

Restaurant Forum



HotSauce Technologies

Leading the Way in Restaurant POS

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By Hope S. Philbrick

Designed in collaboration with restaurateurs, foodservice professionals, servers, managers and cooks, HotSauce Technologies Restaurant Management Solutions sets the new standard for point-of-sale (POS) systems with its trend-defining technology and unprecedented service levels.

Today HotSauce Technologies is the leading provider of POS solutions to restaurants, bars and nightclubs. How did a company that launched with just one client — a Japanese restaurant in Atlanta, GA — rise to the top of its industry in just four years?

"We create a platform for restaurants to run their business," says Kai Hsu, Chief Executive Officer. "A POS system is really just a glorified cash register. What makes HotSauce Technologies Restaurant Management Solutions different is that we provide our

On the Cover: Jason Constantine, Director of Professional Services; Kai Hsu, Chief Executive Officer; and Gary Liu, Vice President of Sales (left to right) of HotSauce Technologies at Atlanta's Repast restaurant.

HotSauce is the right choice for my business needs. The product has all the bells and whistles I need to run my business at its best and, the most important thing, exceptional customer service.

— Joseph Truex, Chef/Owner, Repast

customers with a true management solution, a way to better manage their business." HotSauce Technologies' capabilities run the gamut of POS functionality, from lightning-fast order entry to inventory management, credit card to payroll processing, basic to custom packages to meet unique needs.

But that's not all.

"We built our name on two things: technology that truly makes sense for our clients and outstanding service," says Gary Liu, Vice President of Sales.

Every HotSauce Technologies' system is customized to meet a client's unique needs.



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Open architecture means that HotSauce is compatible with any hardware that runs on a Windows platform. This allows customers to use the hardware they prefer.

A NEW STANDARD FOR SERVICE

HotSauce takes customer service to a whole new level. “We’re the industry’s first company to offer live customer support 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” says Hsu of the Client Operations Support Center that has been operating for more than a year now. “With our clients open late, we determined that to truly service the needs of our customers it’s crucial that we’re available when they need us.”

“If you call at 2 a.m. — which happens a lot; restaurants, bars and nightclubs are open late — you will reach a live person,” says Liu. “What we provide is not a recording, not a paging system.”

“We’re really the first POS company to sit down and examine the way service has been delivered within the hospitality industry,” says Hsu. “The problem we found was that most of our competitors were selling through dealers, and that after 5 or 6 o’clock these dealers would close their offices and carry pagers. They’d return calls once they determined if a situation was an emergency or not. We think that’s ludicrous, especially since the peak hours for restaurants, bars and nightclubs are often in the evenings. It just did not make sense to us to try to fit our clients into ‘normal’ business hours.”

By providing this level of service to resolve all hardware, software and training issues, HotSauce Technologies demonstrates its commitment to building a relationship with its customers. That relationship is expected to endure for years. “You’re buying a system that lasts,” says Hsu. “We feel the need to shine not just for a few weeks when you’re making a decision about which POS system to purchase, but for years after the sale. Beating the competition when it comes to pre-sale choices is one thing, and we believe we do that, but where we truly stand above the rest is in after-sale service.”

The level of commitment is clear: “In the past year we’ve invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in the infrastructure for our support

centers,” says Hsu.

There’s no question that the decision to offer 24/7 LIVE! support was the right one: Hsu says, “We’ve found that almost 50 percent of our call volume comes in during what is typically considered ‘after hours,’” or outside the hours of 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. “It confirms what we’ve always believed, which is that restaurants are under-served when they don’t have access to immediate service at the hours when they need it most.”

Of course, any service is only as good as the folks providing it. Beyond technology knowledge and experience, “Our employees have restaurant experience,” says Hsu. “That’s really the ‘extra’ that we look for when hiring people.” This precedent can be traced back to the company’s two founders, Michael Lapid and Gary Liu, whose own restaurant experience inspired them to create the technology company to service the hospitality industry.

In addition, the Technical Support Team behind the 24/7 LIVE! Client Operations Support Center is required to have HotSauce Restaurant Management Solutions Certification and restaurant domain knowledge. “When every technical employee starts working for HotSauce Technologies — whether in R&D or support — he or she has to complete two months of implementation training. That new employee stays at a restaurant and sees what’s going on, so later, whether supporting restaurants or designing systems, these folks know what a restaurant environment is really like and how HotSauce Technologies supports it.”

Meanwhile, sales consultants “are taught that the first objective is to help restaurateurs come up with the best system for the need and not just try to ‘sell’ something,” says Hsu. “Our sales consultants often talk customers out of purchasing features and add-ons that they don’t need.”

A NEW STANDARD FOR TECHNOLOGY

“From the beginning, what we wanted to do with HotSauce was build a POS system that was more user friendly than any other system that was available at the time,” says Liu. They did just that.

“One thing we continually hear from ultimate end users — from servers and bartenders to cooks and managers — is how intuitive and friendly HotSauce is,” says Hsu. “One reason we succeeded in creating such a user-friendly system is that we sought tremendous input from

Love it. We waited a long time before getting a POS system. HotSauce is one good program; it’s got what we need and performs great.

— Fred Harris, Owner/Operator, BBQ House

I've had HotSauce for almost two years. My business has increased 15 percent in that time, and I couldn't have done it without the HotSauce system in place. It's been a great help to me.

— Casey Smith, President and CEO, Red Neck Gourmet

end users. That really sets us apart.”

Increased accessibility doesn't mean decreased effectiveness. HotSauce Technologies Restaurant Management Solutions uses the most sophisticated technology and is designed to last for years. Consider these three key features:

- **Open Architecture** means that HotSauce is compatible with any hardware that runs on a Windows platform. The advantage is that HotSauce can be installed into most existing hardware components eliminating the need to purchase new equipment.
- **Real Time Data Redundancy** protects information with data replicated every one to two seconds from the file server to a backup server. “If the main computer ever goes down, no problem,” says Liu. “You can pick up and run the entire system without interruption from another terminal.”
- **SQL Server Database** that provides real time database changes. This means that data entered on one terminal appears on every terminal without having to restart the system. “Change the price on something, update inventory, whatever — it's up to date on all terminals,” says Liu.

With all HotSauce Technologies products and services, the consideration is always how to help clients manage operations, deliver better service and improve the bottom line.

A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

HotSauce Technologies embraces the concept of working as a partnership with its clients and with other providers. “The product management side of our business frequently polls customers to keep on top of trends and develop new specifications that address needs,” says Hsu. As an example, “We introduced a new payroll service in response to customer feedback. We heard it was inconvenient for them to run two systems — one for POS and another for payroll — so we created our own payroll service to seamlessly automate the payroll process.” And the list of these services goes on. “The whole idea is that we're constantly innovating and looking to provide customers with tools to run their business.

“Everything about our business is thinking from the customer perspective and thinking of ways that we can provide better function and better value,” says Hsu. Eliminating the middleman provides such advantages.

“We're not a reseller,” says Liu. The company has no dealers.

Despite the fact that a network of dealers might help the company grow at a more rapid rate, “We've gone against that business model,” says Hsu. “We have only company-owned offices because

we feel the best way to achieve the highest level quality of service and maintain the consistency of our system is to avoid working through a third party.

The approach provides a competitive price advantage. “Eliminating the middleman saves on cost, and we pass that savings to the customer. HotSauce POS is the absolute best value dollar for dollar that you're going to find,” says Hsu. “On price plus quality of the product, we can beat anybody.”

A BRIGHT FUTURE

“At the outset, our goal for the company was to become the leading provider of POS systems to restaurants, bars and nightclubs in Atlanta,” says co-founder Liu, who helped create the product in 1998 that was taken to market in 2002. “We've accomplished that. Our next objective is to become the worldwide leader of POS to the hospitality industry.” Having grown from a staff of two with a single client to a company in five offices around the world servicing thousands of the restaurant industry's leaders, HotSauce Technologies is on track to succeed in doing just that. Today the company maintains its headquarters in Atlanta and has additional offices in Charlotte, Chicago, New York and Taipei, Taiwan.

For more information about HotSauce Technologies Restaurant Management Solutions, call 1-877-5HOTSAUCE (546-8728) or visit www.hotsaucepos.com. ■

HotSauce Technologies tests all equipment through quality assurance at least 72 hours prior to installation.



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