

# Hospitality Technology

## 2007 Restaurant Executive Summit Growth Award Nomination

Category	Overall Technology Innovation
Nominee	Legal Sea Foods
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### Description of Technology Initiative

Boston-based Legal Sea Foods owns and operates 34 restaurants and a conference center located along the Eastern Seaboard. The restaurant group is known for the quality and freshness of its food. In fact, Legal often describes itself as a fish company in the restaurant business because it purchases and processes in-house the seafood that it serves.

In order to maintain the integrity of its products, Legal Sea Foods considers each move to a new location very carefully. Although the company chooses to restrict the geographic distribution of its sites to fit its supply model, it is committed to growing the business through other means, including catering, delivery, and catalogue and on-line sales. In addition, Legal is innovative in its use of technology to support growth, recognizing that the right technology can serve as an attractive differentiator to a new market demographic as well as a way to improve company-wide operations.

Legal's current wireless point-of-sale initiative serves just such a dual purpose. Combining PAR's *iSIVA™* point-of-sale, POS<sup>2</sup> handheld ordering and Pay@Table wireless credit card processing applications, Legal has assembled a technology solution that improves operations by speeding table turns and enabling more server time on the floor. As a result, Legal restaurants with the solution deployed have seen increases in revenue and in guest satisfaction. At the same time, Legal Sea Foods has used the PAR solution in conjunction with consumer technologies as part of a brand experience designed to appeal to guests in their 20s and 30s at the company's new concept, LTK.

The wireless order begins when guests are greeted at the table by a server with the POS<sup>2</sup> application running on a PDA. Taking an order is quick and simple, with the software displaying associated sides and modifiers for entrees and detecting errors before information is sent to the kitchen. Drinks can be reordered with a single touch. And the application's line format is designed to display the maximum number of items possible, eliminating unnecessary keystrokes. POS<sup>2</sup> also provides critical information to the servers, including order running time and manager messages such as daily specials.

A key benefit of wireless ordering is its impact on the kitchen. Orders are received more quickly and in a smooth stream because there is no waiting until a server can get to a fixed terminal. In addition, the handheld greatly speeds service in seasonal outdoor areas such as patios. A major improvement over its existing POS system is the ability to restrict servers from ordering items which are out of stock (86'd).

After the meal guests are presented with Pay@Table, a handheld credit and gift card payment device. Following simple instructions on the Pay@Table screen, guests can review the check, split it, choose to add a gratuity, pay, and print out a receipt without their card ever leaving their sight. As a result, opportunities for card skimming and identity theft are eliminated while the settlement process is streamlined. In addition to accepting gift cards as payment, Pay@Table allows guests to look up their gift card balance.

Many Legal Sea Foods restaurants are located in malls or other areas with significant outside foot traffic. Recognizing yet another opportunity for mobile solutions, the company equips employees with Pay@Table devices to sell gift cards during peak gift giving periods.

Both the POS<sup>2</sup> and Pay@Table wireless technologies are anchored by PAR's *iSIVA* point-of-sale software. Designed as an enterprise application, *iSIVA* uses next generation technologies and strategies such as Java, HTML and a service oriented architecture to create a connected, open point-of-sale system that delivers operations information throughout the organization in real time. In addition, the software consolidates web-based management of remote systems at the corporate level, greatly simplifying support. With an ideal architecture for multi-unit chains, *iSIVA* is a smart choice to support Legal Sea Foods operations today as well as expansion in the future.

Part of that expansion is coming from movement into a new market demographic rather than a new geographic territory.

Although Legal Sea Foods has been a New England tradition since 1968, the use technology in their new LTK concept is anything but traditional. In addition to PAR's wireless point-of-sale solution, the restaurant offers consumers shared touchscreen terminals with the LTK menu, Internet access, and community trivia. iPod docking stations and WiFi access complement the hip environment created by a sophisticated mood lighting system and multi-cultural seafood menu. It's a unique vision—combining culinary and technological expertise to devise a bridge to a new, young marketplace.

In addition to wireless point-of-sale, Legal Sea Foods is currently deploying other technologies as part of an overall IT strategy to enhance the guest experience, including:

- [www.legalseafoods.com](http://www.legalseafoods.com). Legal Sea Foods web site was recently voted the # 1 restaurant website in the US by Hospitality Magazine. Since 2004, the company's web traffic has grown 10 fold during the holiday season.
- **Cisco IPT phone systems running on a Paetec MPLS network.** The phones have been deployed to a majority of Legal's restaurants, allowing for more streamlined and accurate guest information (driving directions, hours) as well as more accurate processing of guest requests (private dining, takeout). By connecting all of the Legal sites to the same, central phone system, the company can quickly and easily perform 4-digit transfers between sites to better leverage restaurant availability while reducing long distance costs.

Through the convergence of all three areas of technological advancements—POS, web, phones—the company hopes to bring guests a better, more integrated dining experience in the future.

Today Legal Sea Foods is clearly a leading IT innovator, reaping both operational and branding benefits from its use of technology. With the same fresh approach the company is known for when it comes to food, Legal's modern model of hospitality is setting the pace for the rest of the restaurant industry.