

Toshiba and Bristec Brew Up the Perfect POS Solution for Bath Ales



Summary

Based in South West England, brewery and pub chain Bath Ales has selected the future-proof point-of-sale (POS) solution from Toshiba in partnership with Bristec.

Background

Bath Ales was founded in 1995 in Wincanton, Devon, by two partners who shared a passion for quality real ales. Since its modest beginnings the company has grown and now operates from a purpose-built brewery in Warmley, near Bristol, producing 250 barrels a week. In an age where independent breweries are increasingly being overtaken by the large chains with the latest brewing technology, Bath Ales still uses only the finest British malts, grains and hops to brew its selection of ales, all in traditional casks. During the ten years since its start, the popularity of the brand has grown tremendously and the company has now expanded to include a chain of eight pubs and a brewery shop.

The Challenge

Up until 2005, the company had traded using stand-alone tills, but as the company grew it became apparent that the tills were not providing the functionality required. Mike Wilkins, Retail Manager, explained, "We wanted to invest in a system that provided the required tailored functionality at each of our individual sites, rather than one that was standardised and head office driven. We also wanted streamlined information to meet our current head office reporting needs, but with the option to develop and customise the system in line with the changing needs of the business."

The Solution

The solution consisted of Bristec's Boss Retail Suite software on Toshiba ST-60 integrated touchscreen terminals. Bristec was recommended to Bath Ales by another independent brewery to consult, install and manage the project. Although alternative suppliers were evaluated, Bristec was selected due to its consultative approach and the flexibility of its software.

The compact, splash-proof and robust design of the Toshiba ST-60 terminal proved the perfect choice for both the pubs and the brewery retail outlet. The system was first installed in the brewery shop before Christmas 2005, which was used as a training base for managers. The trial proved so successful that it was quickly followed up with installations in a further four of the pubs during 2006, the most recent on the latest Toshiba dual screen ST-71 integrated touchscreen model.



The Benefits

With the Toshiba / Bristec solution in place in both the retail shop and majority of the pubs, Bath Ales now has a user-friendly POS system that can be tailored to the individual requirements of each of the sites whilst still providing the streamlined information required for head office reporting.

A brewery with an individual approach, Bath Ales employs entrepreneurial managers who enjoy a degree of autonomy. The company works alongside each manager, helping them to achieve their specific pub's profit and loss targets. The flexibility of the Toshiba / Bristec solution has enabled Bath Ales to use the POS system to help manage the business. For example, the company can set a product price at head office but allow individual managers to set pre-agreed individual prices at each pub. The system is flexible enough to manage both blanket promotions and promotions specific to individual pubs, as well as offers available from the brewery shop.

The screen layouts in each pub have been tailored to each individual manager's requirements, helping to smooth the transaction process and speed up customer service. The Toshiba ST-60 and ST-71 terminals with intuitive layouts and bright touchscreen make the system easy for staff to navigate, ensuring customers are served quickly and efficiently, which is particularly important during peak times.

Prior to the installation of the Toshiba / Bristec solution, one of the biggest challenges for Bath Ales was in its busy Wellington Pub, situated opposite Bristol's Rugby Club. Faced with anything up to 2,000 customers within the busy ninety minute period prior to the start of rugby, Bath Ales was having difficulty serving them quickly enough and keeping track of sales. To overcome the problem, Bristec installed wireless Toshiba ST-71 terminals in the two marquees outside the pub linked directly to the kitchen printers, ensuring all customers were served as quickly as possible prior to the match.

Bath Ales has also been able to improve efficiencies and wastage through enhanced reporting using the Toshiba / Bristec POS solution. Commenting on this aspect, Mike Wilkins said, "Use of the system for detailed sales and wastage analysis, combined with our local knowledge, has enabled Bath Ales to pool all the available information and use it for best practices."

The Future

The brewery plans to use the Toshiba / Bristec POS system to manage all stock, with a stock link into its head office. The company currently carries out monthly manual stock checks at each of the sites but is planning to implement weekly stock checks, complemented by management reporting supplied from the POS system. This information will improve wastage, save on external audit costs and increase gross profit.

Other plans include a payroll link and use of the POS for menu planning, identifying popular meals and reducing wastage further.

Moving forward, a further exciting development planned is to utilise the Toshiba / Bristec POS solution to build a database of customers using a card membership discount scheme. By recording all the transactions through the Toshiba POS terminal, Bath Ales will be able to carry out sales promotions, such as e-shots, to increase sales during less busy periods, such as a free bottle of wine with a meal for two after Christmas. The company will also be able to enhance two-way communication with its customers, for example sending personalised offers to redeem on purchases of kegs of beers, helping them to retain loyal customers.

Commenting on the brewery's future and its ongoing relationship with Bristec, Mike Williams said, "Our aim is to increase from eight to fifteen pubs in the next five years. We are very happy with the service and system that Bristec has supplied. It is very important that we have a company that understands our business and is able to work with us to tailor a solution to meet our requirements. We are confident that, with the Toshiba / Bristec system in place, we have a future-proofed POS solution capable of delivering the future functionality and management requirements of the business."

About TOSHIBA TEC

TOSHIBA TEC Europe has earned a reputation as a leading manufacturer of retail and industrial information systems through product development that aims to anticipate and uncover potential customer needs, resulting in products that provide real value and benefits to the user.

As a total solution provider, TOSHIBA TEC Europe offers a complete package from consulting and system design to system installation, operation and maintenance of point of sale systems, cash registers, scales, barcode printers, peripherals and software information systems.

TOSHIBA TEC Corporation has a global turnover of 355 billion yen through 58 offices, employing over 13,000 people. TOSHIBA TEC's majority shareholder is the TOSHIBA Corporation, which provides TOSHIBA TEC with the support of an unrivalled worldwide organisation with a strong presence in four continents.

TOSHIBA

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