

# Optimizing Chick-fil-A Drive-Thru Delivery Flow

## Observation

During high-volume periods, customers are sometimes handed their food while still behind other vehicles. This creates a mismatch between perceived completion and actual flow, causing confusion and inefficiency.

## Current Experience Flow

|            |             |            |                |                 |                   |      |
|------------|-------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|------|
| Enter Line | Order Taken | Food Ready | Early Delivery | Blocked by Cars | Wait Holding Food | Exit |
|------------|-------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|------|

## Key Problems

**Expectation Mismatch:** Receiving food signals completion, but customer is still stuck in line.

**Flow Inefficiency:** Early delivery does not reduce total wait time.

**Customer Discomfort:** Holding food while waiting, uncertainty about next steps.

**System Misalignment:** Food readiness not aligned with vehicle movement.

## Improved Experience Flow

|            |             |               |                |                |                      |
|------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Enter Line | Order Taken | Approach Exit | Food Delivered | Immediate Exit | Completed Experience |
|------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|

## Proposed Solutions

Align delivery timing with exit readiness, introduce a ready-to-exit zone, apply conditional early delivery logic, improve customer communication, and explore parallel exit options where possible.

## Impact

**Flow Efficiency:** Better alignment between food readiness and vehicle movement.

**Customer Experience:** Reduced confusion and clearer expectations.

**Operational Optimization:** System operates as a cohesive flow.

**Perceived Speed:** Experience feels faster due to improved logic.

## My Role

I analyzed a high-performing drive-thru system, identified a breakdown between service speed and customer flow, and proposed system-level improvements to better align operational efficiency with the overall customer experience.