

# Hectic Lifestyles Just Got a Little Easier

by Michael G. Thodoroff

It happens to most people on a frequent basis. You scramble to leave a grinding day of work on time so that you can make it to your child's soccer game. You only can hope that your new GPS unit will navigate appropriately around all the traffic. Because you had to skip lunch, you're thinking about any feasible dinner options and, at the time, they're slim-to-none as game time is

Located at 5286 Miller Rd. just west of Dye Rd., this recently launched business is a combination of high technology, talented hands-on executives and a sincere passion for customer service. Basically, they are systems integrators for the point-of-sale (POS) industry specifically focused on the restaurant trade, delivering a full range of products and services based on technology that provides their clients with critical financial data covering all aspects of their business operations.

Formed in January 2011, Aaron Hamp, president, Ted Kramer, vice president of sales and marketing, and Chris Kramer, vice-president of customer service, joined forces after many years experience in their respective careers.

Aaron left the insurance business to pursue a network communications degree from Baker College and to help fund his education repaired computers out of his home. "I gave an ironclad guarantee," Aaron remarked. "I would always find a way to fix the problem because if I couldn't, I would not have charged anything." As his reputation as an expert computer repairperson grew, so did his workload. He felt it was time to feed his entrepreneurial spirit so he took on a partner and formed Intelligent Network Communication Systems (INC) in 2003. INC eventually developed expertise in credit card security due to the fact that the payment card industry (PCI) joined forces in order to keep the government from regulating that industry by creating the PCI-DSS (data security standards). Hamp holds the opinion that industry standards are stricter and more involved than the current HIPAA requirements.

As a refresher, Congress passed the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in 1996 to establish national standards for healthcare transactions. The sweeping regulations require that every business that accepts credit cards must answer a PCI compliance document that contains between 20 and 250 requirements depending on different factors before a customer can be considered compliant. "We are responsible for helping our clients set up their network security," he emphasized, "therefore, we clearly understand the technical compliance requirements." To that end, part of the PCI-DSS requirements is to have an outside company see if they can "hack" their systems periodically looking for network vulnerabilities. If any issues are found, INC is notified to "plug the holes".

Ted Kramer, affectionately considered the wily "old veteran" of POS of Michigan, has been in the cash register/POS business since 1970. In those 40+ years



Aaron Hamp, Chris Kramer, Ted Kramer

approaching. Then, as traffic comes to a standstill, your mind wanders and thinks how great it would be if you could simply touch-screen order from your new smart phone a quick take-out meal from a restaurant on the way to the soccer field. You begin to smile as this process quickly pays for your items without the restaurant seeing any of your credit card's numbers thereby ensuring complete security. While this scenario may seem a

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little far-fetched, there is technology that exists today that will actually allow a person to bring up a menu from a nearby restaurant on a smart phone, place a complete order, correctly pay without giving out any credit card numbers, and have the food ready for a "curbside" pickup. To make all this work however, the right infrastructure must be put in place and POS of Michigan can make this happen.

in the industry, he has strived to stay on the cutting edge of technology for his customers. Ted was one of the first to sell Touchscreen POS systems in Michigan. In 1989, Kramer installed a very large Beverage Management System in the SKYDOME in Toronto. This was such a success that he installed similar systems in Detroit's Fox Theater, neighboring Second City Comedy Club, Joe Louis Arena and The Palace of Auburn Hills. Kramer briefly explained the Fox Theater's system which includes miles of tubing, dispensing liquor to each of the bars on its four floors, all coming from a central inventory room in the Fox basement. Essentially, it allows every bartender to automatically and precisely pour the requested beverage, record the sale and track the drink's inventory while being recorded - all with one touch of a button.

By 1991, Ted started IBS Consulting (Interactive Business Solutions) specializing in point-of-sale and camera systems specifically suited for restaurants. His business motto was "Taking you beyond POS," as they had the ability to perform inventory control, online ordering, labor management and multi-location franchise reporting which gives the restaurant's executives the ability to see a myriad of numbers and statistics generated in real time.

Chris started in the point-of-sale service end of the industry, personally leading systems installation and religious follow-up with the clients. Before joining POS of Michigan, he worked in Florida for that state's largest point-of-sale company. Quickly moving into management, he opened and ran a branch office in Ft Myers. He then took an opportunity to move to New York City as director of customer service for the POSitouch dealer there. During his time in NYC, Chris helped to grow that company by building customer service policies, procedures and implementing a Customer Relations Management (CRM) tool to ensure timely resolutions to service issues.

Aaron and Ted crossed paths at a local networking function a few years ago and carried on business conversations over informal lunches. When aligning the facts, Aaron's network security business was managing the information technology infrastructure for businesses throughout Southeast Michigan. Ted's point-of-sale business was selling POS systems that required a tight internal network and even tighter internet security demanded by the Payment Card Industry. Since Aaron had the knowledge to make Ted's restaurant clients more secure, it all lent itself to a combination of forces. Thus, POS of Michigan was formed and subsequently purchased the assets of IBS Consulting.

Like all successful formative businesses, they established a mission: To help our clients create greater success by leveraging today's latest point of sale technology into increased profits through hard work, commitment and strong relationships.

Aaron said their goal is to be more of a partner in business instead of being just a vendor. Ted added that companies today need a strong partner to help their owners be able to efficiently look at financial data along with prime costs and have the flexibility to act upon trends in a timely fashion in order to promote profitability. Chris noted that they are looking to create long-term relationships that will allow them to fully understand their client's specific business needs.



POS of Michigan promotes and recommends three point-of-sale software solutions for restaurant and bar applications. POSitouch was the first major software based entirely on touch screen technology and through its maturation of development has included built-in inventory and labor management modules thereby eliminating the need for feature "add-ons." It's great for a business with multiple locations, delivery service, online ordering and has the best interface with cameras and inventory control with the additional ability to search databases. Ted mentioned that once POSitouch is in operation, it is very hard to move away from it because of its functionality and ease of user interface.

A product with a few less features is 2Touch and is a powerful, efficient tool for pizza stores because of its ease with many program applications unique to this line of business. With a very economic initial cost of ownership and an efficient cost of ongoing ownership, Dinerware is the simplest to use and has the versatility for "add-ons." Hamp pointed out that the costs of all three products are very competitive due to the fact that all systems use same hardware which they buy locally through a point-of-sale hardware vendor Unypos in Grand Blanc.

For rapidly evolving smart phone applications, POS of Michigan recommends Snap Finger, Tabbed Out, and Speed Menu. Snap Finger allows smart phone or online ordering via web pages where a customer can order from the restaurant's actual menu. Tabbed Out and Speed Menu allow a customer to pay a food and beverage bill directly from a smart phone without the restaurant seeing any part of the credit card. In addition, Speed Menu actually lets you order items directly from your phone. Processing happens entirely behind the scenes with the credit card company, thereby eliminating the possibility of fraud.

According to Ted Kramer, restaurants are prime targets for hackers due to the sheer volume of credit card transactions. Trade journals have documented that during the last quarter of 2009, the identity theft industry made more money for the crime syndicate than global drug trade!

On a more positive note, POS of Michigan has the potential to automatically increase a restaurant's gross revenues by 35 percent by simply using their technology to increase their volume. Chris Kramer underscored they are very serious when it comes to insuring the protection of their clients while growing their business by leveraging technology. Additionally, through POS of Michigan's products of inventory control and labor management, it provides an end to a mean of more profits.

"If you install a point-of-sale system," Ted reasoned, "we can guarantee you will save five percent of gross sales by eliminating mistakes and unrecorded sales. The National Restaurant Association states that an average restaurant does \$400,000 per year. Simple math suggests that equates to \$20,000 per year. And even if I am only half right, we can save \$10,000 per year, every year!"

So, before you leave work to catch your child's soccer game, make sure your restaurant of choice has contacted POS of Michigan by phone at 810-422-5598 or online at [ted@posmich.com](mailto:ted@posmich.com). Visit their new website at [www.POSMich.com](http://www.POSMich.com).