

## Award-Winning Solution Delivers The Ultimate Customer Experience

Jump onto the IHOP website and you'll see a feature few could have imagined when the pancake house first opened in 1958: the online ordering app IHOP'NGO. Likewise, Applebee's To Go entices customers with a catchy appeal: Pick up your favorite dishes and get home fast.

## Revitalizing Iconic Brands

IHOP® and Applebee's Grill + Bar® are iconic American brands of Dine Brands Global, one of the world's largest full-service dining companies, franchise-run with more than 3,700 locations in over 18 countries. The restaurant business—with its thin margins and stiff competition—has never been easy. It's even harder today because the market is mature; the only way to gain share is to win it from competitors. Applebee's learned that the hard way a while back when some new menu offerings strayed from the traditional favorites customers prefer. Compounding the drag on business, Applebee's online ordering spread confusingly across three different websites, depending on the access device. Slowdowns on high traffic days made frustrated consumers give up, causing revenue loss. IHOP offered no online ordering at all.

Dine Brands moved quickly to reclaim its position in the restaurant food chain, by giving customers what they want: the right menus, great service, convenience—and an exceptional omnichannel experience delivered through Sitecore.

"We lost a little relevance with our customers; we forgot what the customer expects from us and got a wake-up call," Dine Brands CEO Stephen P. Joyce told the Los Angeles Times in early 2018. "The company is adding technology to make ordering more convenient and is paying more attention to off-premise dining."

"We share XCentium's pride in receiving this recognition of our joint initiative. Our goal was to create a personalized omni-channel customer experience that would reengage former Applebee's and IHOP online guests and attract new guests in a changing restaurant market and we are pleased to be recognized as industry leaders in this important category."

- Charlie Jones, Executive Director, Digital and Guest Facing Technology, Dine Brands Global

"Partnering with Dine Brands Global and Sitecore on this strategic initiative has been a defining experience for XCentium. Assisting iconic brands like IHOP and Applebee's in achieving and surpassing their online marketing objectives has been a true honor for us. We deeply value our relationships with Dine Brands Global and Sitecore. We are grateful and humbled to have our work recognized with this great Sitecore award,"

- Martin Knudsen, Co-Founder and Partner at XCentium



### CLIENT

Dine Brands Global

### WEBSITE

www.ihop.com  
www.applebees.com

### INDUSTRY

Dining

### SOLUTIONS

Sitecore® Experience Platform™ (XP)  
(v9), Sitecore® Experience Database™  
(xDB), OLO Connector

### INTEGRATIONS

GeoIP geolocation  
Brandify location technology  
Google Maps  
Apache SOLR search engine  
Scalable Cloud Hosting



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## XCentium Serves Up Results



## Applebee's And Ihop Share Sitecore Platform

Dine Brands has operated on the Sitecore platform for close to a decade, and knew that Sitecore brought the robust capabilities needed to revitalize the Applebee's and IHOP brands. The restaurant company began by upgrading its website and Sitecore licenses to improve the accessibility of its online properties. Sitecore partner, XCentium, led the technical implementation for the Dine Brands digital team, which became a springboard for transformation and innovation.

"XCentium came in and helped us with performance optimization of our existing online properties," says Charlie Jones, executive director of digital and guest facing technology at Dine Brands. "We explained our vision to them—a single site encompassing each of our brands that could leverage Sitecore's personalization capabilities throughout the ordering process."

Using Sitecore Helix design principles, XCentium architected the solution that leverages Sitecore XP and xDB with a custom integration to connect Dine Brands websites to their e-commerce vendor. The e-commerce connection allows for embedded ordering within the Sitecore platform and doesn't rely on the e-commerce vendor's white label storefronts. This single Sitecore solution provides advanced onsite ordering capabilities responsively for all devices, geolocation-based interaction, multilingual menus, social network integration, and Customer Profiles synchronization into xDB.

"Sitecore xDB is critical to where we're going. We want to understand our guests' behavior and offer them a personalized, emotionally resonant experience," Jones says, adding that the solution provides headless architecture for xDB analytics for native apps, and consumption-priced cloud scaling.

## Easy Online Ordering Builds Loyalty

Today both Applebee's and IHOP run their websites on this common Sitecore platform. It's easy for customers to order online—no redirection to different websites, no confusing variances in look and feel or performance slowdowns. The solution scales easily to accommodate high-traffic events and television advertising, enabling increased revenue. Franchisees benefit from a corporate resource that supports their operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Applebee's met its goal of seeing more return visitors, a sign that satisfied customers are coming back. Bounce rates fell 22% quarter over quarter; sessions rose 31%; average session duration rose 41%; and pageviews went up 67%. IHOP also saw improvements in all these metrics: bounce rates down 7%; sessions up 35%; average session duration up 17%; pageviews up 67%.





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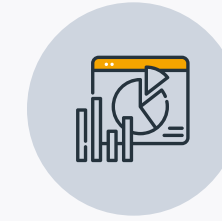
## Challenge

- Create a omni-channel experience for customers
- Reinvigorate Applebee's and IHOP brands online ordering experience
- Win market share from competitors in mature market
- Build customer repeat business, loyalty



## Solution

- Provide online ordering directly within Dine Brands' website
- Simplify Applebee's online ordering for off premise dining
- Create IHOP online ordering capability
- Scale website to accommodate high traffic events and television advertising



## Result

- Delivered year over year revenue increase from online sales both in terms of revenue and number of orders
- Provided advanced online ordering capabilities for all devices
- Eliminated need to send guests to separate ordering portal
- Increased repeat customers and online sales
- **Applebee's:** bounce rates down 22%; sessions up 31%; average session duration up 41%; pageviews up 67%.
- **IHOP:** bounce rates down 7%; sessions up 35%; average session duration up 17%; pageviews up 67%

