

Technology that Assists Profitability

By Rachael Brown
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"The restaurant business has the highest mortality rate for U.S. businesses" says Scott Filiault, president of **LionWise**, a point-of-sale (POS) company in Hampton, NH. In fact, the failure rate is what inspired Scott Filiault and Richard Lilly, both formerly of Lilly Software, to develop a system that would enable restaurateurs to become more profitable.

Filiault and Lilly began product development in 1995, although the original idea was to develop manufacturing software. Almost immediately they noticed a similar opportunity in hospitality. "Through our independent research, we found that well over 60 percent of NH independent restaurants were still using single electronic cash registers. Some of that's due to the small mom-and-pop establishments, but we see it in fine dining too." Filiault says.

LionWise's POS system is designed so that managers can see operations from front-of-the-house stations. "In most restaurants today, operations are done in the back office, away from the customer base. Our POS allows the manager to make real-time decisions, putting them in front of the customer to help resolve the situation rather than having to leave the floor, go to a back office to adjust a guest check, split a check or process voids or transfers," explains Filiault.

Filiault says that the company's newest system also integrates such restaurant functions as POS, back office and retail, which might include simply selling gift certificates or branding items like souvenirs. He says the system allows managers to gauge profitability. "We believe retail sales in restaurants is a trend and can increase revenue. When folks are waiting, shopping in an annex gives them something to do," says Filiault. LionWise's POS system lets the operator jump from different revenue centers seamlessly, whether it's from take-out to souvenirs to table service.

One typical customer, the **Galley Hatch** in Hampton, has multiple restaurants, a retail division, and a provisions store. John Tinios, Galley Hatch owner, began using LionWise's POS system last year. He was an ideal customer, especially in light of the fact that Filiault and Lilly had picked his brain during their development phase. "LionWise's business philosophy is to adapt software to best meet the needs of the customer," says Tinios, who adds that this is a great first step given that many of the larger POS firms tend to have a one-size-fits-all viewpoint.