

Cooplands Bakers

Case Study



The Client

Cooplands Bakers is a long-established retail bakery business with a strong regional following and 85 stores across Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. The business has 550 retail employees, a further 200 in head office and production, and a yearly turnover of £18 million – all the hallmarks of a business that knows what its retail and wholesale customers want, and that has evolved to meet the needs of successive generations.

The business is split into retail sales – through stores and mobile sandwich deliveries; bakery and despatch – with inhouse baking facilities in Doncaster; and wholesale operations – production of savouries, bread and sandwiches for the industry.

By 2008, Cooplands was running its business using two EPoS systems. Unable to communicate, neither was reliable nor could produce the mission-critical data needed to manage the business efficiently and plan growth. Specialist EPoS solutions company, AlfaRichi, then came on the scene. AlfaRichi was already supplying its software to bakeries and was in the process of designing a bakery-specific EPoS solution.



“Thanks to AlfaRichi and J2 EPoS, we now know exactly how each shop is performing. Our ordering and stock management have improved, and food wastage and till shrinkage have reduced.”

Robert McIlroy, Marketing & Retail Estates Director, Cooplands Bakers.

The Solution

The Challenge for Retail Bakeries

Explains Trevor Claybrough, AlfaRichi's Managing Director: *“Retail bakers were making do with EPoS developed for non-food retail or hospitality. No one was taking account of their needs. We were well advanced with our development and, in Cooplands, found the perfect partner, willing to collaborate on fine-tuning a specialist solution and be the first to benefit from it.”*

Large shop estates and sales of daily-ordered and carry-over goods make stock management complex for retail bakeries. Cooplands, for example, has 200 lines. Given the bread and fresh cream cakes disposed of each day, wastage is a major drain on their finances. More so than in

other retail sectors, bakeries need instant and reliable daily data from each shop to drive stock control and supply.

Says Claybrough: *“Retail bakers need to know what has sold well or sold out, and how much waste has been generated. Although both sales and wastage figures should be recorded and communicated to head office at each day-end, many in the industry still make do with cumbersome systems that transmit data overnight by modem.”*

The Benefits

- Reliable recording of sales data has significantly reduced wastage
- Good data capture has improved stock management, ensuring shops do not run out of popular items
- Shop managers use their tills to place daily orders that can be fine-tuned to meet changing demand
- Head Office admin staffing has reduced from five to two, as the new system automates sales recording and order placing
- Touchscreen tills and reporting functions have combined to radically reduce shrinkage
- The business feels completely in control and is able to plan expansion confidently.

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The Results

AlfaRichi software, running on J2 PC-based touchscreen tills, has addressed the operational issues a retail bakery faces and has raised the bar on efficiency and profitability. At Cooplands, the software is installed in all the shops and at Head Office, where it helps to perform shop-related operations and is used by Accounting, Sales and Ordering teams.

AlfaRichi has rolled out its solution on J2 615s to shops without PC-based tills; each has between 1 – 4 tills. As remaining non-J2 tills come to the end of their useful life, they are being replaced with J2s. Says Trevor Claybrough: *“Within 2-3 years, Cooplands expect to have moved entirely to J2s.”*

He continues: *“Our software is well designed and not particularly resource-hungry so doesn’t need a powerful processor. We recommended the J2 615 because it’s robust. It’s fanless too, which is ideal for dusty retail bakeries, and staff find its 15” screens comfortable. Cooplands uses the J2 615’s different mounting options, and has a combination of pole- and counter-mounting.”*

The J2 tills are true PCs and go beyond point-of-sale transactions. They are used in the shops for sales, ordering, stock-related operations such as declaring delivery ‘overs’ and ‘shorts’, ‘shop use’ and ‘damages’, transfer of goods between shops, and wastage.

Improved stock control and ordering

Stock control and ordering have improved. The business – both at a shop manager level and at head office – knows in real-time if stock is running out. When it comes to ordering, the till suggests a quantity for each product, based on past sales. This results in more accurate stock control, fewer empty shelves during the afternoon and less waste to dispose of. *“Stock is optimised so we don’t waste as many cakes and pastries,”* says McIlroy.

As for the order process itself, shop managers do this from the till rather than use a back-office telephone to call in sales each evening. The result is fewer errors, plus more time to spend front-of-shop serving customers.

Automating order processing benefits head office

In the past, five Head Office admin’ staff recorded and processed telephone orders from 85 store managers across up to 200 lines. Now orders are now placed via the tills – a virtually error-free and instant process, and only two admin’ staff are needed to extract order data and enter it into the production system. This saving alone meant that Cooplands gained a very fast return on its investment.

Reducing till shrinkage

In all retail businesses, shrinkage erodes profit margins. Using J2’s touchscreen tills, where all products are defined to buttons, makes easy

work of data entry and prevents items being sold inadvertently at the wrong price.

Other till-based issues include staff ‘selling’ goods to friends and then cancelling the sale to reconcile till cash. The AlfaRichi system eliminates this with ‘void’ reporting. Suspicious instances can be investigated and anything other than a genuine error flagged as dishonesty.

‘Shop Reconciliation’

Another plus of the AlfaRichi software is ‘shop reconciliation’. With order placement automated, delivered stock can be easily compared against its order and any ‘over’ or ‘short’ items flagged for Head Office to organise additional deliveries.

Ingredient tracking for made-up items

Margins are slim in retail bakery, so it is important to track everything, down to the last gram of butter. A valuable function, unique to AlfaRichi, is the ability to record the weight and composition of made-up items such as sandwiches. The system highlights if precise weight/quantity or ingredient guidelines are not adhered to, say, too much butter being put in a roll, or ham disappearing from stock. Cooplands now has complete visibility and can focus its attention on any shop that departs from the norm; yet another way of eliminating shrinkage through staff theft.

Accurate trading data for complete business management

Comments Trevor Claybrough: *“Before acquiring the AlfaRichi and J2 solution, Cooplands expended energy on trying to obtain accurate trading data. Now its focus is on shop-specific and consolidated data, and on managing the business. It has complete visibility of profitable and less profitable shops, knows which shops and which products generate most wastage, and can easily pinpoint best- and worst-performing lines.”*

True picture of promotional success

Bakeries operate quite complex promotions. With the new solution, it is possible to analyse the true value of each offer and understand how effective it is in terms of margin and increased spend.

“Staff don’t have to remember complex promotions – the till does this for us,” says McIlroy.

In numerous ways, AlfaRichi and J2 have helped Cooplands increase the efficiency and profitability of its shop estate, at the same time making managers more autonomous and reducing the need for head office resource.

Robert McIlroy concludes: *“Cooplands now has better control of the overall business, not least because we receive up-to-the-minute accurate information via our reporting system.”*

www.cooplands.co.uk

About us

J2 Retail Systems

J2 Retail Systems is a specialist manufacturer of PC-based touchscreens, LCD touchscreen monitors and point-of-sale hardware to the retail, hospitality and leisure industries. Now with over 100,000 units installed worldwide, its clients include thousands of leading-brand retailers, hospitality businesses and leisure operators.

The company controls its own design and manufacture and constantly looks for ways to improve the cost and quality of its user experience. J2’s history has been one of pioneering and market ‘firsts’. It recently launched the first EPoS to contain Solid State storage drives as standard, and is now offering clients the widest choice of leading-edge touchscreen technologies available. J2 products represent innovation, reliable performance and one of the lowest costs of EPoS ownership achievable today.

About AlfaRichi

AlfaRichi provides comprehensive yet easy to use EPoS systems for bakery, coffee shops, hospitality and retail. Customers range from single shops to companies operating upwards of 100 shops. AlfaRichi is based in Birmingham and serves customers throughout Great Britain and Ireland.

The company provides fully-managed EPoS and related IT solutions so that bakeries, pubs, restaurants and shops can concentrate on their key business and not worry about IT. Access to detailed sales data is available anywhere through secure web access. AlfaRichi is able to adapt to specific integration requirements and can also produce bespoke business and other applications.

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