APP, APP, AND AWAY

BUSY CUSTOMER FINGERS TAPPING AWAY AT SMART PHONE APPS ARE PUTTING PROFITS AT OPERATORS' OWN FINGERTIPS. KATHY BOWRY REPORTS

Mobile payment is the latest innovation in the payment world

Scanomat's TopBrewer is the first bean-to-cup coffee maker to be app-controlled, meaning it can either be barista-controlled from a single integrated iPad behind the bar, or it can be operated by individual smartphones for an enhanced self-service experience.

So says Simon Bracken, managing director of Scanomat UK, who explains: "The TopBrewer app has revolutionised the way consumers can personalise their coffee experience. It is literally the barista in your pocket allowing users the ability to tailor their drink to individual preferences."

Bracken adds: "We have also released a mobile payment solution to complement TopBrewer Cafe, the world's first app-controlled Cafe concept which we launched in Denmark earlier this year. Mobile payment is the latest innovation in the payment world and our unique system gives the modern consumer the ability to select, customise and pay for their drink in one secure eco-system."

First Data Merchant Solutions (FDMS), has recently launched Clover, a new android-based

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point of sale system for independent restaurants. Clover has its own in-built 'Clover app market', from which operators can download apps to help with their business and payment functions, all from one location. The App Market on the system means owners can customise the device - adding apps and capabilities to the technology as they grow and their business needs evolve, rather than investing in entirely new technologies. From newcomer Flowify comes an app called Sofia. An up-to-date 'task list' will instantly show the status of every table during service, while users can also 'tag tables' where there have been complaints, special dietary requirements, or where people are celebrating an occasion or are VIPs."

Wedderburn's Ian Brown says: "Wedderburn can develop your very own Orbis app with your own branding, so you are in total control of the customer experience and the customer information."

Orderly, from Super Mega Fresh, is a phone based

app that allows customers to pick a venue, order food and drink pay for it and then pick it up and go – or stay – as they please. It is available on iTunes.

However, not everyone is happy to download an app, says Steven Pike, managing director of HospitalityGEM ."Our latest research shows only six per cent of diners are prepared to pay a bill via a new smartphone app, most commonly because they do not have a smartphone or do not wish to diverge from paying by debit card or cash. A reluctance to download an app and to give away personal information were also clear obstacles.

"We worked with Boston Tea Party recently to overcome this. Previously, the chain of cafés used stickers on tables and notices on chalk boards to encourage guests to give honest feedback after their experience; now they have converted their Wi-Fi landing page into an online feedback form. This change resulted in an increase from 13 pieces of feedback one month, to 919 the following; a staggering increase of 6,969 per cent."