

Week 1 - Meeting: Clarifying Project Goals

Below is the transcript of the first Sauce & Spoon project meeting with the following people:

- Peta (Project Manager)
- Deanna (Director of Operations)
- Gilly (General Manager, North)
- Alex (General Manager, Downtown)
- Seydou (Restaurant Consultant)

Peta (Project Manager): Hi, everyone. Thanks for meeting today. I'm so excited to get started, and to find out more about what we're hoping to achieve with this project. I've reviewed the existing project documents and I'm in the process of drafting the project charter. Once it's finalized and approved by all the stakeholders, we can move into the planning stage! So, I'd like to take this time to review the information I have so far and make sure we're off to a successful start.

Deanna (Director of Operations): Welcome to the Sauce & Spoon team, Peta! We're happy to have you. How can we help?

Peta: Thanks, Deanna! Since you worked on the business proposal for this project, do you want to start by just giving a general overview of the project idea for everyone?

Deanna: Sure! Sauce & Spoon would like to launch a pilot rollout of tabletop menu tablets at two of our restaurant locations, Sauce & Spoon North and Sauce & Spoon Downtown. That way, guests can place their orders on the tablets as soon as they arrive at the restaurant, rather than waiting for a server to attend to them, which has been an issue in the past. I think these two locations will work well for the pilot, because each has the right sized staff and volume of guests to test this new concept. Gilly and Alex are the general managers of these locations—do either of you have anything to add?

Gilly (General Manager, North): Yes! I'm excited our location has been selected for this pilot. I was wondering which section of the restaurant we want to use for the tablet rollout. Or will we be piloting the entire restaurant? Personally, I think the bar area is an ideal location. It's the section where we're always hoping to drive faster turnover. Plus, I think guests in the bar area would appreciate a faster dining experience.

Alex (General Manager, Downtown): I agree, Gilly. The bar area is my pick for testing out the tablets, too.

Deanna: Great points—yes, we'd intended to pilot the tablets in just one section of the restaurant, and setting them up in the bar area makes sense.

Peta: Okay, great. We'll roll the tablets in the bar section of each restaurant. Deanna, can you discuss some of the major outcomes you're hoping to achieve with this project?

Deanna: Well, one of our biggest company-wide goals is to increase our product mix. We're thinking one way this project can help us do that is upselling appetizers or promoting certain entrees. Seydou, I've seen on some of the different tablet vendor websites that there's a feature to promote specific items. Does this seem fairly standard and like something we could incorporate?

Seydou (Restaurant Consultant): Yes! Several models out there allow you to suggest any menu item as an add-on, and you can display a coupon for that item as well.

Deanna: Excellent. Peta, we definitely want to try out the menu item add-on feature and the coupons, so we'll need to figure out which tablet package has those features. I think we also want to decrease our average table turn time by about 30 minutes, since delays in service have been a source of customer frustration. I know this is an ambitious goal, but I'm hopeful we can achieve it, since guests can use the tablets to order immediately and pay their own checks without having to wait for a server.

Peta: Got it! As someone who's new to the restaurant industry, I may need a little help with definitions. Can you please clarify what you mean by *table turn time*?

Deanna: Oh, sure! Table turn time is the amount of time a party occupies a table, including the time it takes to get the table ready for the next party. Right now, our average turn time at these locations is about 95 minutes for most sections, and 80 minutes at the bar.

Peta: Thanks—so you think reducing average table turn times by 30 minutes is a reasonable goal?

Gilly: Yes! Our dinner hours are 5-10 p.m., and we believe each table should be able to serve at least four parties in that time. We want our guests to have a great experience, so we don't want them to feel rushed. But we do think the tablets can help us cut down on wait time on the time they spend waiting for tables and servers. Reducing table turn time should also help with some of our other goals, like increasing our average daily guest counts by 10%.

Peta: I see. Thanks for sharing more of the context. Are there any other goals you'd like to discuss?

Alex: At my location, we've noticed a growing amount of food waste. I think part of the reason for this is that we comp meals when customers send food back.

Peta: Comp?

Alex: *Comping* means not charging. Our current policy is to prepare new meals for any guests who report that their orders are prepared incorrectly. The problem is this can get cumbersome and expensive if it happens too frequently.

Gilly: That's been a problem for us as well. I'm wondering if the tablets will help us communicate specific guest requests to the kitchen more directly? That way, if a guest modifies a menu item in any way, we'll have a record of it.

Peta: Got it. Do you have a specific goal around cutting food waste?

Alex: Not really. It would be great if we could get some estimates of how much we can expect to cut with this project, and formulate a reasonable goal from there.

Peta: Okay, I'll see what I can do. So, I'm adding to the charter that we're going to roll out the pilot in the bar, check on tablet packages that include menu add-ons and coupons, and get some estimates on a goal of reducing food waste. Now, is there anything you're worried about with the tablet rollout?

Gilly: Change can sometimes be challenging for the staff. There's always a learning curve when you're adopting new technology, and people can sometimes be resistant.

Peta: Yes, of course. We'll definitely include a plan for how we train the staff on the new system. What else?

Deanna: It's not totally clear how the tablets will integrate with our existing POS system and host software.

Peta: Sorry, can you tell me a bit more about what these two pieces of software do?

Deanna: The host software tracks table usage and wait lists, while the point-of-sale or POS software manages prices, tracks orders, and generates the check at the end of a meal. The tablet software should be compatible with our existing systems, but we'll need to configure them properly to make the integration as seamless as possible.

Seydou: The account services teams I've worked with have a lot of experience with this. Peta, let me know when you are ready to research tablet packages and I can work with you on that.

Peta: Thanks, Seydou! That will be really helpful.

Deanna: Excellent! Peta, what other questions do you have?

Peta: Let's see, I wanted to review the timeline for this rollout.

Deanna: We'd like to start the pilot at the beginning of quarter two, which gives us next quarter to get everything ready. If we can do it sooner, that's even better since we tend to be less busy in January and February.

Peta: This is great! Thanks, everyone, for answering all my questions. I may have more later, but I think I have what I need for now. I'll start drafting a project charter, which will summarize the project and explain the goals, the scope, and any future deliverables that might be necessary.