DATAMARS

TEXTILE ID

Appetite for Technology Adds Savings to the Table

Among La Tavola Fine Linen's clients are some of the most prestigious wineries, event planners and caterers in the United States and abroad; their linens grace the tables of some of the most elegant events throughout the world. Located in the San Francisco Bay Area, not far from high-tech Silicon Valley, it's no surprise that LaTavola selected high performance RFID technology from Datamars to deliver a customer experience that's as sophisticated as their elite clientele.

Learn how this leading-edge linen rental company offers exceptionally responsive service at incredible efficiency.

Application Snapshot

> Company: La Tavola
> Industry: Linen Rental
> Unique Garments: ~25,000 and counting
> Solution: Datamars high frequency Laundry-Chips™, scanners, tunnel antennas and PartyTrack's Inventory Management System
> Results: Reduced loss, reduced labor, increase in service offerings

Background

La Tavola, located in San Francisco, Calif., U.S., is focused on creating lasting impressions for its customers by responding with speed and accuracy—a tall order considering the eight collections, more than 15 sizes, and over 600 unique colors representing thousands of fine table linens. And that's just the table linens. In addition, LaTavola offers a variety of coordinating items including napkins, runners, chair cushions, chair covers and sashes, aisle runners and pillows. "We really wanted to make this business run as smoothly as possible for our benefit as well as our customers; plus reduce operating costs and improve productivity," said Betsy Stone, La Tavola owner.

Challenge

In the linen rental business, it's not enough to deliver the right items when and where the client wants them. Accuracy is equally as important when linens are returned. Accurately managing delivery and return when multiple clients hold multiple events, often at the same time, is a major challenge.

"We felt much more comfortable with Datamars' response time, customer service and willingness to adapt the system to our needs."

Betsy Stone, Owner
La Tavola Fine Linens

In many cases, the linens have to be quickly turned around. To minimize loss, linen counts must be instantaneous because venues constantly hold events, and it's imperative that clients are notified of missing items quickly. The client has a much better chance of locating them if he or she can check the premises before another event is held in the same space.

Mix-ups on returned linens are inevitable—especially among clients holding multiple events simultaneously. La Tavola needed a fast, accurate sorting process and the ability to quickly track down missing linens. The current process was labor-intensive and took as much as a week to track down missing linens.

"Our goal is to never lose a customer because we are trying to track down the status of a linen and therefore, unable to respond in a timely manner," said Stone.

Solution

A combination of Datamars Z-Rack antennas for outbound clean linens, tunnel antenna for in-bound bagged soiled linens, high-frequency RFID LaundryChips™ and Party Track tracking software streamlined La Tavola's manual process into a cost-saving, automated and highly responsive system.

The team developed a customized *To Clean* station—an innovative one-step process which automatically takes returned linens from *cleaning* to *available* status.

Datamars' Tunnel Antenna

Here's how it works

Outbound clean linens ("clean out") are loaded onto the Datamars Z-Racks which pass through the Z-Rack antenna. The Party Track software assigns the scanned RFID tracking code to the order being shipped. This improves the quality of the shipping process by identifying when wrong items were picked or when the quantities picked do not match ordered quantities.

Upon return, bags containing hundreds of soiled linens pass through the tunnel antenna at the *To Clean* station, where they are identified, verified against the original order and variances reported before moving on to the laundering cycle. This considerably reduces operational costs by eliminating the process of counting each linen—the system automatically records items returned and identifies those items not returned. Once cleaned, the linens are scanned and bagged in a seamless process.

Party Track software records the linen as available and produces a label to attach to the bagged linen, which helps warehouse staff accurately and efficiently store the item.

The benefit of the system is twofold—(1) clients at the event venue can easily identify what linen size they have and (2) warehouse staff can easily pull orders and put away orders. Datamars installed a scanner on the arm of the automatic bagging machine, and Party Track wrote program to interface with the scanner.

Datamars' Z-Rack Antenna

"Now with just a single scan the system automatically moves the item from clean to available status and outputs an identification label including linen style, color, size and warehouse location," said Stone.

Datamars LaundryChips™

Business Benefits

The RFID system enables La Tavola to enhance their reputation for outstanding service by allowing them to offer additional services never before possible, such as true, reliable same day service. With a robust tracking process that immediately indicates exactly where in the process and at what location the linen resides, same day service is easier and more accurate.

"With every other system, when the linen is returned it is immediately in a *ready-to-rent* status. That means that if a client calls in a same-day order, it would show available, when it was really in a stack of linens to be laundered. With Datamars & Party Track, we know immediately where that linen is and in what stage of the process it sits." said Stone.

Additionally, processing speeds have more than doubled, enabling La Tavola to respond instantaneously. For example, even during the reservation process, the system automatically alerts operators when linens, which are being reserved, have been returned the day before, giving La Tavola the opportunity to process them immediately or suggest an alternative.

The technology, provided by Datamars and Party Track, reduces scanning time; and because the system is fully automated, it will also substantially reduce labor costs.

Visit La Tavola Fine Linen at www.latavolalinen.com

About Datamars

Datamars is a leading global supplier of high performance RFID-based solutions. Founded in 1988, the company has developed a broad range of identification solutions based on RFID transponders, readers and antennas and is currently market leader in the textile identification market. Fully integrated product portfolios, technological innovation and a profound understanding of customer requirements have earned Datamars a reputation for quality and performance worldwide. As an RFID manufacturing company, Datamars works with strong partners and has developed a worldwide distribution network in each of its target markets. Datamars employs more than 160 employees globally with offices in Europe, Asia, and the Americas.

About Party Track

Party Track software has been used for more than 12 years by Tent Rental, Linen Rental, and Full-Service Party Equipment Rental companies. Their software includes order entry, warehouse manager, accounts receivable and reporting modules for customers ranging from smaller rental businesses with annual revenues less than 1 million to larger multi-location businesses with annual revenues greater than 10 million. Visit www.partytrack.com.

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