



CASE STUDY – THE MILK BAR

Top London Espresso Bar combines leading Smart Phone Android™ Technology with the versatility of Casio's NEW EPoS Terminal.



The Milk Bar in Soho, London uses the Casio V-R100 EPoS to provide better customer service, reduce perishable stock and produce accurate financial reports.

Background:

The Milk Bar in Central London serves the vibrant and bustling community of Soho and Shaftesbury Avenue. Established in 2008 as an expansion sister coffee house to the popular 'FlatWhite' coffee bar located nearby, both establishments pride themselves on producing the highest quality espressos in London, served accompanied by delicious sweet treats, brunches and lunches. This friendly outgoing Australian/New Zealand approach to hospitality has provided a haven for travelling expats and become a firm favourite for Soho locals.

Situation:

Eric Hiakita is the Operations Manager at both the Milkbar and FlatWhite and has been instrumental in completing a recent refurbishment of the Milkbar. Whilst doing so, he and the owner, Tracey Merrony, took the decision to move from a standalone 2008 Casio Electronic Cash Register (ECR) to a new fully functional Android™ EPoS terminal.

Eric takes up the story. "At the Milkbar, we pride ourselves on offering excellent coffee backed by a significant fresh menu available throughout the day. Our growing reputation and popularity meant that it was time to upgrade to a unit that proffered greater intelligence and flexibility and could automate tasks while recording transactions. We wanted to be able to add new items easily and were becoming restricted by the limited functionality provided by a traditional register."

Previously, this limited functionality meant that the Milkbar had to largely rely on paper based accounting methods. Whilst staff were experienced, manual accounting increases the margin for error and caused issues in assimilating accurate accounts, especially with different VAT rates now applicable on hot and cold take away purchases. So, whilst the premises were being refurbished, the Milkbar decided to take total control of their business and asked ABL Systems, a locally based EPoS systems supplier and Casio partner, to recommend a solution that would facilitate better financial information, speed customer service and ultimately improve productivity.

Solution Detail:

In the summer of 2012, under advice from ABL Systems and Casio, the Milkbar installed the new Casio V-R100 Android EPoS Terminal – the first such hospitality designed and engineered system in the world to run on the Android™ platform. The decision to use this ground breaking technology was relatively simple and backed by a lower capital outlay than a traditional EPoS system. From a hardware perspective, the Casio V-R100 sits neatly on the Milkbar counter, housed in its compact (395x 237mm) frame. Underneath the spill-proof exterior, lies real-time connectivity to the entire Android application platform, allowing the Milkbar to access hospitality focused applications covering everything from stock control analysis to accounting packages.

Unlike traditional EPoS units that arrive accompanied by major first time system configuration headaches; the Casio V-R100 was ready to go straight out of the box and easily customised to reflect the Milkbar menu items and promotion buttons. Now fully installed on the Milkbar counter, every menu item sold is recorded by date and time, giving a full sales history for both customer and audit trail for the business accountant. There is also greater precision in ordering produce, Eric explains “One of the great benefits of deploying the system is the ability to have more product detail available – breaking a menu item into its individual constituents. It also means that via just-in-time ordering, which used to be done manually at the end of each day, we can monitor perishable stock levels accurately and ensure that our customers have only the freshest items in our menu items.”

Customers are served more quickly and planning ahead, Eric is hoping to introduce the SMS and email marketing package. This allows carefully targeted communications to be sent to regular customers, with special offers and events, increasing loyalty and providing an invitation to bring family and friends along to the Milk Bar.

Results:

Undoubtedly, a key challenge to all in the catering trade is to accurately anticipate consumption levels. Whilst there is still an element of managerial experience involved in this forecasting, over time, the Casio V-R100's intelligent software helps with accurate forecasting and stock management; maximising profitability at the shop.

Further efficiencies to the bottom line are made when energy savings are considered into the mix. The Casio V-R100 demonstrates significant energy savings of typically 65% against the previous Electronic Cash Register used at the Milkbar and, reassuringly 85%, demonstrable savings against traditional EPoS systems.

Being a sister cafe to the nearby FlatWhite cafe, the Management team can often be in either premises. With the Casio V-R100, this is not an issue, “I can see the transaction, in real time, and then seamlessly process that data into management information that I can use to make useful business decisions, right there and then” explains Tracey Merrony. Tracey explains further, “This allows me to view peak sales times, highlight best sellers and manage the staffing levels appropriately across both coffee bars to ensure that the welcoming Southern Hemisphere service level is always present.” She laughs.

Deemed as incredibly easy for Milkbar staff to use with a large colour 10.4 inch colour touch screen that can be adjusted according to the server's line of view, all staff have embraced the Casio V-R100. Adding new items is fast and seamless, and prompts onscreen offers customers extra items, such as ‘cakes of the day’ and specials to accompany their coffee.

In terms of marketing, both coffee bars offer loyalty schemes, offering the 10th coffee free for regulars and Eric is keen to also expand use the V-R100 solution for email and SMS marketing to existing and new customers. “We’re looking forward to expanding promotions to regulars and see the potential of the marketing packages within the Casio Business Portal to offer seasonal promotions and attract new customers such as Anzac Days.”

As the key user of the system, Eric summarises his findings:-
“The Casio V-R100 is simply an outstanding asset that can be as straightforward or as complex as you need it to be. Sitting in a robust, spill-proof frame, it’s compact appearance belies the power that sits beneath. The combination of the EPoS platform and the Business Portal assures me of future proofing and versatility.”

The last word goes to Milkbar owner, Tracey. *“Whilst I am not the primary user, I like the V-R100 as I can see instantly what is in stock, it’s like a window into the business. We know precisely what has sold and we reorder ingredients accurately now saving time and money.”*

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