

Impact Printers

Small printers reap big changes

With the many elements it takes to operate a successful hospitality enterprise, the printer doesn't always come first to mind. But the right match of printer to application can give a bustling business just the edge it needs to boost productivity, sales and customer satisfaction.

While wireless point-of-sale systems have been around for a while, the development of robust and dependable wireless print solutions and wireless card swipes, are suddenly bringing new attention to the point of sale. Increasingly busy bars, restaurants with outdoor seating and stadiums have turned to complete wireless solutions to speed service and allow wait staff to spend more time in the dining room and less time running orders to the bar and kitchen.

Certainly at Denver's Comedy Works, bustle is the name of the game. With three tightly timed shows on a busy weekend night, wait staff have very narrow windows in which to sell food and drinks, a major source of the club's revenue. Maximizing sales time is essential—but so is processing transactions for 324 audience members in a timely manner. That task got even harder when the fire marshal ordered a layout change that doubled the number of checks needed at the end of a show.



While vigilant about over-serving, management wanted to stretch selling time as long as possible, and then get customers out the door quickly. “There is a tiny window to make our money,” says Wende Curtis, owner/operator. “We’ll do anything we possibly can to speed up transactions.”

Comedy Works deployed Symbol (symbol.com) hand-held terminals and Epson Mobilink (pos.epson.com)

wearable printers running off the Comedy Works’ Digital Dining point-of-sale system from Menusoft (menusoft.com). With wireless access points, the Symbol handhelds whisk orders off to the Digital Dining staff even move.



Denver's Comedy Works uses wireless printers as part of its wireless POS system.

When it's time to close out sales, wait staff don the printers and move table to table, taking cash and credit cards and issuing receipts on the spot. The solution enabled Comedy Works to delay last call by five to ten minutes per show—a significant help in an operation where wait staff average \$2,000 each in sales on a weekend night. “This is made for my business,” says Curtis.

Improving inventory

A printer had a similar impact on Pizzeria Uno. Keeping orders moving through the 200+-unit chain's hectic kitchens was a real challenge. Pizzeria Uno uses a video expo to track orders and ticket times in the kitchen, and wanted to find a way to reliably print bar coded orders at three prep stations. That would allow an expeditor to take the ticket off a completed order, scan the bar code to bump it, and run the order to the dining room. Previously they used a keypad. “If you scan the ticket, you get more accurate ticket times,” says Chris Gorman, director of restaurant systems. “The expeditor isn't fishing around screens” looking for the right order to bump.

But finding a printer to stand up to the heat and spills of kitchens was a challenge. Pizzeria Uno worked with TransAct Technologies on development of its Ithaca KitchenJet 1000 (ithacaprinters.com). “Our environment is rough, and printers get a lot of use on a busy night,” says Gorman. “A paper jam can be a disaster.” A successful pilot in 12 restaurants led to rollout in 126 corporate restaurants and about 75 percent of franchises. “It's been a real good solution to cap-

ture correct ticket times, and there is less downtime and repair costs,” he adds.

A gift of a printer

Of course POS printers are not just for restaurants. Printers are also unlocking benefits for the Racine Marriott in Wisconsin, where the catering department began using a Seiko (siibusinessproducts.com)

Smart Label printer to boost office productivity, according to Jenny Williams, catering assistant.

For the Tropicana Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, a printer change triggered a cascade of benefits from increased productivity to improved accuracy, customer service, merchandising data and inventory taking. An earlier printer making labels for products sold in Tropicana’s gift shop and gift kiosks was incapable of printing tiny butterfly labels for small items like jewelry and keychains.

Significantly, Tropicana didn’t include prices on its labels, had a low bar code read-rate and required a multi-step process to print labels. As if that weren’t enough Tropicana employees were required to hand-attach the labels to each hang tag.

Tropicana’s store administrator Patrick Leary spent 280 hours seeking an alternative solution, and ultimately chose three Zebra (zebra.com) LP 2844-Z direct thermal printers. The Zebra printers are capable of printing all three of Tropicana’s labels—butterfly, hangtag and sticky labels.

Printer software pulls data right from Tropicana’s AS/400 POS, and the units print clear bar codes with adequate quiet area around them, boosting readability for point of service and

physical inventory taking. They also include prices. That eliminated the need for separate price labeling and reduced the use of “open” merchandise keys on the point of service terminal, improving inventory tracking and speeding checkout for customers, which in turn enhanced sales.

The ability to quickly change label types and print all tag types reduced the daily tagging task from two people, tagging for two to four hours a day, to one person in one hour, and saved about \$300 a week, quickly



Finding a multi-functional printer has helped the Tropicana gift shop reduce its labor costs.

delivering ROI for the project.

“We just did a physical inventory, and because the bar codes are so clear, we could scan from a farther distance and the scan accuracy was there, so it sped up the inventory process, with no manual entry,” says Leary. “It’s been a godsend.”

Tropicana will soon use its third printer (which used as a spare) for labeling promotional items, enabling staff to better track usage, incentives and traffic. ■

PRINTER SPECS AND FEATURES

	Axiohm-TPG	Brother	Citizen	Epson	Ithaca/ TransAct	Star Micronics
Contact	Transaction Printer Group 950 Danby Road Ithaca, NY 14850 800.732.8950 tpgprinters.com	100 Somerset Boulevard Bridgewater, NJ 08807 800.276.7746 brother.com	CBM America 363 Van Ness Way, Suite 404 Torrance, CA 90501 310.781.1460 310.781.9152 fax cbma.com	3840 Kilroy Airport Way Long Beach, CA 90806 562.290.5304 pos.epson.com	20 Bomax Drive Ithaca, NY 14850 877.7ithaca ithacaprinters.com	1150 King Georges Post Rd. Edison, NJ 08837 800.782.7636 starmicronics.com
Printers	A795	HL-5140	CD-S500 High-Speed Impact Printer	Mobilink TM-U220	iTherm 280 KITCHENjet	TSP700 Thermal Printer
Print Speed	Monochrome: 150 mm/sec Color: 100 mm/sec	Up to 21ppm	Max. 5.0 lines/sec. (40 columns)	Mobilink: 70 mm/s TM-U220: 4.7 lps (at 40 columns, 16 cpi) 6.0 lps (at 30 columns, 16 cpi)	iTherm: 203 mm/sec. up to 64 lines/sec. KITCHENjet: Up to 12 lines/sec.	180mm/sec (60 LPS @ 3mm/line)
Reliability	Monochrome: 150 km Color: 100 km	Up to 20,000 pages per month	Printer: MCBF 7.5 million lines Print Head Life: 150 million characters Auto Cutter Life: 1 million + cuts	Mobilink: 10 million printing lines 500,000 auto-cutter TM-U220: MTBF- 18 x 104 hours MCBF- 18 x 106 lines	iTherm: MCBF- 60 Million print lines; print-head Life: 100 Km; auto-Cutter-1,200,000 Cuts KITCHENjet: MTBF- 30,000 hrs Auto-Cutter-1,000,000 cuts	60 million lines MCBR (CRT); Cutter: 1 million cuts
Warranty	N/A	N/A	N/A	Mobilink: 1 year TM-U220: 2 years	2 years (Extended plan available)	3 years
Wireless Ready?	N/A	N/A	N/A	Mobilink: 802.11b or Bluetooth (RS-232 port included) TM-U220: RS-232, Bi-directional parallel, Connect-It Dealer Option: USB, 10 Base-T I/F	802.11b	Wi-Fi (802.11b) interface. (Serial, parallel, USB & Ethernet available as well)
Special Features	To compliment the graphical and color capabilities of the A795, Axiohm/TPG has developed a utility ReceiptEZ that allows end-users to add logos, watermarks, margin messages and promotions to receipts without changing the software applications.	Ideal for all around basic printing. 250-sheet input capacity, 250-sheet optional 2nd tray. Printer has parallel port and PCL6 and can support DOS applications; small and compact footprint.	A key benefit of the CD-S500 is the user-installable interface cards versus the outdated fixed interface board. Its printer configuration settings are achieved by utilizing software memory switches, instead of antiquated physical dip switches, resulting in easy, error-free configuration changes.	Mobilink: This wireless printer is based on the TM-T88; It is a rugged, compact, cost-effective thermal printer designed for high-speed, on-the-go receipt and label printing. 10-hour battery life. TM-U220 printers features drop-in paper loading and two-color, black and red printing to highlight special orders, logos, and an adjustable paper width feature for more flexibility.	iTherm: Drop-in loading, Cash drawer drivers: 67 Language Code Pages, data Buffer-8K, APA Bit Map Graphics, Paper out Indicator, Ethernet. Print resolution: max 208 dpi horizontal, 96 dpi vertical. KITCHENjet: PowerPocket for protected and secure storage of power supply, Patented auto paper loading, 65 language character sets supported.	The TSP700 is an ultra high-speed, high reliability thermal printer. Its features and performance are unmatched in a receipt and specialty printer. Star's Raster driver for Windows™ helps receipts come alive with valuable features like AutomaticLogo printing which adds logos to the top of every receipt without having to modify existing point-of-sale software.

Self-Service Gets Schooled at Penn State University

York, PA—Penn State University (PSU) partners with NCR (ncr.com) and RMS-Touch (rmstouch.com) to deploy the RMS-Kiosk self-service ordering solution at its York Campus.

Installed in January, the solution, which includes NCR EasyPoint kiosks and RealPOS terminals and printers, as well as RMS-Kiosk Customer Order Entry and POS software, allows students to order and charge meals to their PSU cards using a declining balance feature.

“We are seeing more than 100 orders per hour processed through each kiosk during peak lunch periods, with an average of less than 40 seconds per order,” says taste-catering director of operations Jim Switzenberg. “Based on these results and the end-to-end support we’ve received, it’s clear we chose the right partners and the right solution.”



agers more effectively deal with trends in sales and costs. “Mymicros.net allows us to access information on the fly at the supervisor level or from people in the field,” he explains. “The system keeps them abreast of current information to which they can react immediately as issues arise. It gives our managers the ability to be more proactive and work at the front end of the curve rather than the tail end.”

The Atlantic Ups Service

Fort Lauderdale, Fla.—The Atlantic Hotel Condominium, a Starwood Luxury Collection hotel, recently installed Profit Series point-of-sale system from Hospitality Solutions International (hsi-solutions.com).

“HSI is very knowledgeable and experienced with integrating its POS at Starwood properties,” states James Huaman, systems manager of The Atlantic. “The installation team knew exactly what needed to be done to make everything perform smoothly and received excellent project management from the HSI team.” ■

Franchise Gets Enterprising

LOUISVILLE, Ky.—Hooters largest franchisee, RMD Corporation, recently installed an enterprise management system from Micros (micros.com) to

remotely manage its 41 locations in four states via the mymicros.net Internet portal and the Restaurant Enterprise Series (RES) 3000. Brad Harper, controller at RMD, believes this system helps man-