Global Oil Company Enhances Foodservice Operations with Zipthru Cashless Solution from Compass Group

Solution Streamlines Efficiency, Improves Customer Satisfaction

Despite global success, a large independent oil and natural gas company faced a major challenge at home: How to increase efficiency and streamline foodservice operations at its on-site dining centers in Texas. The company, which employs more than 2,000 people in its Houston headquarters, operates two cafés and a coffee shop. Lunch crowds often pour into the cafés at once, with as many as 600 employees dining between 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Eurest Dining Services, a division of Compass Group North America, manages the company’s foodservice operations and identified it as a candidate for the Zipthru cashless solution, a meal payment plan that works like a gift card to deduct food and beverage purchases from customer-administered accounts. The cashless solution is fully integrated with a comprehensive point-of-sale system that streamlines operations in corporate dining facilities.

Customers pre-fund their Zipthru cashless accounts automatically in $25 increments, ranging from $50 to $125, simply by linking a credit card to their account. Funds can be added on specific dates or when a minimum balance threshold is reached. Customer credit cards are billed accordingly, and an automated e-mail confirming the purchase is sent after each auto-load.

Integrated solution saves time

For years, the company had used a point-of-sale system that, according to management, wasn’t user-friendly; and a debit system for cashless transactions that required too much hands-on attention. Funds had to be added manually to customer accounts, requiring Eurest staff to spend hours each day downloading and entering customer credit card information. The system also allowed customers to run into negative balances.

It was clear the company needed an integrated cashless and point-of-sale system that would save time, increase efficiency, prevent negative account balances and enable customers to manage their accounts online.

Eurest implemented the Zipthru cashless payment system with centralized point-of-sale at the company’s three dining facilities. Two weeks before the solution went live, Eurest established sign-up areas outside each dining center. Volunteers distributed brochures about the system and helped customers set up their new Zipthru accounts. E-mail announcements about the new system were sent company-wide, and signs were posted at café entrances and exits. During the initial launch, customers were also offered an incentive for signing up: a 15 percent discount on all food and beverage purchases.

Results seen quickly

The company saw results almost immediately. More than 50 percent of employees now use the system to pay for their meals. And, while cashless check averages are generally higher than cash check averages, with the new Zipthru system, cashless check averages have increased an additional five percent. Also, more employees are dining on site rather than going to nearby fast-food outlets and restaurants.

One of the primary benefits of the program is its flexibility. The cashless payment system is integrated with employee badges, making it simple to pay for meals. A designated Zipthru website allows secure log-in and provides an easy way to view transactions and print receipts. Customers also appreciate the convenience of automatic funding.
Lunch lines move quickly, too. The company’s dining centers routinely serve hundreds of customers at one time, so speed and efficiency are important.

Another advantage is fewer transactions on monthly credit card statements. Customers are charged only when they replenish their Zipthru cards and not for individual meal purchases.

**A winning combination**

According to Eurest Dining Services, the solution is user-friendly. The integrated point-of-sale system makes it simple to add and delete menu items. Training is also easier. In fact, according to the unit manager, it takes only 10 minutes to train cashiers on the new solution.

Then, there’s the time savings. Staff is no longer required to manage each customer’s cashless payment account manually. With more than half of the company’s employees using the Zipthru solution, the time savings add up. With the previous system, staff spent approximately two hours per day — which translates to as much as 25 percent of a full-time employee’s work week — downloading and entering account information. Now, that time is spent on more important duties.

The Zipthru solution also costs up to 90 percent less to implement and manage than traditional credit card programs. For large companies like this one, the transaction fee savings can be significant.

Finally, the centralized POS and cashless payment system provides comprehensive and detailed reporting. The company can view daily reports on sales revenue, cash tender, product mix by revenue center, closed check and cashier tender.

The Zipthru cashless solution with centralized point-of-sale is beneficial to companies and customers alike. It increases traffic to corporate dining centers, offers comprehensive reporting and enhances customer satisfaction. It’s a winning combination for everyone.