

Hugos gives thumbs-up to MICROS Handhelds



Hugos Manly

Manly Wharf, Sydney

hugos.com.au

Capacity

Seating for 180 guests



The [Hugos Group](#) has been operating in Sydney since 1996, when the first Hugos restaurant opened in Bondi. In 2000 the doors opened at Hugos Lounge in Kings Cross, which was joined by Hugos Bar Pizza in 2006.

James Mcbeth has been working at Hugos since the beginning – first as a barman, and now as the Operations Manager at Hugos newest restaurant at Manly Wharf. He is also responsible for the IT and computer needs of all three Sydney sites, and oversaw the transition to MICROS point-of-sale technology in 2006.

“When we opened Hugos Bar Pizza, it was an opportunity for us to try out a new system,” Mcbeth says. “Our old system was dated, and very much focused on back-of-house data. It wasn’t particularly user-friendly.”

Mcbeth says one of the greatest things about the MICROS system, which included five terminals and two printers, was the useability in the front of house.

“Before, if we needed to make menu changes, it could take 10 minutes to change the button, and another 40 minutes to upload the changes to the tills. The MICROS system allowed us to make these changes instantly.”

MICROS terminals were subsequently installed upstairs in Hugos Lounge – allowing the venues to operate as two revenue centres on the same system.

“The combined system helped us run as a company rather than individual restaurants, with more controls and better reporting. It was a much more efficient system all round,” Mcbeth says.

Two years later, when the 180-seat Hugos Manly was opened, the owners again decided to trial some new technology. This time it was introducing Motorola MC 50 handhelds to team up with the MICROS point-of-sale system.

Embracing leading technology

Mcbeth says the idea behind Hugos Manly was to embrace leading technology in every aspect of the restaurant – including things like touch panel screens to control the environment, music, blinds and heating.

“Our restaurant relies on technology,” he says. “We can serve anywhere from 800 to 1,000 people on a weekend, having up to 15 or more wait staff on at any one time. It’s a demanding environment, and we need quality equipment.”

The restaurant initially purchased Motorola MC 50 handhelds, and soon upgraded to the MC55s when they decided the investment was worthwhile.

“The MC50s were good, but we needed something more reliable and robust. In a restaurant as busy as ours, things can go wrong – we really need the best gear to get us through.”

Mcbeth says the MC55s require very little tech support and up-keep, and staff can pick up the new technology very quickly.

“The MC55s have been fantastic,” he says. “Most of our staff are ‘Gen Y’, so they’ve grown up with the technology – it’s just like they’re standing there sending a text message.”

“We can serve anywhere from 800 to 1000 people... It’s a demanding environment, and we need quality equipment”

James Mcbeth, Operations Manager, Hugos Manly



Helping staff work smarter

Mcbeth describes the way Hugos Manly operates as highly systemised, with staff employed to perform particular roles. He says the handhelds play an important role in making the setup work.

“We have drink runners and food runners to help the wait staff, so that gives the waiters and waitresses more time to focus on customer service.”

“It helps with resourcing too. We know one person can manage a whole section up to 25 people on their own, so it makes it easier to do our rostering.”

Using the handhelds, a waiter can take a drinks order, punch it into their handheld, and the order is sent directly to the MICROS printer in the bar. That means the drinks can be prepared while the waiter is still chatting to the customers at the table.

“Often the drinks arrive while a table is still giving their meal orders. You can see the surprised looks on people’s faces when they realise their drink has arrived before their waiter has even left the table!”

Increasing the speed of orders

Mcbeth says customers appreciate the speed and efficiency the handhelds allow when it comes to turning over orders.

“People regularly want to come and go quickly – especially at lunch times. And we often get people in here that want to squeeze in a meal or a drink before the ferry leaves, so they appreciate that we get their orders out fast.”

The handhelds also carry details of every inventory item that’s on the menu, so staff can easily answer questions about what’s available. Mcbeth says this saves even more time, and allows staff to give customers the answers they’re after on the spot.

“A customer might want to know what types of champagne you have. So instead of having to remember all the types and prices, our waiter can just login to the champagne page, and get a complete list of what’s available.”

“The system is designed for simplicity, so staff pick up very quickly how to find information on the handhelds – I see them scrolling to the right pages without even looking at the screen.”

Expanding the use of handhelds

After the successful implementation of the handhelds at the Hugos Manly restaurant, Mcbeth says Hugos is looking to get them up and running at Kings Cross.

“We’ve just done renovations to increase the capacity of Hugos Bar Pizza, with the addition of a private dining room,” he says. “It makes sense to have all the venues using the same equipment, and the best tools available.”

Ultimately, Mcbeth believes the handhelds allow Hugos to run a more efficient business, and improve their customer service.

“By allowing us to serve more customers more efficiently, the handhelds have definitely had a positive effect on revenue.”

“They make doing what we do a little bit easier, and a little bit better – it would be much harder work without them.”

To find out more on how handhelds can benefit your restaurant, please visit micros.com.au/handhelds



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