

Restaurant Confidential™

The business magazine for restaurateurs

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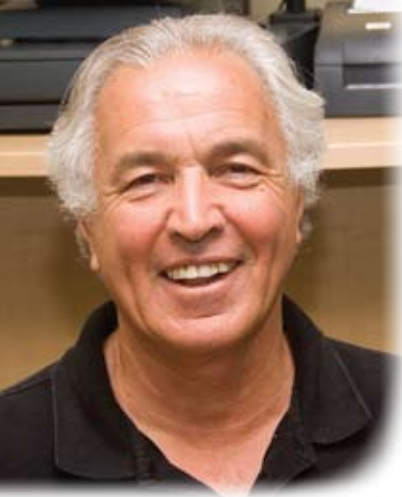
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Credit Card Fraud - Taking Action

by Mike Wayshak

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Paul Barber, owner of The Flying Rhino in Worcester, MA knows all about his customers' fears of credit card fraud. He, like his customers, has read about the 45.7 million credit card numbers stolen from TJX Corporation. Paul has also seen the CBS News story about the waiters from over 40 restaurants in NYC who were arrested as part of a \$3m dollar crime ring for "skimming" credit card information from their patrons. And we all know - even if we don't always heed - the AARP's frequent warnings to its 38 million members never to let their credit cards out of their sight. Especially at retail outlets!

And like every restaurant owner in America, he knew that identity theft is not a trivial problem. The FTC reports there were over 27.5 million victims of identity fraud in the past 5 years and that the losses racked up by businesses run into billions of dollars.

"A restaurant", Paul said, "is the only business in America where someone takes your credit card and disappears with it for five minutes or more. Who can feel comfortable with that scenario? Customers really don't like it."

Pay at the Table Was the Solution!

So about a year ago Paul began his search for a solution. He knew the answer lay in wireless, handheld technology. Settlement of guest checks at the table must be the right solution - the credit card never leaves the customer's sight.

Paul knew that a pay-at-the-table solution would put an end to customer concerns about fraud, but which handheld should he choose? He reviewed every available handheld on the market and decided to buy the Write-On from ASI. "The Write-



On handheld," Paul says, is the only terminal on the market that uses hand-writing recognition technology. It is just like using a pen and a pad. The system is so simple, and so intuitive for wait staff to use, that I decided to go live with it the day it was installed."

"It was a busy Thursday night and within a half hour my servers were up to speed with it. They all know the menu inside and out so I knew they would catch on pretty fast.

The Write-On handheld put an end to his customers' fears of identity-theft and skimming. So Paul makes sure that every customer knows that the Flying Rhino is protecting them from credit card theft every time they settle a check!

Out on his patio, Paul has installed a portable wireless printer for quick check settlement, speeding up service for everyone. An unexpected benefit emerged in how average table turns getting 15 to 20 minutes faster. "With our old fixed station system there were always jam-ups during busy periods. Now settlements are quicker and more accurate. We've also seen increased food and additional drink orders per table," says Paul.

"All told", he said, "wireless handhelds have transformed the way we do business. I sincerely believe that it has made obsolete the whole idea of fixed station terminals. All my servers have Write-On terminals. We won't go back to the old way of doing business."

With the quicker table turns it's been like a raise in pay to Paul's servers and he's had to semi-retire his old fixed-station terminals. One is now dedicated to take-out service, the other has become a humble time clock. Progress can be a cruel master.

Paul and his wife and partner Melina will be opening a second Flying Rhino in the near future. All wireless, no doubt. ■



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