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KFC UK & Ireland Case A: Crafting a Technology Roadmap

Introduction

It was June 2021 and Jatin Chandwani was three months into his role as Chief Technology Officer of KFC UK & Ireland (KFC UK&I). Immediately upon joining, he completed a three-week induction working in a restaurant. The experience made him realise there was a massive gap between the digital capabilities he envisioned for a modern quick-service restaurant chain and what was being delivered. Following the induction he held discussions and workshops with all of the teams in the company to collect and identify various pain points and opportunities within the company. This led Jatin to draw up a plan for KFC's digital journey which included defining KFC UK&I's technology strategy, allocating priorities to different projects, identifying the best way to engage different stakeholders, and growing and reorganising his team and wider cross-functional teams.

These would have been huge tasks at any time, but Jatin knew he would have to act quickly with the FIFA 2022 World Cup in Qatar fast approaching. As a broadcast sponsor of the event coverage on the UK free-to-air channel ITV, with matches attracting audiences in millions¹, KFC expected demand to grow significantly during the games. Knowing how important it is to have the relevant digital capabilities for meeting demand spikes, it was imperative that the high-priority initiatives he chose for his plan were up and running as flawlessly as possible by the time the tournament opened.

About KFC

KFC is owned by Yum! Brands, Inc., headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky. Yum! Brands also own Taco Bell, Pizza Hut and the Habit Burger Grill. The brands are all global leaders in their categories and are operated by around 1,500 franchisees. Yum has over 55,000 restaurants in more than 155 countries and territories.

Kentucky Fried Chicken (later changed to "KFC") was founded by Harland Sanders, who began selling fried chicken from a roadside restaurant in Corbin, Kentucky, in Depression-era America. Sanders identified the potential of restaurant franchising and opened the first Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise in Salt Lake City, Utah in 1952.

Sanders challenged the dominance of the hamburger in the fast-food industry with his closely-guarded recipe of herbs and spices. Styling himself "Colonel Sanders", he became a prominent figure in advertising for the brand.

One of the first fast-food chains to expand internationally, KFC had opened outlets in the UK, Mexico and Jamaica by the mid-1960s. Following this rapid expansion, Sanders sold the company to a group of investors in 1964.

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