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# Operator Archetypes

From Subject Matter Expert, Kathryn Fenner, Principal

Understand operator purchasing behaviors, menu philosophies and brand positioning of Technomic's proprietary Operator Archetypes and how to put them into practice within your own organization



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Foodservice is a fascinating channel. It's why so many of us have dedicated our careers to it—we love the challenge it presents! Designing an efficient go-to-market strategy is no simple task due to the diversity of foodservice segments. One size does not fit all, and operator behaviors and drivers can vary dramatically, even within a single segment. That's why Technomic developed its proprietary Operator Archetypes.

Marketers have long used archetypes (or personas, or clusters) to segment consumers based on behaviors and motivations. Applying the practice to foodservice operators is relatively new, but follows the same principles, assigning archetypes based on what motivates operator purchases. In this paper, we will help you understand these distinct motivations, which products and services will resonate most, and how to put Technomic's Operator Archetypes into practice in your own organization.

## What are Operator Archetypes?

Technomic developed its Operator Archetypes approximately eight years ago through a battery of questions asked across operator segments. These typing tool questions have been tested, retested and fine-tuned for statistical reliability. We then grouped shared variables into clusters, or archetypes.

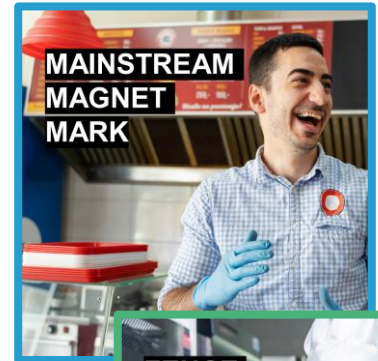
The purpose of Operator Archetypes are to help you better understand foodservice operators beyond their service model and cuisine type to develop a deeper understanding of their motivations, behaviors and menu philosophies.

## Why are Operator Archetypes important?

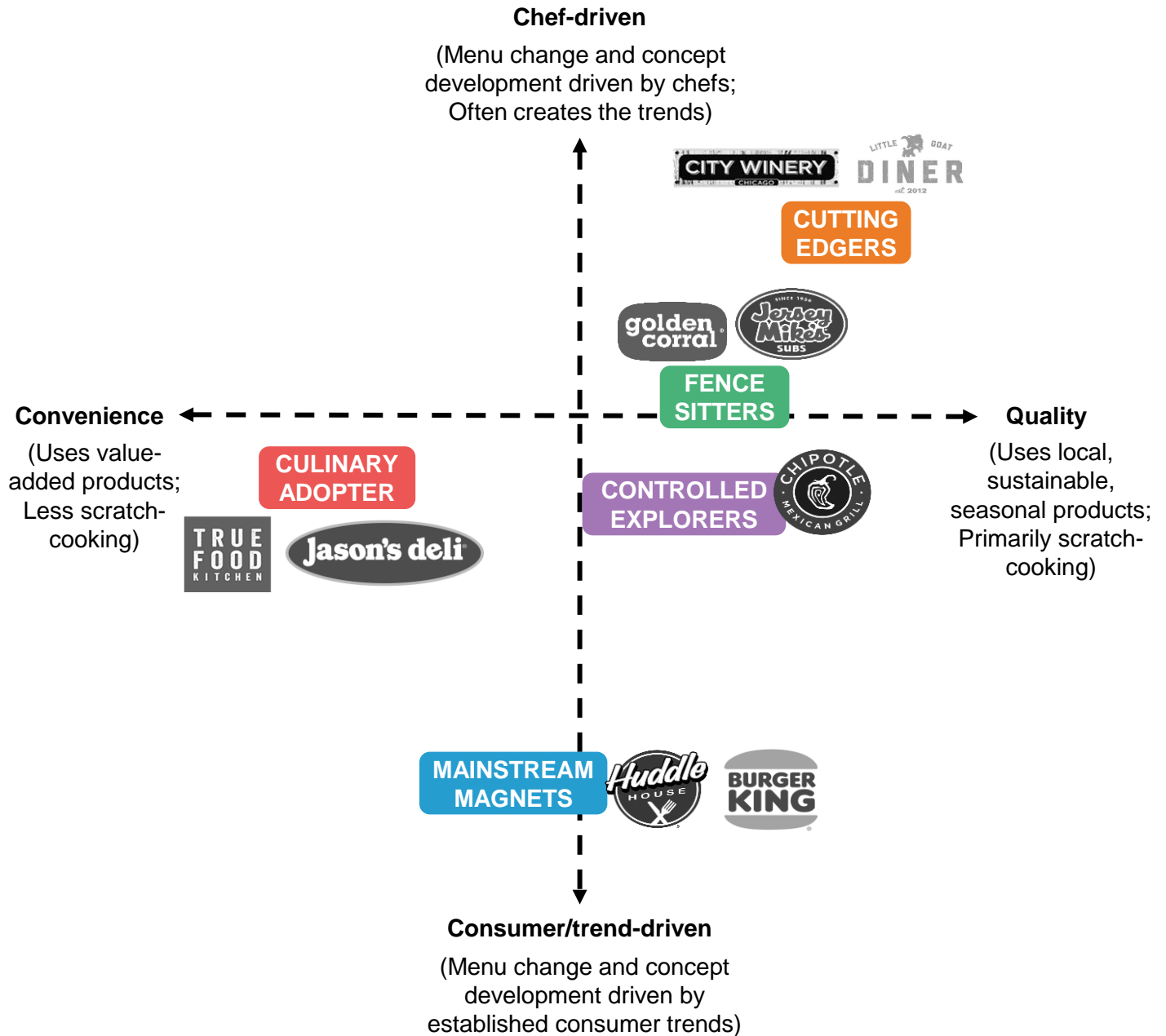
At the end of the day, when you are working with foodservice operators, you are working with people. And even within a single segment, operators can think and behave very differently. This distinct segmentation model recognizes differences in values, purchasing behaviors and pain points, serving several important purposes.

- It allows sales and marketing to create meaningful and actionable strategic growth plans and selling stories that target the right opportunities.
- It allows for operator prioritization. Manufacturers can align resources against the operators who will respond to the benefits their portfolio offers.
- It unlocks insights that allow sales to quickly assess an account, develop a stronger partnering strategy based on operator needs and motivations, and ultimately deepen customer relationships.

## Technomic's Operator Archetypes



# Operator Archetypes: A Visual Representation



The above graphic shows the distinctions between archetypes based on key segmentation criteria, demonstrating how each archetype prioritizes products (convenient vs. high-quality) and interacts with the menu development process (follows consumer trends vs. offers chef-created trends).

# Applying Operator Archetypes to Your Business

## Determine which archetypes you want to target

Which of the archetypes best align with your portfolio?

Do you offer value-added products? If so, consider Culinary Adopters or Mainstream Magnets. Do you offer base ingredients? If so, consider Fence Sitters or Cutting Edgers, who focus on scratch preparation. Controlled Explorers may use either, depending on back-of-house skill level.

Do you offer well-known consumer brands? The archetypes that will most value your brands are Mainstream Magnets and Controlled Explorers.

Do you have special attributes and quality indicators or niche products in your portfolio (e.g., vegan, organic, sustainable, gluten free, etc.)? Controlled Explorers and Culinary Adopters are the archetypes that will be most likely to seek these items.

Do you have value-oriented products in your portfolio? These items should be targeted to Mainstream Magnets, who prioritize low prices in their purchasing decisions.

On the other hand, do your products have premium pricing? If so, consider Fence Sitters or Cutting Edgers, who are willing to pay more for high quality.

Do you have products that meet established consumer trends and data to show what consumers want? Mainstream Magnets, Controlled Explorers and Culinary Adopters are ready to hear these ideas.

Do you have a team (e.g., sales, R&D, chefs) that excels in partnering with operators to create new trends? The Cutting Edgers will value your partnership.

Do you have products that are seasonal in nature? Target Controlled Explorers or Cutting Edgers.



## Discover which operators fall into targeted archetypes

Leverage Ignite Company, Technomic's online industry intel platform. Using the directory, you can conveniently export critical information on the leading 1,500 restaurants, including Operator Archetype, sales numbers, unit counts, growth data, etc.

## Target operators efficiently

Understand where operator archetypes like to learn about products, how frequently they innovate and for what attributes they are looking.

Apply archetypes to custom research! Do you need to test a concept with operators? Do you seek to determine operator challenges or preferences specific to your portfolio? Technomic can apply the Operator Archetype tool to your research and provide insights according to archetype, in addition to traditional segmentation.

# Operator Archetypes At a Glance

	WHAT DEFINES THEM	WHAT TO DO
<b>Mainstream Magnets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of value-added foods</li> <li>Operations are basic and culinary skills are low; They prize consistency, efficiency and simplicity</li> <li>Seek value; Cost-control drives decisions</li> <li>Little attention paid to ingredients</li> <li>Slow to adopt trends</li> <li>Prize known consumer brands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on proactive communication and consistency</li> <li>Tout availability and food safety benefits</li> <li>Provide familiar products (for operators and consumers) and simple prep</li> <li>Communicate through food shows, trade pubs and online videos</li> </ul>
<b>Fence Sitters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer quality through scratch-cooking</li> <li>Use of fresh, high-quality ingredients more so than processed</li> <li>Menus are driven by consumer trends (following, not creating the trends)</li> <li>Focus on craveable or comfort menus with broad appeal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide ideas for differentiation and case studies</li> <li>Avoid substitutions; Tout consistency, and address their labor cost concerns</li> <li>Be patient with slow menu cycle</li> <li>Provide case studies and competitive intel for inspiration</li> <li>DSR has a strong role</li> </ul>
<b>Controlled Explorers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early trend adopters; Walk the line between being chef-driven (creating the trends) but still using value-added ingredients</li> <li>Menus tend to be fixed, but are diverse and authentic</li> <li>Feature on-trend seasonal offers more often than LTOs</li> <li>Use seasonal, clean and sustainable products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommend product based on skill level back-of-house (varies in this archetype!)</li> <li>Provide menu recommendations and support for (including testing and promotion ideas and collateral)</li> <li>Consumer data and peer activity valued</li> <li>Show items that meet special dietary needs</li> </ul>
<b>Culinary Adopters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ultimate trend-chasers and a high frequency of innovation</li> <li>Often feature a specific specialty menu focus</li> <li>May use processed ingredients for convenience and speed of service, as well as to enable frequent LTOs</li> <li>Heavy chain presence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target with better-for-you ingredients</li> <li>Provide support for culinary, strategy and limited-time offers</li> <li>Use social media to inspire</li> <li>Showcase innovation and sustainability</li> </ul>
<b>Cutting Edgers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scratch-made, authentic, chef-driven and upscale fare</li> <li>Driven by vision, not trends; Unique personality is tied to the menu</li> <li>Chefs are well-informed</li> <li>Local, clean and sustainable sourcing and preparation</li> <li>Mostly independents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listen and interact with respect for existing knowledge</li> <li>Target with upscale products and positioning that fit unique personality</li> <li>Be transparent with ingredients and sourcing</li> </ul>



**Technomic®**

**Since 1966, we have produced in-depth research focused on the foodservice industry.**

**We provide insights into consumer, industry and menu trends in the U.S., Canada and 23 countries around the world. Our team of experts helps leaders in the industry make complex business decisions, set strategy and stay ahead of the curve.**