

# FRUITFUL

Innovative concessions and catering solutions, in addition to new products, are enhancing venues' abilities to increase revenues in the tough economy. Feature writer, Steve Traiman, highlights comments from leading North American and Europe-based firms.

**W**ith the global economy downturn, the importance of food and beverage revenue to teams and venue operators takes on an added urgency, as this is second only to ticket and suite revenues.

The first part of PanStadia's Concessions, Catering & Hospitality coverage that appeared in the Summer 2010 issue, focused on how leading concessionaires and caterers are working with their client venues to develop true partnerships to bolster the bottom line for both parties. Included was insight from Delaware North, Chris Bigelow, ARAMARK, Centerplate, Ovations Food Services, Sodexo USA and consultant Bill Caruso (WC&A) for North America, with the Compass Group UK & Ireland and Lindley Catering offering insights for the UK.

In the second part of this feature, the many suppliers of concessions solutions software and systems, food and drink products, equipment and delivery systems give their thoughts in regards to increasing productivity, enhancing the fan experience and, perhaps most importantly, building per cap revenues. Offering some targeted insight to their venue clients are concessions solutions providers Texas Digital, Agilysys, MICROS Systems, Radiant Systems/Quest and FanGo Systems. On the food and beverage side, new and enhanced product vendors include food delights from Gold Medal Products and Pukka Pies; beverage dispensing equipment from Micro Matic, Niagara Dispensing and Ellickson International; and portable concessions equipment from B-R Carts & Kiosks, FWE and SICO Inc.

## Catering, Concessions & Hospitality Solutions Update

Texas Digital has recently installed its VitalCAST content management software and LCD digital menu boards at

several Texas stadiums and arenas. Romney Stewart, Vice President of Customer Services at Texas Digital advised: "At American Airlines Center in Dallas, Texas Digital upgraded our VitalCAST software to fully interface with Agilysys' InfoGenesis POS system. Content changes made in the POS system are now automatically populated on-screen and reflected on the digital menu boards throughout the entire arena."

In Round Rock, TX, at Dell Diamond, home of the AAA Round Rock Express, and in Corpus Christi at Whataburger Field, home of the AA Corpus Christi Hooks, Texas Digital has installed digital menu boards in the permanent concessions areas of both minor league baseball ballparks.

Stewart commented: "We worked closely with Sodexo USA, which operates the concessions at both facilities, and manages its own food and beverage content on the digital menu boards through their Radiant POS system. Each stand-alone concession stand is individually branded, and different-branded stands have product variations on-screen."

Stewart also highlighted another application at the MLB Texas Rangers Ballpark in Arlington, where Texas Digital has installed twenty small, high-bright amber LED displays in the box office windows that are all networked together for easy updates from the manager's office to show which windows are Open, Closed and Will Call. Their high viewability in sunlight makes them easy to read for patrons to ensure they are waiting in the appropriate line.

## eMenu Food Ordering Solution

Agilysys, a leading provider of innovative information technology and hospitality software solutions, has launched the eMenu solution, a new self-service, web-enabled desktop and kiosk food ordering system. Its

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*Texas Digital's LED digital menu boards for Sodexo in Whataburger Field ballpark, Corpus Christi, TX.*

IMAGE: TEXAS DIGITAL

intuitive and convenient online interface allows customers to place orders quickly and easily, and its advanced administrative functions enable food service providers to incorporate their own branding and workflow into a complete online meal-ordering platform. A premier UK venue recently implemented the solution, and according to Tina Stehle, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Agilysys Hospitality Solutions Group, the eMenu solution helps food service providers conserve costs, particularly in a tough economy. Stehle also said: "Most hospitality and food service operators operate within tight margins, even in the best of times. Now, more than ever, they need technology that can help them streamline operations and gain a competitive edge. Automated food ordering systems offer convenience to customers and enable food service providers to increase order processing capacity. This kind of technology benefits everyone."

Providers that use automated food ordering solutions have also discovered its potential to increase revenue. Research shows that these systems tend to boost sales and, in fact, are often more consistent than wait staff at offering up-selling alternatives. Stehle commented: "With eMenu, food service providers can boost line speed and table-turn rates, especially during peak periods."

Other benefits of online and automated ordering systems such as eMenu's include enhanced order accuracy and multilingual options. "With labour costs continuing to rise, businesses are eager to incorporate technology that enables them to reassign staff from the point-of-service to other areas," Stehle concluded. "The eMenu solution can help reduce operational costs and increase

profit margins, while enhancing the customer experience. Implementing an automated ordering system allows food service providers to offer customers state-of-the-art technology and focus their efforts on the business of preparing and serving food."

### Stadium & Retail Systems

For Radiant Systems, Marketing Manager Erica Mattson noted the recent agreement with the NFL's Jacksonville (FL) Jaguars to implement the Quest Venue Management software and hardware in the concession stands and restaurants of EverBank Field, in addition to deploying the CounterPoint retail point-of-sale (POS) system for its retail operations.

"Customer satisfaction, speed of service and connecting with our ticket holders were top of our minds when looking for a new technology provider," said Bruce Swindell, Jaguars' Executive Director of Information Technology. "Radiant's innovative stadium and retail solutions enable us to provide the ultimate fan experience from the moment ticket holders first step into our stadium."

Prior to the current season that opened this August, the Jaguars outfitted the stadium with Radiant's Quest POS software and hardware, including the wireless POS solution, within its standard and premium concessions and its three restaurants. The Jaguars also installed Radiant P1515 and P1560 wireless terminals running CounterPoint retail POS software within its retail and souvenir operations.

Mattson added: "Using Radiant's technology, the Jaguars are delivering faster and more convenient service" ➔



Concessions staffer at the NFL New York Giants and New York Jets' New Meadowlands Stadium inputs an order into the MICROS Workstation terminal.

IMAGE: MICROS/NEW MEADOWLANDS STADIUM

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and innovative payment methods, such as loaded ticket functionality that gives fans the ability to pre-load dollar amounts onto their admission tickets to use for food and beverage purchases during games. Radiant's retail product suite will also help maximise customer satisfaction and loyalty by serving customers quickly and ensuring that popular items are always in stock through its inventory tracking capabilities. By selecting a single technology provider for all of its retail and concession operations, the team can rely on one vendor to ensure that its technology is running smoothly and efficiently at all times."

### Advanced POS Solutions

"The stadium and arena market is constantly evolving and continuously embracing cutting-edge technology," said Dan Bell, Vice President, MICROS Leisure & Entertainment Business Unit. "We've become an industry-leader in developing advanced POS solutions featuring state-of-the-art applications and full integration capabilities."

The New Meadowlands Stadium, home of the NFL Jets and Giants (and featured in this issue), recently opened with the MICROS 9700 Hospitality Management System (HMS), mymicros.net, Mobile MICROS, MICROS iCare, and a variety of MICROS terminals, including the Workstation 5 (WS5), mobile handheld devices (Motorola MC55), and the new Keyboard Workstation 270 (KW270). Other recent installations include Red Bull Arena, home of the MLS New York Red Bulls; Chase Field, home of the MLB Arizona Diamondbacks; Target Field, home of the MLB Minnesota Twins; and Busch Stadium; home of the MLB St. Louis Cardinals.

Bell advised that the KW270 — which is ideal for indoor and outdoor concessions — features a 5.7-inch colour QVGA display, robust keyboard, spill proof case work, integrated magnetic card reader, integrated scanner, wide operating temperature range, battery and wireless card. MICROS has a published POS specification available to any third party integrator to customise and

configure a solution, including online ordering and Smartphone integration. Another application is MICROS's real-time value added tickets, which are increasingly important as the convenience of loading value on the ticket for all facility concession and merchandise purchases, drives increased per cap revenue. MICROS's loyalty solution has the capabilities to reward fans for attending events and for their concession purchases and makes it possible to track fans' attendance and offer incentives to increase purchases during visits.

Bell added: "Our innovative POS solution helps to improve business operations, boost profits and increase touch points for fans, making it a perfect fit for point-of-sale anytime, anywhere."

### Mobile/Smart-Phone Platform

"FanGo has transformed the fan experience in stadiums and arenas," noted FanGo's CEO Collin Wallace. "By allowing every fan to order food from their seat using their smart-phone, we have completely eliminated the need to wait in line. Not only are facilities able to process twice as many orders during intermissions, mobile orders have proven to be more than twice as large as traditional orders. This year, the FanGo mobile platform has adapted to better suit both the customers on the front-end and concessionaires on the back-end."

The improvements were first implemented at Louisville Slugger Field, home of the AAA affiliate of the Cincinnati Reds, over the summer. FanGo will also be available for fans at Rupp Arena, home of University of Kentucky men's and women's basketball in Lexington, and the new KFC Yum! Center in downtown Louisville.

Wallace added: "With the new FanGo app, customers experience a smoother interface and lightning-quick app speed. They also have the ability to order merchandise, as well as alert security of issues inside the facility. On the back-end, FanGo integrates with point-of-sale providers, including MICROS and Radiant Systems. This



*This iPhone with FanGo app is used at Louisville (KY) Slugger Field to get orders delivered to fans in seats by uniformed staffer.*

IMAGE: FANGO

allows FanGo to seamlessly operate within the existing architecture of the facility. Additionally, customer data and overall sales are gathered in one place, which allows managers to better learn how to improve their concessions and merchandise sales.”

### Enticing Food Offerings

The MLB American League champion Texas Rangers hit a homerun at their Ballpark at Arlington with Gold Medal Funnel Cakes and Waffle Dawgs, also called Fudge Puppies. John Evans, Gold Medal Senior Vice President, told PanStadia: “The delicious treats are extremely profitable, ranging from 75% to 88% gross margins, and add something unique for guests. The Waffle Dogs are Belgian waffles coated with chocolate or countless other toppings. As a bonus to speed delivery, they can be made ahead of time and kept fresh in a warmer.”

Evans also noted some other profitable and unique items that Gold Medal recently introduced to offer stadium and arena guests: “Funnel Fingers are a new twist to classic funnel cakes with gross margins of 75% or more, and can be paired for added revenue with icing cups,

chocolate sauce, fruit toppings and whipped cream. They are easy to make, easy to serve and easy to eat, as the long, skinny shapes are ideal for dipping and on-the-go eating. Saratoga Swirls are a new way to serve ever-popular potatoes, brought from the fair midway to arenas and stadiums. Customers are lining up for this tempting treat that has a low food cost. They’re spiralled around a stick, making them easy to eat and carry, and can be topped off with such delicious ‘Savory Shakes’ flavours like Ketchup, Jalapeno and BBQ. Gold Medal’s new 5 Alarm Blazen Hot Flavor Additive can ‘turn up the heat’



*Gold Medal® Products’ Waffle Dogger unit is featured at Metroplex Sportservice’s popular Waffle Dogs booth at Rangers Ballpark in Arlington, TX.*

IMAGE: METROPLEX SPORTSERVICE



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*Pukka Pies' England Band playing at Villa Park, one of their many concessions locations across the UK.*

IMAGE: PUKKA PIES/VILLA PARK

on popcorn, Saratoga Swirls, nuts, Puff Poppers, corn dogs and more. The concessions staff simply adds the Blazen oil to cheese, buttery toppings and any oils, or it can be sprayed on for a hot kick."

### Speedy Pies

In the UK, Tim Storer, Managing Director at Pukka Pies, reported: "Pukka Pies have been synonymous with football in the UK for nearly thirty years and are now sold at over thirty football grounds, including Premier League side Aston Villa. Based on this success the company completed an extensive development programme that resulted in the new microwaveable '3½ Minute Pie' range. It initially includes All Steak and Chicken, and is now available from selected major retailers, including 600 Tesco and 200 Asda outlets."

A new short crust pastry recipe has also been specially developed by Pukka Pies' research team for the microwave. Coupled with innovative new packaging that includes a laminated card to ensure that the pastry has a light crumbly eating quality, this ensures a truly delicious pie is created every time. Pukka Pies have ensured that the steak and chicken fillings remain consistent and loyal to the traditional qualities expected by customers.

Storer added: "Creating a microwaveable pie such as this has been something of a holy grail for the industry. We have been truly delighted with the highly successful results in extensive consumer research about the pies' texture, taste and quality. We believe that the new pies offer the ultimate in high quality, speedy convenience food and represent excellent value for money when compared to other microwaveable meals."

### Draft Beer Dispensing Systems

Micro Matic USA, Inc. has been helping breweries, retailers and beer lovers enjoy the taste of draft beer for over 50 years, noted Richard Banks, Director, Foodservice/National Accounts: "As an industry leader in the manufacture and sale of draft beer dispensing systems, we provide a complete system solution from stadiums to corner pubs."

At SunLife Stadium in Miami, FL, home of the NFL Miami Dolphins, Micro Matic took a non-functioning beer system on the fourth level and completely renovated it. Over 6,100ft of trunk line was connected to 144 two-faucet towers, doubling the dispense capacity. And at BC Place in Vancouver, BC, site of the 2010 Winter Olympics opening and closing ceremonies, Micro Matic were responsible for remodelling 45 stations with four to six faucets each, and over 3,000ft of trunk line was installed.

Banks added: "In each case, Micro Matic sales representatives worked with the customer to design a system and answer questions about the operation of key components. Our goal is that the investment our customer makes will meet their needs and deliver a quality glass of draft beer. With our national network of Certified Dealer/Installers we offer installation and maintenance services throughout North America, we're constantly seeking new and innovative dispense products. Through our global manufacturing capabilities, four stocking warehouses, training facilities and knowledgeable staff, we're focused on providing maximum sales and profits from draft beer to all our venue clients."

*Micro Matic renovated the kegroom (inset picture) at Miami's SunLife Stadium (main picture), doubling dispense capacity to the beverage serving stations.*

IMAGE: MICRO MATIC/SUNLIFE STADIUM





*Ellickson Draft Master two-tap "pour your own pint" mobile stations are already in two Las Vegas casinos, just two years after launching onto the North American market.*

IMAGE: ELLICKSON

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*Niagara Dispensing's EXACTAP units at Dublin's O2 Arena brought record sales.*

IMAGE: O2 ARENA  
DUBLIN/NIAGARA



### Pour Your Own Pints

Ellickson International is an Irish company that has been selling Draft Master 'pour your own pint' tables to outlets and venues there for over two years, and introduced their unique devices to North America this Spring. Declan Duggan, Director of Sales & Marketing at Ellickson International USA reported: "The units were a big hit at the June ALSD conference reception in New York, and they have been very well received, with over 40 placed as of early September. Casinos in Las Vegas have found them a great revenue driver, with placements in Nine Fine Irishmen at NYNY and Mandalay Bay's Sports Book, putting the units well and truly on the map."

Essentially, the mobile unit offering suits the arena business best. It houses two full kegs under the table, including a full twin-tap beer dispense system,

and is controlled wirelessly through a software controller managed by a staff member at a pre-determined location. The two-tap tower in the centre of the table rotates 320 degrees so that customers can simply twist the taps to pour a beer, so they don't have to miss a moment of the event they are attending. After an event, it can be moved easily as it is on wheels.

"Draft Master is truly unique and with zero waste it returns on the investment quickly," Duggan emphasised.

### High Octane Beverage Dispenser Systems

Niagara Dispensing introduced its EXACTAP beverage dispenser systems in 2006. Alex Cleary, Marketing Manager for the company explained: "EXACTAP is the fastest draught beverage dispensing system in the world, capable of dispensing a perfect pint of Lager in under three seconds, or Stout in under five seconds. Our first full indoor arena install at the O2 Arena in Dublin, Ireland, has been extremely successful. On opening night,

EXACTAP dispensed 22,900 pints, more than doubling the previous maximum sales threshold of 10,000. We also just completed a stadium-wide installation at Manchester City FC in the UK, and another at Dublin's new Aviva Stadium. At Aviva, we installed over 300 EXACTAP dispense points, giving concessions' staff the ability to pour over 6,000 perfect pints per minute."

Neil Fischer, Sales Director at Niagara added: "We are currently looking to further increase the efficiency and ultimate profitability of the Aviva installation by introducing an automated beer saver system to minimise any wastage that would otherwise be lost through line cleaning. In addition, Ethernet functionality will allow networking of all 300-plus EXACTAP's for either stadium-local or remote programming and/or data collection."

Among other leading global venues with EXACTAP installations are MLB Comerica Park, Chicago; NFL Browns Stadium Cleveland, OH; MLB Target Field, Minneapolis; NFL SunLife (formerly Dolphins) Stadium, Miami, ➔

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*Portable Budweiser bar from FWE is one of most popular stadium units.*

IMAGE: FWE

FL; MLB Great American Ball Park, Cincinnati, OH; HSBC Arena, Buffalo, NY; Credit Union Centre, Saskatoon, Sask.; CN Centre, Prince George, BC; Allianz Arena, Munich; Olympic Stadium, Berlin; Odyssey Arena, Belfast; Post Finance Arena, Bern; Budapest (Hungary) Sports Arena; Coca Cola Stadium (Ellis Park), Johannesburg; and Newlands Cricket Stadium, Cape Town.

### Mobile Concessions Units

As a custom designer and manufacturer of portable carts and kiosks for food and beverage and merchandise, B-R Carts & Kiosks has had great success in guiding construction projects at NFL, MLB, NBA, NHL, and NCAA stadiums and arenas, as well as numerous Minor League Baseball venues.

Managing Partner Nancy Bryan Role told PanStadia: "The B-R Carts team has extensive experience in sales, design, manufacturing, project management and business management disciplines. We're committed to the manufacturing of portables using a variety of construction materials to offer our clients an array of options when examining their appropriate applications. State-of-the-art materials not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of our carts, but also insure their long-term durability in any weather conditions. We listen to our clients to understand their needs and objectives to insure a finished product

that enhances their customers' overall experience and drives revenue for the facility. Our high level of repeat business reflects our clients understanding that B-R Carts & Kiosks is committed to exceeding their expectations."

Among recent installations are portable carts and kiosks for AT&T Park in San Francisco; the new KFC YUM! Center in Louisville; New Yankee Stadium and Citi Field in New York; Coors Field in Denver; Joe Louis Arena in Detroit; Angels Stadium in Anaheim; and Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg.

Role added: "As one of the newest members of the European Stadium Supplies Group (ESSG), we're definitely focused on expanding our portable carts and kiosks to more markets outside North America."

### Portable Bars, Banquet Cabinets & More

For FWE, Curt Benson, Marketing Manager observed: "For over 50 years, FWE has been manufacturing tough, durable Portable Bars and we now manufacture 24 different models for the foodservice and hospitality industries, with an expanding focus on stadiums and arenas. We also offer 60 Banquet Cabinets, four Refrigerators, two Air Screens and 50 Utility Cart models. We're particularly proud of our recent NSF Certification for safety for our complete line of Portable Bars, earned after months of rigorous product testing, a distinction that sets us apart from most other industry manufacturers."

The units feature a rugged design with stainless steel frames that combine with base frame bumpers to absorb shock during transport, and top and bottom precision-welded steel frames that prevent sagging and twisting.

Benson added: "The NSF Portable Bars also offer tremendous cost savings to arena and stadium operators, who can reduce costs from 25¢ per conventional 6 ounce serving to 6¢ per Post-Mix Bag-in-Box 6 ounce serving."

### Mobile Buffet Station Concept

SICO Incorporated recently introduced a new concept in buffet stations to the arena and stadium market, as Ken Steinbauer, Vice President of Sales, observed: "The SICO Mobile DECO Buffet Series was created by master chefs, working with our designers to enhance the complete buffet dining experience for sports and entertainment venue luxury suites and clubs. The new series, now being built for our first orders in the market, consists of ten different mobile buffet stations: Action Cooking; Carving; Holding Stations for hot or cold foods and beverages; Dessert; Bar; and ambient Side Stations to display foods, or any accessory desired for the buffet presentation. The

mobility of the new Buffet Series brings the action of the kitchen to wherever is desired."

Among special features, Action Cooking Stations are configured with induction cooking units, and Holding Stations are configured with induction warming units and/or heating plates. Beyond the perfect functionality of each buffet station, SICO designed each with an optional decorative lighting package that illuminates a countless array of colours to complement the design theme of any room, or to support the theme of a specific event.

Steinbauer added: "These stations will unleash the creativity of food and beverage professionals at any stadium or arena, and the SICO DECO Buffet Series will create a dining experience for VIP customers that will be beyond compare."

This sampling of cutting edge technology, forward thinking equipment designers, and creative food product suppliers is strong evidence that the industry is working together with arena and stadium concessionaires and caterers, and venue owner/operators, to enhance the increasingly important bottom line for food and beverage revenue. ✪

*This SICO Carving Station is one of ten models in the firm's new Mobile DECO Buffet Series.*

IMAGE: SICO INCORPORATED

