

London's oldest restaurant Rules with latest technology

QuadraNet Restaurant Solutions

Rules is the oldest and one of the busiest restaurants in London. It first opened its doors in 1798 and for more than 200 years a loyal patronage has enjoyed its classic British cuisine. With four private dining rooms and a full restaurant every night, Rules wanted to introduce efficiency improvements that would benefit the efforts of its staff as well as reward its devoted customers.

Rules cuts costs and improves customer management with ResV4

Rules' long-standing success is based on an unparalleled ability to protect the standard of its products, not simply over a period of years but for centuries. Fresh meat is supplied from Rule's own private shooting estate in the North of England and this helps provide consistency. But even an old established restaurant cannot assume customer loyalty will pass from one generation to the next automatically. Rules takes nothing for granted and is always looking to see how it can improve the overall customer experience. This more than ever, is a question of technology.

The key issues:

The restaurant seats around 130 and is always fully booked. The environment is fast and hectic and, given its immense popularity, needed a reservation system to:

- eliminate lost bookings**
- manage customers more professionally and efficiently**
- enable multiple staff to use the system**
- prevent duplications**
- handle future bookings more than a year in advance**
- protect the overall customer experience**

Background

The main restaurant was originally run on the conventional diary system. Although Rules had some experience of

using a DOS-based system in its private dining rooms, the introduction of an advanced IT system challenged the traditional culture. Ricky McMenemy, Managing Director said, "We've had our own way of doing things for so long that we were hesitant to introduce new systems".

Rules began cautiously 10 years ago when it introduced the DOS-based system to handle bookings for its four private dining rooms. Although the system lacked the sophistication to handle the demanding environment of the main restaurant, it nevertheless needed to handle fairly complex information such as details of menus, character of the rooms, number of people in the party and other information. The success of this transition gave the company the confidence to introduce the Windows-based ResV4 reservation system.

Why QuadraNet ResV4 was selected

The busy environment meant that staff were struggling with the traditional diary system. Rules had heard good reports about ResV4 from industry sources and decided to implement the system in the main restaurant. QuadraNet scoped the requirement and once this had been agreed, worked alongside the Rules team to project manage implementation jointly.

More advanced bookings

There is only so much information a conventional diary system can handle and a limit to how many reservations can be taken in advance. Rules were taking reservations for up to six to eight weeks in advance but going beyond this was proving problematic. Pages can be lost, entries accidentally defaced and rushed handwriting in pressurised circumstances can be difficult to decipher weeks later. Now, whoever takes a call, no matter how frenetic the environment, advanced bookings can be managed more reliably.

Brilliant Customer Base

Better Customer Relationships

One of the attractions of the ResV4 system for Rules was the database. Whereas the diary system permitted only limited information to be recorded, ResV4 enables management and staff to have all the information they need for in-depth knowledge of individual customers requirements. In the past a certain member of staff might know about a particular customer's preferences but others might not. The ResV4 system displays details showing what these are regardless of how frequency a customer might visit the restaurant. Staff can be fully cognisant of a

customer's individual needs – simply by looking at the screen in front of them. At the strategic level, ResV4 enables Rules management to identify trends and use this information to promote the restaurant's facilities more effectively.

Fully covered for any eventuality

Although Rules has no problem filling tables, it did want to manage throughput more efficiently and handle customers more professionally. ResV4 enables Rules to optimise its covers. The restaurant manager can set limits to the number of tables that can be booked for any time slot to spread the workload front-of-house and in the kitchen for any session. The system prevents Rules over-booking and enables staff to manage the right number of customers all the time. By entering details into the system the restaurant reduces the risk of lost bookings and can follow up 'no shows'.

Ricky McMenemy said, "It is certainly a customer friendly system. We give accurate information about availability and the database allows us to track customers and know what they like as we speak to them – even their preferred table position".

Return On Investment (ROI)

With the conventional diary system, only one person was allowed to take bookings. Now, with three terminals in use on the system up to three people can take reservations and access the database simultaneously to check details when entering information. ResV4 will automatically prevent duplicate booking and block changes to table levels that have been pre-set by the manager to balance covers. Customers are not left waiting on the line or required to call back and this is just one way ResV4 has improved overall customer satisfaction. These improvements have resulted in a very fast ROI.

Training

Training was an important issue since staff would be moving from a paper-based diary for the main restaurant and a DOS system for the dining rooms onto the latest Windows-based technology. The general view was that staff wanted more computerisation. Compared to paper systems and the DOS system staff immediately warmed to the easy to understand Windows-based displays and the intuitive nature of the ResV4 system. This has helped to protect the stable workforce in Rules in an industry renowned for its high seasonal turnover.

The next step

ResV4 has served Rules reliably for some years. The company has seen a reduction in operating costs and although the restaurant is just as busy as ever, the system has helped to make the main restaurant less stressful for staff. Now, Rules has agreed to introduce the latest Point Of Sales system, QuadraNet EpoSV4.

Results

Ricky McMenemy said "The QuadraNet ResV4 system has worked brilliantly for us right from the time of installation and this is why we're adopting more cutting edge technology. "Despite our traditional ethos, we're always looking for better ways to protect the customer experience. A powerful computer based system allows us to be more flexible and more customer orientated. The restaurant used to struggle to handle bookings more than six weeks in advance now we can comfortably take bookings a year or more in the future".

ResV4 has:

- reduced stress levels in a demanding work place**
- dramatically reduced booking errors**
- maximised table utilisation**
- improved profitability from increased efficiency**
- reduced no-shows**
- made customer delivery more consistent**
- improved staff morale**

Ricky concluded, "We're certainly impressed with QuadraNet and concentrate all our IT needs through them. I feel completely confident and comfortable with them".

Put better business at your fingertips

QuadraNet ResV4 has been proven in the most demanding restaurant and hospitality environments in the UK and mainland Europe. To see how this latest technology can transform the performance of your hotel restaurants ask the sales team for a free demonstration. Email demo@QuadraNet.co.uk or call the sales line: 01628 472999.

If you would like to discuss any issues raised in this case study please contact QuadraNet Systems at the address below.

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