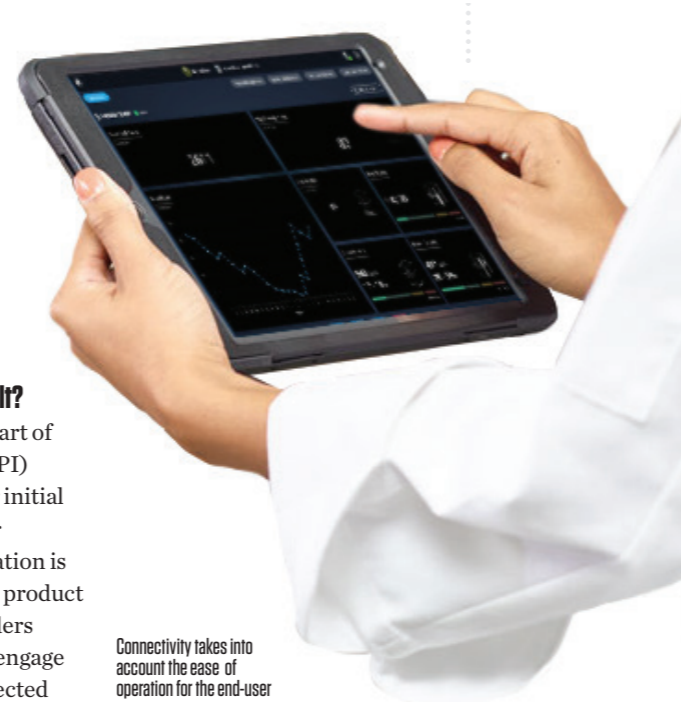# WELBILT

MAKE THE CONNECTION

Welbilt's Ramesh Tirumala, director of digital strategy engineering, Linda Brugler, director of KitchenConnect and Kirk Goss, VP consultant relations, discuss how Covid-19 has accelerated the need for a fully connected kitchen

Connectivity takes into account the ease of operation for the end-user

What challenges are operators facing in a post-pandemic environment?

The post-pandemic foodservice environment for operators has altered the way that both the FSR and QSR channels need to operate in order to provide access to their products in an ever-changing world of consumer expectations.

The list of challenges continues to stack up. Cleaning and sanitation protocol changes require additional focus. Workflow modifications in equipment and layout back-of-house, to assist in curbside pick-up, drive-thru and third-party delivery, are challenges all segments have to manage with a reduced labor force.

There are also restrictions on service accessing back-of-house. Operators should utilize their equipment choices and leverage all they can from connected, smart appliances. Smart appliances not only help monitor equipment for food safety and potential service needs, but also provide savings by reducing food loss through automated communication throughout the kitchen. This functionality also manages the number of tasks the reduced labor force will have to oversee.

A fully connected kitchen has been a hot topic for decades; however, it is slowly becoming a commercially viable option due to increasing labor costs and the recent evolution in 3G/5G network technology. It's Welbilt's view that Covid-19 has only quickened the pace.

What does 'born digital' mean at Welbilt?

At Welbilt being "born digital" is part of our New Product Introduction (NPI) strategy. All new products, at their initial design gate, are evaluated for their connectivity potential. This evaluation is hardwired into our marketing and product requirements procedure. It considers multiple end-user audiences that engage with the appliance and their connected needs. These needs are worked into the user interface embedded within our touchscreen controls.

As Welbilt and the end-users learn more over time, through data supplied by smart appliances, those learnings will drive unforeseen needs. The focus centers around the opportunities the data has uncovered. For example, Welbilt recently conducted a product rollout with a major chain where we collectively implemented over 138 software revisions within six months while we progressed through our alpha and beta field tests. Some of those software upgrades were simple adjustments to pre-cook prep instructions and post-cleaning procedures; while other adjustments were more complex – monitoring the input from the line cook and measuring those responses against various devices within the appliance to ensure operational procedures were being followed. As you can see, being "born digital" is much more than enabling new menu pushes from the cloud.

Why does this also appeal to consultants?

Consultants are faced with the challenges we discussed earlier, compounded by the multiple foodservice venues and menu types that are coming to them for guidance. Their ability to provide the right solution will be enhanced by the data from fully connected kitchens. For example, most fryer manufacturers supply their equipment in multiple vat configurations and varying vat sizes. With a connected fryer we can see its use pattern and create digital solutions to level load the appliance use so the fryer life cycle is extended. We can also improve oil filtration frequency, enabling savings by extending oil life. This shift from traditional analog controllers to touchscreen devices unlocks meaningful next-generation kitchen designs.

What is Welbilt KitchenConnect and how it can benefit operators in a practical way?

KitchenConnect is a cloud-based software application platform hosted on Amazon Web Services (AWS). The practical benefit to the end-user comes via the features that enable remote menu and software management, equipment service management, energy management, asset management and quality control.
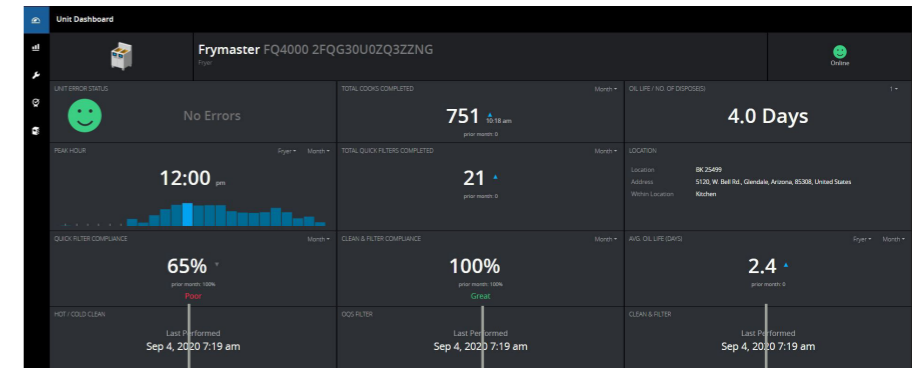
Operators benefit by getting actionable insights from KitchenConnect through analysis of the equipment data and dashboard views that simplify the various back-of-house disciplines and critical decision-making processes. A key focus for most operators is the ability to remotely send a new menu or software updates to one or a fleet of connected appliances.

How can KitchenConnect drive continuous improvements in performance for customers?

KitchenConnect provides unprecedented visibility to the operation of Welbilt equipment in our customers' locations. This allows both Welbilt and our customers to make data-driven decisions to improve performance.

With a connected appliance food quality can be improved

This enables the life cycle of the appliance to be extended

Managing oil life has a big ROI to the foodservice

When equipment is down, sales suffer until the unit is repaired. The best ways to maximize uptime are to prevent failures and repair failures fast. With KitchenConnect, equipment performance can be monitored remotely, giving early warnings of potential downtime events.

Why is it essential now for operators to be able to monitor and leverage data?

It starts with the problem the operator is trying to solve. Is it reduced drive-through times; is it improved food quality and consistency; or is it to reduce or control labor and food waste? These needs are universal within foodservice and having real operational data, is the only way to take calculated steps to improve your position. Operators must speak with their equipment supply chain partners around what their smart appliances communicate and what limitations they have relative to working within a closed or open network.

How can KitchenConnect's augmented reality functionality deliver greater value?

Augmented Reality (AR) makes troubleshooting much easier as manuals become interactive and provide clear step-by-step instructions that reduce the need for call outs by enabling simple inhouse fixes to common issues. Remote

Welbilt's "born digital" philosophy informs all marketing and product requirements

monitoring also aids offsite technical support and improved first time fix rates.

How can technology such as KitchenConnect ultimately drive costs down for operators?

KitchenConnect ultimately helps drive costs down as follows:

1. Remote menu management: The ability to push menus across thousands of units reduces costs involved with handling USBs, shipping, file format inaccuracies and issues with file transfers.

2. Service management: Providing timely information and predicting critical errors ahead of time, can reduce equipment downtime and service expenses significantly.

3. Food safety: Monitoring food temperature in a refrigerator or freezer and sending alerts when critical temperatures are reached can save money on food waste and prevent food-borne illness. Wear on the equipment and energy use will be reduced by monitoring and analyzing food production, equipment utilization, peak demand hours, and other workflow processes. This also enables efficient staffing levels. ∎

Further information
welbilt.com/KitchenConnect/About