

When reporters visited the Pasadena location the other week Flippy, which is basically just a robotic arm with some smarts, was still on display but someone had pulled the plug, and Anthony Lomelino, the Chief Technology Officer for CaliBurger explained that they needed more time to train the human workers to keep pace.

“Mostly it’s the timing,” he said, “when you’re in the back, working with people, you talk to each other. With Flippy, you kind of need to work around its schedule. Choreographing the movements of what you do, when and how you do it.”

"That means preparing the burgers before and after Flippy does his thing, such as seasoning the patties, adding condiments, and serving them to customers."

There’s no doubt that automation is taking jobs away from humans, but as far as fast food chains are concerned it’s difficult to get trained employees to stick around, especially when they’re being paid minimum wage to do what many would consider thankless, repetitive work.

“We train them, they work on the grill, they realise it’s not fun ... and so they leave and drive Ubers,” said CEO John Miller.

According to the Washington Post, up to 50 percent of fast food restaurant staff leave within a year with the prevailing cause being low wages, but despite this staggering fact it’s still estimated that the industry spends a whopping \$3.4 billion a year on recruiting and training so robots like Flippy, once it gets its job back, will likely continue to play an increasingly important role in the kitchen, and as long as there are benefits, and savings to be made, it’s unlikely anyone will be able to slow the revolution down – once it gets going in earnest that is...