



## Case Study

# Lawry's Restaurants Carve out New Markets with Mobile Website



### About Lawry's Restaurants

Serving the world's finest roasted prime ribs of beef with the warmest hospitality has been a recipe for success for Lawry's Restaurants since 1938. Today the family-owned business operates Lawry's The Prime Rib restaurants in Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, and Las Vegas and has franchised locations in Singapore, Taipei, Tokyo, Osaka, and Hong Kong. Lawry's Restaurants, Inc. also owns several other establishments that offer the same commitment to excellence: Five Crowns, a cozy English pub; SideDoor, an English-style gastro pub; the Tam O'Shanter, a Scottish themed restaurant and pub; and Lawry's Carvery, a quick-casual restaurant and take-out establishment.

### Situation

For 75 years guests have enjoyed Lawry's succulent prime rib and genuine hospitality as they celebrated engagements, promotions and other happy occasions. To appeal to spontaneous diners as well, Lawry's added casual restaurants. Increasingly it has turned to social media and an expanded Web presence to keep the establishments at the top of people's minds and to attract a younger clientele. As the use of smartphones has increased, Lawry's wanted to ensure a mobile experience that captures the essence of its distinctive brand without the site errors and delays that can occur when accessing the full website.

### Solution

AT&T [Mobility Solutions Services](#) helped Lawry's launch a mobile website providing streamlined navigation for the 25 percent of visitors who access it on their mobile devices. The site makes it easy to find locations, view menus and make reservations. It communicates the unique attributes and ambiance of its restaurants with a visual richness that sets each apart, while helping Lawry's appeal to a wider range of customers.

### A Single, Perfect Entrée

For four generations, discerning diners have made Lawry's the place to go to celebrate their special moments. The brand that has long been synonymous with excellent prime rib was born in Los Angeles in 1915 when brothers-in-law Lawrence L. Frank and

Walter Van de Kamp began making and selling potato chips. Their success soon led to the opening of Van de Kamp Bakeries and their first restaurant, the Tam O'Shanter.

Frank's idea for a high-end restaurant that focused on a single, perfect entrée led to the 1938 launch of Lawry's The Prime Rib in Beverly Hills. The simple approach – offer guests superb meals, service and hospitality – was an immediate hit with customers, as was the unique blend of salt, herbs and spices Lawry's used to season its prime rib. Soon after the restaurant opened, Lawry's began marketing its signature seasoned salt and other popular seasonings. The company sold Lawry's Foods in 1979; the brand today is owned by McCormick & Company, but the Frank and Van de Kamp families continue to own and operate Lawry's Restaurants Inc.

Lawry's Marketing Director Rich Cope attributes the company's success to ongoing family involvement and a staff that is deeply committed to

## Lawry's Restaurants Facts

### Business Needs

A way to enhance the website user experience for the increasing number of patrons accessing it via mobile devices

### Networking Solution

New mobile website provides content optimized for smartphone viewing

### Business Value

Improved experience for new and existing customers that preserves the unique attributes of each of the restaurants

### Industry Focus

Fine Dining

### Size

More than a dozen restaurants worldwide

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the organization. Recognizing that skillful, friendly staff is an essential element of customer satisfaction, the founders created a workplace in which all are “co-workers” who are treated with respect. As a result, many have worked for Lawry's for decades. “All of our co-workers feel a very deep connection to the families and to the brand,” he said. “They're the ones who really make the guests feel like part of the family.”

### Catering to Changing Tastes

In addition to pioneering the single-entrée restaurant, Lawry's was the first to feature a green salad prior to the meal, car valet service and to provide “doggy bags” so customers (or sometimes even their pets) could enjoy the leftovers. Like many successful organizations, it resisted the temptation to adopt every passing fad, but remained open to making changes that would benefit its customers, even as its restaurants became some of the most popular in the country.

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*“We want to ensure that guests' experience is every bit as special, unique and true to the brand today as it was 75 years ago.”*

– Rich Cope, Marketing Director, Lawry's Restaurants Inc.

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“Far and away our biggest challenge is staying relevant in a world that changes so quickly, where food is seen as constantly evolving,” said Cope. “Traditions are not quite as important to younger generations as they might have been for their parents and grandparents. People still want a quality meal, but might not want to get dressed up to go out to dine for two or three hours.”

Accommodating changing guest preferences while maintaining focus on the brand's successful heritage is a constant balancing act. “It's very easy to lose sight of what got you to where you are for the sake of trying to keep up with the latest trends,” Cope said. “We want to ensure that guests' experience is every bit as special as it was 75 years ago.”

Having a firm sense of its identity helped Lawry's preserve what its guests like best while also accommodating the desires of younger diners. It continues to operate Lawry's The Prime Rib locations, but has also introduced Lawry's Carvery, a concept that features fresh, high-quality roasted meats that are hand-carved-to-order, offering Lawry's excellence in quick-casual style. “It's important that we deliver a great experience for our guests and that they walk away feeling connected to the family and to what we're doing,” Cope said.

### Getting Social

As it introduced new products to build its customer base, Lawry's has begun to broaden its exposure. “We're adding communications paths designed to reach younger guests,” said Cope.

To promote the 75th Anniversary of Lawry's The Prime Rib, for instance, the company augmented traditional public relations efforts with a social media strategy that included Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Posts promoting a prime rib dinner for \$1.25, the price when the restaurant opened in 1938, created Lawry's first “viral” messaging.

Cope sees the ability to connect quickly with younger audiences as an important element of Lawry's growth strategy. “We want to keep Lawry's at the top of their minds whenever they go out to eat,” he said. “Social media certainly can be an avenue to remind them that they love Lawry's, or plant the seeds that it's an amazing place that makes them feel special and connected.”

### New Recipes for Success

Part of attracting new customers is making it easy for them to find a location, preview the menu and make a reservation via the Lawry's website. “Imagery is a critical aspect of what we do, so our site is very visual,” Cope said. Communicating the richness of the experience, however, was harder when people used smartphones.

“A pretty high percentage of mobile device users would access our site and immediately click out,” he said. “The high bounce rate told us many were not happy with what they were finding. We had to make it as painless as possible for them to get a phone number or find a menu without having to fuss with a lot of buttons, pages and loading time.”

Although simplicity was critical, the company also wanted the option to augment the mobile site. “Down the road we may want to link visitors to a particular page when there's an event or a specific promotion we're running,” Cope said.

### A Cut Above the Rest

These factors were top of mind as the company chose a mobility consultant to provide assistance. “AT&T understood what our needs were and the importance of delivering on those goals,” he said. They were absolutely dedicated to making it happen. They recommended a scalable site and an opportunity for us to drive people to it beyond just giving them the basic information and the ability to make reservations.”

AT&T engaged and collaborated with a trusted software services company to duplicate the lush look and feel of each of Lawry's restaurants, an arrangement that worked well for Lawry's. “I knew that if I ever had an issue or any concerns that AT&T was going to be there right away to take care of it,” Cope said.

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– Rich Cope, Marketing Director, Lawry's Restaurants Inc.

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Just as Lawry's Carvery offers diners the best of Lawry's The Prime Rib, the new mobile site gives customers the best of all worlds. The two-page format rapidly provides the relevant and most often requested information. Now customers get an outstanding online experience that features the same look and feel of Lawry's full site which they can still access if needed.

The mobile site is designed to help people make an informed decision about where to dine. "We're always looking for opportunities to share the brand experience in a way that encourages people to give us a try," Cope said.

### An Improved User Experience

Although the analysis hasn't yet been completed, Cope sees that a higher percentage of people are using the mobile site and Lawry's is experiencing a lower bounce rate. "All of the feedback from various sources indicates that it is well received and successful," he said.

"My sense is that it is helping people get the information they need so that they can make a decision about coming to our restaurants," he said. "Our user experience has greatly improved because of the mobile site, making it easier for people to have a positive experience with Lawry's and driving loyalty."

The new site has become another important tool Lawry's can use to support its brand. "I didn't want to do it halfway," he said. "It was really important to ensure that the quality was there, and that's what AT&T ultimately delivered."

### Next on the Horizon

Cope said he's impressed with the expertise of the AT&T team. "I can't say enough about the people that I've worked with at every level," he said. "There was a commitment to excellence and a dedication to ensuring the best possible quality service. It's a lot like how we operate here at Lawry's, delivering the best experience at a very good value."

Cope expects AT&T to be a valuable resource as Lawry's continues its mobile and social media marketing. "We're going to take it to another level and reach people in different ways," he said. "As platforms and new marketing tactics become relevant and more mainstream, we want to be in position to deliver our brand on those platforms. We're always looking for opportunities to do things better."

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