

*faster  
hotter  
sooner*



**Fast-food restaurants tout their healthy choices. But in a business where seconds saved at the counter can mean millions on the bottom line, ever-quicker service is still the ultimate goal. What's it take to get you your fast food faster? More tricks and tools than you could imagine**

**Steve Bigari is the fastest man in fast food.**

About a year ago, his Colorado Springs, Colo., McDonald's restaurant set the world record for drive-thru speed: 349 transactions in one hour. To pull in traffic for the stunt he sold 25¢ Quarter Pounders — no customizations allowed, but still, that's about 10 seconds per order. During the peak, he boasted to reporters, 106 cars went through in 15 minutes.

Bigari had impressed the fast-food world before with experiments ranging from order phones at dining tables to robotic french fry makers. But what really drew industry awe was when one of his crazy innovations — a remote call centre that took over order-taking at his 12 drive-thru outlets — helped bring down the average transaction time to just over one minute.

That's a startling stat: the industry average is 3.5 minutes. And in this industry, time literally is money. Business models are built around seconds,

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