

High-Volume, Multi-Lane Beverage Retailer Thrives with Catapult



Located in Minneapolis, MN, Chicago Lake Liquors is one of the largest liquor stores in the Minneapolis area. According to Manager Allen Warren, the store has been doing business at the same location for over thirty years. We recently caught up with Warren who talked with us about how Chicago Lake Liquors is using Catapult to streamline its operational procedures.

ECRS: Tell us about your business philosophy.

Warren: At Chicago Lake Liquors, our goal is to sell the best products for the lowest prices. We constantly strive to be model members of our commercial district. Our owner is actively involved in the community, so we are strongly committed to being good neighbors to the other retailers and residents around us.

ECRS: How did Chicago Lake Liquors decide on Catapult?

Warren: We were using an old DOS-based system, which was not very user friendly. We were really impressed at how easy Catapult is to use, and how adaptable it is to what we needed in a modern POS system. The decision to install Catapult was an easy decision to make.

ECRS: Which Catapult reports do you rely on most?

Warren: I love being able to run inventory reports on the fly. We balance every day by cashier, so we rely on the detailed data in Catapult's activity reports in order to reconcile the drawers at the end of each day. We run total inventory at the end of the month. We're able to crank out any number of Catapult reports very quickly at a moment's notice.



ECRS: How is your buying strategy based off the information you get from Catapult reports?

Warren: Our buyers use Catapult reports at the end of each month to guide their purchasing decisions for the upcoming month. One of our most useful reports is the Item Net Optimized report. This report ranks inventory items by net quantity sold. It also shows each item's quantity as a percentage of the total items sold for the filtered date range. The report also shows extended cost, net sales, and net margin as well. Our buyers find this information vital for formulating their buying strategies.



ECRS: How do you like the customizable touch screen interface?

Warren: We absolutely love it! We are always adding buttons and removing buttons in order to make navigating easier for the cashiers, and to make checkout faster for our customers. Because Catapult is fully automated with POS scanning, our cashiers don't have to worry about incorrect data entry. Catapult gives us about a 3-second authorization on our credit cards. We are currently running ten Catapult POS terminals and four back-office manager workstations, all of which are operated by our forty-three employees.

ECRS: How do you use your remote desktop control to access Catapult?

Warren: We use it when there is not a manager on the floor and I'm tied up and unable to physically come to the cashier when there is a problem. I can login on the host computer and do everything up here in the office that I can do on the checkout terminals. I typically use it to do voids and to monitor transactions at the front end. It really saves us a lot of time. Managers can take control of any terminal in the store by simply entering a password. And if there is ever any suspicious behavior involving a cashier, we can instantaneously monitor their transactions without their knowledge.

ECRS: How has Catapult's touch screen helped with training new employees?

Warren: It's easy to train people visually, and with Catapult, it's only a matter of learning a few basic keystrokes. We have a lot of our item promotions set up on specific POS buttons, which makes training a lot easier. The simplicity of Catapult's POS configurator makes it very easy to customize our touch screens to suit our needs. Changing the touch screen is all done behind the scenes, so no one ever notices a change in checkout speed. We have been using Catapult for three years and have come to rely on its speed, accuracy, and user-friendly design.

ECRS: How do you feel about Catapult's ability to grow with your business?

Warren: Catapult is definitely powerful and scalable enough to grow with Chicago Lake Liquors. In addition to being a fantastic POS product, it is backed by a top-notch local dealer and a quality software manufacturer. Both are very receptive to our needs and are always looking for ways to make things faster and simpler for us. It's like having a big team working with us to help achieve our goals.



ECRS: Would you recommend Catapult to other retailers?

Warren: Of course. I can't say enough about Catapult. The system's real-time data saves me a lot of work. Chicago Lake Liquors has very minimal down time and we have had very few software issues. ECRS is always coming out with smarter features and functionality for Catapult.

ECRS: Can you comment on the support you've received from your local Catapult Dealer?

Warren: They have always been quick to respond to our needs, and are friendly and knowledgeable beyond the call of duty.