



x **Slang**

How Legal Sea Foods Increased Reservations and Improved Guest Experience with Voice AI

Legal Sea Foods is a nationally recognized restaurant brand known for its high-quality seafood and hospitality-driven dining experience. With multiple locations and a strong emphasis on guest satisfaction, the team is constantly balancing operational efficiency with delivering exceptional service. As a multi-unit operator, maintaining consistency across locations while continuing to innovate is a core priority for the organization.

Challenge

As phone calls began to decline year over year, Legal Sea Foods faced increasing pressure to modernize its approach to guest communications. At the same time, operational demands on staff were growing, with hosts spending a significant portion of their time answering repetitive calls about hours, directions, and availability. This limited their ability to focus on in-person guests and deliver the level of hospitality the brand is known for. The team also faced inconsistencies in how phone calls were handled across locations, depending on who answered the phone.

Despite these challenges, leadership was cautious about introducing automation. “We were definitely wary,” said Christine Cocce, Director of Marketing at Legal Sea Foods. “You think of an AI phone answering service and you’re just thinking of the frustrating experience of trying to get a person to help you and we don’t want to be that to our guests.” Protecting the guest experience was the top priority, and there was concern that introducing AI could create a barrier or a negative first impression. As they put it, “We want to make sure that we’re giving people a hospitable experience, whether they’re calling in or however they’re interacting with us.”



97%

Guest Satisfaction
Score



61,100

Calls Handled
by Slang AI



5,038

Reservations Booked
by Slang AI

Solution

To address these challenges, Legal Sea Foods evaluated Voice AI through Slang AI, which integrates directly with OpenTable. The team began with a pilot in two locations to assess the impact on both guest experience and operations. While initial expectations were low, the results quickly shifted their perspective.

“We were really pleasantly surprised,” Cocce said. “Seeing the demos and hearing how natural it sounds and how much it really isn’t a barrier to that experience really turned our opinion around.” The system demonstrated that it could handle guest interactions in a way that felt conversational and aligned with the brand’s hospitality standards.

Following the success of the pilot, Legal Sea Foods moved forward with a full rollout across all 19 locations in a single launch. “It was unanimous to move forward quickly everywhere,” Cocce said. With strong training support and a user-friendly dashboard, the implementation was smooth and easy for teams



to adopt. “The training assistance made it easy to roll out at all locations at once,” she added. The platform also enabled centralized customization of messaging, allowing the team to ensure consistent communication across every location.

Results

One of the most immediate benefits was the ability to deliver a consistent guest experience across every location. With Voice AI in place, every guest now receives clear and polished communication. The team can also proactively promote initiatives like brunch, happy hour, and seasonal events through automated messaging. “Now when you call in, we can talk about brunch or happy hour and put that in the first message so it’s being communicated to all guests,” Cocce explained. “It’s no longer maybe it is, maybe it’s not depending on who is actually at the desk.”

The impact on reservations has been significant, particularly in capturing incremental demand. After-hours bookings have become a key driver of new revenue. “We’re counting those as net gains in terms of reservations that we might have lost otherwise,” the team shared. The system also enables cross-location

booking, allowing nearby restaurants to capture demand when one location is fully booked. “In the past, it was not possible for the host to go check another location’s books,” Cocce explained. “Now we’re seeing those as net gains on incremental reservations that we wouldn’t have been able to recommend before.”

Operational efficiency has also improved meaningfully. By automating routine calls, the system has freed up staff to focus on in-person guests. “If we can take someone at the host stand away from being on the phone 24/7, that lets us give the guests who are actually in person a better experience,” she said. This shift has allowed teams to be more present on the floor and deliver a higher level of service where it matters most.

Legal Sea Foods measures success by tracking the percentage of calls fully handled by the AI, along with after-hours reservations and cross-location bookings. These metrics provide a clear view into both labor savings and incremental revenue. Overall, the implementation of Voice AI has enabled the brand to modernize its phone experience without compromising its commitment to hospitality. As the team continues to evolve its use of the platform, they remain focused on enhancing both operational efficiency and guest satisfaction at scale.

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Director of Marketing at Legal Sea Foods