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AI Is Earning Its Place at the Table, New PAR Technology Survey Finds

Consumers who rejected restaurant AI outright in 2025 are now more open to it, provided transparency, control, and human access remain part of the deal

NEW HARTFORD, N.Y. (August 18, 2026) — [PAR Technology Corporation](#) (NYSE: PAR), a leading technology provider powering multi-unit operations across restaurant, retail, and large-scale commerce, today released its [2026 Industry Report: AI on the Diner's Terms](#). The report analyzes findings from 1,000 surveyed consumers on AI's expanding role in the restaurant experience, revealing a meaningful shift from 2025.

In 2025, [41% of surveyed consumers](#) said they'd choose a restaurant that avoided AI altogether. One year later, average discomfort with restaurant AI has fallen to 27%. This means nearly 3 in 4 diners are now open to AI playing some role in their experience, depending on how it's used. That's a meaningful signal: consumers aren't just tolerating AI, they're actively reassessing its value.

The shift doesn't mean consumers are ready to hand everything over to AI. Rather, the research suggests diners are increasingly willing to embrace AI when the value is clear: faster service, greater consistency, and more relevant experiences. What they expect in return is transparency about when and how AI is used, and the ability to reach a real person when needed.

"Consumers are giving operators clear direction—they are open to AI when it makes their experience better," said Savneet Singh, CEO of PAR Technology. "The operators who move now to build that trust will own the guest relationship. The ones who wait will be handing it to someone else. This is not about replacing humans. It is about making sure restaurants are present, relevant, and in control wherever their guests choose to order next."

Five Findings, At A Glance:

Operational AI earns the strongest acceptance

- Nearly half of surveyed consumers (48%) are comfortable with AI making operational decisions like adjusting labor based on demand or optimizing menus based on inventory. Comfort rises to 51% when AI is used to improve service consistency and shorten wait times.

Diners are increasingly open to AI-powered personalization

- A year ago, only 33% of consumers trusted AI to suggest personalized offers based on their dining history, but that number has risen to an average of 45%. Notably, parents with children under 25 in the household stood out at 59% versus 38% of those without kids. This jump suggests the value exchange is becoming clearer — personalization grounded in dining history feels relevant rather than intrusive.

LLMs emerge as a new ordering frontier

- 62% would order through an LLM given the right offer, with Millennials (73%), Gen Z (70%), and parents (74%) showing the most enthusiasm. Younger diners and parents aren't debating whether to order through an LLM. For many, the only question is whether the offer is good enough.

Transparency is the clearest trust signal

- 43% rank transparency first when it comes to trusting AI usage at restaurants, nearly 3x any other factor, overtaking last year's top concern about AI replacing workers (64%).

Human touch remains a firm boundary

- 47% say AI goes too far when it replaces most human interaction, and 44% say the same when they cannot easily reach a person. Only 7% believe a restaurant cannot be too automated.

Singh added, “Earlier this year, I [predicted](#) LLMs would become the new ordering interface. This data is proving it out faster than I expected. Sixty-two percent of surveyed consumers—and climbing—say they would order through an LLM given the right offer. The field is pre-seeded, and the guests are ready. The question is whether operators move fast enough to meet them there and own that relationship before someone else does.”

These findings arrive as agentic AI moves from concept to deployment. [PAR Intelligence](#) is built to help multi-unit operators connect data to coordinated action in the use cases where surveyed consumer comfort is highest, such as operational decision-making, personalized offers, and service consistency. Brands that lead with transparency, preserve human touchpoints, and apply AI where it tangibly improves the experience will be best positioned to earn consumer trust as adoption accelerates.

Read the full [2026 Industry Report: AI on the Diner's Terms](#), which includes the survey questions, base sizes, and complete results underlying the findings summarized above.

Survey Methodology

The findings in this release are from an online survey of 1,000 U.S. adult consumers fielded in June 2026 through Dynata's consumer panel and commissioned by PAR Technology. Year-over-year comparisons reference PAR's 2025 survey of 1,000 U.S. consumers, conducted online in March 2025. Survey results reflect the stated views of respondents at

the time of the survey and are not a prediction of future consumer behavior or of PAR's future results.

About PAR Technology

PAR Technology Corporation (NYSE: PAR) delivers an agentic operating platform that enables smarter, more consistent operations for multi-unit brands across restaurant, retail, and high-volume commerce. PAR's platform brings together mission-critical software—point of sale, digital ordering, loyalty, payments, and back-office systems—along with hardware and data to orchestrate decisions and workflows across systems, locations, and guest touchpoints in real time. Designed to drive measurable outcomes, PAR helps brands improve efficiency, deliver better experiences, and make every store more profitable. Learn more at partech.com.

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