

chain leader

PROMOTION

Happier Returns

Thanks to QSR's ConnectSmart Kitchen system, Jack Astor's has increased its table turns, reduced slow-food promos and bolstered employee satisfaction, all the while enhancing guest delight.



Say you're a multiunit operator of around 50 restaurants and you discover a technology solution that enables you to turn tables faster, reduce food comps and significantly improve employee satisfaction. Would you adopt that solution?

Living up to its name, Service Inspired Restaurants (SIR Corp.) is doing just that, starting with its Toronto-based Jack Astor's Bar and Grill brand, a full-service concept known for its great combination of classic comfort food with a twist, as well as a high-energy bar business. SIR Corp. had been using kitchen printers since its inception in 1990.

When SIR Corp. implemented the ConnectSmart Kitchen (CSK) software and hardware kitchen solution by QSR Automations in its first unit, results — better-quality food, happier employees and faster turns — were so immediate and impressive that the company decided to continue its rollout of the CSK to more Jack Astor's restaurants as well as other concepts it operates, such as Canyon Creek.

"CSK shortened our table turns two to four minutes, greatly improved

food quality, and made our restaurant less stressful to work in — all of which translates to higher guest delight," says Stephen Seymour, SIR Corp.'s director of information technology. Noting that comps relating to slow food or food timing shrank by 50% and line staff turnover seems to have slowed since implementing CSK in that restaurant, Seymour adds, "CSK makes our people's jobs

easier, and as a result of being less stressed, there's increased intent to stay — subsequently reducing recruiting and training costs."

A Perfect Fit

Thanks to the CSK's powerful features and extensive POS interfaces, SIR Corp. is able to gain these benefits while leveraging its existing technologies in its high-volume restaurants. The CSK routes items to the appropriate prep stations based on item cook times, while displaying speed of service information — such as average cook times at prep stations and average order times at expeditor stations.

"Configuring the CSK to do something automatically that was previously managed through employees with extensive training is a fantastic way to improve operations," Seymour says. "Making a difficult and demanding job easier so that a less-experienced person can do it just as well has great value to us. Plus, we don't have to burn out our best people by constantly having them work our busiest times."

While maintaining employee satisfaction can yield huge dividends

in executing quality service, Seymour says, food quality is just as critical to encouraging return guest visits.

"With the help of CSK, our guests get their food together and at the right time on a more consistent basis. In a busy kitchen, it's difficult to time everything precisely — if you let the system do it for you, you can see a significant reduction in slow-food comps and discard less food that wilted in the window. And by executing good food faster, you shorten table times, for another improvement to the bottom line."

Further enhancing accuracy and efficiency, SIR Corp.

capitalizes on the CSK's intuitive graphical kitchen views, which allow user-defined colors, fonts and font formatting, as well as the ability to dynamically display menu cards for any food item at any time. The CSK also captures and displays transaction-level item and order data. Relying on the CSK, the restaurant manager can track the successful execution and delivery of food orders at all times.

"The visibility is one of the main things I like about the solution," Seymour says. "For instance, a manager can look at the expo-station monitor and know the condition of the kitchen via the color coding and average times. So the manager can gauge the health of the kitchen at any time with a simple glance — keeping him on the floor with employees and guests."

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