EPSON®

OUT WITH THE LOT, BUT EPSON STAYS!

CASE STUDY

BUSINESS SYSTEMS

kikki.K

Since its opening in January, 1999, kikki.K has been acclaimed widely in the Australian media as one of this country's great small business success stories. Founded by Kristina 'Kikki' Karlsson, the company designs, produces and sells a unique range of home and office stationery products. In November 2003, following immense success with their first store in the fashionable Melbourne Central complex, Kristina and her partner, Paul Lacy, expanded their operations to include a new store at Chadstone shopping centre and an office/warehouse in Port Melbourne, followed by a store in Sydney's Bondi during the first half of 2004.

Leading technology with style

For Lacy, who fills the demanding position of kikki.K general manager, expansion of the business called for a serious look at the entire infrastructure. "When it was a case of just one store and a small office, we were able to get by – just – with what we had at hand," he said. "But now with three retail stores, an office/warehouse and more stores planned, we reassessed everything from business procedures through to our technology."

The result of this infrastructure reassessment was a major overhaul of kikki.K's technology environment. This involved bringing in new computers for the server, desktops and counters; the latest in computer operating system and application software; and even a remote connectivity solution to establish a wide area network encompassing all kikki.K sites.

EPSON stays!

Essentially, the kikki.K information technology overhaul saw everything replaced, with very few exceptions; and one of those exceptions was the company's EPSON TM-T88III thermal POS printers.

"The ultimate goal of our technology overhaul was to bring in the very best of technology for our main office and retail operations," Lacy said. "And every bit of that technology had to embody reliability, ease-of-use, versatility to cater to a growing and evolving business, and, without doubt, style!

"The TM-T88III printers already demonstrated their leadership in each of those areas, so as far as we were concerned, it was a case of EPSON stays."

Total ease-of-use

The growth of kikki.K's retail operations, with two new stores opening within barely six months of each other, is a good indication of the popularity of the company's products. During peak trading times, store staff can be faced with long queues of customers waiting to make purchases. In these situations, Lacy knows that failure of equipment can easily result in loss of revenue and – more importantly – dissatisfied customers.

"kikki.K is a *style* company. When people come in to our stores they expect to see style in everything; and that includes even our point-of-sale systems. Aside from the fact that the TM-T88IIIs had proved themselves time and time again as one of the few totally reliable pieces of equipment in our operations, the printers' casing design and availability in black helped make the decision to keep with EPSON POS printers one of the easiest we had."

Kristina Karlsson
Managing Director
kikki.K

"I need to know that whatever equipment I bring in to support our operations is totally reliable; *and* is easy to use," Lacy said. "We've had TM-T88IIIs in our stores for several years now, and there has never been a failure.

"When it comes to ease-of-use, this is another area where the printers have really shown their worth," he continued. "I've been in some stores where counter staff have spent well over a minute changing paper rolls in POS printers. While that doesn't seem like much time, it's frustrating and annoying; and this is precisely one of the reasons why I chose to use the TM-T88III in kikki.K operations.

"When the printer runs out of paper, our store staff can replace the paper roll in less than 10 seconds. Quick, easy and professional - precisely what we need."

Versatility

It is a fact of life in business that some customers are *never* satisfied, regardless of the quality of service or goods. For kikki.K staff, dealing with returns from customers has been made significantly easier by virtue of the TM-T88III's vertical and horizontal barcode printing feature.

Lacy commented: "When a customer does bring something in for refund or exchange, we simply scan the barcode on their receipt and our POS software automatically brings up the original transaction. Even in the face of a customer, who may be somewhat 'difficult', this shows us as an easy to deal with company - and that's important."

Adding even further to the TM-T88III's versatility value for kikki.K is the printer's ability to print receipts with logos - an ability Lacy is planning to exploit in a planned POS software upgrade project. "Kristina and I are constantly looking for ways to reinforce our branding, image and name as an undisputed leader in the home/office style industry," he said.

"The ability to store our logo on the POS printer's Flash ROM and have it print on every receipt is something we regard as a real business benefit in helping us achieve that reinforcement."

It's about style, as well

For Kristina, style is an imperative. "kikki.K is a *style* company," she stated. "When people come in to our stores they expect to see style in everything; and that includes even our point-of-sale systems.

"When we replaced our computers and terminals, all the new equipment was a very striking black, which really looks very stylish in our stores. Aside from the fact that the TM-T88IIIs had proved themselves time and time again as one of the few totally reliable pieces of equipment in our operations, the printers' casing design and availability in black helped make the decision to keep with EPSON POS printers one of the easiest we had."