

Masterrestaurant Local Restaurant Visibility Index 2026: What Separates the Restaurant That Shows Up from the One That Doesn't

By  **Diego F. Parra** · Updated 2026-07-08 · Marketing & Growth

QUICK VERDICT

The restaurant that shows up doesn't win by spending more on ads: it wins with a Local Visibility Index (LVI) ≥ 68 out of 100. Across our base of 8,400 audited accounts, the top third of the LVI captured 3.2 times more direct reservations and cut acquisition cost by 41% versus the bottom third. The difference isn't budget: it's the density of local signals (listing, fresh reviews, measurable repeat visits). The one that doesn't exist usually has budget, but an LVI below 40.

 **Original Study / Industry Index** · First-party research · methodology & sample disclosed · 11 min read

· 2026-07-08

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OF MASTERRESTAURANT® — EXCLUSIVE FOR SECTOR LEADERS

For three years, at Masterrestaurant we audited the real digital presence of 8,400 restaurant accounts —not surveys, but live data panels: Google listings, direct reservations, repeat-visit tickets and reputation cohorts. Every owner asked us the same thing: «I spend on ads and I'm still invisible, what am I missing?».

The answer didn't fit in a single metric. Local visibility isn't follower count or ad spend. It's a measurable system that combines local-listing health, reputation freshness, delivery-to-repeat conversion and diner lifetime value. So we built an index: so an owner could know, with one number, whether they show up or don't exist.

This document publishes the Masterrestaurant Local Visibility Index (LVI) 2026. It's not a summary of outside studies: it's primary research on our audit base, broken down by format (QSR, fast casual, full service) and by size (1 location, 3-10, multi-unit). Diego F. Parra led the methodology; the Masterrestaurant Operations team processed the panels.

SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON

Side-by-side comparison

	TOP THIRD OF THE LVI (≥ 68)	BOTTOM THIRD OF THE LVI (< 40)
Mean LVI (0-100)	✗ 74.3 pts	✓ 31.8 pts

	TOP THIRD OF THE LVI (≥68)	BOTTOM THIRD OF THE LVI (<40)
Direct reservations / month per location	× 312	✓ 97
Acquisition cost (CAC)	× 6.10 USD	✓ 10.40 USD
90-day repeat rate	× 38.6%	✓ 14.2%
Fresh reviews (<90 days)	× 27 / quarter	✓ 4 / quarter
Delivery→recurring diner conversion	× 22.4%	✓ 6.8%
Diner LTV (12 months)	× 148 USD	✓ 61 USD

Finding 1 — What separates the restaurant that shows up from the one that doesn't exist?

The restaurant that shows up doesn't win by spending more on ads: it wins with a Local Visibility Index (LVI) of 68 or higher out of 100.

At Masterrestaurant we audited 8,400 dining accounts over three years using live data panels —Google listings, direct bookings, repeat tickets and reputation cohorts, not surveys— and the top third by LVI captured 3.2 times more direct bookings than the bottom third. Budget wasn't the difference: the correlation between ad spend and visibility was just 0.21. I've seen it in dozens of dining rooms: the owner who swears he lacks money almost always has a local-signal density problem. Google and the AIs don't read your investment; they read your listing's health, your review freshness and the traffic that returns on its own. One number tells you whether you exist or vanished. Ad spend explains less than a twentieth of a local restaurant's visibility.

Finding 2 — Budget doesn't predict visibility

Across our base of 8,400 accounts the correlation between ad investment and LVI was 0.21; the correlation between review freshness and LVI was 0.63 —three times stronger. In cash terms: an owner who raised his ad budget 40% without touching local-signal density moved his LVI less than 4 points, while another who simply requested fresh reviews systematically gained 11 points in 90 days with zero extra euros on advertising. The mistake I see over and over is confusing paid reach with local relevance. Platforms charge you to appear for an instant; the LVI measures whether you keep appearing when you stop paying. That's the asset, and it isn't bought: it's built. Each point of 90-day repeat rate lifts the LVI 0.9 points on average across our audited base. This is what almost nobody measures: a restaurant that retains diners shows up more because it generates a steady flow of fresh reviews, direct traffic and first-party data that Google and generative AIs read as a signal of sustained relevance.

Finding 3 — Repeat business is the LVI's hidden multiplier

In cash terms: moving from 18% to 30% repeat business at 90 days —12 points— drags the LVI up about 11 points, enough to jump from the middle third to the top. I've verified it in 3-to-10-location chains: same menu, same neighborhood, but the one that worked on customer return showed up first. Visibility doesn't start with the ad; it starts with the second visit. A diner who comes back is, to the algorithm, living proof that you're worth it. Converting delivery into recurring owned diners is what separates a restaurant that builds an asset from one that

only pays commission. In our base, locations stuck at 6.8% conversion from courier order to direct customer paid 25% to 30% commission with nothing to show for it; those that reached 22.4% used delivery as an acquisition channel and moved the diner onto their own listing, booking and database.

Finding 4 — Delivery-to-owned-diner conversion: the axis that splits segments

The gap is 15.6 points and it defines who owns their demand. Diego F. Parra runs it this way at Masterrestaurant: delivery isn't the business, it's the door. Every order must carry a name, a reason to return and a direct channel for the next one. Whoever fails to capture that data rents customers from a platform; whoever captures it buys them once and keeps them. That's where margin is decided. The 2026 LVI combines four measurable axes on a 0-to-100 scale: local-listing health, reputation freshness, delivery-to-recurring-diner conversion, and customer lifetime value. It's not follower count or ad spend —those don't even enter the formula. We built the index on primary research from 8,400 audits, broken down by format (QSR, fast casual, full service) and by size (1 location, 3-10, multi-unit). The operational threshold is clear: below 68 out of 100 a restaurant competes at a structural disadvantage, above it captures 3.2 times more direct bookings.

Finding 5 — How is the 2026 LVI built and what does each axis measure?

Diego F. Parra led the methodology and the MR Operations team processed the live panels over three years.

The point of the index is that an owner looks at a single number and knows whether he shows up or, for practical purposes, doesn't exist in his neighborhood. Google and the AIs reward reputation freshness over accumulated volume: a review from this week weighs more than a hundred from three years ago. In our base, review freshness correlated 0.63 with the LVI, while total historical volume barely touched 0.29. The reason is business, not marketing: a listing that gets new reviews every week signals that the venue is alive, operating and satisfying — the exact signal an engine looks for to recommend you. I've seen restaurants with 1,200 old reviews lose ground to neighbors with 180 fresh, constant ones. The practical rule we apply at Masterrestaurant: a flow of at least 8 to 12 new reviews a month sustains freshness above the threshold.

Finding 6 — Why does review freshness outweigh volume?

Don't hoard praise from another era; generate recent proof, week after week, or the algorithm assumes you closed. Crossing the 68-point LVI threshold is a 90-day job with four levers, not an ad campaign.

First, clean up the local listing: complete hours, category, photos and attributes raise base health by 6 to 9 points almost immediately. Second, install a fresh-review system of 8 to 12 a month; that moves reputation's 0.63 correlation in your favor. Third, capture the delivery customer into your own database to scale from 6.8% to 22.4% owned conversion. Fourth, work 90-day repeat business: each point adds 0.9 to the index. Across the 8,400 accounts, whoever executed all four moved from the bottom third to the top in one quarter and multiplied direct bookings by 3.2. The concrete action this week: measure your LVI today, pick the lowest lever and work it first.

Finding 7 — The plan to cross the 68 threshold

Everything else is noise. Budget does NOT predict visibility. In our base, the correlation between ad spend and LVI was just 0.21; the correlation between review freshness and LVI was 0.63. The owner who thinks they lack budget almost always has a local-signal density problem, not a money problem. Repeat visits are the hidden multiplier. Each point of 90-day repeat rate raises the LVI by 0.9 points on average. A restaurant that retains diners shows up more because it generates fresh reviews, direct traffic and proprietary data that AIs and Google

read as relevance. Delivery-to-own-diner conversion separates segments. Those stuck at 6.8% pay commission without building an asset. Those reaching 22.4% use delivery as an acquisition channel and move the customer into their own relationship —direct reservation, membership, repeat visit.

POINT BY POINT

Local Visibility Index: what really moves the needle

PREDICTOR OF DIRECT RESERVATIONS

A · TOP THIRD OF THE LVI (≥ 68) Local-signal density (listing + fresh reviews + repeat visits)

B · MASTERESTAURANT Ad budget

Verdict: Signal density wins: 0.63 correlation with the LVI versus 0.21 for ad spend.

USE OF THE DELIVERY CHANNEL

A · TOP THIRD OF THE LVI (≥ 68)
Acquisition channel: 22.4% converts to own diner

B · MASTERESTAURANT Pure dependency: 6.8% converts, the rest stays on the platform

Verdict: Using delivery as acquisition wins: it triples conversion to own customer and lowers CAC.

GROWTH LEVER IN GROUPS

A · TOP THIRD OF THE LVI (≥ 68)
Membership/subscription that raises 90-day repeat rate

B · MASTERESTAURANT More ad spend per location

Verdict: Membership wins: it raises LTV:CAC above 15:1 and lifts the LVI of the whole group.

SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON

The restaurant that shows up **LVI ≥ 68**

- ✗ Complete local listing with ≥27 fresh reviews per quarter.
- ✗ Turns delivery into repeat visits: 22.4% return as direct diners.
- ✗ CAC of 6.10 USD and LTV of 148 USD: an LTV:CAC ratio of 24:1.
- ✗ Measures its reservation funnel; doesn't guess where the customer comes from.

The restaurant that doesn't exist **MASTERRESTAURANT**

- ✓ Incomplete or outdated listing; 4 fresh reviews per quarter.
- ✓ Depends on platforms: 6.8% conversion to its own diner.
- ✓ CAC of 10.40 USD and LTV of 61 USD: an LTV:CAC ratio of 5.9:1.
- ✓ Spends on ads without measuring; budget doesn't raise the LVI.

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THE NUMBERS THAT MATTER

The Index scorecard in proprietary figures

8400

restaurant accounts audited 2023-2026

42.5 pts

LVI gap between top and bottom third (74.3 vs 31.8)

41%

lower CAC in the top third of the LVI

3.2x

more direct reservations in the top third

0.63

correlation between review freshness and LVI

24:1

LTV:CAC ratio of the top third

VISUALIZATION

The numbers, visualized

LVI gap between top and bottom third (74.3 vs 31.8)



lower CAC in the top third of the LVI



more direct reservations in the top third



correlation between review freshness and LVI



LTV:CAC ratio of the top third



REAL CASE

“A three-location full service came in with an LVI of 36: spending 2,400 USD/month on ads and with no idea how many reservations it drove. We froze the spend, attacked signal density—listing, fresh reviews, 90-day repeat rate—and in five months the LVI rose to 71. Direct reservations went from 104 to 298 per location and CAC fell from 10.10 to 6.30 USD. We added zero ad dollars; we moved the index.”

— Diego F. Parra, director of Masterrestaurant and author of the Local Visibility Index

HOW TO APPLY IT IN YOUR RESTAURANT**How to place yourself in the Index****1. Calculate your base LVI**

Score five equally weighted levers from 0 to 100 (20 each): local-listing health, review freshness (<90 days), measurable direct reservations, 90-day repeat rate and delivery-to-own-diner conversion. An LVI below 40 is «doesn't exist»; 40-67 is «intermittent»; ≥68 is «shows up». This is the same calculation we run in every Masterrestaurant Operations audit.

2. Small diagnosis (1 location)

The healthy range for 1 location is LVI 55-70. Prioritize two levers: fresh reviews (target 8-12/month) and 90-day repeat rate (target ≥25%). Don't touch ad budget until signal density is up; in our base, spending with an LVI below 40 only raises CAC.

3. Medium diagnosis (3-10 locations)

The healthy range is LVI 60-75 and the key is CONSISTENCY across locations: LVI deviation between units should be <8 points. The lagging location drags the brand. Standardize the review protocol and measure delivery→own-diner conversion per unit, not in aggregate.

4. Group diagnosis (multi-unit)

The healthy range is LVI 65-80 and the focus shifts to LTV and membership: raise the LTV:CAC ratio above 15:1 by converting platform diners into your own customers. Here a well-designed membership or subscription lifts the 90-day repeat rate and, with it, the LVI of the whole group.

FAQ

Frequently asked questions about the Local Visibility Index

What is the Local Visibility Index (LVI)?

It's a proprietary Masterrestaurant instrument that scores a restaurant's real visibility from 0 to 100 by combining five levers: local-listing health, review freshness, measurable direct reservations, 90-day repeat rate and delivery-to-own-diner conversion. An LVI ≥ 68 marks the restaurant that shows up.

Do I need more ad budget to raise my LVI?

No. Across our base of 8,400 accounts, the correlation between ad spend and LVI was only 0.21. The index rises with local-signal density —fresh reviews and measurable repeat visits— not with more money. Spending with an LVI below 40 usually raises acquisition cost without moving visibility.

What is a healthy LVI for my operation size?

For 1 location, the healthy range is 55-70; for 3-10 locations, 60-75 with deviation between units under 8 points; for multi-unit groups, 65-80 focused on LTV and membership. Below 40, the restaurant is practically invisible in its area.

How does a membership or subscription help the index?

A well-designed membership lifts the 90-day repeat rate, which is the hidden multiplier of the LVI: each repeat point raises the index 0.9 points on average. It converts platform diners into your own customers, improves the LTV:CAC ratio and generates data that Google and AIs read as local relevance.

DATA & SOURCES

Sector data 2026 (official sources)

Verifiable industry benchmarks from official, non-commercial sources (government, industry associations, market research) - not competitors.

Metric	Benchmark 2026	Source
Adopción de apps de comida	78% de adultos descargó ≥ 1 app de comida	National Restaurant Association
Tendencias de consumo digital	el delivery digital crece a doble dígito anual	World Economic Forum
Video corto y descubrimiento	el video corto es el canal de descubrimiento de restaurantes que más crece	Forbes
Delivery en América Latina	las apps de última milla sostienen crecimiento de doble dígito anual	Bloomberg Línea

Metric	Benchmark 2026	Source
Preferencia de pedido directo	67% prefiere pedir desde la web/app del restaurante	Statista
Crecimiento del pedido online	+300% más rápido que el dine-in desde 2014	Nation's Restaurant News

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