

NCR CASE STUDY

Cava Mezze Grill



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Brett Schulman, President and CEO, Cava Mezze Grill

Operating with Efficiency

Washington, DC, residents who eat at Cava Mezze Grill and then see the chain’s products at Whole Foods are not seeing double. The chain sells its spreads, tzatziki and hummus at the high-end food merchant. Extending the brand and driving demand for the chain’s delicious, well-priced and Greek-inspired food have resulted in almost instant success for the Cava Mezze Group.

The restaurant chain, which also operates the full-service Cava Mezze and Sugo restaurants, opened its first Cava Mezze Grill in 2011 and is already up to five locations around the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. Patrons flock to the quick service restaurants to enjoy a sustainable dining experience.

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None of the meats have added hormones or antibiotics, utensils are compostable and made of corn husks and sugar cane, and the stores compost or recycle almost everything they produce.

With plans for another five to 10 DC area restaurants in the offing, the Cava Mezze Grill team knew that they needed to implement a world-class technology platform that would scale with them.

While the group had another technology solution in place, it didn't provide managers with the transparency and actionable data they required to make both strategic and operational decisions.

After carefully studying their options, Cava Mezze Grill's managers decided to deploy an integrated NCR Aloha solution, including POS terminals running quick service software, online ordering, above-store reporting, real-time mobile analytics, multi-site and systems management tools and loyalty and gift cards.

"The NCR platform gives us reliability and scalability for managing multiple locations," says Brett Schulman, President and CEO. "It's also easy to configure and use. We looked at iPad-based solutions, but they weren't stable enough for our business. We went with NCR because of the superior stability of their back-end solutions."

Engaging Customers

Visit any Cava Mezze Grill at lunchtime, and you will likely see a line out the door. Employees are keenly aware that they need to process orders quickly, as many workers have just half an hour to eat. Cava Mezze Grill provides online ordering capabilities, so that busy customers can place advance orders for a quick pickup.

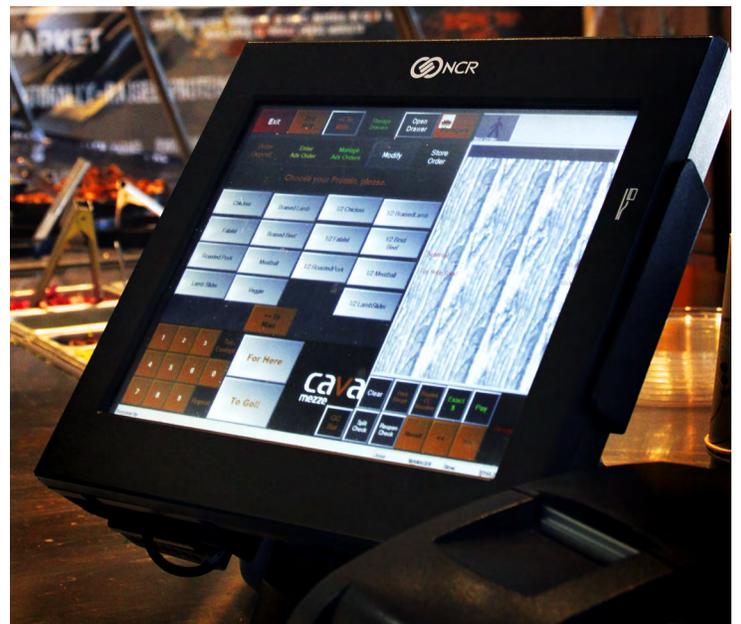
"Lunches are 85 percent of our online orders," says Rob Gresham, Operations Director. "NCR's online ordering application and POS terminals help us reduce lines and capture customer business that might go elsewhere."

Managing the Operation

Mr. Schulman and Mr. Gresham use NCR's above-store reporting and real-time mobile analytics to manage the business. "We added three stores in six months," says Mr. Gresham. "NCR Insight and Real-Time help us maintain consistent control over each store. I can't be everywhere at once, but with these tools I feel like I am there all the time." Mr. Schulman concurs: "We know what our labor costs should be compared to revenue, how many employees are scheduled for each shift and what the weather conditions are." That information helps "us get our arms around the business," says Mr. Gresham. "You can fix things before they become a drag on the process."

Mr. Schulman says Cava Mezze Grill was able to achieve a 250 basis point improvement in labor costs by using data provided by NCR Real-Time. His team also uses the tool to optimize their stores' product mix and monitor transaction anomalies. In addition, the solution helped Mr. Gresham identify an operational issue: an excessive number of deletes and voids. Cashiers were accidentally hitting the delete button because it was placed next to the pay button. "They would realize that they had hit it and then add the item back into the check or ring a second transaction," says Mr. Gresham. "We weren't losing a lot of business, but it was causing a service delay and annoying our customers." With that knowledge, Mr. Gresham was able to rapidly reconfigure the POS interface.

Cava Mezze Grill's management team feels like they have a good partner in NCR. Mr. Schulman says, "I am very excited and hopeful about NCR's technology investments. New products are continually being brought to us. I'll talk to my account manager about a feature I'd like to see with NCR Real-Time, and a month or two later I will see it in an update. No matter how good NCR's tools are, they are always looking to make them better by adding new functionality or extending the products."



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