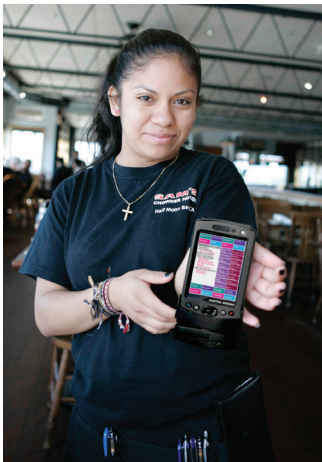




Sam's Chowder House increases overall sales by 30 percent, speeds table turns, and lowers labor costs with a Motorola wireless tableside ordering solution and Digital Dining



"Our revenues—and our servers' livelihoods—all depend on our customers having good experiences. Since we installed Motorola wireless and Digital Dining, our overall sales are up and our per-person average is up. That's proof that more people are enjoying more great New England-style seafood here at Sam's Chowder House."

— Paul Shenkman, Owner, Sam's Chowder House

Organization overview: Sam's Chowder House

Take the fresh seafood and relaxed atmosphere of a New England-style fish house, mix thoroughly with breathtaking views of the California coast, and the mouth-watering result is Sam's Chowder House. The restaurant seats about 280, offering indoor and outdoor seating in addition to private dining rooms. Serving approximately 20,000 people each month, Sam's Chowder House is a large restaurant with a reputation to match. Sam's Chowder House has over \$6 million in annual sales and wins praise from tens of thousands of seasonal tourists and destination diners from the San Francisco Bay Area. The big restaurant also has a big heart. Loyal fans in the Half Moon Bay community think of Sam's Chowder House as a fun, family-friendly place for locals.

The challenge: Efficient, stable restaurant automation

The original planning and vision for Sam's Chowder House were based on the personal experiences of the owner, Paul Shenkman, and his colleague Lewis Rossman who has become the restaurant's Executive Chef. The two shared fond memories of casual seafood eateries on the Atlantic seaboard.

East-coast sensibilities also led Shenkman to implement an innovative technology for efficiency and customer service: point-of-sale (POS) software running on Motorola mobile computers.

"We wanted happy customers and happy staff, and those can be challenges in a high-volume restaurant, so I looked into a mobile POS system as soon as we opened," Shenkman said. "Mobile POS is not as common on the California coast, but it's used quite a bit in the east. I did some research and talked to people around the country, and they raved about Motorola hardware."

Customer profile



Company

Sam's Chowder House

Location

Half Moon Bay, California (USA)

Industry

- Independent restaurant

Motorola Products

- Motorola WS2000 wireless switches
- Motorola AP300 access ports
- Motorola MC50 enterprise digital assistants (EDA)
- Motorola MSR5000-00R magnetic stripe readers

Application

- Wireless infrastructure and mobile computers used by restaurant servers to take customer orders at the table
- Wirelessly send the orders to the bar and kitchen
- Swipe credit cards for payment at the table

Partner

- Digital Dining POS software

Benefits

- Achieving ROI in one month
- Increasing sales 30 percent
- Turning tables 10 to 15 minutes faster
- Increasing per-person average \$4
- Improving employee retention and productivity
- Reducing front-of-house labor by 12 percent

Unfortunately, the first software implemented could not handle the requirements at Sam's Chowder House. "During peak periods, we can have sixteen servers on the floor, and we're serving continuously from 11am to 9:30 at night. The software system started to crash on regular basis," Shenkman explained. "Our servers lost confidence in the system, and obviously it doesn't please customers to have wrong orders or long waits," he said.

Shenkman looked for a more stable software solution. "It was a difficult situation, but I believed in the Motorola mobile computers, and I knew it was a matter of finding the right software," he said.

The solution: Motorola wireless, Motorola mobile computers, and Digital Dining software

The right ingredients for POS success at Sam's Chowder House turned out to be Digital Dining software from Menusoft Systems Corporation running on a Motorola wireless network.

"We couldn't be more pleased with Digital Dining," Shenkman said. "Their service is excellent, and the software is reliable—it's one hundred percent better than our previous POS software."

Sam's Chowder House turned to its POS team, led by POS Specialists, to configure and implement the Motorola wireless system using Motorola WS2000 wireless switches. POS Specialists of Northern California is the number one dealer for Digital Dining in the U.S. The Motorola WS2000 is designed to easily and cost-effectively scale to meet growing needs. Instead of traditional access points, the Motorola WS2000 wireless switch works with Motorola AP300 wireless access ports which can be mounted almost anywhere.

"We serve up to 1,300 people a day using the system, with seating indoors and outdoors, and the coverage of the Motorola wireless system is excellent and consistent," Shenkman said.

Diners lounge outdoors in Adirondack chairs overlooking the crashing surf, enjoy meals on a covered terrace, or share authentic East Coast seafood specialties with friends and family in one of the restaurant's several dining rooms. Sam's Chowder House servers take their orders using Motorola MC50 enterprise digital assistants and use Motorola magnetic stripe readers (MSR) to process credit-card payments at the table.

The Motorola MC50 is small and light enough that some servers wear them with elastic wrist bands. Others choose to carry the Motorola MC50 in a holster on a belt or in a checkbook folder. "We're talking about a device that is used 10 hours a day, constantly, and the durability has been very good," Shenkman said. "Initially, we were concerned about reading the screens in the sun, but that turned out to be a non-issue: our servers are using the Motorola MC50's easily in our outdoor areas every day," he added.

"Using the Motorola MSR for credit-card pay works very well. The process is smooth, and customers love that their credit cards never leave the table," Shenkman stated.

The benefits: ROI in one month, sales up, and happy customers and staff

Sam's Chowder House achieved ROI in a single month. "We had to start over with our POS software after only six months, and that was a difficult situation. But once we got Digital Dining and the Motorola wireless, I recouped my investment quickly," Shenkman said. "Sam's Chowder House is a high volume restaurant, and with the per-person average up \$4, the added revenue in one month alone more than made our ROI," he explained.

"Overall sales are up 30 percent from last year, and we'll soon be over \$6 million in revenue," Shenkman stated. "The system is dependable and our servers like it a lot; it's a major part of our business. Our servers are more productive, and the capabilities for up-selling and suggestive selling with the mobile computers will continue to impact our bottom line," he added. Sam's Chowder House is turning tables 15 to 20 percent faster. "When you serve 1,300 people a day, from 11am to 9:30pm, getting tables back 10 to 15 minutes earlier is huge," Shenkman emphasized.





The system has also increased staff retention, according to Shenkman. “We have very little turnover among our servers or in the kitchen. The system allowed us to increase server station size by 25 percent. With the mobile computer, they don’t need to spend time going back and forth—servers have more time to sell and do table maintenance, and the tips also increase,” Shenkman said.

The use of a mobile POS system is still quite unusual in the Bay Area, according to Shenkman. His customers and his servers like the novelty, and the system is one more unique aspect of the experience at Sam’s Chowder House that helps drive return customer visits.

For Sam’s Chowder House, the benefits of the Motorola and Digital Dining solution include:

- Achieving ROI in one month
- Increasing overall sales 30 percent (approximately \$1.5 million)
- Turning tables 10 to 15 minutes faster
- Increasing per-person average \$4
- Expanding server station size 25 percent
- Improving employee retention and productivity
- Reducing front-of-house labor by 12 percent

About our partner

Menusoft Systems Corporation, designer and developer of Digital Dining POS software, is a pioneer in the computer-based POS hospitality market and continues to be an innovator in restaurant automation after approximately twenty-five years in business. The privately-held Springfield, Virginia-based company has more than 50,000 customers, including independents and large chains and both quick-service and table-service hospitality environments. Digital Dining software is flexible and robust while providing an easy-to-use solution for enhanced efficiency and improved service.

About Motorola

Motorola is known around the world for innovation and leadership in wireless and broadband communications. Inspired by our vision of seamless mobility, the people of Motorola are committed to helping you connect simply and seamlessly to the people, information, and entertainment that you want and need. We do this by designing and delivering “must have” products, “must do” experiences and powerful networks – along with a full complement of support services. A Fortune 100 company with global presence and impact, Motorola had sales of US \$42.9 billion in 2006. For more information about our company, our people and our innovations, please visit <http://www.motorola.com>.



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CASE STUDY: SAMS CHOWDER HOUSE