

THE POWER OF FIRST IMPRESSIONS: VERSATILE AND STYLISH LECTERNS MAKE A STATEMENT IN RESTAURANTS



By Don Roth, CEO, AmpliVox Sound Systems

What's the most important piece of furniture in your business? The mind immediately goes to the main dining room: the carefully selected tables and chairs where customers spend most of their time. However, don't forget that there are other furniture pieces that contribute to your customers' experience in both practical and subjective ways. Before they sit down in the dining room, customers make judgments on the quality of your business based on their first points of contact: the valet stand and the host station.

For both of these important restaurant functions, specialized lecterns deliver an image of professionalism while supporting your employees' responsibilities. Customers have more confidence in a valet service that is visibly secure and well organized. Once inside, the host stand projects the style choices of the overall restaurant while efficiently serving a multitude of functions. The right furniture choice for both these settings will establish the positive first impression that customers appreciate.

Valet Operation Centers Require Durability and Security with Style

Valet stands take a beating from weather, traffic, and frequent relocations, so durability is of course a crucial consideration. To make the most of your investment, consider a valet stand constructed of weatherproof, powder coated steel to maximize durability with an attractive and versatile black finish. Enhance the stand's appearance with customized logos or signage. Professional valet stations should include lockable storage with easy-to-read key hooks to make customer service secure and efficient. For easy mobility, look for heavy duty, lockable casters. For uncovered locations, some valet stands incorporate an umbrella holder to give your staff and patrons extra shelter.

Host Stations: The Nerve Center

Virtually every customer will have some degree of contact with your establishment's host stand. The right equipment enables your team to smoothly manage flow, store and protect valuable items, and communicate easily with customers in the restaurant and on the telephone. The host stand must serve all those functions efficiently while still complementing your overall décor and image.

The fabrication of the lectern contributes the most to its appearance and durability, and lecterns are available in many different materials to suit varying needs. The most traditional décor settings may call for a solid wood lectern, although a high quality veneer can blend in well and offer practical advantages for cost and mobility. Contemporary décor is suited to different materials, including metallic finishes and Lucite. For outdoor patio or other dining areas, polyurethane lecterns offer the practicality of a weatherproof material available in a virtually limitless range of colors. Customization can maximize both the impact and the utility of your host stand selection; for a distinctive option to promote your brand, incorporate your restaurant's logo on the front panel of the lectern.

Practicality also plays a vital role in choosing design options. The scale of the stand must be appropriate to the overall space available while providing an adequate workspace for staff. Consider the functions that will be accomplished from this location: table assignment coordination, menu storage, telephone reception, and checkout operations all require adequate space and thoughtful layout. Interior shelves and lockable storage are indispensable features for most settings. If the staff will be communicating with patrons over a sound system, the best lectern option will include integrated mics and amplifiers to reduce cords and clutter behind the stand. Finally, consider a lectern with discreetly hidden casters to allow for ease in mobility.

Special Use Lecterns: Versatile Functions, Small Footprint

Lecterns can be helpful options for customers hosting business meetings, parties, or other events at your restaurant. Even small furniture pieces can deliver great functionality with thoughtful design:

- **Multimedia carts** provide mobile, space-efficient presentation staging areas for devices including projectors, computers, tablets, and sound systems.
- **Tabletop lecterns** can be placed almost anywhere to create additional check-in or presentation space. For the easiest storage solution, some are available in folding designs that can be collapsed, carried, and stored flat.
- **Acrylic lecterns** create an elegant setting for weddings and special events with a minimal footprint.

Explore Your Options, Invest for the Future

With so many options available, don't make a snap decision on these important additions to your restaurant. Take time to consider the many factors at work, both esthetic and practical. Talk to your staff about the equipment they will be using to maximize efficiency and support their [professional interactions with guests](#). When you consider the importance of making a positive first impression on your customers, the effort you put into choosing the right valet and host stand equipment will certainly be time well spent.

About the Author:

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