RUBY TUESDAY RESTAURANT

CASE STUDY

Fresh Technology

Ruby Tuesday boosts efficiency with bar-station displays and electronic menu cards

With an uncompromising commitment to freshness and quality — from premium handcrafted burgers to the fresh garden bar — Ruby Tuesday, Inc. takes its healthy obsession one step further with fresh technology. Already making a name for itself as a leader in the use of innovative IT solutions, Ruby Tuesday adds two new levels of functionality to its successful rollout of the ConnectSmart Hospitality Automation Solution from QSR Automations, Inc.

Ruby Tuesday completed the implementation of QSR's ConnectSmart Kitchen (CSK) graphical software, eXpert hospitality controller, and KP-3000 keypad in the fall of 2005. Due to the kitchen management solution's positive impact on Ruby Tuesday's operations, the company is further leveraging the system's capabilities to include the use of graphical menu cards while also adding a display station into the bar. The additions have been implemented in Ruby Tuesday's 850-plus corporate and franchise partner locations.

Ruby Tuesday is saving an average of $500,000 annually with electronic menu card capabilities from QSR Automations.

Built to help operators like Ruby Tuesday ensure consistency as well as cut costs and clutter associated with printing and distributing hard copy recipe information, the electronic menu cards present employees with recipes as well as plating instructions via the push of a keypad or touch screen button. "We're experiencing large savings in not having to print and ship menu cards, which were costing the company an average of $500,000 annually," explains John Doyle, director of IT store systems for Ruby Tuesday.

Additional benefits are realized with a more organized kitchen and a simplified process for updating menus. "We no longer have cumbersome printouts all over the kitchen, and we can easily send updated menu cards to our restaurants in as little as 45 minutes," explains Doyle. He also notes how the system has allowed Ruby Tuesday to quickly diversify its offerings. "We now have the ability to test newly developed menu items on the fly. Overall, there has been nothing but positive input from the field — the culinary and operations teams love it," notes Doyle.

"The savings we experienced with QSR's kitchen management solution were so impressive, we wanted to see what else we could do to leverage the system — and we could see there was an immediate savings within our reach with both the menu cards and the bar station," says Doyle, who added that the menu card project was prioritized to be sure it was completed before the next menu change rollout. After completing the addition of menu cards in the first half of 2006, Ruby Tuesday turned its attention in what Doyle calls a "natural extension of the technology" to bringing a kitchen display station to its bar areas.

"If we had it to do over again, we would roll out the bar station at the same time we did the initial implementation," says Doyle. The added bar station has brought speed of service tracking along with the menu card functionality into the bar area, allowing bar staff to make drinks to exact specification and ensuring consistency. "The number-one focus of our company is quality. We've switched to the freshest, choice and prime meats, overhauled our fresh garden bar, and are upgrading our entire bar area with a focus on quality spirits and fresh juices," explains Doyle. "This is just one more place where technology can help enable operational initiatives to drive sales and guest satisfaction."

The bar display stations became operational in all locations in mid 2006. Already doing a tremendous amount of reporting with the production data that is now available to the company, Ruby Tuesday plans to implement the system's reporting functionality in its bar areas in early 2007 including the ability to verify where preparation times may be lagging and evaluate individual employees by station.

Concludes Doyle, "We're a big company, but we're an extremely agile company — and this is a technology that fits us well."

For more information on QSR Automations and its ConnectSmart solution, visit www.qsrautomations.com.

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