

Posted On: 8/17/2009

VSR's 2nd Annual Innovative Solution Awards Revealed

By Lisa Terry, Contributing Editor, VSR

"Business has only two functions, marketing and innovation," said Milan Kundera, a Czech novelist, playwright and poet. The winners of the RSPA/VSR 2nd Annual Innovative Solution Awards have executed on both, devising creative solutions that help their customers.

[The Retail Solutions Providers Association \(RSPA\)](#) and Vertical Systems Reseller launched these awards in 2008. This past spring, we invited the channel community to submit a multi-vendor retail technology solution that fell within one of the following categories: **Credit/Processing, Fine Dining, In-Store Customer Touch Points, Quick-Service, Specialty Retail and Supermarket**. All of the entries gave the winners a run for their money, but the judging panel ultimately selected one winner per category, as well as one overall winner (of this group of six) that managed to take away the coveted "Best of the Best" prize. On behalf of our panel of judges, and everyone at both VSR and the RSPA, we'd like to congratulate the recipients of this year's awards, which were presented at the RSPA's RetailNOW Summer Convention and Expo during the show's awards banquet on July 14 at Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino in Las Vegas.



Fine Dining

*John Scheefers, Vice President, Computer Visions
SoftTouch Touchless Sign-On Solution*



In the hospitality business, there is usually a trade-off between speed and control, says John Scheefers, vice president at Computer Visions. So when someone comes up with a product that weighs less than an ounce and delivers both, it's a real door-opener. That's the experience Computer Visions, a Boca Raton, Fla., VAR, has had with SoftTouch Touchless Sign-On. Computer Visions has been serving the South Florida hospitality market since 1985, exclusively selling SoftTouch products for the last few years.

Restaurants make most of their money in a short period of time, so speed is truly critical. Many operators struggle with how to authenticate the user for a shared POS station. All the available solutions, from mag stripe cards to biometrics and key codes, got in the way of productivity and/or security, Scheefers says. "In a busy bar, they don't want to take the time to put in a number or swipe a card." So the tendency is to turn off those features, which also shuts down the owner's controls.

When [SoftTouch](#) introduced the Touchless Sign-On, Scheefers saw an opportunity. The solution consists of a Touchless Sign-On reader for each POS workstation and waterproof Touchless Sign-On bracelets. At the start of a shift, the staffer clocks-in at POS, and is automatically prompted to self-assign a bracelet. The bracelet is automatically deactivated at clock-out. Whenever a staffer reaches toward the touch screen, the reader reads the RFID chip in the bracelet and the system automatically authenticates the user.

"The Taverna Opa in West Palm Beach, Fla., is a big Greek restaurant, and it's extremely busy," Scheefers says. "This is a perfect solution for them."

The Taverna Opa used a competitor's POS system, but a business contact got Scheefers five minutes with one of the principals. One look at the solution, and he gave Scheefers the hour. "We got the entire POS contract off of that," he recalls, including 12 POS stations at that location and promise of more work in a newly opening restaurant. Now the Taverna can get accurate data on transactions and fulfill IRS reporting obligations without sacrificing the productivity of its large, busy staff. They also no longer have to police staff to guard against sharing codes or borrowing mag stripe cards.

SoftTouch Touchless Sign-On has had similar impact with other customers. "When they see it, they instantly grasp the benefit of it," Scheefers says. "Any time you have a competitive advantage, it's huge. He's sold the solution as an add-on to existing customers as well. "There is no question there is a bottom line impact," Scheefers says. That's true not only for the customer, but for Computer Visions as well.