

BOSTON'S JP LICKS SERVES UP WiFi ACCESS

ALONG WITH HOMEMADE ICE CREAM AND COFFEE

SITUATION

- Boston-based chain of premium ice cream cafés
- Growing number of locations throughout Greater Boston
- As many as 6,600 transactions a day during the summer
- Patrons expect WiFi access

CHALLENGE

- Add public WiFi access without compromising business wireless use
- Manage costs

SOLUTION

- Comcast Business Internet
- Comcast Business WiFi
- Comcast Business Voice

RESULTS

- Happier customers
- Realized annual savings

EXPANDING CHAIN OF BOSTON ICE CREAM CAFÉS LOOKS FOR TOOLS TO ATTRACT NEW CUSTOMERS AND RETAIN EXISTING ONES WHILE MANAGING COSTS AND DOWNTIME

DELIVERING DELICIOUS ICE CREAM TO HUNGRY CUSTOMERS QUICKLY IS THE CHALLENGE

Working for a Philadelphia ice cream institution after college, Vincent Petryk witnessed the transformative effect that ice cream can have – “It was like giving people scoops of happiness,” he says. He wanted to do that every day. So in 1981 he started his own ice cream parlor just outside Boston, serving premium ice cream made from scratch.

Named JP Licks Homemade Ice Cream Café in honor of its Jamaica Plain (JP) home base, the business quickly earned a reputation for its intense flavors. One local restaurant reviewer claimed the parlor’s Myers’s Rum Raisin had “the subtlety of a sledgehammer.” Petryk couldn’t have been prouder. Today the chain has 12 locations in and around Boston.

SPEED OF SERVICE IS CRITICAL

Creating a positive, friendly atmosphere has always been at the core of JP Licks’ corporate culture. Yet twelve years ago, after having opened yet another JP Licks location, Petryk had an epiphany: “You don’t get a chance to be nice and friendly if you’re not fast.” As wait times for ice cream rise, with lines often snaking out the front door, some JP Licks customers are unwilling to hang around. That’s lost business. Finding other reasons for patrons to stick around was essential. WiFi was one possible answer.

“We looked at WiFi as a way to bring people into our stores but need to balance that with keeping tables open and customers moving,” explains Al Cripps, JP Licks’ IT manager. “We experimented with managed WiFi but that’s not our business and we didn’t want to have to support it,” he says. Also, having access to a secure network for business was important. Comcast Business WiFi was the perfect solution.

While Comcast Business WiFi offers the convenience of a private wireless network for business transactions and internal communication, it comes with an additional public XFINITY® WiFi Hotspot for customers at no additional cost. It was a two-in-one offering that met JP Licks’ needs perfectly.

“People will come in specifically for WiFi and they will typically buy more.”

Vincent Petryk
Founder and owner
JP Licks

COMCAST DELIVERS BUSINESS WIFI

While added value for customers was one reason to implement WiFi, the speed and quality of Internet service was the primary motivator for the switch, Cripps says. Having relied on another provider initially, JP Licks was disappointed with the amount of downtime and slow speed of repairs. When the Internet was down, the company lost sales and customer loyalty card information that couldn't be gathered by hand. Additionally, stores often had to wait days for the company to get Internet service up-and-running again. One year, JP Licks' service was down and they had to rely on a fax modem to process credit card transactions – “Each purchase took 45-60 seconds,” says Cripps. “We had lines out the door.” The modem was an unacceptable Plan B, the company decided.

After turning to Comcast Business for Internet and Business WiFi in 2013, JP Licks was pleased with the service. “And Comcast is very responsive on the rare occasion that it does go out,” says Cripps.

Business WiFi also has helped attract new customers during the day. Those customers are a nice complement to the families who generally come in during the evenings for vanilla cones. “[WiFi] customers often make a purchase because they feel guilty for using WiFi” without supporting the company, observes Petryk.

Establishing public WiFi Hotspots at each JP Licks gives customers what they want without impacting the company's internal operations. Setting up the public WiFi network “doesn't take away from my bandwidth,” says Cripps, allowing employees to continue to work productively without diminished Internet speed.

BOOSTING PROFITABILITY BY SHRINKING EXPENSES

While WiFi brings in new customers, Comcast Business helped reduce the company's combined phone and Internet bill. Each of the 12 JP Licks locations is its own corporation, with its own bills and accounts, allowing the company to monitor each café's level of profitability. The largest location seats 34 customers at a time and the smallest, eight.

At the JP Licks in Brookline, the switch to Comcast Business helped reduce its phone expenses. “In Coolidge Corner (Brookline), our phone bill was reduced when we switched to a Comcast Business promotion,” says Cripps.

“Customers have come to expect WiFi,” says Cripps. Thanks to Comcast Business, JP Licks is an XFINITY® WiFi Hotspot, joining the more than 1,000,000 existing XFINITY® WiFi locations nationwide. That value added has customers stopping by for both ice cream and email.