

Your Allied Business Partners



By Bob Arnold
LionWise: point-of-sale solutions for the restaurant industry

Nearly 40 percent of your operating costs are related to goods and services provided by your suppliers. I feel that one factor, other than price, should be taken into account in determining whether to continue doing business with an existing supplier. Do they cover your back? If a delivery is short, will they travel to their other customers to "borrow" product to complete your order for a holiday weekend? Do they share industry information with you that makes you a better competitor? If you point out that another supplier has walked through your back door with a lower price, do they go back to the buyers with their company and get you relief? Do they explain the differences to you in why their product might have a higher price point than the competitors? Do they support the New Hampshire hospitality industry by being actively involved with NHLRA?

A long-term relationship with a supplier can be a very valuable tool to anyone in the hospitality business. There are many factors that can affect our cash flow throughout the year (snow storms immediately come to mind, but others can be equipment breakdowns, building repairs, etc.). Being able to ask a favor of a long-term supplier can be very valuable. You might need a few extra days in paying an invoice, a special delivery due to an ordering mistake by you or your staff, or a better price on an item to keep you more competitive in the marketplace. If you are always shopping and switching suppliers just for the lowest price, you will lose that part of a relationship.

A supplier understands the importance of keeping you as a customer. Good suppliers, like good restaurateurs, understand that business is about making and keeping customers. Are they in business to make a profit? Absolutely. All of our suppliers are facing the same low margins and cash-flow constraints that the restaurant operators are facing. I know that they are all interested in helping you to succeed, as your success is also their success.

Confide in your supplier. Let them know that you are looking for new ideas, that you are receptive to demonstrations from representatives of the companies whose products they are marketing to you. I know that many of our suppliers have long histories with the hospitality business. Many of them have had restaurants of their own or have worked many years in the restaurant business. A fresh set of eyes looking at your operation will provide you with an insight that may have eluded you and your staff.

Look at your suppliers as a part of your management. Involve them with your business. Expect more out of them than to just be an order taker. Suppliers that become true friends over the years are one of the greatest benefits of our industry.

Your supplier wants to become a valuable resource to you, supplying you with tools, resources, or just plain old feedback to help you to improve your operations.

Bob Arnold is the sales manager for LionWise, based in Hampton, New Hampshire. LionWise provides high quality, leading edge point-of-sale (POS) solutions for the table-service and quick-service restaurant industry. Its philosophy is to provide highly flexible and scaleable POS and back-office reporting solutions that can meet the needs of single, multi-site, and multi-purpose restaurant establishments. Bob has also been a board member of the NHLRA for close to 20 years. Visit www.lionwise.com for more information.



Register Early for 2008 Awards Dinner and Hospitality EXPO

NHLRA's biggest events of the year, the Stars of the Industry Awards Dinner and Hospitality EXPO, celebrate the very best in hospitality. The daylong EXPO gives association members and non-members the opportunity to meet one-on-one with exhibitors and to explore the industry's top technologies, products, and services—all under one roof.

This year's Stars of the Industry Awards Dinner and EXPO will be held on October 27 and 28 at the Mount Washington Resort. The Awards Dinner will take place the evening of October 27, followed by the EXPO on October 28 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Stars of the Industry Awards Dinner recognizes the best restaurant and lodging employees in the state. Traditionally drawing a crowd of top decision makers, general managers, and business owners, the Awards Dinner is always well attended and well received.

Exhibit space will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis to a maximum of 60 vendors, with our past exhibitors receiving priority. We are pleased to continue to provide our vendors with opportunities to connect with our industry and our members. Contact NHLRA to reserve sponsorships, booth space, or dinner tickets today: (603) 228-9585.

Thank you to our sponsors to date:

Title Sponsor:
PFG NorthCenter



Performance Food Group

Presenting:
Glen Group
Southern Wine & Spirits



NorthCenter

Glen Group

Contributing:
Coca-Cola of NNE
Heartland Payment Systems
Sadler Insurance Agency



Supporting:
Bath Fitter
Common Man Family
Favorite Foods, Inc.
Fishbowl Marketing
Lakes Region Linen
New England Coffee
Pete's Restaurant Equipment
Public Service of NH
SYSCO, NNE
Waste Management

