

# Order's Up!

## Wings Restaurants Serving Up Better Information Through Corporate Network

A local franchise operator of Buffalo Wild Wings is discovering how IT has redefined the sharing of information from the restaurant level to the corporation, in the process giving managers the tools to make quicker and better decisions.

As recently as last fall, Washington Township, Mich.-based JK&T Wings, Inc., which operates 19 restaurants in Michigan, Illinois and Louisiana, was using little more than e-mail to send store information to the company's head office.

That changed when Jeremy Krol, the franchisee's controller, introduced JK&T owners to David King, president of Red Level Networks, an infrastructure solutions firm he had used at a previous employer.

Krol knew what his new employer's Buffalo Wild Wings stores needed. And what they didn't have.

"The financial reporting we were doing was through a Web-based portal," says Krol. "What we needed was an ability to generate consolidated information that would allow us to make quicker decisions. We didn't have the infrastructure we needed to make that happen."

Red Level Networks gave Krol a number of options, which he says helped the owners make decisions that made sense to a company that's still expanding. Two new restaurant locations are in the works and the company is "still growing."

From the perspective of David

King, Livonia-based Red Level Networks' CEO, the real opportunity was giving the Buffalo Wild Wings' franchisee the tools they needed to speed up decision making and in

appealed to JK&T Wings.

"One of the best things about Red Level is that they didn't try to sell me something I didn't need," says Krol. "They gave us several

options that give us room to grow. Everything was very clear and spelled out for us."

As far as benefits are concerned, much of it comes down to one word: speed.

"In the restaurant business, you're dealing with big volumes," says Krol. "Whether it's food, beer, or liquor categories, if you know what's going on in a few days you can make adjustments, instead of waiting two months for the information. That allows us to react much more quickly."

While Red Level's David King acknowledges it's more common for individual restaurants to have local point of sale systems for use by serving staff, having management and accounting tools presents

some of the biggest advantages for multi-location restaurant operations such as JK&T's Buffalo Wild Wings.

"When they have information being generated from several locations, being able to share that information in real time becomes important. They need a collective way to do that."

Jeremy Krol agrees.

"It's made us more efficient. And obviously we were able to implement a new financial software package that has helped us. We now have the ability to turn information around and make decisions more quickly. That's improved our bottom line." ■



*For David King, president of Red Level Networks, one of the real advantages of IT is speed. "Speed of information is critical to making business decisions." The company gave a local franchisee of Buffalo Wild Wings the tools to do just that.*

the process become more profitable.

"A restaurant is like any other corporation in the sense that speed of information is critical to making business decisions," says King. "How the information is presented, the clarity of the information and the ease of access is very important."

While Red Level has created an information infrastructure that provides easy access to store-specific and store-wide information, King says the process is an ongoing one, typically with one level of integration building on another.

It was that approach that