

Darden Using New Seating and Wait List Management Software to Enhance Guest and Team Member Experience

New Technology Enables Restaurant Teams to Better Deliver Exceptional Service

ORLANDO, Fla., Dec. 21, 2010 — Darden Restaurants, Inc. (NYSE: DRI) today announced the company has begun rolling out a new seating and wait list management system at its largest brands designed to enhance the guest and team member experience. The new system uses software to automate guest wait times and provide more efficient guest seating, enhancing the overall level of service restaurant teams can provide to their guests.

After a successful test, Darden has completed introducing the software in all Olive Garden restaurants this month. Darden also is currently testing the solution at Red Lobster.

QSR Automations, a leading provider of in-store, online and mobile connected technology solutions for hospitality businesses worldwide, is providing the “ConnectSmart Hostess” software solution to Darden. Darden is a long-time user of QSR’s advanced kitchen automation software and hardware solutions.

“ConnectSmart Hostess” accurately provides and manages restaurant wait time quotes and ensures effective server rotation and suggested seating — all based on rules that are designated by the restaurant operator. The software also helps manage large parties, building tables that meet guest preferences and ensure seating efficiency. Team members can view the real-time status of each table in the restaurant on an intuitive, graphical interface. A colorful icon automatically updates as each table nears completion of the meal, signaling to team members that a table soon will be available for seating.

“Darden takes great pride in successfully leveraging innovative technologies to allow our restaurant teams to focus on delivering an exceptional experience for every guest,” said Patti Reilly White, senior vice president and chief information officer for Darden Restaurants. “The ‘ConnectSmart Hostess’ solution enables us to grow guest confidence in wait times and seating efficiency, which enables us to enhance the overall guest experience in our restaurants.”

About Darden Restaurants

Darden Restaurants, Inc. (NYSE: DRI), the world’s largest full-service restaurant company, owns and operates 1,800 restaurants that generate more than \$7 billion in annual sales. Headquartered in Orlando, and employing approximately 180,000 people, Darden is recognized for a culture that rewards caring for and responding to people. Our restaurant brands — Red Lobster, Olive Garden, LongHorn Steakhouse, The Capital Grille, Bahama Breeze and Seasons 52 — reflect the rich diversity of those who dine with us. Our brands are built on deep insights into what our guests want. For more information, please visit www.darden.com.

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