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C A F E

Operational
Intelligence &
Profitability
Structuring

in a Hybrid Experience-Driven Café

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Context

Artistry Cafe operates in a competitive hospitality environment, serving Gen Z and Millennial customers with a hybrid model — social ambience, plus F&B service. Its success depended equally on menu appeal and experiential value.

However, operational decisions were largely intuitive.

Sales were recorded via POS or manual methods. Inventory tracking was inconsistent. Customer data was not structured. Performance evaluation happened retrospectively via cash summaries rather than analytical dashboards.

The café had brand traction but lacked operational intelligence.

Core Problem

Three structural inefficiencies emerged:

1. Menu Profitability Blindspots: No clarity on high-margin versus high-popularity items.
2. Inventory Leakage Risk: Variance between raw material purchases and theoretical consumption.
3. Customer Retention Data Gap: No structured tracking of repeat visit patterns or promotion impact.

The café risked revenue leakage and suboptimal pricing decisions despite strong footfall.

My Role

My mandate was to introduce analytical discipline without overwhelming a low-digitisation environment.

The objective

Bridge intuition with structured operational intelligence.

Intervention I

Data Infrastructure Foundation

I designed a unified SQL-based data mart consolidating:

- POS sales data
- Inventory purchases
- Expense records
- Basic customer touchpoints

Additionally:

- Introduced structured daily logging templates.
- Standardized SKU-level tracking.
- Created simple customer segmentation fields (new vs repeat).

The emphasis was on usability over sophistication.

Intervention 2

Menu Engineering Dashboard

Using Power BI, I built a menu classification model:

- Stars: High margin, high popularity
- Plowhorses: High popularity, lower margin
- Puzzles: High margin, low popularity
- Dogs: Low margin, low popularity

This analysis enabled:

- Pricing adjustments
- Recipe optimization
- Strategic promotion focus
- Identification of redesign candidates

For the first time, management could separate emotional preference from economic contribution.

Intervention 3

Peak Hour & Staffing Analytics

By visualizing hourly sales trends, I identified:

- Lunch and evening spikes
- Slow weekday windows
- Weekend behavioral shifts

This informed:

- Smarter staffing allocation
- Targeted off-peak promotions
- Service speed optimization during peak loads

Intervention 4

Inventory Variance Monitoring

I built variance dashboards comparing:

- Theoretical consumption
- Actual raw material usage
- Food cost percentages
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Flagging >5% deviations enabled early detection of:

- Waste
- Mis-recording
- Potential leakage

This introduced operational accountability without aggressive policing.

Strategic Impact

The transformation delivered:

- Profitability clarity at the item level.
- Structured operational monitoring.
- Early-warning inventory controls.
- Data-driven promotion evaluation.
- Foundational repeat-customer identification.

The café moved from retrospective cash-based review to proactive performance intelligence — improving profitability discipline while maintaining its experiential character.

