# BJ's Brewhouse and MTECH Mobility
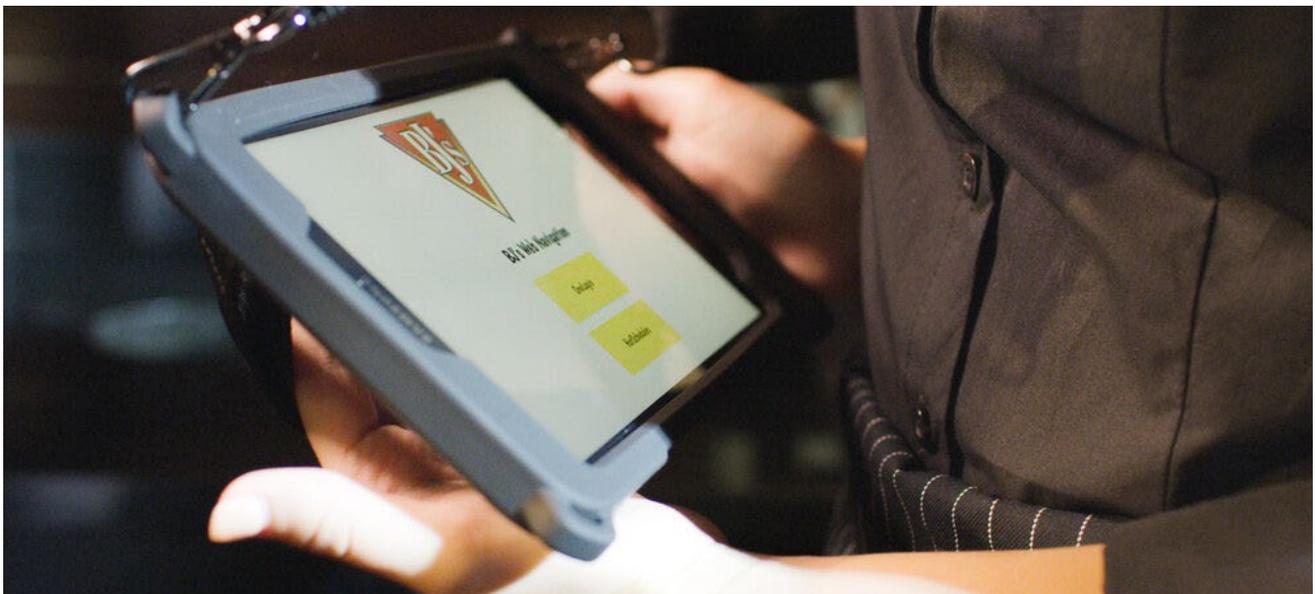
Elevate the Dining Experience with Samsung Tablets Integrated with ID TECH's VP3300

The Challenge

BJ's was an early adopter of mobile technology in its restaurants, so they knew the value of equipping servers with the right devices. But the limited functionality of their existing tablets—including battery life and connectivity issues—were causing backups at stationary point of sale (POS) terminals and kept BJ's servers from providing the highest level of service to customers.

"[Up to] 70 percent of service time was spent traveling to and waiting for a POS terminal," says BJ's chief information officer, Brian Krakower. "On busy days, there may be 25 servers on the floor, but a typical BJ's location has just six to eight POS terminals. There are only so many places you can put those inside a restaurant. Returning that time was essential in terms of providing better hospitality for our guests, and equipping servers with new tablets was a critical part of that objective."

The previous tablets also weren't waterproof. For a restaurant environment with wet surfaces like bars, tabletops and dish pits, this durability is critical.
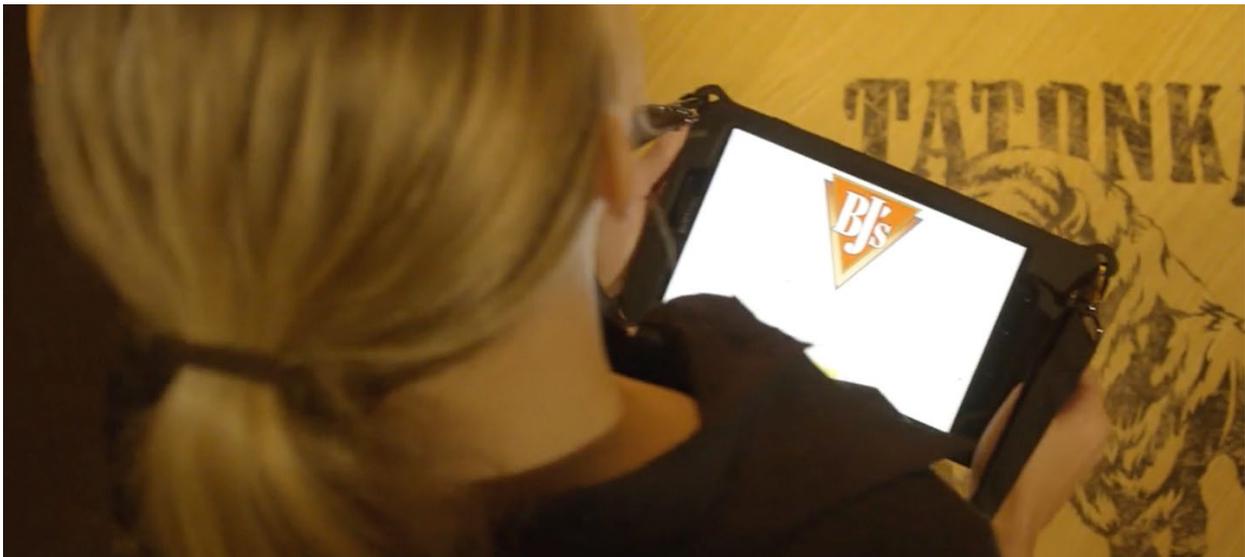
The main issue, though, was troubleshooting time. "There were times when we had more devices out for repair than we had inside the restaurant," says Krakower. "Aside from the cost, the space and logistics required to keep that going wasn't sustainable."

MTech Mobility, BJ's longtime managed mobility services provider, did their best to keep up with service and repairs, but they knew their client needed a new solution.

The Solution

BJ's management team worked with MTech Mobility to devise a custom solution with ID TECH's mobile payment device, leveraging rugged Samsung tablets and custom peripheral designed by MTech to address these issues.

"We started by collecting data from the restaurants to give the BJ's team full visibility into what was going on," says MTech CEO Tony Fernandez. "One of the biggest problems with the previous device was retrieving the old assets. BJ's had so many spares going back and forth that the shipping costs were astronomical."

MTech also went onsite to consult with restaurant servers and observe how they used their devices. On MTech's suggestion, BJ's chose to implement rugged Samsung Galaxy Tab Active tablets, which were then integrated with ID TECH's VP3300 and deployed to BJ's restaurants nationwide.

"We explained the value and customization abilities of Samsung's product line and devised a streamlined service solution," says Fernandez, "which included procurement of the devices, setup, peripherals and security, software and life cycle management—all for under $30 per device per month."

The lightweight Samsung tablets feature bright, 8-inch screens, an intuitive user interface, powerful processors and a rugged design. Military-grade durability—including resistance to drops, water, dust, extreme temperatures and humidity—and up to 11 hours of battery life mean these tablets can withstand the rigors of a restaurant environment. All the while, Samsung Knox security keeps company and customer data protected.

To maximize operational efficiency, the devices can also be configured with the latest industry-specific digital workflow tools. And the tablets come with water-resistant S Pens that staff can use to jot down notes or grab a guest's signature on a credit card transaction.

For the payment device, MTECH partnered with ID TECH to integrate their VP3300, a 3-in-1 mobile magstripe reader that perfectly pairs with Android mobile devices, with Samsung's Galaxy Tab Active tablets. The VP330 offers the hospitality industry a cost-effective, secure and mobile-friendly path to EMV.

The VP3300 can be used as a stand-alone mobile reader (ideal for pay-at-door or fields services) or integrated directly into POS terminals, unattended hardware/stands, or mobile tablets. It accepts all card payment methods including magstripe, EMV contact/contactless, and NFC contactless payments such as Samsung Pay.

MTech also designed custom casing for the devices that integrates with credit card readers, as well as a fast-charging docking station—with charge indicator lights—that streamlines cords and contains clutter. After the devices are configured with all necessary apps and enrolled in the MDM, they're ready for action.

Spare devices are stored at the MTech integration center, in case of emergencies, ready to be configured, shipped and delivered to any restaurant in the U.S. by 10:30 a.m. the next business day. For support issues, the dedicated MTech helpdesk can assist restaurant operators in troubleshooting over the phone, on demand, via phone, email, and live chat. Ultimately, MTech deployed 5,300 Samsung tablets across stores in 30 states in just 90 days for BJ's.

The Results

The Samsung Galaxy Tab Active tablets integrated with MTech's custom case and managed services brought a dramatic improvement: device failures decreased instantly. With their long battery life, water-resistant hardware and durable casing, the rugged Samsung tablets alleviated the need for frequent, costly repairs. The docking bay is also a huge success. The tablets stay charged for an entire shift, are lighter and less cumbersome for servers to carry, and the screens are large, bright, and easy to navigate. Like the Samsung Galaxy Tab Active tablets, ID TECH's VP3300 is also a compact, water and weather resistant device that allows for flexible host communication. Its charging ability is also flexible and its integration into the host tablet doesn't interfere with existing functions.

"With the solution that MTech engineered, we have multiple tablets in one bay and don't have to search around to find the correct chargers," Krakower explains. "Now, servers can walk up to this nice clean bay with confidence that their devices are charged and working properly. So far, we've only had one failure—and that was a freak accident."

Feedback from servers has been overwhelmingly positive. Wait times for stationary POS stations plummeted—practically overnight—and servers can now be confident their tableside orders will be rung up accurately and in a timely fashion. Returning this lost time to the BJ's staff increased productivity in other areas, such as spending more time engaging with guests. The tablets can also be used for servers to review training materials and other internal communications. A new tip portal also immediately transfers credit card tips to the employee's debit card.

Most importantly, the guest experience was instantly elevated. Now, orders are rung up and sent to the kitchen before servers have even left the table, meaning orders are "working" the moment a ticket comes through. This translates to shorter wait times for guests and quicker table turns—and higher earnings for servers.

"It's also a wow factor of sorts," says Krakower. "It's not uncommon for guests' bar drinks to be delivered while their server is taking their food order, with a runner or server assistant already on [the order] as soon as the ticket comes through. It's fun to watch the guests' reactions."

On the tech side, when restaurants do run into a problem with a tablet, they can reach out to the MTech help desk and possibly solve the issue over the phone. When they need them, spare tablets arrive before the restaurant opens the next morning, fully charged and ready to operate.

"The Samsung tablets have helped improve our overall outlook," says Krakower. "It makes the servers' jobs more enjoyable, and they feel proud because they're doing a better job. That was not anticipated, yet it was so obvious. We realized the previous technology was holding them back and

now fully appreciate how important it is for them to have the proper tools. If they don't, then we're letting them down."

Samsung and MTech's solution allowed BJ's to reinvent the way they provide service, from employee relations to guest satisfaction, leading to rapidly increased ROI and operational efficiency.

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– Tony Fernandez, CEO, MTech

A typical BJ's location seats 250 people—47 percent more than the average restaurant—so their operations have extra pressure to run smoothly and efficiently.

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