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The Lasting Functionality of Pagers in Food Service by [Cora Bullock](#)

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Back in the day, numeric pagers were used to convey pre-set messages in numerical codes. Meanwhile, alphanumeric pagers were useful for sending and received messages in recognizable text.

Within a decade or so, pagers steadily waned until they became no more than useless curiosities for young people today. Yet despite their decline, pagers remain useful in some industries such as restaurants because of their efficiency, function, and sensible design.

More restaurants nowadays rely on paging systems to enable better and more efficient communication with their staff and customers. Some restaurants also use decorative pagers that are both functional and eye-catching. Most pagers being used in restaurants are the alphanumeric kind, although some pagers do have a voice message function.

Typical pagers look nothing more than black boxes. However, some restaurants use fancy-looking pagers to make the devices more interesting and less intimidating for customers. Fancy pagers are a little like a marketing strategy, strengthening brand recall while improving the customer experience at the same time.

Pagers are useful for restaurants or similar food establishments that enjoy high customer volumes or where meals take a while to be prepared. Customers are given pagers and are free to leave the premises within a limited radius; they then come back once the table is available or when the food is ready to serve. These pagers are usually one-way pagers, meaning they can only receive messages but never send them. Pagers can also be used among servers, so their supervisor or manager can notify them of new orders or tasks.

Some establishments have devices that enable customers to call the attention of servers. This is useful in nightclubs, bars, and fine dining restaurants where servers are consistently on the move. This way, they can notify servers more efficiently instead of waving their arms in the air, calling out, whistling, or ringing a bell, which can disturb other diners. These pagers are sometimes shaped like coasters that customers can press for service, thereby notifying servers immediately.

Some restaurants use fancy pagers to promote their business and make the devices less likely to get lost. A seafood restaurant may have pagers shaped like a lobster, fish, or clam. A pizza parlor may have a pager shaped like a pizza slice; or a diner, with pagers shaped like a hamburger. For customers, this makes the restaurant more interesting and memorable; for the restaurant, it helps them remind customers where the devices belong.

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