

Starting at SquirrelOne: Squirrel Systems puts the ease in technologies with a web-ready POS that enables solutions integration

The open architecture offered by Squirrel Systems' SquirrelOne point-of-sale (POS) system allows users to easily interface with a multitude of applications in order to maximize the technology in use at their customer establishments. SquirrelOne, which utilizes Microsoft's SQL database and .NET3 communication foundation, is a fluid, customizable system that works with various technology applications, including web-based solutions, to provide real-time results so restaurant operators can better manage daily operations encompassing beverage control; table turns and online reservations; online order processing; payment transaction processing; business intelligence; and more.

Squirrel's customers attest to how their POS capability, through Squirrel's open architecture and Internet-enabled platform, has helped them save time and money and reduce manual processes — all around making day-to-day operations considerably easier.

Copper Cellar

Copper Cellar, which operates several Tennessee restaurants including Cappuccino's, Cherokee Grill, Chesapeake's, Calhoun's, Copper Cellar, Cumberland Grill and Smoky Mountain Brewery, first piloted an integrated system consisting of SquirrelOne POS and Bevchek's beverage management system in December 2007 in order to manage its free pour beverage dispensing. The combined system compares actual amounts poured at the bar with the sales data from SquirrelOne, as well as variances and slippage on a moment-by-moment basis. According to Mike Gaston, MIS director for Copper Cellar, the integration between SquirrelOne and Bevchek has proved extremely useful because it eliminated the need "to manually combine the information from our Squirrel system with the information from the flow metering system in order to calculate our slippage rate."

Copper Cellar's brewmaster, Marty Velas says the pilot provided quick results. "We were immediately able to identify trends that allowed us to link slippage results with other factors like time periods and staffing."

Copper Cellar can now account for every ounce poured. "We're now seeing slippage rates of between 5-10%. In the longer term, we're setting our slippage targets to be less than 5%," states Gaston.

Kingston Taphouse & Grille

Another system that SquirrelOne integrates with is OpenTable, the #1 provider worldwide of online reservations, table and guest management solutions. Ron MacGillivray, General Manager of Kingston Taphouse & Grille in Vancouver, notes that



his restaurant had specific issues with managing table turns and waits: The restaurant consists of four floors, which made it difficult for the host/hostess to view open tables. It was a time-consuming process for the host/hostess to continuously walk the floor throughout a shift in order to turn tables, especially on nights with a line at the door.

With Squirrel's OpenTable compatibility, Kingston Taphouse & Grille now has the means to track the status of tables in real-time throughout the diners' restaurant experience. Each time a server inputs a portion of an order into SquirrelOne, it updates the monitor view through OpenTable, which is color-coded on the hostess' screen. Kingston says, "Our hostess can now give customers an accurate wait time. Plus, it eliminates the need for the hostess to walk the floors because they have the updated status on their screen."

Another benefit that the SquirrelOne integration to OpenTable has afforded Kingston Taphouse & Grille is that it offers targeted information on guest visits and spending habits. Explains Kingston, "The system tracks how many visits each customer has made and how much they spent during their visit as well as an average spend per visit. The next time the customer comes in we know all of this information and we can better meet their needs."

Buca di Beppo

In October 2007 Italian restaurant chain Buca di Beppo began piloting online ordering for its take-out menu in five restaurants in the Minneapolis area. The pilot resulted in a 40 percent increase in ticket averages compared to phone-in orders, exceeding Buca executives' expectations. Shortly after, the company began implementing the solution in 18 additional stores.



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The online ordering solution consists of SquirrelOne point of sale (POS) and orderTalk online ordering software.

Buca di Beppo, a long-time customer of Squirrel Systems, uses SquirrelOne in all its locations.

After the initial installation in the pilot stores Buca di Beppo also realized an increase in the rate of take-out orders coming in.

Dan Cullen, senior director of information technology at Buca di Beppo, says they were “amazed to see that the orders are coming at a much higher frequency than expected.

Another aspect of the online ordering solution that impressed Cullen was that the implementation occurred without slowing operations. “From an operators’ perspective, this has been a non-event,” states Cullen. “A technology implementation that has virtually no impact on operations is very positive. The icing on the cake is that the trend of online orders producing an increased average check has continued with the additional stores.”

Buca di Beppo’s menu and pricing varies regionally, and therefore it was critical that the company use an online ordering system that could manage those differences. Buca’s senior web developer Hanie Hartman notes, “The setup that is done within SquirrelOne really facilitates the integration of the regional differences to orderTalk. The information flows seamlessly. From a technical stand-point, it is fabulous!”

Logan’s Roadhouse

Another longtime customer of Squirrel’s, Logan’s Roadhouse, a restaurant chain with 165 company-owned locations and additional franchise locations, opted to upgrade to SquirrelOne in 2005 for its company-owned stores. The adaptability that Squirrel offered through its SquirrelOne POS enabled Logan’s to integrate with various technology vendors including Southern DataComm to maximize its operations. Southern DataComm offers credit card transaction processing software.

Since Logan’s began using Southern DataComm, Scott Dever, vice president of information services for Logan’s, says the greatest benefit has been the ability to keep their transaction processing off-site. “The transaction leaves our restaurant and then goes to Southern DataComm’s network facility. We don’t have to maintain those systems in-house.”

Soon, Logan’s will take Squirrel’s flexibility one step further. “Going forward we won’t have to store any credit card data on our system because we are going to implement something called Data Lock. This will eliminate the security risk of having this information in-house. Squirrel is going to help us take that whole risk 100 percent out of the restaurant.”

Looking back on Logan’s relationship with Squirrel and the growth ahead, Dever exclaims, “Squirrel’s flexibility and ability to integrate to Southern DataComm provided a big win for us.

Squirrel got us ahead of the game. In addition, going forward it’s going to allow us to achieve our Data Lock goal. That is huge for us.”

Applebee’s Woodland Group

Brentwood, Tenn.-based franchisor Applebee’s Woodland Group, Inc. switched from Squirrel Classic to SquirrelOne in 2006 for its multiple locations and soon began searching for a business intelligence solution that would allow the company to pull and analyze its data. The company selected CTUIT, Inc., provider of business intelligence and decision support infrastructure for the hospitality and retail industries, as its primary decision support system.

The implementation of SquirrelOne and CTUIT has impacted Woodland Group’s individual stores as well the corporate headquarters by making information accessible on every level to help manage multiple aspects of operations. The data can be viewed via email alerts or via an information dashboard. Some of the ways in which Woodland Group has benefited from this system include:

Fraud Protection – If a customer contacts CTUIT’s support center with a comment or if they need a chargeback on their credit card, CTUIT’s support staff can pull up the individual check and see all of the information. It eliminates the manual process of having someone at the restaurant sorting through a lot of data in order to find the correct check.

Menu Analysis – CTUIT analyzes trends to show which items are selling and which are not.

Server Economics – Takes the guesswork out of server performance because it shows which servers are top sellers, and it details a server’s strengths in regards to selling as well as the areas where they could use some improvement.

Meal-break Compliance – Labor laws dictate that minors must break after a certain amount of time on-clock. This system sets up alerts and notifications to ensure employees are taking their breaks.

Ultimately, Robert D’Ambrosia, president and CEO of CTUIT, credits the Woodland Group’s success with this combined system to customer service. “Unless you provide a real human component behind your solution, it is just software. We educate our customers and provide ongoing service and support.”

D’Ambrosia also notes that without Squirrel’s open architecture which enables immediate results on the back end this story may have had a different ending. “With systems that don’t utilize SQL you can’t necessarily get real time results,” concludes D’Ambrosia.

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