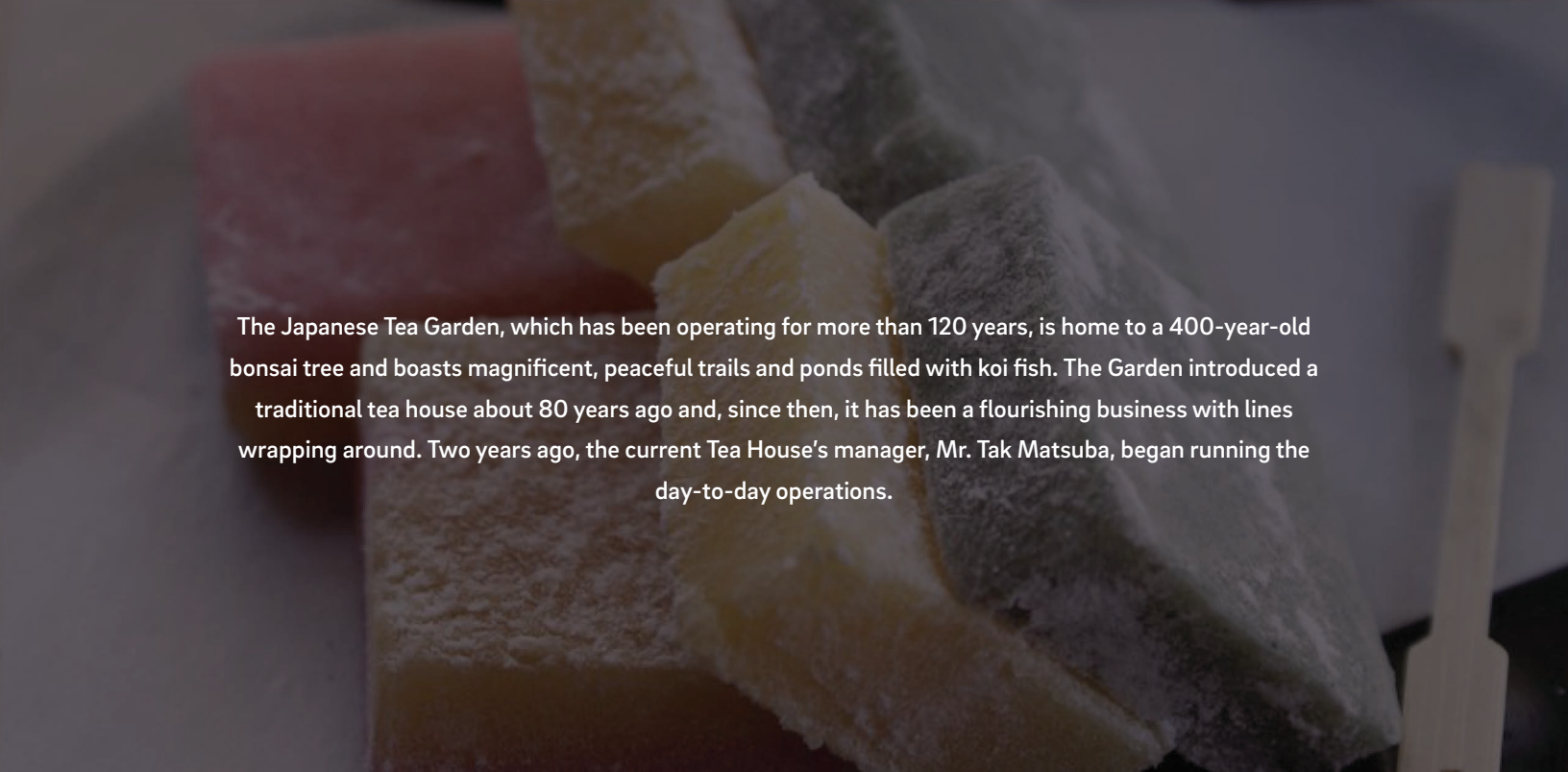


Upgrading from Cash Register to Point of Sale Technology Opens Doors to Data

San Francisco's famous Japanese Tea Garden leverages CAKE
POS data to streamline business and increase profits

CASE STUDY





The Japanese Tea Garden, which has been operating for more than 120 years, is home to a 400-year-old bonsai tree and boasts magnificent, peaceful trails and ponds filled with koi fish. The Garden introduced a traditional tea house about 80 years ago and, since then, it has been a flourishing business with lines wrapping around. Two years ago, the current Tea House's manager, Mr. Tak Matsuba, began running the day-to-day operations.

The Overview

Although stepping into San Francisco's Japanese Tea Garden provides instant relief from the fast-paced urban lifestyle, behind the scenes, the business is one of the busiest locations in the city. As proof of its popularity, the Tea Garden hosts between 6,000 and 8,000 visitors on weekends. The Garden is a shining example of what many restaurant operators face—controlling chaos in the back of the house in order to provide the best possible experience for customers.

The Japanese Tea Garden, which has been operating for more than 120 years, is home to a 400-year-old bonsai tree and boasts magnificent, peaceful trails and ponds filled with koi fish. The Garden introduced a traditional tea house about 80 years ago and, since then, it has been a flourishing business with lines wrapping around. Two years ago, the current Tea House's manager, Mr. Tak Matsuba, began running the day-to-day operations.

Tak immediately noticed the Tea House's popularity, but also its struggles to keep lines moving and to streamline back-of-house operations. Having run a Michelin Star restaurant for a number of years, Tak sought new ways to maintain the old-world charm of the Tea House while increasing efficiencies.

The Challenge

Usually, it was not uncommon to see lines of 35 customers wrapping around the Garden for traditional food and beverages at the quick service Tea House, which has a 75-person seating capacity. On an average day, the Tea House serves about 900 guests. On top of long lines and occasional two-hour waits, the Tea House used a cash register-type point of sale system that limited the amount of available data for Tak to review—he had no way to gauge basic operations like order history or inventory tracking. Tak also spent about 45 minutes each day manually reconciling bills, as, despite having a wonderful staff, the cash register system increased the chance of human error.



The Objection

Tak began the search for a new point of sale system that would bring the historic Tea House into the 21st century. He needed to simultaneously speed up service to cut lines down and keep staff happy with increased opportunities for tips. Lastly, Tak needed a system that could leverage data to track specific orders and minimize the human error associated with old cash registers.

The Solution

Tak came across Mad Mobile several times during his research and, after receiving a demo, he became convinced that the system was what his restaurant needed. He was immediately drawn to its user-friendly interface. A seemingly small upgrade to a customer-facing screen, where customers could sign their electronic check and assign a tip amount, was also a huge benefit for Tak's staff. "After seeing the front-facing screen and tip prompt, I felt I could guarantee my staff would increase tips by at least 30 percent, based on the design alone," said Tak. "As it turns out, they were able to make even more than that estimate."



The Results

REDUCING LINES BY HALF

Because of the efficiency transitioning to a POS system brought to the Tea House, lines were immediately reduced by up to 30-50 percent, depending on the day and the server. A large reason for that was the streamlined approach to ordering. Gone were the days of manually entering prices on a cash register—the new touch-screen system had items and prices built-in. “We have cut the time to take an order in half,” said Tak. “Now, you just sign with your finger.”

50 PERCENT INCREASE IN TIPS

With the new POS, Tak was able to keep his staff happy through an increase in tips. He predicted the new POS and front-facing screen could increase gratuities by 30 percent, but then, as Tak says, “They ended up doubling their tips. They were flabbergasted!” The best part was that this reduction in workflow was not limited to his staff.

ERROR REDUCTION AND INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY

Tak also found the back-of-house benefits striking. With menu items now programmed into the POS, Tak’s staff significantly decreased human error and the old days of reconciliation vanished.

He was able to eliminate one to two hours of work per day, which was usually devoted to reconciliation. But, more importantly, for the first time, he was able to track when an error occurred and which staff member was working so he could further investigate any issues. Now, Tea House staff sign into the POS and, if there is an error, Tak has all the information he needs to quickly and efficiently solve any problem.

PEACE OF MIND THROUGH REAL-TIME DATA

Whether it is from his office overlooking the peaceful gardens before guests arrive, or at home on his days off, Tak is able to access live data for the Tea House. He can see what is selling well, change prices, compare sales in designated time periods and check on staff efficiency. This peace of mind has improved Tak’s process and helped him become a better boss to his.

Additional Value Provided

A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF INVENTORY

While transitioning to a POS helps speed up business at quick-service restaurants, it also expedites the inventory management process. Tak uses data from Mad Mobile to track how much inventory he has sold, which, in turn, allows him to make better, smarter purchasing decisions with vendors.

“Because of the system, I can now see exactly how much tea I have sold,” said Tak. “This makes reordering much easier for me than before, when I had to manually add up numbers and see what was sold.”



Based in Silicon Valley, CAKE is a company offering restaurant-specific technology solutions. CAKE's platform seamlessly integrates front and back of house restaurant operations, allowing restaurant owners and operators to achieve unparalleled visibility into and control over their point of sale, table and waitlist management, menu pricing, guest preference tracking, reservations systems, inventory and payroll.

trycake.com