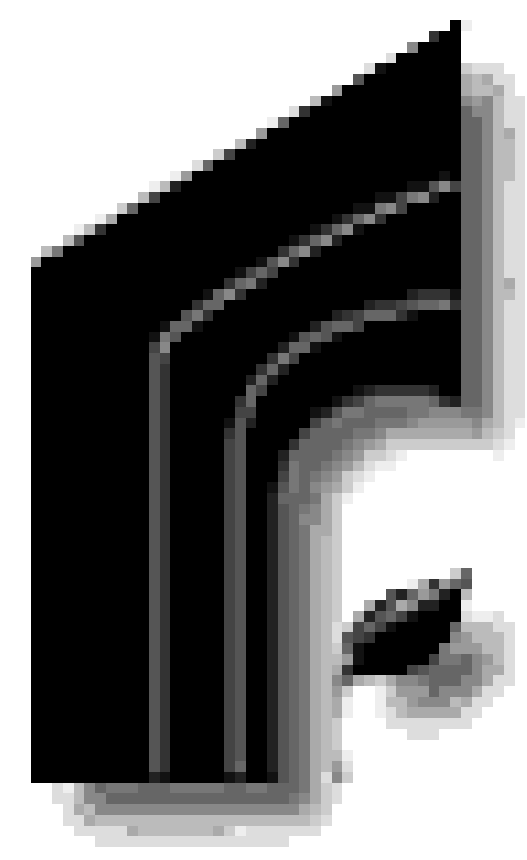


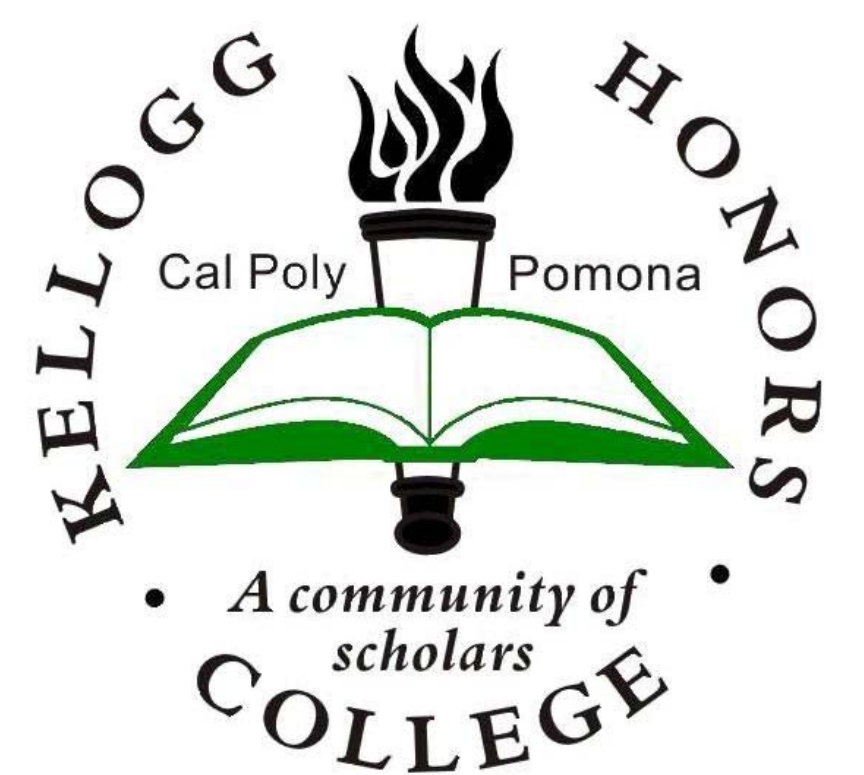
Beta Testing the Usefulness of QR Codes In Vivo in a Classroom Setting: Triumphs and Trials



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Problem

Guest feedback systems are key to improving and maintaining quality in customer service environments, such as a Restaurant. Traditional paper comment cards come with many areas for improvement: they can be boring, require a lot of time to compile data and have to be reprinted constantly which wastes precious resources.

Purpose

A QR code accessed, paperless guest feedback system was implemented in a student run restaurant setting for the period of a week during March 2012. The new system's goals were to increase guest participation, improve efficiency in compiling data to allow increased utilization of the feedback and conserve resources.

What is a QR code?

QR codes were invented in Japan during the mid 1990's and are a registered trademark of Denso Wave. The QR code is one among a number of 2-dimensional bar codes that exist. By scanning a QR code, consumers can be directed to additional information, media, or receive a coupon. They are often placed on product packaging, business cards, and ticket stubs. Due to the popularity of Smart Phone applications, QR codes can make information readily accessible by the average person walking down the street.

Results

Benchmark response rates were compiled to gain an understanding of the response rates on a typical night of service. Due to Wednesday's banquet service being used for server training, its data has been omitted. The average response rate for paper comment cards for the three Thursday dinner services prior to the experiment was 79%. The average response rate for paper comment cards for the three Friday dinner services prior to the experiment was 96%. The beta test yielded a 68% combined response rate (paper and electronic) on Thursday and a 90% combined response rate on Friday. Through the week, electronic responses decreased while the overall response rate increased.

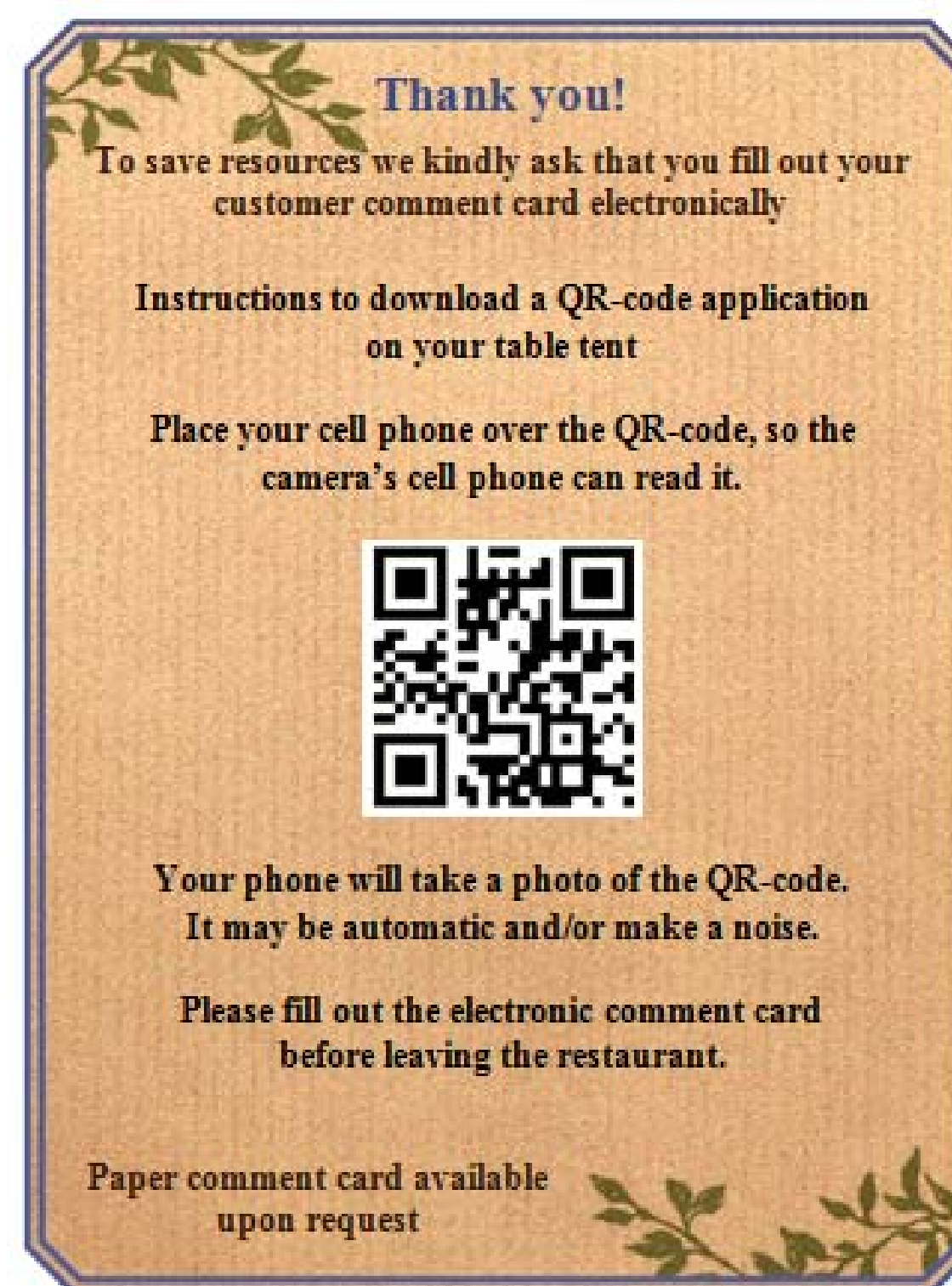
Day	Electronic Responses	Paper Response	Total Response	Guest Count	Overall Response rate	Average Response Rates (Previous Weeks)
Wednesday*	30	0	30	56 Banquet	53%	
Thursday	24	13	37	54 entrees	68%	79%
Friday **	23	32	55	61 Entrees (65 guests)	90%	96%
Totals	77	45	122			

18% of all guests, did not participate in either format

* Only Banquet service (**Incentive, Undivided Attention**)

** does not include private party of 8 (**Includes party in the bar & Large party of 10**)

27% of patrons who utilized a paper comment card listed not having a Smart Phone as the reason for not using the electronic method. 11% specified not having a QR code reader App, 8% preferred the paper version, leaving 54% listing "Other Reasons."



The Process

Guests were primed for the use of the technology when they were led to a display about the restaurant, before being sat. Patrons were told about QR codes several times throughout their dining experience. Table tents allowed for guests to read about QR codes while they were seated. At the end of the meal, a "Thank You" card featuring a QR code was included with a guest's bill. Servers asked guests to participate in the QR code accessed survey, prior to departing. A quick scan of the QR code led patrons to an online survey, to be completed on their device while sitting in the Restaurant. In addition to responses being tabulated, the number of clicks was electronically documented through the use of an additional program. This allowed management to know if the same number of people who scanned QR codes, matched the number of survey responses. To keep anonymity, but also be able to match responses to servers, a question was added to the basic comment card inquiring the guest's server's name.

Server Training

Initial server training was done on Tuesday and supplemental server reviews were held on Wednesday and Thursday before service. Staff members were trained to initiate conversations determining the type of cell phone the guest had, their level of technological experience, and knowledge about QR codes. Servers' performance was tracked. Team members with high response rates were acknowledged and individual server consulting was done when necessary. When servers were mentioned by name in surveys, they were acknowledged in front of their peers.

Limitations

The time frame of the experiment was a week, and the previous weeks only offered one type of comment card. The classroom setting encourages guest participation leading to unusually high response rates. The restaurant staff was made up of students earning course credit. Server's attitudes about elderly patron's technological abilities caused them to not offer the paperless option to some guests. Not all guests had the means to scan the QR code and the restaurant did not provide smart phone or tablets.

Conclusions

QR codes provide the ability to engage with restaurant guests in multiple ways during the dining experience. When QR codes are used in guest feedback systems, they increase the efficiency in the data collection process, allowing management to instantly share feedback and making it possible for team members to take corrective action immediately. It was found that server training, frequent review by management, and a good attitude are important in the success of the QR code accessed paperless comment card system.



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