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By Richard Slawsky | Contributing writer, PizzaMarketplace.com

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The players

SpeedLine Solutions Inc.—based in Vancouver, British Columbia and Lynden, Washington—delivers point-of-sale and enterprise management software to restaurant owners and multi-unit pizza, fast casual, and quick service chains. For over 20 years, SpeedLine's POS solutions have helped growth-oriented restaurants and chains in six countries operate more efficiently and profitably.

Woodstock's Pizza was founded in 1977 when Chuck Woodstock opened his first pizzeria near Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon. From the beginning, he focused on fresh, hand-tossed dough folded into a unique crust with secret sauce inside. In 1980, Woodstock and his partner, Mike Chew, began expanding into Southern California. They partnered with Jeff Ambrose to open the additional restaurants.

Woodstock and Chew were killed in a private plane crash in 1985, and their families later promoted Ambrose to president of the company. In 2001, Ambrose and his wife Laura bought the California restaurants. Today, there are eight Woodstock's Pizza

locations, with a total revenue exceeding $19 million a year. This makes them the second-largest independent pizzeria in the country.

The challenge

Managing the ultimate customer experience requires accurate and timely business information.

Woodstock's believes its success comes from their commitment to quality food and the values of Fun, Unique, Excellence, Loyalty, and Service (FUELS). These values have helped Woodstock's exceed their customers' expectations, but as the company grew, Woodstock's found it increasingly difficult to manage information coming out of the restaurants and make comparisons to spot problems.

"Having opened several stores and being spread across geographic boundaries, we were really stepping on our own toes because we had several different brands of point-of-sale systems in those stores," said Darryl Turner, Woodstock's director of technology.

"This obviously caused some administrative and support challenges," Turner said. "In some cases we couldn't analyze data just because of the disparate systems and the

Paving the way to growth with SpeedLine:

- Different POS systems made it difficult for Woodstock's to analyze store information
- Company was looking for more detailed operations reporting
- A number of hospitality professionals recommended SpeedLine Solutions
- SpeedLine's Pizza POS allows Woodstock's to control product usage down to the ounce
- Data allows Woodstock's to solve problems before they become a crisis

way each POS provider did things. And because of the different types of equipment, it was impossible to establish a hardware standard and lifecycle management plan."

In addition, some of the systems didn't offer the features the company was looking for, including inventory control and automated marketing.

"We were originally using two different systems, but they weren't really working for us and weren't going to help us grow and scale," Turner said. "So we tried another one, and another one after that, and ended up in a position with all these different systems."

The solution

Woodstock's eventually made the decision to adopt a single POS system for all of their restaurants to help achieve consistency in the information coming from their locations. The question, though, was: Which system would best serve their needs?

Turner began the search process by asking a number of hospitality and restaurant professionals about their experience with pizzeria POS systems. In his discussions, one name was mentioned over and over: SpeedLine Solutions.

"What really got the ball moving was when we visited their booth at the Pizza Expo in Las Vegas and had some conversations and a live demo," Turner said. "And at that point we felt they were a viable option for us."

The next step was another demo at Woodstock's San Diego headquarters. Based on their impressions of the SpeedLine team, and the fact that the system was specifically designed for pizzerias, Woodstock's took the plunge. The company began by deploying

the system in the stores closest to its headquarters in 2014, and expanded outward from there.

"I really liked that SpeedLine had a training and certification program for their customers," Turner said. "This gave us a solid foundation to really understand how to install and support the SpeedLine architecture. Their support team is very knowledgeable, not just about the architecture and infrastructure, but also in trying to understand what we do as a business and realizing that what others do may not fit."

The results

The SpeedLine system's inventory management tools, which help restaurant operators identify waste or possible theft, have delivered key benefits to Woodstock's. SpeedLine Inventory compares the sales information from the point-of-sale with the restaurant's recipes. That comparison shines a light on where a store may be losing money through waste, theft, or mishandling, and where food costs may be out of line with pricing.

"We were looking for a system that allowed us to get index-specific and sometimes complicated with inventory," Turner said.

"If something comes out of the kitchen without a ticket, we want to find out why," he said. "We're very detailed with our recipes right down to the ounce. We know how much sauce, how much cheese, how much pepperoni and how many mushrooms go on a pizza. We

"We have data we can trust and depend on instead of different information from disparate systems. That data is fed into one central location that helps us make accurate intelligent business decisions. It's really helped us grow."

— Darryl Turner, Woodstock's director of technology

can compare what is going out of the kitchen versus what's left at the end of the day or at the end of the week, and we can study that variance and see what's going on."

Woodstock's also relies heavily on SpeedLine's enterprise reporting tool, SpeedLink Enterprise, which generates reports to compare sales between locations and helps the pizzerias manage labor, scheduling, and supply costs.

"We've even taken reporting to the next level," Turner said. "There are canned reports that are available with the SpeedLink server out of the box, and we've hired a database analyst to write more detailed reports."

All that data goes into a weekly profitability report, and corporate officials set up meetings with store managers to discuss the numbers. If there are issues, they are addressed very quickly, according to Turner.

"We also like the ability to be able to integrate with other partners," Turner said. "SpeedLine has open APIs, and we have the system connected to our online ordering provider. We need to be able to see the customer journey as they order online from us, so just as they're able to capture that information in-store, we're able to capture it from [online] customers as well."

As a technology-forward company, Woodstock's continues to work with SpeedLine to suggest improvements and new features for the software. Follow-up support from the POS provider has really been a plus for the growing pizzeria chain, Turner said.

True to Chuck Woodstock's legacy, Ambrose and his team remain committed to offering the highest quality ingredients, making the dough fresh daily in-house, and keeping the signature sauce a secret. They work hard to create loyal customers and team members – all while having fun.