

New Forest Hotels

Case Study



The Client

Long before it was designated a national park in 2005, the New Forest had been winning the hearts of generations of visitors. Located in some of the Forest's best-known beauty spots and taking full advantage of its attractions are four welcoming country house hotels. They are owned by New Forest Hotels, a group with more than 20 years' experience. During that time, the group has refurbished and stylishly upgraded each of the hotels to equip them for the higher end of the personal and business travel markets.

The Bartley Lodge Cadnam, The Forest Lodge Lyndhurst, The Moorhill House Burley and The Beaulieu Hotel now boast new conference and function suites, pools and leisure facilities, and fine dining restaurants. By combining contemporary facilities with a country house atmosphere, they attract year-round trade from couples and families wishing to enjoy the natural environment, corporate guests in search of a tranquil but business-like place to meet, and wedding parties seeking a picturesque background for their special day.

For many years, New Forest Hotels ran their operations with basic cash register systems, relying upon local company, Stevens Business Systems, for technical support. However, as the business expanded, it became clear that a move to more modern technology was required.



"The tills are easy to use and not obtrusive at all. They enable us to be more professional."

Christine Turner, Operations Manager at New Forest Hotels.

The Solution

The Process

Explains Stevens Business Systems' Operations Manager, Lee Drew: *"I had managed our relationship with New Forest Hotels for a number of years, but could see that they were due for an upgrade. At that point, they turned to us for advice and I steered them towards investing in an EPoS solution."*

New Forest Hotels had two main requirements: to streamline the business and to increase security at the till points.

Stevens had no hesitation in recommending hardware from its partner J2 Retail Systems. Continues Lee: *"The main benefits of selecting J2 units are reliability and the fact that J2 are a well-established brand with lots of reference sites."*

The decision was made to install the recently released J2 580 PC-based EPoS, in its 1.0GHz model. *"The software in use does not require a massive machine, so the J2 580 was suitably*

spec'ed." This machine also has the benefit of integrated fingerprint recognition technology, which could address the client's security concerns.

Across the four hotels, ten J2 580s have been installed. Stevens have made these machines the backbone of a complete hardware and software solution. *"We put in ICR Touch software to run point-of-sale operations,"* explains Lee Drew. *"Plus we interface to the front-office management system, SoftBrands' PORTfolio PMS, that they'd been running for years, and to back-office software which is installed at the head office."*

The Forest Lodge Hotel at Lyndhurst was the first to receive the new technology. Within the following two months, the remaining three hotels had also been upgraded. Stevens Business Systems carried out all the implementation, customisation and training.

The Benefits

- Integrated PC-based tills form the hub of front-office and back-office operations, supporting specialist third-party software and linking to handheld POS units
- Silent, stylish and space-efficient, the J2 580 units fit unobtrusively into the attractively refurbished bar environments of each hotel
- J2 580's fanless operation is ideal for the food preparation area, where it contributes to a hygienic environment
- Inbuilt fingerprint recognition technology is resulting in greater visibility and security of till transactions
- The new tills are easy to use, have been problem-free since installation and are designed to be user-maintained.

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The Results

The J2 580s have been located within the bar and food preparation areas in the four hotels. This machine has a number of attributes which make it particularly well suited to its environment. It has a very small footprint so takes up little space, and comes with a double cash drawer as standard.

The units are quiet, fanless, dust-proof and have a waterproof display front. All this contributes to their suitability for food preparation and food service areas, with the fanless construction also helping to increase overall system reliability. An easy slide-in hard disk drive, Compact Flash card and system board make simple work of maintenance which, when required, can be carried out by hotel operations staff or by Stevens.

Sheridon Mascoll-Durrant manages one of the hotels. She says: "We can stay in the restaurant and look after the guests without having to leave to take orders through to the kitchen. It's definitely easier for the chefs, and it's also much quicker to print bills from the new tills."

New Forest Hotels are finding fingerprint recognition particularly useful for securing till points. "All staff now sign in using this method,"

says Sheridon. Not only does this clarify which staff were on duty and completing which transactions in the case of query, but there is also greater control over cash and reduced shrinkage. "It's great to have a paper trail. Once PORTfolio is linked in and we can charge straight to the rooms it will be amazing," she observes.

Jenny Withington manages The Beaulieu Hotel and is similarly positive. "Once you get used to where the buttons are, the system is easy to use. There is less room for error, it is useful when you are recommending wine and it's easier for the chefs to understand. At the end of service, the new system makes it more simple to charge meals or drinks to rooms," she adds.

Six months down the line and the New Forest Hotels group is a more efficient business. "As hoped for, this new integrated technology solution has streamlined its operations and made its points-of-service more secure and visible. New Forest Hotels are an important and loyal client, so we're pleased we've been able to help them to achieve the business improvement they were looking for," concludes Lee Drew.

The J2 580



Contact

J2 Retail Systems Limited

J2 House, Clayton Road, Birchwood, Warrington WA3 6RP. United Kingdom

T +44 (0)1925 854 841

F +44 (0)1925 811 989

www.j2retailsystems.com

Stevens Business Systems

Unit 9, Wynford Industrial Park, Romsey SO51 0PW. United Kingdom

T +44 (0) 845 094 9268

www.sbsinfo.co.uk

About 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. With 70,000+ units installed worldwide, its clients include hundreds of leading-brand and independent retailers, hospitality and leisure operators including several cinema chains, and countless pubs, hotels and restaurants.

By controlling its own design and manufacture, J2 has built a reputation for innovation, reliability and cost-effectiveness. Credited with introducing 'thin client' EPoS to the market, J2 uses emergent technologies wherever possible to reduce the cost of hardware ownership. In another recent market coup, J2 launched the first EPoS to contain Solid State storage drives as standard. By so doing, it has once again reset the benchmark for EPoS performance and cost of ownership.

About Stevens Business Systems

Stevens Business Systems Ltd was formed in 2002 to provide specialist EPoS touchscreen solutions to both the hospitality and retail markets, delivered in a highly professional and personal way. The company has since experienced rapid growth and now offers products and services to over 1,000 single-site and multi-site customers throughout the UK.

With a wealth of industry and technology experience held within the company, clients benefit from complete solutions that include a wide range of the latest EPoS hardware, and software packages for front- and back-office operations, stock control and customer loyalty. These elements are backed up by services that include programming, e-commerce interface development, installation, user training and technical support 365 days a year.



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