Bring Smiles to Drive-Thru Customers with Speed and Hospitality

Getting Up Close and Personal with the Drive-Thru Team!

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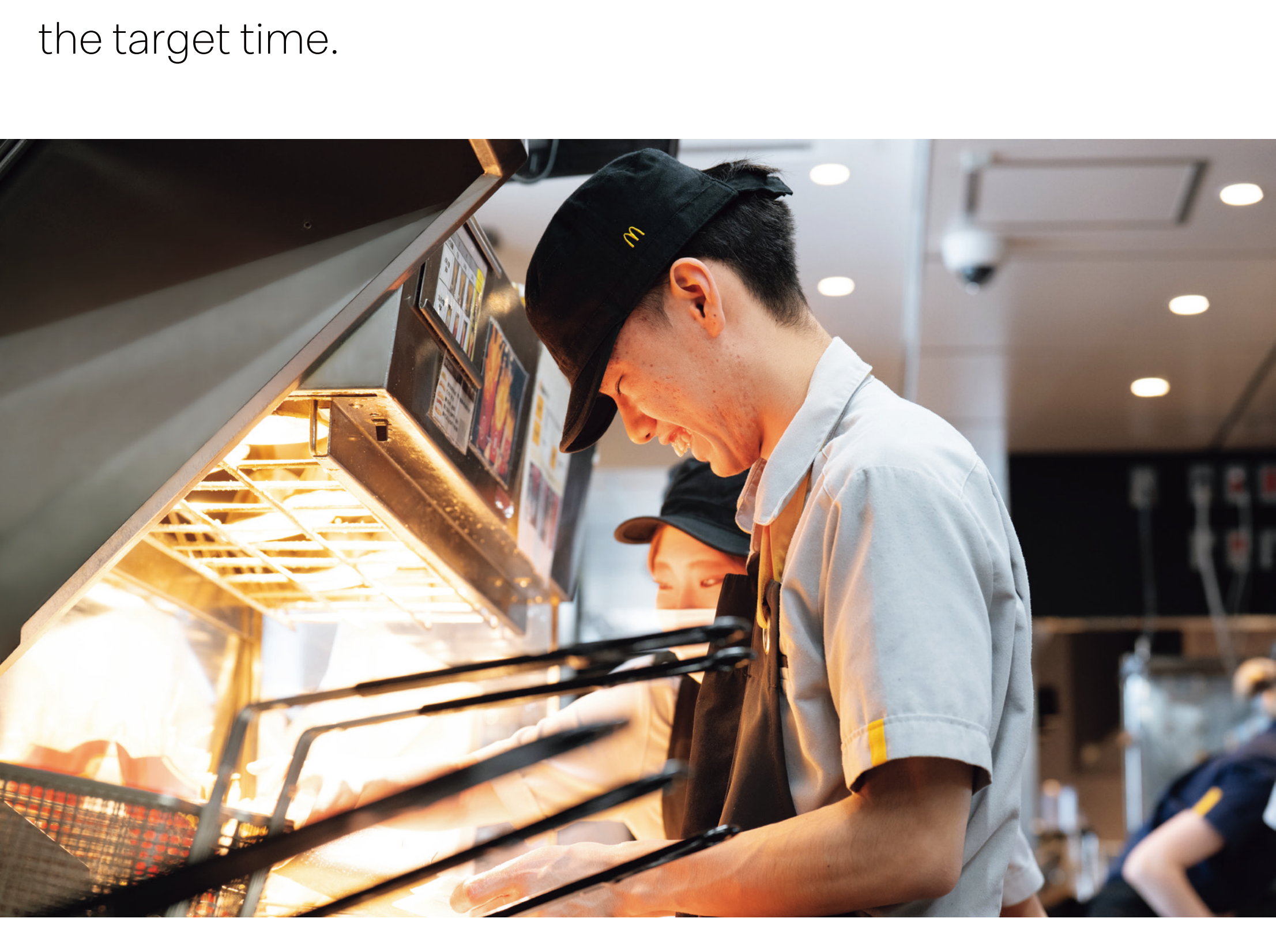
Drive-thru is one of the key services that makes visiting McDonald's simple and enjoyable. We interviewed the drive-thru team at Toyama Nakagawara Musashi restaurant in Toyama Prefecture, who strive to serve and bring smiles to their drive-thru customers. Let us take a close look at the development of the team in detail.

We're All in This Together

"Let's bring smiles to drive-thru customers with speed and hospitality!" The drive-thru challenge originated from a comment by the RGM and was initiated through a meeting where shift managers evaluated their own areas for improvement and exchanged ideas on how to enhance them. "We need to speed up serving food, and to make this happen, we need to enhance our shift leadership!" Shift managers increased their efforts and served food at a faster pace, but the pace was still well behind the target time.



"This taught me again that to grow, everyone working at this restaurant needs to be aligned and working toward the same goal." Ishimoto-san, the manager, realized that the entire restaurant team needed to be in this together to reach the drive-thru target time.

Step1

Share ideas for further improvement

Trainers are also invited to the manager meeting to improve drive-thru service. Crew members attend weekend recap sessions after lunch peak to review successes and opportunities for improved performance in the coming week.

It's Fun to Work Toward a Goal

Everyone needed to pitch in to reach the goal, so trainers were also invited to the drive-thru team and the inclusion of these new members enabled the team to identify an opportunity for improvement. "No one knew what to do or how to reach the goal." While the team was aware of the restaurant's target time, the specific actions required from each crew member were not clearly defined, which hindered their ability to achieve the goal. Now, however, they recognized the importance of setting individual goals to reach the overall restaurant target.

So they promptly discussed and established target times for each position and developed a training plan. By utilizing a trainer's notebook to document each crew member's progress, individuals were prepared to work effectively during weekend lunch hours when customer traffic is high. Over time, the crew became more focused on meeting target times for their position and the restaurant, with many saying, "Cutting down time is fun!"

Preparation Precedes Success

"We should focus more on stock preparation. At present, managers and trainers handle this responsibility, but if we also train crew members for this role, it could help restaurant operations proceed more efficiently during weekend peak hours." A trainer's suggestion was implemented, resulting in an increase in the number of crew members able to prepare stock for all positions. As a result, the restaurant's inventory is always well-prepared. In addition, crew members assigned to Friday and Saturday afternoon and night shifts were asked to assist, ensuring that stock preparation for Saturdays and Sundays was completed in advance by the morning.

Step2

Stock preparation one day ahead

Advance preparation is the key for optimum performance on weekend lunch peak. Crew members on weekend mornings, late afternoons and night hours also join in ensuring stock preparation for weekend lunch peak.

Role Segregation Enhances Teamwork

Weekend lunch is a busy period at McDonald's, with many crew members scheduled to work in different positions, which means it is important for individuals to define the scope of work with each other in advance. "Can you cover this for us?/You are the best!" Advance preparation clarified the scope of work and identified individual skills and development, contributing to effective teamwork and motivation.

Step3

DT coordinator defends the team from missing items!

DT* coordinators are positioned during busy hours to balance speed of service and order accuracy.

*DT = drive-thru

Step4

In-sync teamwork starts from prior communication

As soon as the crew steps into the kitchen, the scope of work is defined in detail between positions. This dramatically reduces time loss and mistakes.

Bringing Together

"Let's aim for a new record high in sales!" said the RGM after seeing the growth of crew members. Sale targets were set for the first weekend lunch period of the Tsukimi Burger limited time promotion. Everyone was involved in preparing for the day and a detailed strategy was developed by the drive-thru team.

The kitchen buzzed with unprecedented excitement as voices checked in and encouraged one another. The team operated with exceptional coordination, providing service to customers with their best smiles, fostering a sense of bringing everyone together. Before they know it, lunchtime was over. The RGM announced a new record high in sales, and the whole team was ecstatic.

Step5

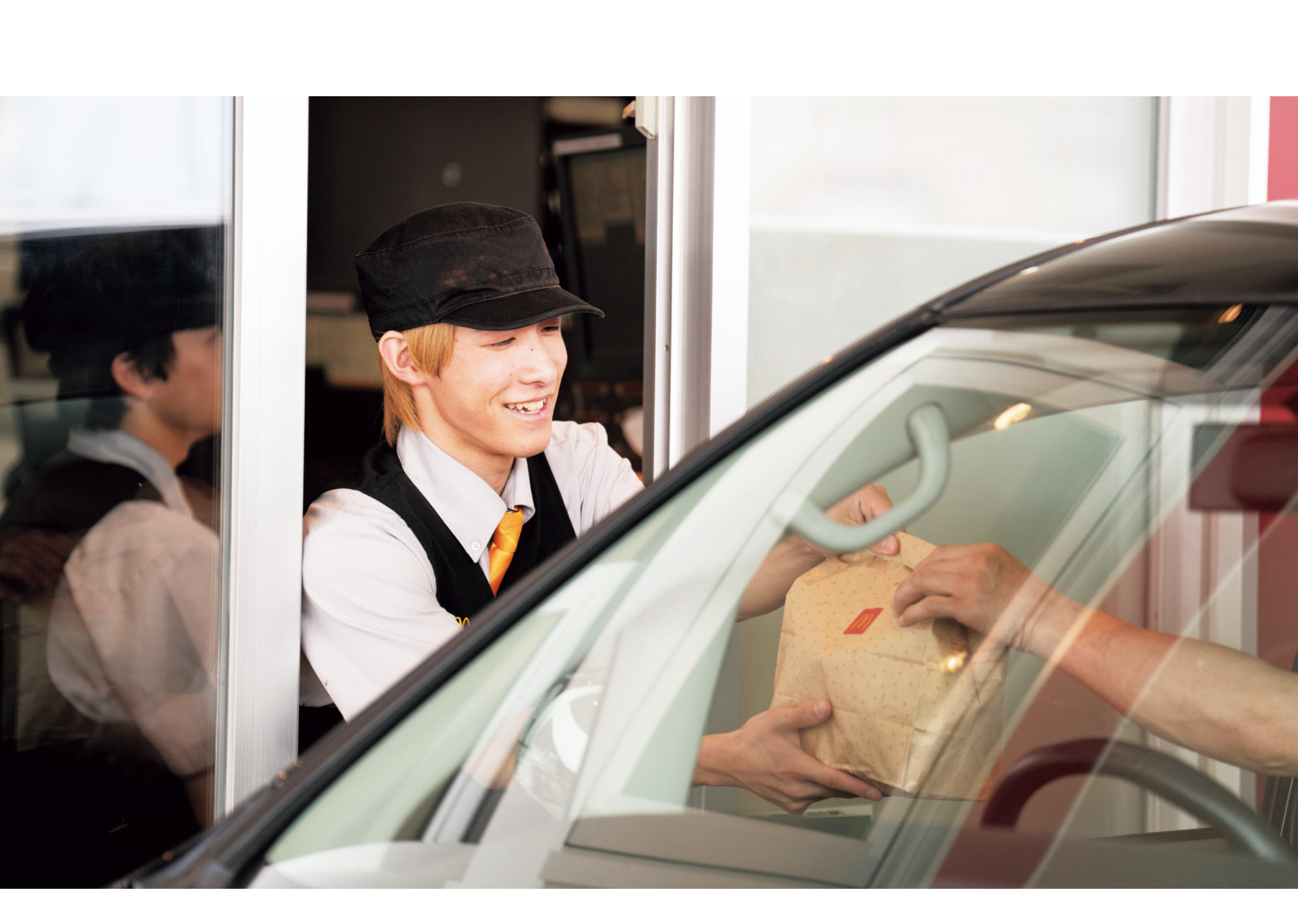
Close communication for better decision-making

Crew members in different kitchen positions frequently communicate with each other, for example "I can finish this in XX sec." Then, the drive-thru runner determines how fast they can collect items for each order and uses options as needed to ensure smooth drive-thru service.

Left: Fast Forward Booth
Right: Present Booth

Solidarity Unlocks Unlimited Possibilities

The Toyama Nakagawara Musashi restaurant didn't rest on their laurels; after achieving a new record high in sales, they continue to serve customers with even faster speed. Drive-thru customers made remarks such as "Oh, that's mine? Super fast!" and "Great smile, guys," among other comments. Previously, the drive-thru team aimed for targets; now, they've advanced to bringing smiles to customers and continuing to improve.



We recognize that this journey has not been easy. What motivates the drive-thru team to remain committed throughout?

They responded to the question promptly and said, "acknowledging one another in the process." Team members have varied strengths and personalities, but they work to understand, utilize and appreciate one another. That's why they are progressing together as a team. They are more than colleagues; their strong sense of solidarity consistently drives the restaurant's growth. Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much. The possibilities are endless; that's why the drive-thru team keeps meeting new challenges.

Drive-thru teams never stop challenging to keep customers smile.

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