

# Res

## Conran consolidates success with 99.9% reliability

### QuadraNet Restaurant Solutions

Conran Restaurants Ltd was founded by Terence Conran in 1991 and is one of Britain's most dynamic restaurant groups. There are currently 31 Conran Restaurants in London, Paris, Stockholm and New York. Its restaurants in the UK have relied upon QuadraNet reservation for many years. Now, with the introduction of the latest QuadraNet centralised ResV4 real-time system, the company is consolidating the business benefits.

## Conran heightens security, operates faster and lowers costs

Conran is not a chain of restaurants but a collection of independently operating businesses that happen to be owned by Conran and run by the local managers. However, some small clusters of two or three restaurants are run by managers based at the head office. Conran Restaurants' head office plays a support role, not a controlling one. Group activities cover sales and marketing, finance, IT and procurement, although some marketing is handled at the local level. The centralised reservation system was therefore required to satisfy everyone's needs.

### The key issues:

During the mid-nineties, Conran Restaurants introduced the QuadraNet reservation system to achieve the classic advantages of real-time visibility, improved table utilisation, reduced booking errors and fewer no shows. The ResV4 system also enabled Conran Restaurants to improve staff rotas and synchronise front of house and kitchen activity as well as automatically manage online bookings. This had a major impact on the profitability of the business.

Having established successful procedures throughout the group, Conran recognised that it could gain further business advantages through the increased efficiency benefits a centralised infrastructure would offer. The new objectives were to:

**improve reliability**

**create a more secure computing environment**

**increase performance**

**lower operating costs**

### Business as usual - with advantages

There was a high level of satisfaction and familiarity with the ResV4 system and its operation. For this reason, Conran were happy to proceed to a centralised system without the need for a competitive tender. At an early stage, QuadraNet support and Conran IT personnel came together to form the project team.

It was vitally important to plan the migration carefully to minimise any disruption to the restaurants. The databases had to be copied across to the central server, but since the restaurant's processes all varied in minor ways this involved some restructuring, with the need to run data through several transformations to achieve a unified solution everyone could use.

### Better security

Each restaurant managed its own customer records using a Microsoft Access database stored on a PC on the premises. Although unlikely, there was the lurking possibility that an unauthorised person could copy this information onto a floppy disc or CD. Safeguarding this valuable marketing data was a high priority and hosting it on a central server was the obvious solution provided other benefits could be accrued through this strategic investment in IT.

Flexibility was another important requirement. Authorised staff needed access to the central server. For example, managers needed to track reservation trends to plan more effectively. The thin client architecture answered the need and access is gained from on-site screens or locally-based PCs using Microsoft Terminal Services.

The centralised server brought additional benefits to those managers who were responsible for small groups of restaurants since they could work with the data at head office without having to visit the restaurants.

Mark Mergler, Group IT Manager said, "We have complete control over the data and access is secure since this can only be done through the ResV4 system. No one in the restaurants can copy it onto any type of removable media - which was a real concern to us before".

## Faster performance

The dedicated server gives managers faster processing speeds than the stand-alone PC and the speed at which screens change does not deteriorate when several restaurants access the system.

Operating costs are significantly lower because now only one server needs supporting rather than numerous PCs that had no remote diagnostics facilities. The streamlined operation is effectively offsetting the capital cost of implementing new infrastructure.

Improved efficiency and ease of use, together with increased reliability and simpler administration, means the overall cost of ownership has tumbled ensuring that the initial capital cost was recouped in a relatively short period of time.

Mark Mergler said, "[The new system] is 99.9% reliable. We haven't suffered any unplanned downtime. The reliability is incredibly high. The reservation system has worked faultlessly since we centralised it some months ago."

## The next step

Conran is now busy using the system to improve its levels of efficiency. Staff spend less time supporting the system, and more time harnessing its full capability, such as developing CRM.

## Training

Since staff at all of its UK restaurants were already familiar with the QuadraNet ResV4 system no additional training was required. This has meant business as usual from the day the system was installed - with no disruption to any of the restaurants.

## Results

**Increased data security**

**Faster performance**

**99.9% reliability from the outset**

**Lower maintenance costs**

**Building on the existing knowledge and skill levels of staff**

**Fast return on investment**

## 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 establishment, and to arrange a free demonstration, please contact QuadraNet directly on 01628 472999 or via email at [res@quadranet.co.uk](mailto:res@quadranet.co.uk).

**If you would like to discuss any issues raised in this case study, please contact QuadraNet on 01628 472999 or via email at [res@quadranet.co.uk](mailto:res@quadranet.co.uk)**

**If If you would like more information about Conran restaurants, please visit [www.conran-restaurants.co.uk](http://www.conran-restaurants.co.uk)**

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QuadraNet Systems Ltd, Old Crown & Anchor, 45 Oxford Road, Marlow, Bucks SL7 2NN  
Tel: +44 (0)1628 472999 Fax: +44 (0)1628 891161 [www.QuadraNet.co.uk](http://www.QuadraNet.co.uk) [information@QuadraNet.co.uk](mailto:information@QuadraNet.co.uk)