotions based on full cross-channel profiles**

While traditional ESPs or CDPs can track known users to some extent, they simply lack the scale and behavioral intelligence of dedicated identity partners. Identity partners understand the multiple devices a consumer uses to click and browse while observing actions on thousands of other websites and publisher properties. This means identity solutions also bring a wealth of knowledge on a given consumer to your brand. Far more data than your brand or family of brands could collect on your own properties. And when the goal is maximizing revenue from every digital touchpoint — recognition and intelligence at scale isn't optional. It's transformative.

**Cross-domain tracking issues:** Happens if your main restaurant site and catering site are on different domains.

**Browser updates and privacy settings:** Features like Safari's Intelligent Tracking Prevention interfere with tracking.

**Multiple emails/accounts:** A guest might use a work email for one order, personal email for another.

**Expired server-side sessions:** Sessions can time out if the site uses server-side tracking.

**Inconsistent app and web experiences:** Your app might recognize the guest, but the web session doesn't.

**Third-party cookie blocking:** Increasingly common in modern browsers.

# Bridging the Gap Between Interest and Action

Once a restaurant brand lays a strong identity foundation, the next frontier is harnessing intent signals to drive action. ESPs don't track click and browse behavior at an individual level. Identity partners do. In fact, they will build a history of actions any given device takes on your digital properties and create a profile record even if you don't have that individual opted-in to your marketing database. This is the digital breadcrumb trail that can be used to not only trigger hyper-personalized messages across channels but its historical data that gets unlocked when a contact does opt in. From that moment forward you can personalize onsite experiences and deliver revenue generating emails and texts..

Here are five key categories of intent signals and how restaurant marketers can use them to serve up personalized, revenue-driving experiences:

## 1. Identification Signals

These help identify a guest, even if they haven't logged into an account. This includes IP address, device ID, cookies, or email capture via your website.

**Use Case:** A visitor browses your online ordering site but doesn't place an order. If you capture their email, you can send a reminder about their selections, or offer a discount to bring them back for dinner.

## 2. Behavioral Signals

Track specific actions a guest takes, like browsing catering options, spending time on your menu, or clicking into your loyalty page.

**Use Case:** A guest starts a large group order but doesn't complete it. Trigger a cart reminder email with a catering offer tailored to the items they considered.



### 3. Product Signals

Monitor engagement with specific menu items or categories – like repeated views of your family meal bundles or seasonal specials.

**Use Case:** A diner frequently checks out your brunch menu. Send a Saturday morning text highlighting your new brunch combo or limited-time mimosa deal.

### 4. Lifecycle Signals

These indicate where a guest is in their relationship with your brand, whether they're a first-time visitor, a regular, or someone who hasn't ordered in a while.

**Use Case:** A new email subscriber receives a welcome sequence with your top dishes, how to earn loyalty rewards, and a first-order discount. Meanwhile, a lapsed guest receives a personalized “We miss you” campaign with an incentive to return.

### 5. Transactional Signals

Leverage purchase history – like order size, frequency, and category preferences – to anticipate what guests may want next.

**Use Case:** A guest who recently ordered a pizza and wings combo might get a follow-up offering dessert add-ons or a loyalty punch toward their next family night order.

These signals empower CPG brands to deliver behaviorally triggered messages at the exact right moment – leading to higher engagement, more frequent visits, and greater lifetime value per guest.

# Activating Revenue with AI-Driven, Behaviorally Triggered Messaging

## Activating Smart Acquisition

Before you can turn anonymous visitors into loyal diners, you need to turn them into known contacts. Identity resolution doesn't just recognize return visits — it also powers intelligent acquisition strategies. By understanding a diner's browsing behavior in real time, AI can surface the right offer (like a discount, loyalty points, or early access) at the right moment, in the right format — making the value exchange feel relevant and timely. This creates a more seamless opt-in experience, while significantly boosting list growth and downstream revenue opportunities.

Once a restaurant brand has established a strong identity resolution framework and is

## Triggers Over Cast and Blast

capturing real-time intent signals, the next step is to activate that intelligence through AI. Rather than relying on manual campaign logic or static workflows, advanced machine learning models can now analyze behavioral data and purchase intent to automatically trigger timely, context-aware messaging that enhances the diner experience and drives revenue.

The goal is both to increase message volume because of identity capabilities while delivering the optimal offer that is truly bespoke for every eligible customer. To scale this in real-time, AI decides what constitutes the best content, channel and delivery time, all personalized

across your entire audience, even if that's millions of customer profiles. Combining your brand's customer data with the rich historical profile data an identity partner brings to the table, AI then has a complete view of who the diner is and what they want.

While some brands attempt to scale messaging by adding new vendors or platforms, this often results in fragmented execution and inconsistent customer experiences. A more effective approach is to let your identity partner serve as the central decisioning engine — determining who gets what message, when, and through which channel.

When identity-driven AI sits at the core of your messaging strategy, orchestration across email, text, social, and ads becomes seamless. Rather than siloed campaigns competing for attention, your channels work in concert — reinforcing one another and delivering a consistent, personalized experience that meets the consumer exactly where they are in their journey.

### **The acquisition path vs. the loyalty path**

Restaurant marketers typically pursue two parallel but distinct growth paths: increasing the number of loyalty sign-ups and driving more repeat orders from existing loyalty members. The first path is all about acquisition — capturing attention at key moments and using targeted messaging to convert anonymous website traffic into enrolled loyalty guests. This requires smart use of behavioral triggers, personalized offers, and seamless sign-up flows.

The second path is focused on retention — deepening relationships with known diners by delivering exclusive promotions, reminders, and content that reward loyalty and encourage habitual ordering. Both paths require different strategies and messages, but when powered by strong identity resolution and unified cross-channel decisioning, they work in tandem to maximize guest lifetime value and long-term revenue.

**Wunderkind can help you with both growth paths through better retargeting and segmented messaging. Whether it's identifying a non-loyalty member and encouraging them to sign up or identifying a loyalty member and showing them their points balance and encouraging them to make their favorite order.**

Here are a few strategies to consider once you've established your process for decisioning and executing of sends:

### Personalized Order Recommendations

By using AI to analyze customer intent signals like browsing behavior and order history, you can send highly relevant order recommendations. These recommendations should be timely and reflect the customer's demonstrated interests and are optimized for timing, content, and channel. For instance, if a customer regularly browses a certain category (e.g., appetizers), sending them updates on new appetizers or related dishes can increase the likelihood of conversion.

### Abandoned Cart Reminders

Cart abandonment is one of the most common challenges for restaurant brands. However, it's also a significant opportunity for revenue recovery. However, it's also a significant opportunity for revenue recovery. AI can detect behavioral and transactional signals, brands can trigger personalized emails that remind shoppers of the items they left behind. Adding incentives, such as discounts or free delivery can further encourage them to complete their purchase.

### Re-engagement Campaigns

AI can spot when a customer has gone dormant or hasn't interacted with your brand in a while. Triggering a re-engagement campaign with personalized messaging (such as a special discount or highlighting new dishes they might like) can help reactivate these customers.

### Triggered Lifecycle Emails

Diners move through different stages of their relationship with a restaurant brand, from acquisition to retention to reactivation. AI uses lifecycle signals to trigger emails that align with where a customer is in their journey. For example, welcome emails can nurture new customers, while loyalty program reminders or exclusive discounts can keep established customers coming back.

### Post-Purchase Follow-Up

AI can use transactional signals to also assist with post-purchase follow-ups, such as sending reheating instructions or suggestions for complementary sides. These communications not only enhance the customer's experience but also drive additional sales by recommending items that complement their recent purchase.

### Highly Targeted Ads

Using intent signals and identity data, restaurant marketers can recognize site visitors and serve personalized ads – or retarget those who didn't convert. For example, if a diner browsed your seasonal menu without buying, AI can trigger dynamic ads featuring the exact items they viewed.

# Identity Solutions Should Flex to Fit Your Stack — Not the Other Way Around

When evaluating identity resolution technologies, brands should carefully consider how seamlessly those partners can adapt to the broader marketing stack. Many solutions impose rigid workflows, rely on embedded scripts that can trigger compliance concerns, or require routing through proprietary systems that limit visibility and control. In contrast, modern marketing organizations often operate with decentralized architectures — leveraging ESPs, CDPs, cloud data warehouses, and custom APIs to maintain agility. A flexible identity partner should enable brands to ingest and activate data in ways that align with their infrastructure, not force compromises to accommodate the vendor.

The ideal partner supports multiple deployment paths — whether server-side, client-side, or hybrid — and allows identity and behavioral data to flow into the destinations your teams already rely on. This includes the ability to plug directly into marketing channels like email and text, enrich customer profiles in real time, and activate across campaigns without dependency on a single platform or proprietary UI. Identity should be foundational, not limiting. The right solution is one that empowers developers and marketers alike with interoperable tools and clear documentation to build, test, and scale experiences on their terms.



# Proof in Performance: A Case Study in Revenue Recovery

Consider the example of a national family-style restaurant chain. Despite strong brand recognition and healthy online traffic, their digital channels weren't converting at the level they should. Wunderkind stepped in to activate personalized capture experiences and real-time abandonment messages.

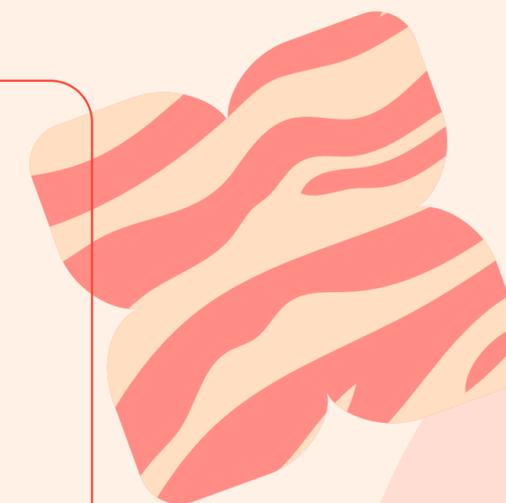
This isn't an outlier—it's a reflection of what's possible when restaurants stop relying on anonymous traffic and start building relationships with every visitor.

The impact in year one:

**353K**  
emails captured

**50%**  
of all online orders influenced by  
Wunderkind-triggered messaging

**\$1.13M**  
in new, last-click revenue directly  
attributed to the program



# What Restaurant Leaders Should Be Thinking About

Throughout this guide, we've explored how identity resolution and intent signals can help restaurants turn anonymous traffic into known guests, and known guests into loyal, high-value diners. We've outlined practical, AI-powered strategies to grow your loyalty base, increase repeat orders, and deliver personalized messages across the guest journey.

Whether your focus is boosting catering sales, improving loyalty retention, or capturing more revenue from website traffic, one principle holds true: personalized, data-driven engagement is now a necessity, not a luxury. With a solid identity foundation,

AI decisioning layer on top, strong cross-channel execution, and a strategic focus on relevance, restaurants can unlock more revenue and deliver a better guest experience – without adding operational complexity.

Because in a market overflowing with choices, the restaurants that let AI recognize and serve their shoppers with precision will be the ones that scale faster, connect deeper, and win long-term.

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**Don't leave revenue on the table – partner with Wunderkind.**

# Wunderkind

Wunderkind is the leading AI-driven performance marketing solution that collects consent based, first-party data and identifies anonymous traffic for brands in order to scale hyper personalized one-to-one messages. Brands lean on the Wunderkind Identity Network, a proprietary database recognizing 9 billion devices, 1 billion consumers and observes 2 trillion digital transactions per year, to trigger the most impactful offers to their target audience at the right moment and in the right channel. This proprietary data is accessed by Wunderkind's Autonomous Marketing Platform, an AI engine which integrates seamlessly into a brands' existing ESP to boost performance across email, text and advertising channels. Wunderkind is the only performance solution that guarantees a lift in revenue for its clients and delivers over \$5 billion in directly attributable revenue annually for brands across a number of industries, often ranking as a top 3 revenue channel in clients' own analytics platforms. Brands such as Harley-Davidson, Perry Ellis, True Botanicals and Kendra Scott partner with Wunderkind to drive top-line revenue.

TRUE BOTANICALS



PERRY ELLIS



KENDRA  
SCOTT