Why XERA mPOS?
Advanced Hold and Fire

The Scenario

A great many restaurants have struggled for years with how to properly pace orders going to the kitchen and to the table. Some restaurants have even resorted to taking partial orders to help with the pace of the meal. An example would be asking for an appetizer order and then coming back to the table to take the entrée order. As a diner I have always found this method a bit awkward even though I knew what the server was attempting to do.

The real problem is the kitchen being slammed with the entire order at once from several different tables and then being expected to remember when to drop the items to pace every meal in the restaurant. It is unrealistic to expect the kitchen staff to be able to meet this demand.

The same can be said for the wait staff if they are expected to not enter items into the POS system until they are ready for them to be started. It is totally unfair for the wait staff to recognize the cook times for all the items on the menu and then send the order when it is time to start cooking.

There is also the challenge of different items taking different times to cook. Sending the entire order to the kitchen and expecting all entrée items to come out together is simply unrealistic.

The Solution

Let technology help. XERA mPOS has the ability to allow for items to be placed on hold and sent to the kitchen in an orderly fashion so the kitchen is not slammed and overwhelmed.

Manual Hold and Fire – Servers can place any item on hold and then return to the terminal to manually release the hold as the table is ready for the next meal course. This allows the server to watch the table and pace the meal as the needs of the customer are determined.

Timed Hold and Fire – When placing items on hold the server has options available to them for a timed hold/fire for the individual items being held. The system will display the current time and allow the server to determine the exact time that they want the item released to the kitchen. The server also has the option to place the item on hold for a specific length of time. A list of preset minutes is displayed to make selection of the hold time more convenient. Setting an automatic time to fire the item to the kitchen is also a failsafe option in case the server is busy and forgets to return to the terminal to manually fire the item.

Hold and Fire by Course – XERA mPOS allows the server to sort the order by menu course, then place an entire course on hold. The items held can be on a timed or manual hold. This allows the server to enter the entire order, hold the entrée course for a specific timed hold, place the deserts on a manual hold and fire the drinks, appetizers and salads to the kitchen by touching the Done button.

Automatic Early Release Based on Prep Times – XERA mPOS has the option for prep times to be set for groups of items. These prep times are then used to calculate when to automatically fire items to the kitchen for more accurate delivery times to the table. This then does not require the servers to know the preparation times for individual menu items. The server simply enters into the system when they would like the item to be ready and XERA knows to fire the item to the kitchen before that time based upon the preparation time.

For example, if the server sets the delivery time for the steak to be in 15 minutes and the preparation time is 7 minutes then XERA mPOS will fire the item to the kitchen 7 minutes early instead of 15.

For an entire order of entrée items this becomes even more important if you consider the various times it takes to prepare different items. Some items just take longer to prepare. XERA POS will fire each item to the kitchen early based upon the prep time of that specific item. This ensures that all of the entrée items for that table are ready at the same time.

This allows the software to send orders by course based upon prep times so that the entire order comes out of the kitchen at the same time.
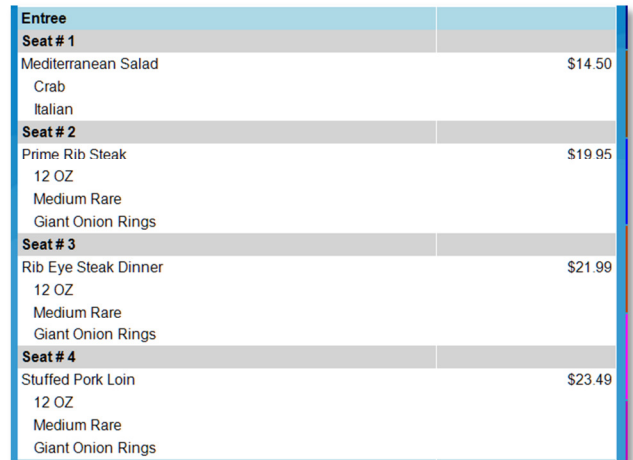
Entire Order Can be Entered at Once – This now allows the server to take the entire order, including every course when the customer is ready. The system will pace the items to the kitchen, taking into account the preparation times for the items and insure that the customer's dining experience is not rushed.

Entree	
Seat # 1	
Mediterranean Salad	$14.50
Crab	
Italian	
Seat # 2	
Prime Rib Steak	$19.95
12 OZ	
Medium Rare	
Giant Onion Rings	
Seat # 3	
Rib Eye Steak Dinner	$21.99
12 OZ	
Medium Rare	
Giant Onion Rings	
Seat # 4	
Stuffed Pork Loin	$23.49
12 OZ	
Medium Rare	
Giant Onion Rings	

If needed, the entire order can be paused or placed On Hold while the server goes back to the table to ask a question. The server does not have to leave the order open on the terminal or send it before they are ready. Placing the entire order On Hold gives them the time they need to get it right.

The Conclusion

Most POS systems struggle with the implementation and application of this feature. Some may have the ability to hold and item and manually fire the item. Fewer will have the ability to automatically fire the item based on a timer. Fewer still will have the ability for the system to know how long it takes to cook an item and fire the item to the kitchen ahead of the desired delivery time.

Let technology help smooth out your operation. XERA mPOS is able to perform all of these functions, making the application of the feature much easier for any restaurant owner.