



ICH GROUP

# Restaurant chain improves operations with central management

**I**CH Group's 10 restaurants on the island of Hawaii are farther apart in menu offerings than in location: Five offer Dunkin' Donuts, four Catch of the Day units sell sushi and the last is a Dunkin' Donuts/Baskin Robbins.

Previously, gathering and managing the data at each concept was as diverse a process as the menus they offered due to electronic cash registers that were limited to basic data collection once a night. Operations' staff had to drive from store to store whenever menu changes were needed.

Sushi, donuts and ice cream now happily coexist on a centralized restaurant management system thanks to ICH's deployment of PixelPoint Technologies' HeadOffice enterprise software and PixelPoint Point-of-Sale (POS). "I'm able to provide answers to the CEO in more of a real-time environment and with much greater flexibility than before," says Jaymes Schooler, CIO for ICH Group, Honolulu, which also operates three wholesale food production plants.

ICH chose PixelPoint after a thorough exploration of the restaurant software market. "We were looking to save labor costs, attain

real-time reporting and gain benefits such as customer retention capabilities," says Schooler.

"The results were almost immediate," he adds. "The biggest thing I noticed was that, before, store managers really had no idea what their product mix was, what was or was not moving. The great benefit for us is that they now see where they need to make menu changes."

The data also fuels corporate decisions such as menu mix, employee performance ratings and product pricing. It even helped one store find a more profitable location when it showed that sales would rise by moving one and a half miles down the street. By running PixelPoint's Dataminer module, "I can perform comparative studies by region and locale for an individual item or a whole category," Schooler says. Appropriate data is readily available anywhere thanks to Web-based reporting.

PixelPoint's centralized management also means decisions can be implemented remotely. "It's been a great time saver, and knowing my managers cannot make unauthorized changes to the menu or product pricing gives me a sense of security as well," he says.

## REWARDING THE CUSTOMER

PixelPoint also enabled ICH to deploy the Mahalo Card loyalty program across the entire chain. The previous punch card loyalty system gave ICH no data on its customers. Now, ICH uses the Mahalo data to evaluate promotions and reduce advertising costs based on customer information. Soon it will begin using the database's e-mail and street addresses for targeted promotions.

Schooler associates some dramatic savings with deployment of PixelPoint: a \$15,000 annual labor cost savings and a 17 percent drop in the cost of goods sold. The program "definitely increased sales and stabilized them," Schooler says. "The Hawaiian economy is on a big slump, with some restaurants seeing a drop of 50 to 60 percent. We've only seen 15 to 20 percent." ICH plans four more Dunkin' Donut locations within three years.

"PixelPoint is by far the best all-around POS product I've seen," Schooler says. Return on investment has come "through time savings, centralized management and real-time information when we need it to effectively run our business." **SS**