



TWO ways to approach technology & then there is the Fergie way.
See page 8

THREE brand new MAX tools to optimise your bottom line.
See page 5



MAXIMISE

News, Views & Advice from the EPOS & Digital Technology Experts

ISSUE 17 AUTUMN/WINTER 2014/15

GS WELCOMES THE ALMR TO MANCHESTER



Living Ventures newly opened Botanist bar in Deansgate, Manchester, was one of the venues visited by the ALMR during its recent conference in the city. Pictured from left are Alex Hazard (The Burningnight Group), Richard Tarran (GS), Kate Nicholls (ALMR), Daniel Davies (CPL Training), Ryan Lowry (GS) and Mike Chung (GS). See pages 6 and 7 for more photographs from the ALMR's retail tour of Manchester.

ALMOST FAMOUS SELECTS GS AND MAX

Almost Famous, the critically acclaimed, high profile burger restaurant brand led by entrepreneurs Beau Myers and Marie Carter, has selected a GS EPOS solution based around the MAX suite. Although it is less than two years old, the four-strong restaurant chain has already opened two outlets in city centre Manchester and one each in Liverpool and Leeds and survived a fire at its Northern Quarter launch site last year.

Beau, Marie and the Almost Famous team have selected GS to ensure its technology is as productive and profitable as the brash, bold marketing, brilliant burgers and no-reservation policy.

"We're delighted to add Almost Famous to our portfolio," said GS Systems managing director Niels Nielsen. "A growing, ambitious brand like Almost Famous is our ideal client as our MAX



suite is specifically designed to help operators with multiple sites wanting to add more. It's a tribute to the GS team that three of the most high profile and best known hospitality names in the north west, Living Ventures, San Carlo and now Almost Famous, use our EPOS and digital technology solutions," he said.



D-DAY IN DECEMBER FOR ALLERGEN FOOD LABELLING

All businesses serving non-prepacked food will now need to know and communicate the allergen content of the foodstuffs they retail or provide to their customers.

The new mandatory European top 14 allergen labelling laws come into effect in the UK in December 2014. Operators must ensure all allergen information is readily available on their premises via staff, written literature or on data stored within their EPOS solution. If asked by customers they must be able to provide the allergen content of their entire menu.

"The safest way of providing this allergen information on a long term basis is to use technology to access and flag the allergen content of all the dishes on your menu," said Richard Tarran, GS Systems operations director. "The information, which can easily be obtained from suppliers when they supply their ingredients, only needs to be entered once and can then be accessed whenever a customer with an allergy wants to know the contents of a recipe."

Operators wanting to discuss the new food allergen labelling regulations should contact GS Systems business development managers Mike Chung or Ryan Lowry on 0800 655 6264 or email them at getsmarter@gs-systems.co.uk



GS COMMISSIONED TO SUPPLY EPOS FOR NEW GUSTO FLAGSHIP

GS Systems' latest commissions for Living Ventures sees the installations of EPOS systems at a new flagship Gusto in Manchester and a Botanist in Newcastle - and the launch of a gift card solution across the entire estate. A long-standing GS client since the turn of the century, the multi award-winning Living Ventures group is currently celebrating its 21st birthday. During that time GS has provided EPOS solutions and related technology for over 60 sites as Living Ventures supremo Tim Bacon and his co-founder Jeremy Roberts have successfully launched a string of impressive and innovative concepts. This year has seen the launch of two Botanists in Chester and Manchester (pictured above) and an Alchemist in London. The gift card solution can be purchased online via the Living Ventures website. "Living Ventures had used two other EPOS suppliers before they talked to us when they had just two sites. We've worked closely with them ever since and share a common ethos that focuses on training, service and innovation. We wish Tim, Jeremy and the rest of team a very happy 21st. It's been a great and memorable journey," said GS managing director Niels Nielsen.

BEAGLE CELEBRATES BIRTHDAY WITH TOP 10 ACCLAIM AND NEW EPOS

The Beagle celebrates its second birthday with a new EPOS solution from GS Systems - and has just been named one of Manchester's top 10 gastro pubs. Dubbed 'the most adventurous modern restaurant-in-a-pub in the city' and 'a leader of the British craft beer revolution' by the Manchester Evening News, the Beagle is one of two pubs owned and managed by innovative hospitality operator Jonny Heyes, who also owns Common in the city's Northern Quarter. GS has provided complete front of house and back office EPOS for both bars to give Jonny greater control over his two outlets and to lay the foundations for further growth.



GS ACCOMMODATES TA HOTEL GROUP

GS Systems has installed a new EPOS solution for the TA Hotel Collection. The group of four award winning, luxury hotels and businesses, located across the beautiful county of Suffolk, boasts an extensive and eclectic wine list, which is now controlled and monitored by a watertight MAX-based stock control function implemented by GS.



ROSS ADDS CANE & GRAIN, XOLO AND CRAZY PEDRO'S TO BLACK DOG PACK

Hospitality entrepreneur and GS Systems client Ross Mackenzie has been very busy this year. He has just launched three new brands. Cane and Grain, a rum-and-ribs venue, has three different bars in one prime spot in the city's hip Northern Quarter. The Mexican bar Xolo has also opened at his New Wakefield Street venue. Crazy Pedro's, a late night pizza parlour, has also just opened on Back Bridge Street. Ross also owns the city's Black Dog Ballrooms and Black Dog Bowl as well as the Liar's Club.

BEM BRASIL OPENS 5TH SITE

Expanding authentic brazilian food chain Bem Brasil has opened a new outlet in Leeds. This adds to existing restaurants in Manchester (Deansgate and the Northern Quarter), Altrincham and Liverpool.

NEW £1M SAKANA RESTAURANT OPENS WITH GS RECIPE MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

A glitzy new £1m pan-Asian restaurant and the latest addition to the GS client portfolio has opened in Manchester. Sakana, located inside the old Chicago Rock Cafe building on Peter Street, has two floors, the first for teppanyaki and sushi. The upper will be for fine dining and an exclusive bar area. The venue will have capacity for 450 people when it fully opens. This includes open air seating at the front through to a swanky bar on entry through to a Japanese restaurant on the ground floor. GS has provided a complete EPOS solution for the restaurant, including six iPads for waiting staff to take orders. In addition, GS has implemented a full recipe management solution to give the Sakana management a complete breakdown of the costs and margins behind every item on the extensive menu.

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LAWN CLUB EYES GROWTH

The owner of a popular Spinningfields bar, and one of the latest additions to the GS client portfolio, is planning to open more venues across the UK and abroad following a successful summer, according to the Manchester Evening News. The Lawn Club, which opened in April this year, has just secured a three to five year lease to remain in its current city centre spot. Owner and hospitality entrepreneur James Wrigley previously ran the venue space as pop-up bar Bloom and Hibernate before settling on The Lawn Club as a name and is planning to expand the Lawn Club brand. "Now, as a brand or a venue, we would like to have numerous Lawn Clubs in the UK and further afield. The idea is to grow the number of outlets as well as looking at other projects," said James.



STOCK CONTROL ADVICE ENHANCES ZIYA CONTRACT

GS Systems has provided an EPOS solution and managed services support for Ziya Asian Grill, a pan-Asian fine dining concept located on Manchester's famous Rusholme 'curry mile'. In addition to the technology, GS has provided extensive managed services support for Ziya's owner shipping specialist Roy Crossley and his son Paul, who are both new to the restaurant industry. "We always match support to a client's needs. In Roy and Paul's situation we took on a consultative role as neither had previously worked in the sector. This included, for example, project managing and carrying out regular stock control checks and audits," said GS Systems operations director Richard Tarran.



A THIRST FOR FIRSTS AND FOR GETTING THINGS DONE!

MANCHESTER HAS AN UNQUENCHABLE THIRST FOR FIRSTS. And I am not just talking about the numerous world class footballers weaving their magic at the Etihad and the Theatre of Dreams. Or the music that defined a generation from Joy Division, New Order and the Smiths to the Happy Mondays, Oasis and the Stone Roses. The atom was first split in the city, the oldest English-speaking library was launched here, the world's first railway passenger station and the first canal built independent of rivers. The city has 25 Nobel prize-winners, more than all but seven countries. It's an impressive array of achievements.

Clearly we excel at innovation but why? Personally and professionally, I think the people who live and work in and around the city are driven by Manchester's rich heritage, marrying an innate desire to innovate with a pragmatism that gets the job done. This is especially true of us as suppliers and you as operators involved in the highly competitive hospitality sector. To stay at the top of our game we constantly need to improve and get things done. Whether it is developing EPOS and digital technology or evolving hospitality concepts and raising guest expectations.

Inside this issue of MAXIMISE we showcase what we're doing as innovators quenching our thirst for firsts. This embraces the work we're doing with new and existing clients, including the launch of exciting new apps and solutions within the MAX suite. These great easy-to-use tools are designed to enable our clients to do better business more quickly and cost effectively. Then there is the consultative or added value approach that separates us from the vast majority of other EPOS-related technology businesses. Cost control. How to tackle new EU food regulations. Training and implementing change. And the preventive steps needed to avoid losses from theft. All are explored here. If you want to know more visit www.gs-systems.co.uk or call 0800 655 6264. Enjoy MAXIMISE.

4 News & Views

OUT TO CHANGE THE VIEWS OF HOSPITALITY AND RETAIL OPERATORS

GS Systems has appointed a national sales manager with a mission to help change the perception of EPOS-related technology.

Shabana Hussain joins GS after a decade working as a senior sales manager for software, finance and advertising companies.

BEST POSSIBLE RETURN

"I am looking forward to the challenge of showing the hospitality and retail sectors the enormous possibilities of a fully integrated business management solution built around EPOS. Our solutions go so much further than the traditional expectations of many operators."

"As one client said recently, price is just a number compared to the game-changing technology displayed on our systems. I challenge anyone not to be impressed by what they see when we show them our technology in action."

BOWLED OVER BY INGENUITY

"My task is made easier by joining a great set up that has the perfect balance between technology expertise and first hand practical experience of the hospitality and retail sectors."



Shabana Hussain joins GS from Iris Software. She has previously worked with ReelContent, Absolute IF and Trinity Mirror.

"Shabana has an impressive track record in sales and will make sure we communicate how we can add value to our retail and hospitality peers," said Niels Nielsen, GS Systems managing director.

"There has never been a more exciting time in our industry as technology drives all aspects of a business from cash and stock control to marketing to understanding the buying habits of customers to labour and performance management."

"As one client said recently, price is just a number compared to the game-changing technology displayed on our systems."

LONDON, BIRMINGHAM & MANCHESTER CALLING GS IN 2015

GS is appearing at four major hospitality trade exhibitions in 2015 to showcase its MAX suite EPOS and business management software for growing multi-site retail and hospitality operators. The MAX suite not only automates and simplifies manual tasks and procedural-led processes but also has numerous smart applications to monitor business performance. Highlights will include showcasing MAX Sentinel, a smart, intuitive early warning system that protect profits and margins and MAX Rewards, an easy to implement gift card and e-voucher scheme to boost sales and build brand loyalty.

FLASHBACK: The NRB in Manchester (above) and Mike Chung with TV presenter and British Holiday & Home Parks Association President David Bellamy OBE.

The exhibitions are as follows:-

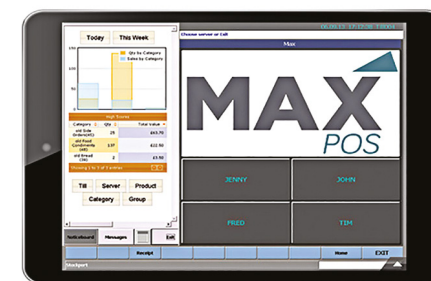
- **The Hospitality Show**, 19-21 January 2015, NEC Birmingham.
- **Casual Dining** - 25-26 February 2015, British Design Centre, London.
- **Northern Restaurant & Bar**, 17-18 March 2015, Manchester Central, Manchester.
- **The Restaurant Show**, 05-07 October 2015, Olympia, London.

Operators wanting to arrange and book appointments with GS EPOS and digital technology experts at the above events should contact business development managers Ryan Lowry or Mike Chung on 0800 655 6264 or visit www.gs-systems.co.uk.

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ALL THE FUNCTIONALITY OF A TILL ON AN IPAD MINI

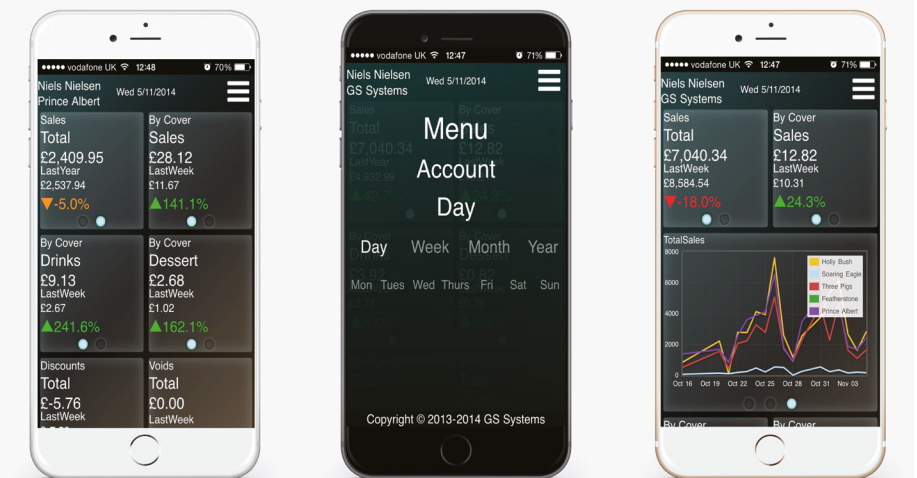
Front of house operators can access the extensive functionality of a touchscreen solution with an iPad Mini as an alternative to traditional bespoke standalone and mobile EPOS hardware. "A lot of operators like the idea of using iPads within their businesses. We've interfaced MAX POS with Apple's mini tablet to enable clients to access sales, stock, table management, loyalty, bookings, staff hours and deposits functionality on the move," said GS Systems developer Stuart Wearing. "GS provides the iPads with cases to protect the hardware from damage and spillage. They look and feel great. iPads are a big attraction for operators but are not as robust as purpose-designed handhelds so the cases are an extra insurance against accidental damage." The iPads also have SLA protection as does all hardware provided by GS.



BOOST RESTAURANT AND BAR SALES WITH MAX REWARDS

An electronic gift card and e-voucher solution designed to boost hospitality and retail sales is now available from GS. MAX Rewards electronic gift cards and e-vouchers provide operators with a profitable, simple and secure alternative to printed or handwritten vouchers. They can be sold to customers on-site, via a brand website or on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Branded electronic gift cards and e-vouchers are given a cash value and a digital ID for tracking when operators swipe them at the point of sale. Once the value and number have been recorded, the gift cards and e-vouchers can be redeemed by customers. "MAX Rewards cards and vouchers neatly dovetail technology and creativity, add genuine end user value and build brand empathy and loyalty. Just as important, it is anticipated that businesses using cards and vouchers will see a 25-35% uplift in users spend in the hospitality sector with a gross margin around the 65/70% mark," said Niels Nielsen, GS Systems managing director. "What's more, using smart tools like MAX Rewards gives operators a cost-effective and measurable alternative to price discounting that undermines a brand proposition and makes it far more difficult to sell at the normal published price."

The MAX suite EPOS-based business management software solution is complemented by our best of breed hardware and consultancy services. Designed specifically for growing multi-site retail and hospitality operators or ambitious one-off concepts, MAX is an evolving modular, fully-scalable software suite. It streamlines businesses, improves efficiencies and adds value. MAX automates and simplifies manual tasks with measurable procedural-led processes so you know how your business is improving its performance as it grows.



INSTANT SNAPSHOT APP FOR MOBILE DEVICES LAUNCHED BY GS

A new smartphone and tablet reporting app designed to give hospitality operators instant snapshot business summaries has been launched by GS. MAX Mobile gives real-time business performance overviews on mobile devices. Operators and head office staff can use the app's snapshot info to spot and rectify under-performing sites. Or alternatively highlight a site's successful activity that can be rolled out elsewhere within an estate. Smart and intuitive, the app enables users to compare and contrast a whole host of real time and historic individual site and estate data. Access to this key business intelligence will help operators run more effective operations and make informed, accurate decisions. MAX Mobile cleverly merges and filters different sets of data to create a compelling and sophisticated narrative about how a business is performing. MAX Mobile is easily and quickly configured and can be accessed anywhere in the world at anytime. Users can also drill further down into the snapshot information to get all the detail they need to make key tactical and operational decisions in the present rather than retrospectively.

SENTINEL GUARDS AGAINST 'UNUSUAL TRANSACTION BEHAVIOUR'

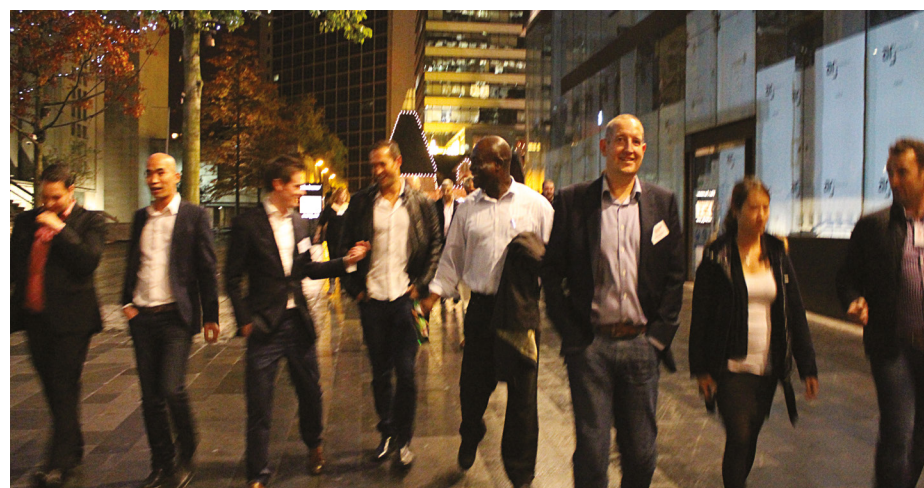
An intuitive early warning application designed to protect the profits and margins of restaurants, bars and pubs is available from GS. MAX Sentinel tracks the real-time progress of live transactions as they happen, spotting and alerting operators and head office staff to any unusual transaction behaviour. "This is a great added security measure to help keep your staff honest, an early warning system to protect your profits and margins," said GS Systems operations director Richard Tarran. "By recording and processing 'key' depression data as it happens, MAX Sentinel interrogates different sets of complementary data and pinpoints unusual activity patterns as defined by a client's benchmark operational criteria. Benchmark measurements are based on a client's operational data and performance statistics at individual site and estate levels." An alert detected by Sentinel either appears on an online dashboard or is sent by e-mail to selected operators or head office staff who are able to view a step-by-step chronological transaction sequence. Once examined in detail, any issues can be rectified immediately.

- The iPad with MAX POS touchscreen technology, MAX Sentinel and the MAX Mobile app can only be purchased from GS as part of an overall business management solution. Gift cards and e-vouchers are available to hospitality operators and retailers as a standalone offering. Operators wanting to find out more about any of the products should call Mike Chung or Ryan Lowry on 0800 655 6264.

6 ALMR...

GS Systems co-hosted the ALMR Autumn Debate's Retail Tour around city centre Manchester when many of the UK's leading multiple hospitality operators visited the Slug & Lettuce, Brew Dog, the Botanist, Artisan, Oast House, the Bierkeller and the Dog Bowl. Prior to the evening's activities, over 120 delegates gathered at the Bridgewater Hall for an informative conference session chaired by market research specialist Peter Martin, CGA Peach, with contributions from Nielsen Harrap, CACI, Pollyanna Vincent, TripAdvisor, and Scott Elliot, CGA Peach. This was followed by the traditional Autumn Debate, chaired by PMA's James Wallin, "Others Survive - Only London Thrives" with Anthony Pender, Yummy Pubs, Steven Kenée, Downing, and Paul Pavli, Punch Taverns, locking horns with Andrew Stones, Be At One, Giles Fry, Snug Bars and James Baer, Amber Taverns.

Photographs: Jennifer Amelia Veitch.



On the movehospitality delegates from the ALMR Autumn Debate on a fact finding tour of a selection of Manchester's leading venues. GS Systems managing director Niels Nielsen (third right) co-hosted the evening's activities alongside the ALMR.



Many of the UK's leading multiple hospitality operators visited the Slug & Lettuce, Brew Dog, the Botanist, Artisan, Oast House, the Bierkeller and the Dog Bowl as guests of the Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers.



Good to talk (part 1)- right Rod McMillan (Quiz the Nation) chats with a fellow delegate.



Good to talk (part 3) - Paul Pavli (Punch Taverns) with Glyn Holland (BOC).



Good to talk (part 2) - from left Niels and Richard Tarran (both GS) with James Almond (Almond Family Pubs) discuss the merits of water versus cocktails...



Good to pose rather than talk (sometimes) - eyes open lads - Ben Stackouse (Love Pubs), Fahim Choudhary (Better Reach) and Glyn Holland (BOC).

... in Manchester 7



Taking a well earned breather after a successful afternoon conference and debate are event organisers (from left) Mark Freeman, Rebecca Lee (both Red Beetle), Crystal Law (ALMR) and Sharon Dickinson (Propel Info).



Delegates chatted about the burning issues of the day concerning VAT, business rates, apprenticeships, benchmarking, allergen labelling, tax cuts and the...



...growing number of beards sported by hospitality operators as very proudly modelled by (right) Darren Somerton (Whiting & Hammond) and admired by (left) Anthony Lyons (Kuits Solicitors) who says it is all perfectly legal....and in the best possible taste...



ALMR chief executive Kate Nicholls shares a joke with Dave Wigham (Punch Taverns) and Ryan Lowry (GS)...before the really serious competition starts...bowling at Dog Bowl...



The secret is 101% calm and concentration according to (centre) Curtis Paxman (Brewfitt) and Mike Chung (GS)...(notice how the ALMR's Matt Steinhofel (left) studies two very different techniques)...



...before they both hurl the bowls as fast and hard as they can towards the skittles.



Lucky strike - no chance Elle Emmanuel (CPL) confidently turns to her audience to say genius doesn't always need extensive training....

GS Systems is a supplier member of the Association of Licensed Retailers. Operators wishing to discuss EPOS and digital technology should contact GS Systems us on 0800 655 6264 or email getsarter@gs-systems.co.uk

8 Winning

PROFESSOR DAMIAN HUGHES advises the business, education and sporting elite, specialising in the creation of high performing cultures. He is the author of Liquid Thinking, Liquid Leadership and How to Change Absolutely Anything and three acclaimed sports biographies of Sugar Ray Robinson, Thomas Hearn and Marvin Hagler. Earlier this year, he hosted a Team Performance event for GS. His new book, How To Think Like Sir Alex Ferguson, not only provides a fascinating insight into the mind of the legendary football manager but reveals how all of us can think like winners.



Like me, I am sure every hospitality operator is always on the lookout for new ways to understand how to achieve highly effective performance. In my latest book, *How To Think Like Sir Alex Ferguson*, I share an example of how the great Manchester United coach encouraged his players to do the same. I'd like to share this with you too.

Ferguson would tell his players a story of three men who were laying bricks.

Each was asked what he was doing.

"Laying bricks," answered the first.

"Earning £10 per hour," replied the second.

The third was driven by a bigger vision and said: "I'm building a cathedral and, one day, I'll bring my kids back here and tell them that their dad contributed to this magnificent building."

Ferguson suggested to his players that they could apply these three approaches to the training session they were about to embark on.

BE PROUD AND TELL YOUR GRANDCHILDREN

"I'm just practising," would be the answer from the first player training.

"I'm earning £1,000 per hour," would be the second.

The third response would be: "I'm helping to build the best Manchester United team ever and I'll be proud to tell my grandchildren I was part of it."

Still pondering these words as they commenced training, David Beckham promptly scored a gem from 30 yards and

ran off in celebration, shouting, "Cathedral 1, Bricklayers 0."

At its core is the idea that there are three alternative ways of approaching a practice or a training session. Or in the case of technology, how you apply it, once you've made your investment.

Level 1

You show up. You do the job exactly as you're told to do it; nothing more, nothing less. You improve a bit.

Level 2

You show up. You do the job, and you target certain tasks that'll help you towards your goal. You push yourself and you get a lot better.

Level 3

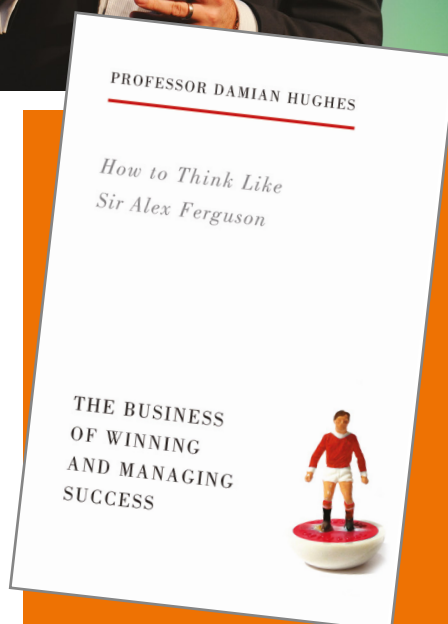
You show up, having thought about how today's practice fits into the larger goal. You work very hard, repeatedly pushing yourself into the discomfort zone, with full commitment. Later, you reflect/analyze/critique your performance with a cool, objective eye.

HOW FAR ARE YOU GOING TO GO TO MAKE IT WORK?

Traditionally, when we talk about effective performance, we use the idea of focus — the amount of attention a person puts into their actions.

If you're investing in technology, for example, how far are you going to go to make it work?

One reason I like Ferguson's concept is that it takes us beyond the basic idea of focus and into the more targeted idea of



You can buy Damian's book at www.amazon.co.uk or win a copy of Damian's book by simply visiting www.gs-systems.co.uk.

investment — sensing and measuring the total amount of time and energy put into the process of getting better.

Ask yourself this question? How do you increase investment and win the workout within the workplace?

Here is a great idea.

Make a habit of connecting every day to the long-term goal.

One way to imagine this is to think like a movie camera, zooming in and out. Zoom in on the task, then zoom out to show where it fits in the bigger picture.

Take the time to do this and you are starting to think like Sir Alex Ferguson and share his winning mentality.

Training 9

GS client support manager RACHEL GAUNT has training in her blood. She started her hospitality career front of house with Living Ventures before being promoted to look after the training and development of all front of house staff. Training has remained core to her ethos even when combining staff development and senior head office managerial roles. She heads our external client training offering. Here she talks about how a positive attitude to training is really important for operators wanting to sustain and grow their enterprises.



"It's about showing them how the system will make their jobs easier, giving them more time to interact and engage with customers."

The team at GS has been really busy throughout 2014 helping our client Living Ventures open a raft of exciting new and existing concepts in cities like Chester, Leeds, London and, of course, Manchester.

Artisan, Long Bar, Grand Pacific and the Botanist are four spectacular recent openings which complement nearby multi award-winning LV brands like the Oast House, Alchemist and Australasia in Manchester's Spinningfields sector.

One of the many things I admire about Living Ventures is its total commitment to training and standards.

This is every bit as important to LV as the numerous creative concepts it develops. When I am chatting to other operators I have no hesitation in using Tim Bacon, Jeremy Roberts and the rest of the LV team as the benchmark to emulate for training their people.

MY BRIEF IS TO CHAMPION CLIENT TRAINING

Their commitment to training and service is second to none. I share their enthusiasm as one of my key roles at GS is to champion client training to ensure hospitality operators genuinely benefit from the EPOS and digital technology at their disposal.

As a former operator myself with a dozen or so years experience, I heard a lot of excuses in my early days about the reluctance to embrace technology. These luddites, as we called them, tend not to like change, no matter what they do. They don't like the thought of having to adapt to new ways of doing things in order to integrate new business systems into an existing operation. Classic symptoms from front of house staff and managers are a negative attitude, a refusal to learn

new skills or adopt different procedures and an inability to maintain the system.

TRAINING MAKES THEIR JOBS EASIER AND BENEFITS CUSTOMERS TOO

My experience and the positive response of our clients to training shows the opposite is true. Training is essential if your investment in EPOS technology is going to pay dividends.

Whenever I meet new clients, I always explain clearly how training and services benefits their staff and their customers.

I do this by focusing on two keywords: training and perseverance. Our training extends way beyond showing staff how to physically use the hardware and software. It's all about showing staff why the EPOS solution benefits them and the business that employs them.

MORE TIME TO INTERACT AND ENGAGE WITH CUSTOMERS

I focus on showing them how the system will make their jobs easier, giving them more time to interact and engage with customers. I will also highlight how the technology eliminates human error by automating processes — and how following pre-dispensing procedures saves them grief from customers, their work colleagues and their managers.

Throughout the integration of a new EPOS system, it is really important to persevere. Naturally, adopting a new system is going to have teething issues as you and your staff get used to the new technology and

different ways of doing things.

You can only successfully tackle any 'issues' by positively working together, communicating openly without prejudice and arranging extra training whenever appropriate.

LEAVING 'ISSUES' UNRESOLVED IS A RECIPE FOR DISASTER.

Imagine, for example, ignoring the complaints of an unhappy customer eating in your restaurant or having a few drinks in your bar. If you did, you wouldn't be surprised if you failed to retain their future custom.

As Living Ventures' Jeremy Roberts says in his Up Close video on the GS website, his staff have seconds sometimes to fulfil an order and can never adopt a mañana philosophy.

This equally applies to training and the adoption of technology. Jeremy kindly points out that GS shares his commitment to getting things done today, not tomorrow. It's an attitude we willingly and happily embrace.

A positive attitude to training is really important if you want to successfully integrate your EPOS solution into your business and optimise the benefits of your investment.

To find out more about how training can improve your business contact Rachel Gaunt on getsarter@gs-systems.co.uk or call 0800 655 62 64.

10 Controls

Business development manager RYAN LOWRY was a general manager at King Henry's Taverns. His responsibilities ranged from hands-on admin and management of any of the half dozen pubs in the group. As well as managing up to 25 staff per pub, he was responsible for office systems, cash handling, payroll, stock control, minimising wastage and losses and dealing with suppliers. So he knows all about the importance of cash control and how technology can keep margins high and losses low. To help you, he recommends a cost control guide GS has published.

The Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers (ALMR) annual benchmarking survey is one of our industry's most authoritative publications.

By identifying market trends and benchmarking business performance and operating costs, it gives us huge insight and context for operators.

Without question, it is the most credible and comprehensive sector report with ALMR members operating a combined 13,000 outlets and employing 350,000 people.

The eighth survey was published this Autumn and paints an optimistic picture for the hospitality industry, especially for the food-led sector.

According to ALMR chief executive Kate Nicholls, the benchmarking report shows what a robust offer we have, and what an exciting time this is for eating out. However, Kate also issues a note of caution, highlighting a general tightening of margins and the increasingly thin line between success and failure.

CONTROL RISING COSTS AND IMPROVE MARGINS

This is where we come into our own. Controlling costs and improving margins are key to our core proposition at GS. As is our drive to add consultative value to our technology.

Which is why we have published a guide highlighting 10 ways operators like yourself can use technology to control rising costs. Each tip will help you do better business and put the leash on expenditure that can all too easily spiral out of control.

There are no secrets in the guide. Just plain common sense supported by many



“However, Kate also issues a note of caution from this year's report, highlighting a general tightening of margins and the increasingly thin line between success and failure.”

years experience of our EPOS experts working with leading operators.

At the heart of the guide are watertight cash and stock controls and embedded operational procedures built around smart technology.

But what do I mean by watertight? Simple. Every single transaction and stock movement counts, without exception. Whether it is a free coffee at the end of a meal, staff drinks or a dessert on the house. Failure to record all your transactions and cash and stock movements means you cannot achieve a truly accurate stock take.

MONITORED AUTOMATICALLY BY YOUR TECHNOLOGY

If that's the case, you're going to struggle to get your costs under control. Especially if you're not following best practice in other business areas.

Managing and monitoring staff rotas and costs, tracking deposits and ordering from suppliers should all be controlled and monitored automatically by your technology to take human error out of the equation. Sadly, unless you track and record your cash and stock as it moves through the business, you're never going to be able to get a really tight grip on your costs.

Think about it by asking yourself these questions. Could you freeze frame your business, like pressing pause on the TV, and guarantee you'll be able to account

for all the stock and cash within your business? Do you know if you have too many staff covering a session?

TECHNOLOGY KNOWS INSTANTLY - IF THE PROCEDURES ARE IN PLACE

Or have you ordered stock from a more expensive supplier when there were cheaper options available to you?

You might not know but technology does, instantly - but only if the procedures built around your EPOS-driven technology solutions are easy to implement and follow.

THIS GUIDE WILL HELP YOU

At GS, it's our job to make sure your business management solution is configured to your exact requirements. This is to ensure your costs and stock are always monitored and under control without disrupting your way of working.

As a former operator, I know the real world offers numerous examples to highlight how easy it is for your costs to spiral out of your control.

You'll have plenty of your own examples which you've either heard about or seen as a hospitality operator. This guide will help you put a stop to them.

Operators can download the free cost control guide at www.gs-systems.co.uk. Alternatively, contact Ryan Lowry on getsarter@gs-systems.co.uk or call 0800 655 6264.

Theft 11

GS business development manager MIKE CHUNG was an O2 learning and development manager responsible for the coaching and the performance management of other trainers before becoming a manager at the Oddest Bar in Chorlton, one of three pubs run by Odd Bars Ltd in Manchester. Here he tackles one of the hospitality industry 'taboo' subjects, revealing why EPOS-led technology, segregated responsibility and procedures can combine to ensure business owners and managers like you can protect your enterprises from theft.

Theft is one of the hospitality sector's most taboo subjects. Yes, we grudgingly admit it might take place in other businesses but not ours. Because employee trust is one the fundamental cornerstones of our industry. No one likes to think their friends and colleagues would stray or that stark newspaper headlines shaming thieves would apply to people they know.

Like the former financial controller at the Cowshed restaurant in Bristol who was jailed for 20 months for stealing at least £170,000 from the business. Turnover was rising from under £1m to £3m in four years but profits were not. Like the Yummy Pub Co, which runs four pubs but had to slow down expansion plans after it was discovered that a dishonest manager had stolen an estimated £69,000. Or the 21 year old Lancashire barmaid who, according to the Mail Online, helped herself to £3,000 from the till and spent it on paying off credit cards, cannabis and buying gifts for her relatives.

THERE IS NO THEFT TEMPLATE

All three examples highlight the problem the industry and you as an operator face. And it's a tough one. There are no definitive theft templates or blueprints that are easy to spot. Each situation is different because there are literally hundreds of ways for people to be dishonest. It is practically impossible to know them all.

What's more, we live in a real world where the reality is that most business owners and managers think staff are honest and if you cannot trust them then it makes running a business unpleasant. So what do you do?

The most important thing is not to lose faith in your staff. Trust and believe in them but at the same time have the technology and procedures in place to



“This ability to see the whole of the business picture, and not just the individual pieces of the jigsaw, makes all the difference.”

reduce risk and temptation to a minimum.

At GS, we always advise hospitality owners like yourself to combine EPOS-based technology, watertight operational procedures and segregated responsibility. The latter ensures that no one person takes the money, banks the money and then reconciles it afterwards. A recipe for temptation can easily be eliminated by having at least two people looking at the day to day cash management.

SPOT TRENDS BY BENCHMARKING

By combining all three, you ensure you have instant access to the information and knowledge you need to know how your business is performing. This ability to see the whole of the business picture, and not just the individual pieces of the jigsaw, makes all the difference. With the right technology tools at your disposal and the processes in place to complement them, you can track all your transactions and easily spot trends by benchmarking and comparing data.

INTERROGATE YOUR DATA

By using key performance indicator statistics generated by your technology you will be able to highlight unlikely trends at individuals sites. For example, maybe there are too many voids, complimentaries or refunds as a % of sales compared to other locations.

Once spotted you can question and interrogate your data with the technology tools at your disposal and investigate the transaction route. Something that is next to impossible with an Excel spreadsheet.

We've recently made this task of tracking unusual or exceptional activity even easier with the launch of MAX Sentinel. This is an intelligent alerts system that red lights the breaching of pre-determined benchmark criteria. They are instant too as alerts can be emailed to head office or viewed on on-line dashboards the second they are spotted.

SENTINEL RED LIGHTS BREACHES

We've developed MAX Sentinel because we want to encourage the hospitality industry to be more pro-active about protecting its cash and precious resources. This means not only tackling theft but also poor business practices that undermine margins and profits (theft and losses are only two of the many challenges that technology can help you confront and win the battle to successfully grow your business).

Perks of the job (free coffees, food, taking the odd bottle of wine home after a shift) are just as damaging as a barmaid pinching £3,000 or a financial controller falsifying VAT returns.

Is that a big deal? It is when you want to open more sites and find you cannot because a trusted manager has walked off with £70,000 of your hard earned cash. We're all about growing businesses and to achieve that goal we collectively need to knock theft and temptation on the head.

To find out more about how you reduce temptation and minimise theft, contact Mike Chung on getsarter@gs-systems.co.uk or call 0800 655 62 64.

“

Cost control is a critical determinant of business profitability.”

Kate Nicholls, Chief Executive,
Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers

Want to get a tighter grip on yours?

Download our **FREE** cost control guide.

Find out how:

- Gross profits can be 5-10% higher than the national average.
- Recipe controls save precious resources and boost client margins by 3-6%.
- Staff management monitors your greatest single cost.



Visit www.gs-systems.co.uk

Empowered by



GS Systems
119/121 Buxton Rd
Stockport
Cheshire SK2 6LR

EPOS & digital technology
for growing businesses

getsmarter@gs-systems.co.uk
www.gs-systems.co.uk
Tel: 0800 655 6264

@gs_systems GS Systems