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## US Beverage Net aims for major growth in coming years

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SYRACUSE — A local company that developed a method to monitor sales of draft beer in bars and restaurants could have as many as 5,000 locations using its technology nationwide by 2013.

The firm, US Beverage Net, Inc., started in 2005 and currently has about 170 bars and restaurants in 16 states and Canada using its technology, which combines flow meters with software. The system gives owners and managers an accurate picture of how much draft beer they're selling, explains Rajiv Kalra, chief administrative officer for US Beverage Net.

By the end of 2009, some 400 locations will be using the company's system, Kalra says.

US Beverage began as a side project of its CEO and founder, Mark Young. Young previously owned and was president of Premier Beverage Distributing, a Syracuse-based distributor of craft beer and other beverages.

Kalra says Young was looking for a way to better track how much beer bars and restaurants had left on site. The idea was to eliminate the need for a sales person to regularly visit customers simply to check on their stock of beer.

Young was looking for a way to compete with much larger distributors that had far bigger sales staffs than he did, Kalra explains.

The end result was US Beverage Net's system, which has a patent pending.

"You can count beer bottles and liquor bottles, but you can't measure draft beer," Kalra says. "They used to kick the kegs or shake them. If it hurt really bad when they kicked it, it was full. If it didn't hurt that much, it was half full."

Bars and restaurants were essentially



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**Josh Solomon, director of sales at US Beverage Net, Inc., works on installing a flow meter on a customized bar that is being installed in the company's headquarters. The firm currently has about 170 bars and restaurants in 16 states and Canada using its technology, which combines flow meters with software.**

guessing at how much draft beer they sold, Kalra says.

US Beverage Net operates under a service model. Users pay a one-time installation fee and then a monthly subscription charge based on how many taps use the system.

They don't buy the equipment and US Beverage Net handles all maintenance, Kalra says.

The flow meters count ounces as they move through tap lines. The system is connected to a Web site clients can use to monitor their stocks.

The technology also communicates with cash registers so bar owners and restaurant managers can ensure their sales line up with what's in their kegs.

"A restaurant or bar owner can control everything in their environment now," Kalra says. "Before this, they had no idea how much they were losing down the drain."

In addition to local favorites like Dinosaur Bar-B-Que and Empire

Brewing Co., US Beverage Net has national clients like Uno Chicago Grill and Hooters. The goal is to grow the total number of locations using the company's system to 3,000 to 5,000 by 2013.

At that level, US Beverage Net would probably employ 70 to 100 people, Kalra says. Currently, the firm has eight employees. The company declined to disclose its revenue information.

Long-term, the plan is to start using the data collected from clients to attract business on the distribution side as well.

"We're exploring it," Kalra says. "We're seeing what the need for information is. It's very clear to us that there is a big information gap when it comes to the entire supply chain."

US Beverage Net is headquartered at 1001 W. Fayette St. in Syracuse in 3,000 square feet of space. □

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