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The State of Restaurant Device Management

How restaurants are redefining device management for the digital dining era.

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Introduction

From Analog to Edge — Restaurants in 2025

In 2025, restaurants are among the boldest adopters of dedicated devices. Once an analog industry, they're now a digital proving ground — where tablets, kiosks, handhelds, and digital signage are no longer "nice to have." They're core to daily operations.

We just published our annual ***State of Device Management*** report, exploring the trends and strategies shaping edge device fleets today. In our initial report, we analyzed data from nearly 1,000 companies — from lean SMBs to sprawling global fleets — and layered in third-party research.

While new technologies and management tools expand what's possible across industries, each sector's unique needs shape its approach to device management.

Year after year, quick-service restaurants (QSRs) push the limits of what their dedicated fleets can do. From AI-driven order management to drive-thru optimization, their tech stacks are among the most advanced — and most demanding. The takeaway from this year's data is clear: Restaurants aren't just serving food. They're running some of the most sophisticated, distributed digital infrastructures in any industry.

This report builds on data from this year's *State of Device Management* but dives deeper into the trends and context of a rapidly digitizing restaurant sector. It unpacks the numbers, strategies, and patterns shaping restaurant device management today — and where the industry is headed next.

Executive Summary

Restaurant Dedicated Device Fleets at a Glance

From POS terminals to kitchen displays and self-service kiosks, devices aren't just supporting restaurant operations anymore — they are the operation.

The challenge? Restaurant fleets are complex by design. They stretch across locations, regions, and roles, and every layer of that complexity makes consistency harder to pull off.

Especially true for quick-service operations, there's no margin for downtime. Operators need device experiences that are predictable and repeatable — for staff and for customers. That means tight control over groups, the flexibility to configure on the fly, and the confidence to push updates without breaking lunch service.

The numbers back it up:

Restaurants **average 59.7 device groups,** a clear sign of just how granular these setups have become.

Restaurants are adding flexibility by **moving away from kiosk mode to multi-app setups** for more flexibility on the same device — a smart shift from hardcoded, single-use deployments.

Alerts are frequent by design (3.3 per tenant), and restaurants lead all industries in remote session usage. When something goes wrong at peak service, IT can't wait for a site visit — they need to fix it instantly, without pulling hardware offline.

This is also why **restaurants lead all industries in remote session usage,** using it to fix issues fast and get hardware back online without waiting around for on-site support. Devices are revenue drivers: If one goes down, it's not just a tech issue — it's lost revenue.

Bottom line: Restaurants are building device strategies that scale with complexity without sacrificing uptime, speed, or consistency.

Executive Summary

Restaurants at a Glance

Restaurant Industry Averages	
Devices	1,408.2
Groups	59.7
Users	28.2
Devices Per User	50.01
% of Devices in Kiosk Mode	34.1%
% Multi-App Mode Devices	65.9%
Alerts	3.3
Geofences	3.0
Applications + Content Files	30.6
Application Pipelines	18.0
Remote Viewer Sessions Per Month	550.8
Monthly Remote Viewer Sessions Per Device	0.26

Part 1: Restaurant Device Fleet Size and Composition Trends in 2025

In 2025, restaurant fleets aren't just big — based on the companies we studied, they average more than 1,400 devices each. But it's not just about the number of endpoints. Managing and integrating those fleets is getting more complex as operators work to close staffing gaps, boost revenue, and deliver smoother guest experiences.

So what's fueling this large-scale edge-device adoption? A few big shifts stand out:

- All-in-one restaurant tech is now real. Integrated solutions are more available and reliable than ever.
- Guests expect devices. Sixty-five percent of adults say they **want self-ordering kiosks** at limited-service restaurants — and that preference isn't slowing down.
- Staffing remains volatile. Regional **labor swings** keep pressure on operators to do more with fewer hands.

The pandemic jump-started a wave of front-of-house device rollouts, especially in QSRs. But operational gains from that shift are still unfolding — across both limited-service and full-service, where customer expectations look very different.

Independent software vendors have also had to play catch-up. Early on, custom builds dominated, but more off-the-shelf solutions are finally emerging. Hardware and software stacks are shifting to modular, flexible builds — less "one size fits all," more plug-and-play. The biggest QSRs got there first thanks to deep vendor ties, but now the whole industry is catching up.

What hasn't caught up? Fleet orchestration and management. Restaurant devices don't function like traditional enterprise IT fleets. And that mismatch remains the challenge operators are still working to solve.

Part 2: Applications and Settings

So what are they doing with these massive fleets? In 2025, more than ever before.

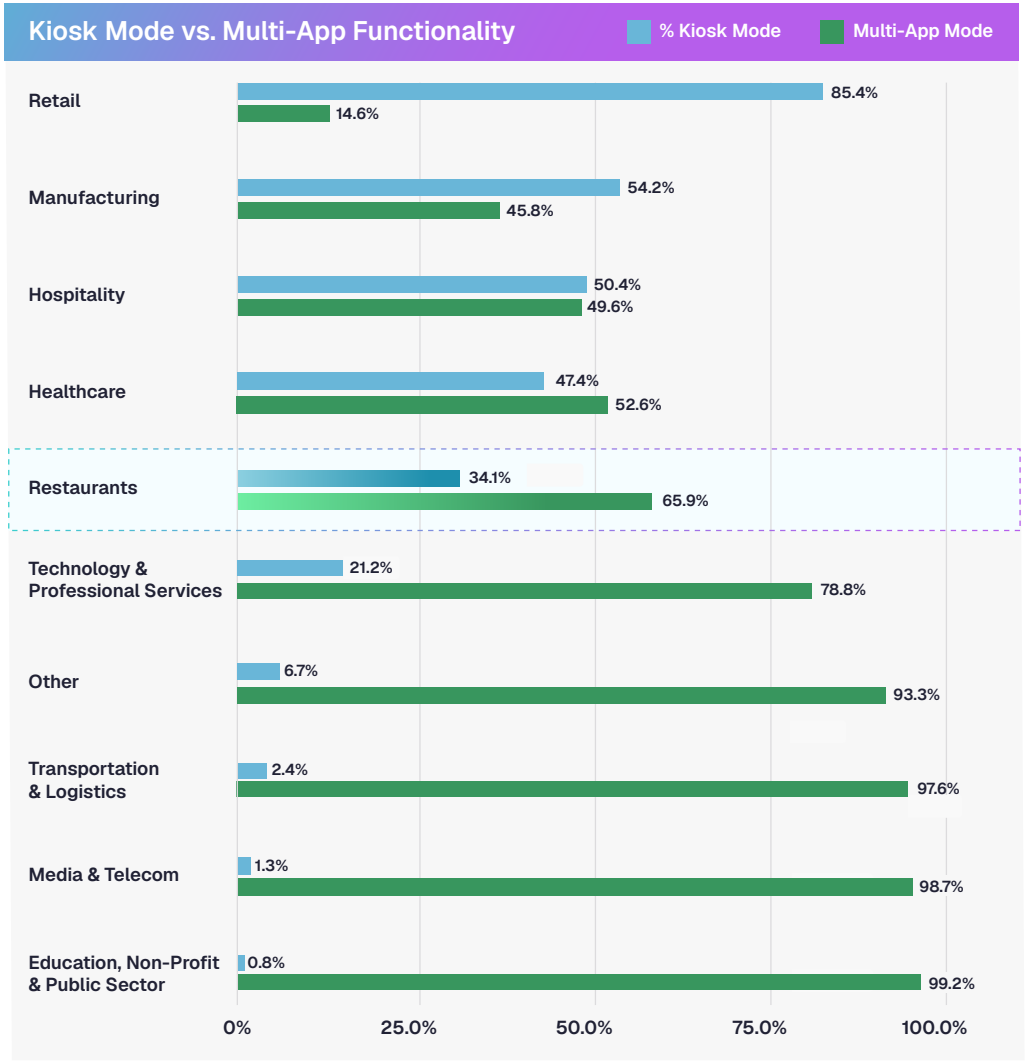
For starters, we know that restaurants are leaning on far fewer single-use devices set to kiosk mode, with 65.9% in multi-app mode, and only 34% set to single-app lockdown.

We can't help but compare restaurants with their retail peers, where just 15% of devices deployed in retail scenarios use multi-app mode.

There are likely a few solidifying patterns that explain the contrast:

- Smaller restaurant locations compared to retail mean leaner device fleets — in some cases just a handful per store — so each device has to pull double (or triple) duty. Training, workforce scheduling, inventory, menus, and POS can all end up living on the same screen.
- Meanwhile, vendors are slimming down their product portfolios and hardware footprints, chasing efficiency as device use cases keep overlapping.
- And on the IT side? Teams are stepping up with better tools and growing confidence. They're locking down devices at the system level, fine-tuning app permissions, and cutting off the usual paths to misuse before problems ever start.

The shift isn't just about tech preference — it's about using more advanced device management tools and workflows to squeeze more value out of every device. By running multiple apps on fewer endpoints, restaurants are getting more functionality per dollar and a fleet strategy that balances performance with cost efficiency.



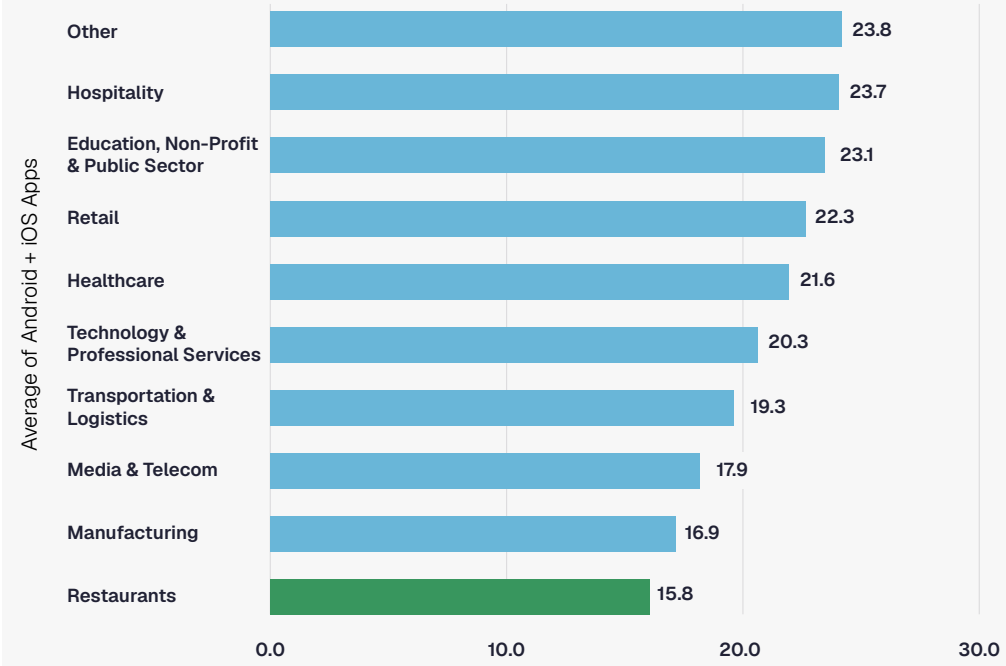
Application Usage and Management

So what's actually happening with all these multi-app mode devices? Interestingly, restaurants are running fewer apps per device than you might expect. Where retail and hospitality average 22–23 apps, restaurants sit closer to 16. But that doesn't mean they're doing less. In 2025, the app count only tells part of the story.

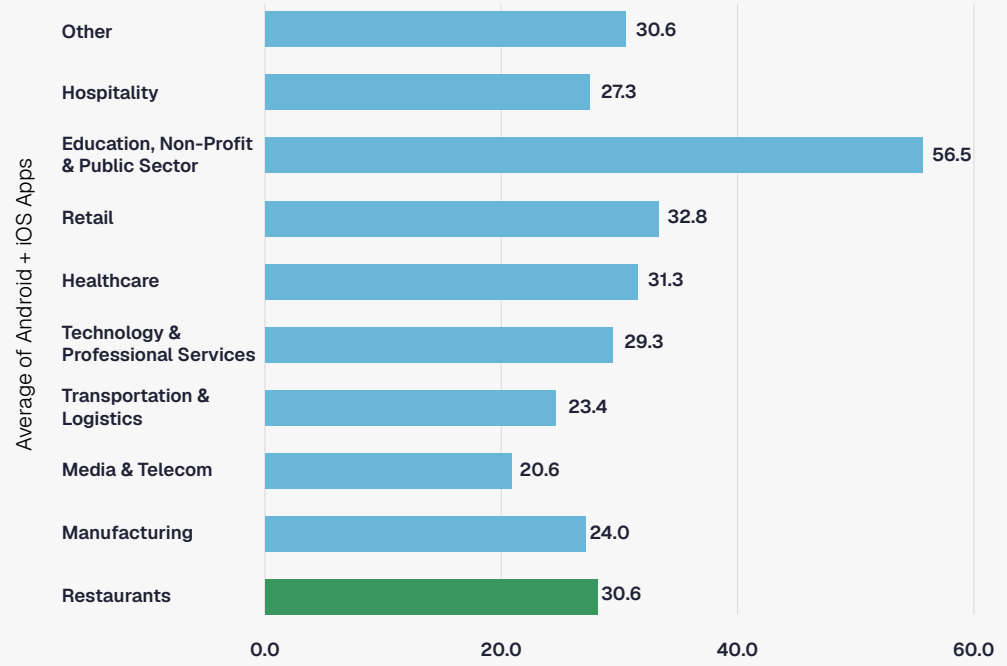
When you factor in content — everything from PDF menus and digital signage to AI-driven models — restaurants land squarely in the middle of the pack.

The takeaway? Restaurants aren't just stacking traditional apps. They're diversifying how devices deliver value, leaning into custom and often more advanced content strategies.

Average Applications Per Device



Average of Apps + Content Files



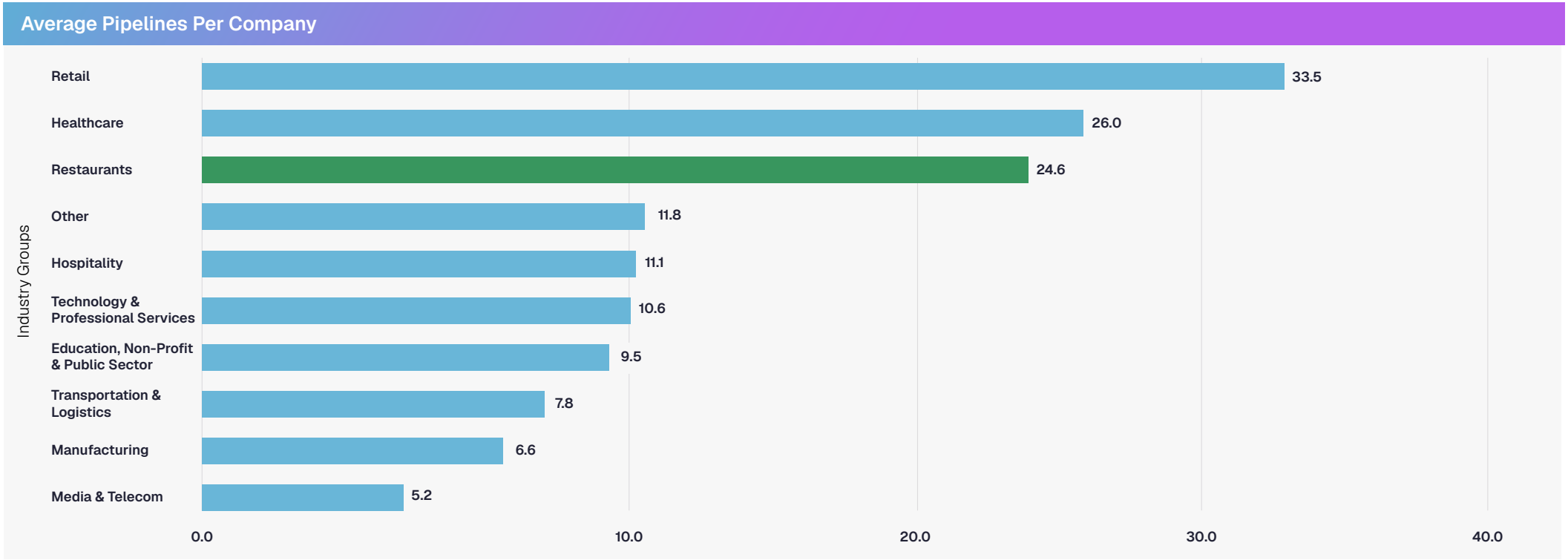
Application Pipelines

And when it comes to deploying all that content, restaurants are way ahead of the curve. The average provider runs about 25 pipelines — that's 5x more than media and telecom, and more than double what we see in hospitality.

This level of complexity shows a clear trend: Restaurants are experimenting, localizing, and updating content at a faster pace than ever before. And it makes sense. Faster innovation cycles, personalized customer experiences, and operational agility (like pushing frequent content updates or bug fixes) demand a more sophisticated deployment strategy.

In other words, restaurants aren't just managing devices — they're orchestrating them for maximum impact.

What's behind the trend? Likely a growing demand for faster innovation cycles, better customer personalization (i.e., content localization), and enhanced operational agility, such as frequent content updates and bug fixes.



Part 3: Deployments and Groups

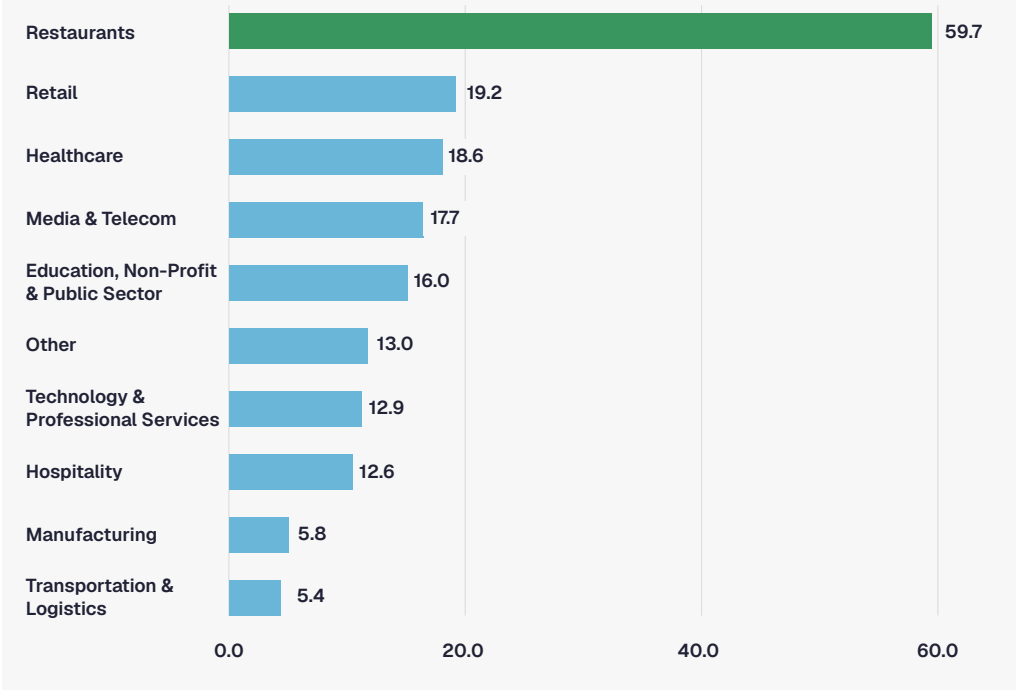
When it comes to restaurant fleets, how devices are managed matters more than what runs on them. And these fleets aren't deployed in one-size-fits-all blocks.

While other industries streamline into fewer, larger device groups, restaurants are moving in the opposite direction.

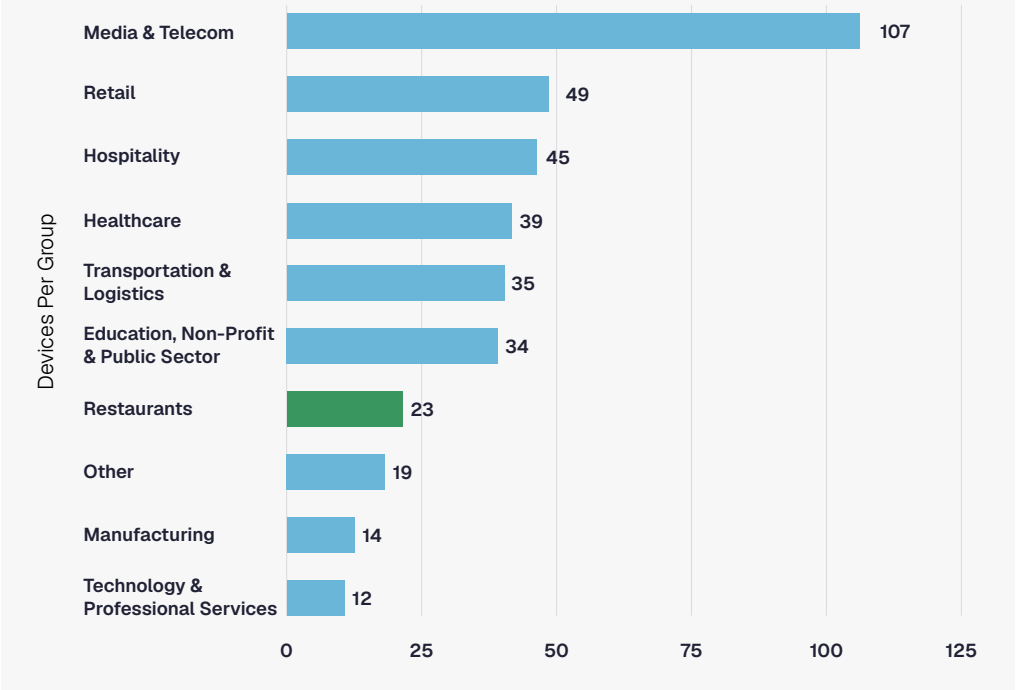
Restaurant devices are clustered into smaller groups, each tuned to specific needs. Front-of-house tablets handle ordering and payments, while back-of-house devices drive kitchen workflows. Menus and pricing shift by region or franchise. In an industry where consistency, speed, and customer experience define success, that level of granularity isn't optional — it's the price of staying competitive.

In 2025, our data shows that restaurants are running 60 separate device groups on average — more than any other industry we studied. And despite some of the largest overall fleet sizes, their device groups stay lean, averaging just 23 devices each. That kind of segmentation highlights a core truth of QSR operations: Control has to be precise, not broad strokes.

Average Device Groups Per Company



Devices Per Group



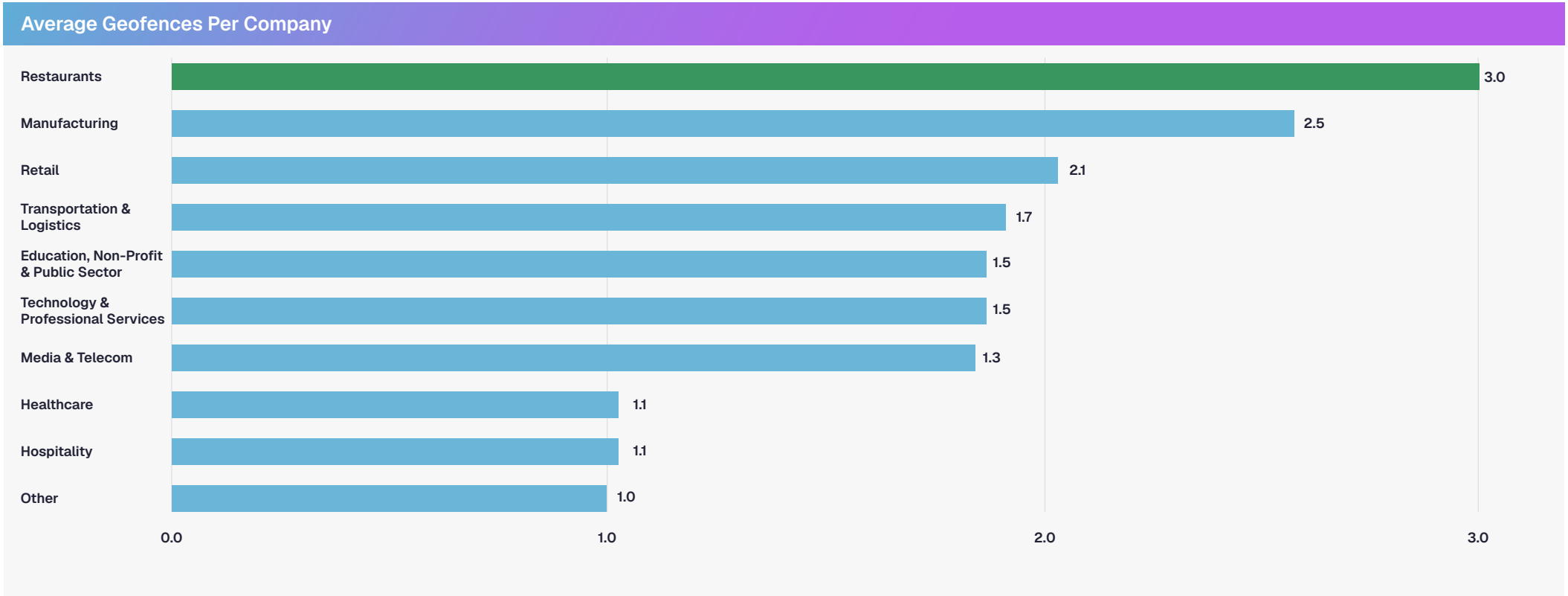
Part 4: Configurations and Policy Management

Even with large, complicated fleets and granular device groups, restaurants aren't always outliers. They're aligning with broader industry trends for fewer, more standardized configurations used for compliance and policy management.

But today's compliance management isn't static. Across all industries, today's teams are shifting their management strategies based on context — mapped to location, role, or function. For restaurants, this means kitchen vs. cashier, or inventory and back office, and delivery vs dine-in.

Today's restaurant IT is building flexible templates, tweaking as needed, and leaning on geofencing more than any other industry. Why geofencing? Because geofencing adds precision — location-based controls that adapt in real time.

And yes, geofencing is still relatively new to device management, but it's already showing promise. For restaurants juggling multiple sites, mobile staff, or always-on devices, geofencing is emerging as a versatile way to tighten security, maintain compliance, and keep operations smooth.



Part 5: Alerts, Uptime, and Device Security

Restaurants live and die by their devices — especially QSRs. When a kiosk freezes, a tablet fails, or a POS goes dark, business grinds to a halt. That's why the restaurant industry has more device management users at more than 3x the rate of any other industry we measured in our 2025 *State of Device Management* report.

Average across all industries:

67 devices per user

Restaurant average:

50 devices per user

Average IT Admins per Company:

9.9

Restaurant average IT Admins:

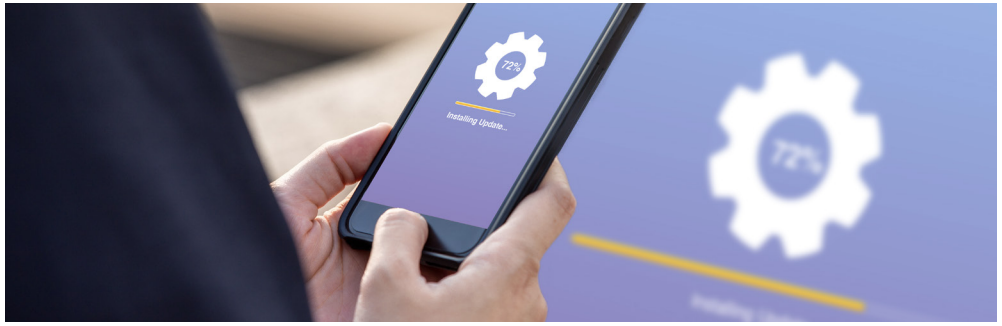
28.2

This gap shows how device management plays out in restaurants:

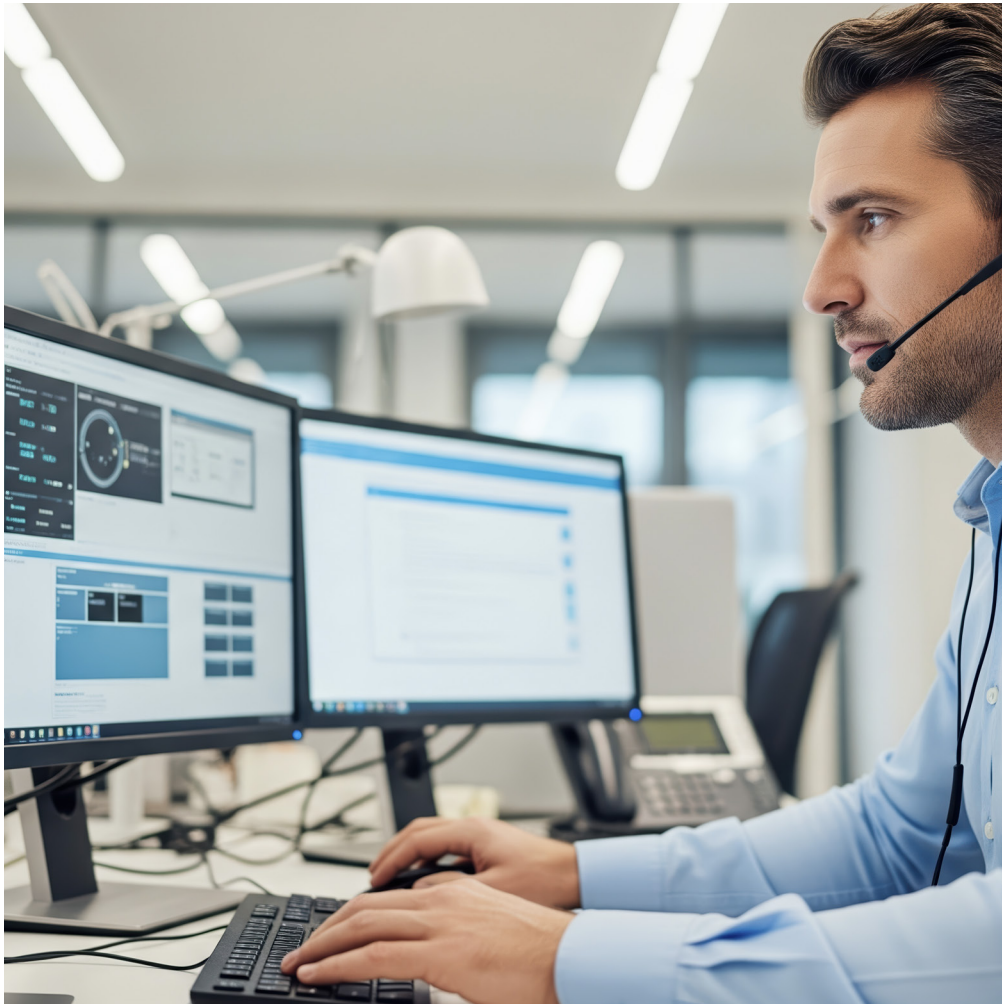
- Thin ops coverage. IT and ops teams are stretched across dozens — sometimes hundreds — of locations. Off-site support is the rule, not the exception.
- Revenue-critical endpoints. In QSRs, nearly every device is customer-facing. Downtime doesn't just slow you down — it can shut the doors.

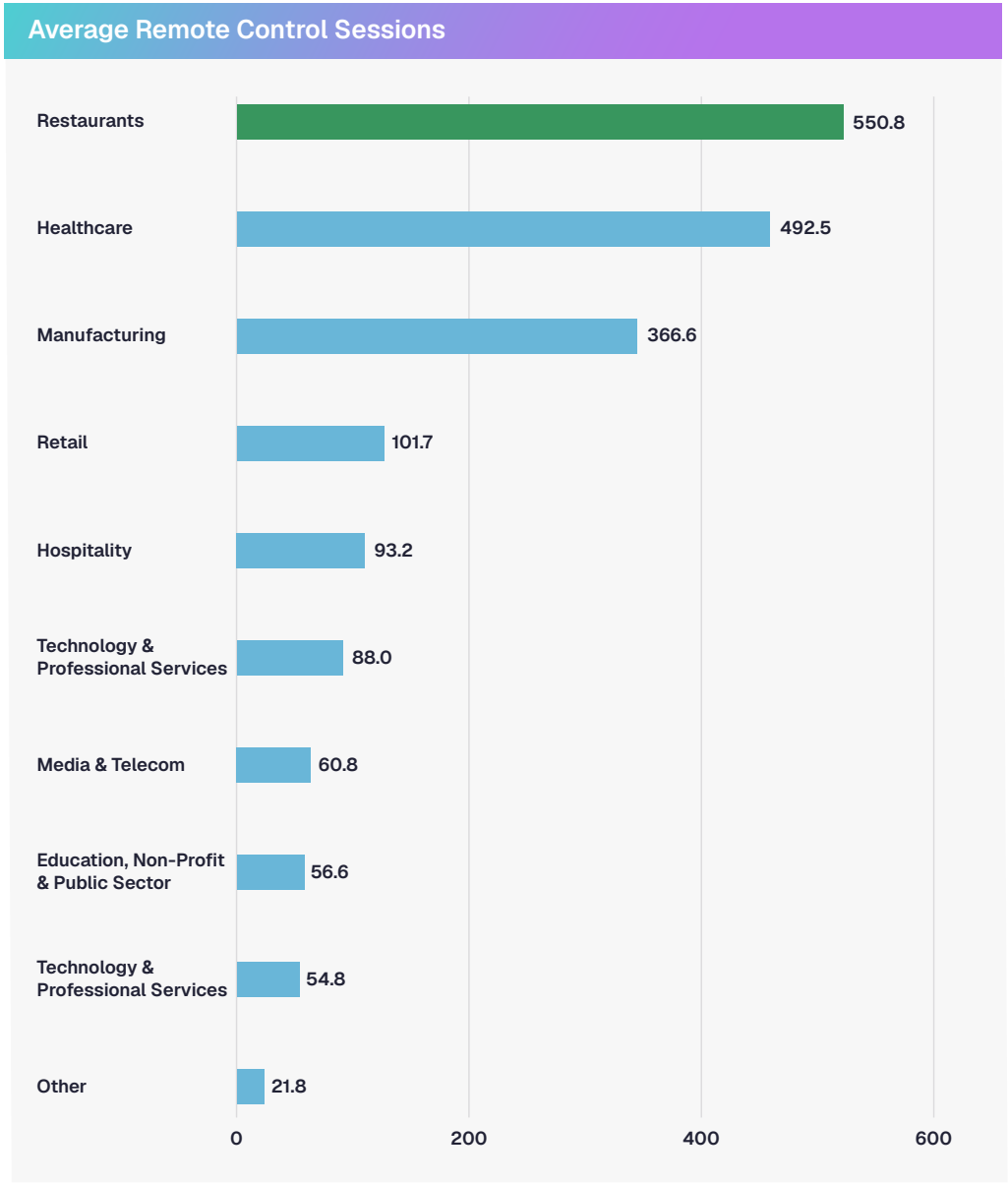
The data makes the point even clearer. Restaurants average 550 remote sessions per month, compared to just over 100 in retail. On paper, retail may look similar. In practice, the differences couldn't be starker:

- Retail has more on-prem staff and infrastructure to cushion downtime.
- Restaurants don't. A single device outage can tank service, stall revenue, and send staff home early.



That's why real-time, on-demand support isn't a "nice to have" in QSRs — it's survival. With instant IT action, a location is back online in minutes. Without it, you're looking at lost shifts, lost sales, and unhappy customers.





Conclusion

Balancing Granularity With Efficiency and ROI

In 2025, while other industries are laser-focused on leveraging advanced device management tools to streamline fleet management as they scale up, restaurants are getting more granular. They're adopting advanced device management tools, but for them, uptime and customer experience are everything.

While most consolidate device groups, restaurants have more. While most industries are keeping IT headcount relatively lean, restaurants are leaning on more support staff and using automation, remote monitoring, and location-based security and compliance tools to maintain their fleet health.

And they have good reasons: For fast-paced, high-volume restaurants, devices drive convenience, accelerate sales, automate operations, and boost revenue. With labor shortages, rising supply costs, and customers getting more selective about discretionary spend, digital devices are becoming mission-critical.

In 2025 and beyond, restaurants aren't less efficient with their technology. For them, the best ROI from tech investments hinges on flawless performance — from app management and updates to compliance and uptime.

Want more industry device management trends in 2025?

Download the 2025 State of Device Management Report