

Andrea Thomas, Vice President of Teletec Systems, Inc., of Toronto, Ontario, an authorized **Restaurant Manager and Write-On Handheld** reseller, speaks of the advantages of wireless technology, highlighted below:

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## Harness your **POS System** to please customers and improve your bottom line

Looking at the variety of features available with current POS systems, it seems they can do it all, short of loading the dishwasher. While these multi-faceted programs are impressive in and of themselves, at the end of the day every operator wants to know, "What is this going to do for my bottom line?" Depending on the level of time and investment you want to make in a system, the answer does vary. Here are a few of the latest ways restaurateurs are harnessing POS systems to their advantage.

The cutting edge of technology for the restaurateur is the wireless handheld units that allow the server to take the order and enter it into the system right at tableside. Andrea Thomas, Vice President, Teletec Systems Inc., explained, "In restaurants today, we must empower the server with the correct tools as they are our sales people." With the summertime upon us, she described an ideal application for the wireless device: On a patio, you don't want the server to be constantly running in and out to grab orders because when they are inside customers can't place orders. If a customer has to wait more than a few minutes for a drink, they may just get up and go elsewhere. But with a handheld, one server can remain on the patio full-time to take orders, which can be entered directly into the system to the attention of an order runner inside. Thomas reports seeing sales improved by up to 30% with such a system.

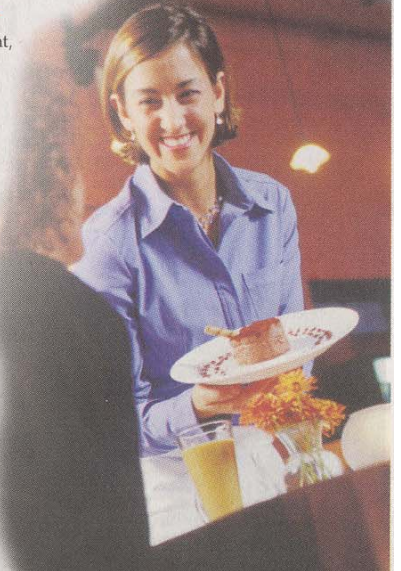
Whether you use a wireless device or a central terminal, the server can input an order and have it print directly to the kitchen. This improves the level of communication between your servers and back of house personnel. Thomas emphasized some of the other advantages to servers. They can let cooks know about coursing changes, for instance if a guest orders soup for an appetizer and salad as an entrée, but the salad is actually listed as an appetizer, the system allows for flexible communication with the kitchen so they know when to put the correct items up. And the kitchen can set a real-time countdown on menu items. If 50 of the Special of the Day were prepared, the system counts down to let all servers know when that item has run out. The server can communicate this to the customer before they place their order, avoiding potential disappointment.

Pleasing customers is the fastest way to improve your bottom line, so more people are taking advantage of POS systems to create and expand customer loyalty programs. Getting a client through the door is a good thing, but giving them a desire and incentive to return is even better. Andrew P. Wickett, CEO, Cratos Integrated Solutions Inc., explains that, within the boundaries of privacy concerns, you can have as little or as much information as your clientele is comfortable with. You can target regular customers by inputting special dates into the system; for instance, make a regular couple's anniversary special by inviting them in for a free dessert and cocktail. As well, the system can help to promote to first time or occasional customers by printing out a targeted coupon right on their receipt—if they ordered steak, why not let them know about an upcoming "steak night"? "The important thing is that customer has to perceive high value for the incentive to be a reward," says Wickett.

You can work the customer loyalty program any way you want. Popular options are gift cards, coupons and point tracking, suggested Kim Proudfoot, Marketing Manager, Pixel Point. The important thing is to use the system to generate reports on customer trends so you can focus and improve your marketing strategies. If you are part of a franchise, customers can carry rewards with them if you like, instead of making promotions location specific. You can make it easier on guests, who often lose frequent buyer cards, by attaching the reward program to any piece of ID they choose. Or you can simply impress guests by recalling their last order, remembering a birthday or, in the case of delivery, already having their address.

While POS systems are an investment, the more you take advantage of the available features, the sooner you can see it pay for itself. The package you purchase can be as basic or intricate as you are comfortable with; the systems are designed to be built upon, and expansion is a simple process. Whether you are using the system to simply track sales and employee hours, or are leveraging the power of the latest technology, the most important contribution the POS system can make is giving you the tools you need to take control of your business.

*The right POS system can help you keep customers happy and coming back.*



# Product Showcase



## CHEF-MASTER'S 5 GALLON COMMERCIAL SALAD DRYER

The **Chef-Master 5 Gallon Commercial Salad Dryer** includes the patented, innovative "Braking System" that will protect and increase the life of the gears. Other unique features are the sealed gear box with a 6-month, full replacement warranty, heavy-duty construction, convenient side-handles, and a patented "finger grip" handle on the rotating arm that spins in either direction. Sold through authorized dealers & distributors across Canada. For further information, call 800-567-6287 or e-mail [info@mul-t-mat.com](mailto:info@mul-t-mat.com).



## WHAT ALL HANDHELD POS SYSTEMS ASPIRE TO BE

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