



# Centerity at Work in Quick Service, Fine Dine, and Fast Casual Restaurants

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EMA recently had a spirited discussion with the head of WW Service Solutions for the hospitality business unit of a multi-billion-dollar managed service provider (MSP). This company specializes its outsourced services and support by verticals to provide end-to-end secure monitoring and managed service that is in-depth and business-aligned. The restaurant/hospitality service offering provides “wall-to-wall” service including help desk, multi-vendor hardware maintenance, field service, break/fix, depot, and incident management. The discussion focused on the centrality of

Centerity in the company’s ability to cost-effectively and comprehensively manage the technology that powers store operations, including: POS hardware and software, applications like loyalty programs and customer engagement programs, online ordering, in-store, third parties such as Uber Eats, curbside pickup, kitchen production, digital signage, and back office. Leveraging the Centerity platform, this global company was able to drive a 60% reduction in incidents, which cut the need for human intervention. The result was a cost savings of 38% within weeks of initial deployment.

## The coffee pot whisperer: Centerity basics

Centerity monitors technology devices from fryers, refrigerators, and printers to ordering kiosks, servers, and network elements. When an anomaly is detected, business logic that has been predefined by the MSP working with its clients and Centerity, determines what actions can be automatically taken by the Centerity agent. If those actions are successful, business continues uninterrupted.

The goal is to eliminate the need for human intervention and to use humans when nothing else will do—and only then. The result is a win on all sides, with superb operating conditions for the client and significantly reduced total cost of operations and support for the MSP.

Speaking of the Centerity value proposition, this global services leader said, “Centerity has come up with a very advanced protocol stack to be able to make real-time decisions and take predictive, preventative, and corrective actions on a variety of devices ranging from IoT to everyday Windows-driven devices and beyond. They have developed and deployed unique agent-based algorithms across a multitude of platforms, hardware, software, operating systems, and applications, and they are able to extend the capabilities to net new devices not previously encountered.

For example, older fryers or coffeepots don’t have a motherboard. They have just enough RAM that we can load a temporary file/SDK on the device. So, for a printer, we are able to determine if formatting is occurring correctly. We can tell if it’s out of paper or ink.

Newer devices and appliances, like refrigerators, are usually either Windows or Android-driven. These devices have the ability to use IEEE APIs that expose attributes that are defined by each manufacturer, such as model type, serial number, firmware, MAC or IP address, error codes, lights on or out, or a need for Freon. This is where Centerity becomes critical. The Centerity platform can ‘read’ and communicate with any device, either out of the box in many cases or through customer-developed SDK/code/agents.

From a platform standpoint, Centerity is unique in that they are able to provide multiple deployment and business models: on-prem, hybrid, and/or hosted in any combination clients need.”

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## Centerity in the quick service restaurant (QSR)

Turning to his QSR service clients, he said, “We all know the macroeconomic situation. There is a lot of struggle to change business models—a lot more online. It’s driven digital transformation even faster and pushed consumption of data to the edge at an alarming rate.

A lot of companies are laying off. Are they laying off IT or the guy on the frontline making food, manning the fryer? They’re in the food business. Technology is a cost center and certainly not their core competency, so they are laying off IT.

Tech is a means to an end, so there is an upsurge in outsourcing IT and service and support desk. It makes sense from TCO and ROI points of view, as well as the ability to innovate and deploy. Today, we are seeing a pivot in our clients beyond IT. They want us to take on monitoring, managing, and the support of their end-to-end platform.

There’s a lot of technology that has to work to support curbside pickup, delivery, online ordering, and new devices. To merely deploy and manage all that technology in real time would take numerous tools and significant resources. Centerity makes it all possible through a single pane of glass across the network.

All that the restaurateurs want to know is when a Point of Sales (POS) system goes down or a printer is out of paper or low on ink. They don’t want to be calling an 800 number for help. What happens and what decisions need to get made when a fryer goes down? Do you back up ordering or shut down while you’re on hold waiting for help on a help line for a fryer, a refrigerator, a scanner, a kiosk? This is where action—remote automation, preventative and proactive maintenance powered by Centerity—cuts down time.”

## IoT device monitoring/mitigation and AI/ML

“IoT device monitoring and mitigation by having an agent/collector on devices make it possible to take proactive, preventative, and corrective action, as well as provide analytics and business logic. Centerity works by collecting data to apply business logic and take corrective action based on prescribed policies. If the actions don’t work, the business logic automatically initiates a ticket in the service desk/ITSM system, reports the problem, builds logic, and learns from the resolution. Analytics build on themselves.

That’s what AI is good for—learning by anomaly, because they already know what they know. Anything outside of that becomes an anomaly. Once it’s solved, it becomes part of what’s known and then you move on to the next unknown, and so on and so forth.

The key is in the logic. You sit down with the customers and Centerity and know without a doubt exactly what you’re going to do if something goes sideways—exactly as if someone were onsite. When a field tech declares that a circuit breaker needs to be replaced, they had to go through a certain process to get to that point. They didn’t just walk in and say, “Your circuit breaker is out and we need to replace it.” What if they knew it before they got there?

Can I remotely remediate? If I can, Centerity commands an action. Preventative, proactive, predictive action is the next level. Then, how do I provide the information—dashboard—up and down? Centerity’s visualization tool for executives includes dashboards and regular reports. They can be at the highest level of business—SLAs, transaction types and volume, revenue—with drilldown to the engineering level of detail. All in one.”



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## Cost savings on all sides

“We know that, on average, QSRs go down twice a year for any number of reasons: power outage, systems don’t work, flooding, whatever. They’re down for between 1.5 and 2 hours each time at a cost between \$3-5K/hour. That is the cost of in-store sales that are missed. Now, with the current situation of increased online ordering, curbside pickup, and services like Uber Eats, it can be \$20k/site. When we save downtime like we do with Centerity’s alerting and action, the client saves, obviously.

But we also save. We’ve cut operational costs by 38% so far and here’s how. It costs hundreds of dollars/hour to roll a truck—and that’s without parts or material. Through deployed agents and business logic, Centerity is able to determine, for example, if a refrigerator is down due to a compressor, requires more Freon, or needs a coil replacement. When the truck rolls, it does so knowing exactly what is needed vs. troubleshooting on site. What is that worth in time, materials, lost wages, lost sales, etc.?

Centerity provides the ability to see and take action based on business logic. If/then...we lay it out with Centerity by leveraging end agents/SDKs/APIs whether on printers, kiosks, POS devices, refrigerators, or fryers. The amount of technology is huge. Each device may have hardware, firmware, an OS, applications, and all of the rules that go with them for RAM, storage, and power...the heartbeat of the network.

When Centerity detects an anomaly, it sends a proactive alert to a dashboard that has business intelligence laid out with actions to take. For example, if a POS is not functioning, reboot three times, reflash. We may call the store to see if they can help fix it—maybe unplug, wait, replug. If all else fails, then we send a person out to fix it.”

## Before and After

Laying out the steps with and without Centerity, the MSP manager contrasted the timelines:

### Without Centerity

1. Something goes wrong in the store. Call an 800 number for help.
2. If it’s your lucky day, you’re not on hold so you immediately hear a Level 1 agent say, “Can I help you?” You tell them “I’m in store number 570 and one of my POSs isn’t working. I can’t take orders. There’s a blue screen.” You get put on hold while you are transferred to a POS specialist.
3. You’re now at three minutes in on your lucky day when the POS specialist picks up and says, “Can I help you?” You repeat the story and get walked through all the possible things you can do in your store to fix it yourself.
4. I have SLAs to meet. If my guy can’t solve it in 5 minutes, a trouble ticket is created in the service desk and I send a truck on its way. This approach often costs hundreds of dollars before I have even started to diagnose the issue, plus thousands in lost sales and productivity before the issue is resolved.

### With Centerity

1. The Centerity sensor sees a problem with the POS. Business logic is employed to take all the steps that can be done remotely. If it doesn’t work, the system automatically opens a trouble ticket with the service desk, which means human intervention is needed.
2. 60-90 seconds in, the NOC tries to remotely troubleshoot and calls the store to let them know a truck is already rolling.

A refrigerator will tell you what you need—a compressor, more Freon, or a coil replacement. When the truck rolls, it does so knowing exactly what is needed vs. troubleshooting on site.

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## Closing Thoughts

“We’ve shown a 60% decrease in incidents through automation, without human intervention. That reduces the rolling of trucks, which has reduced our costs by 38%. Now, I only send a truck out when I need to—and I know exactly what needs to be on that truck when I do.

Centerity collects the information. They expose the data and you can take action. There are so many devices and manufacturers, each one with their own codes. Centerity can do them all on a single pane of glass. We’ve moved from collecting data to providing action. All of it is captured and reported—and through data analytics and AI/ML, the system is always learning.

The ROI is significant and our ability to innovate is accelerated. It’s a win/win situation.”

## About Enterprise Management Associates, Inc.

Founded in 1996, Enterprise Management Associates (EMA) is a leading industry analyst firm that provides deep insight across the full spectrum of IT and data management technologies. EMA analysts leverage a unique combination of practical experience, insight into industry best practices, and in-depth knowledge of current and planned vendor solutions to help EMA's clients achieve their goals. Learn more about EMA research, analysis, and consulting services for enterprise line of business users, IT professionals and IT vendors at [www.enterprisemanagement.com](http://www.enterprisemanagement.com) or [blogs.enterprisemanagement.com](http://blogs.enterprisemanagement.com). You can also follow EMA on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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