

CASE STUDY

Newcastle Students' Union: The Longest Bar None



Multi-million pound refurbishment

The proliferation of high street bars with their drinks deals and promotions is directly affecting students' union bars around the country. However, there are ways to compete and become the first choice for students. The newly opened bars at Newcastle Students' Union are a fantastic example.

An £8 million refurbishment of the main building, which began in November 2010, has transformed the interior of one of the University's most iconic buildings and significantly improved services for students. The building work saw all six floors given a full refurbishment and new facilities added.

The Union building hosts both the 225 capacity Mens bar and 1200 capacity Venue bars to cater for students day and night, all requiring a variety of both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks.

Bringing the ideas together

KCM Catering Equipment, one of the nominated contractors for specially negotiated NUSSL contract pricing for the IMC range of stainless steel modular bars, was asked by the Capital Developments team at Newcastle University to design a layout for each of the bar areas to reflect its individual use. KCM attended an initial design meeting along with IMC and representatives from the University and Students' Union and, through its team of experienced designers, put together initial concepts for the bar equipment. CAD layouts for each of the designs were produced, making it easy for the concepts to be understood.



Each of the bar areas needed to provide workstations suitable for the use and volume of the venue. The flexibility of the IMC Bartender system allows the design of the bar to satisfy all operational and product requirements. Using this flexibility the concepts were tuned to meet the Students' Union needs and budgets, ensuring that everything needed by each member of bar staff is no more than one or two paces away.

KCM Catering Equipment's team in conjunction with the project's main contractor BAM Construction on the bar areas, with 50m of Bartender modules, 33 bottle coolers, 4 glass washers and a large capacity ice machine being installed in a single week.

Integration of the installation into the main contractors programme of works was critical with KCM winning praise for its project focus. James Adshead, Senior Project Manager at Newcastle University stated "KCM were very helpful in the design stages, offering very useful experience, which helped bring the project to completion on time. On site they were well organised and worked well within a larger more complicated refurbishment. Overall the service was excellent."



The first award of many

Following the opening, Newcastle University Students' Union was entered into the National Mixology Interior Design Awards and was soon announced as the Winner of the Education Interior Design Award 2011, at a prestigious ceremony at the Palace Hotel, Manchester.

The NUSU architects Faulkner Brown, and lead designer Alistair Stripp, were on hand to receive the award. NUSU President, Laura Perry, said "This is a fantastic time to be President of the Union, and this award shows that the experts in the industry recognise what a fantastic facility we have delivered for our students". NUSU Chief Executive, Simon Gerry, followed up by saying, "This award recognises the time, effort and detail that was put into the project. There were some fabulous ideas put forward throughout and we looked to capture the very best of them. It is very gratifying to have the results recognised by the best the industry has to offer".

Not just a Student bar

Gary Barnabas, Product Manager of Bar Systems at IMC explains, "Fundamental to the success of every business is the ability to adapt and evolve, and students' union bars are no exception. The latest bar equipment enables managers not only to improve staff efficiency and productivity, but also to enhance the students' experience and thus keep them coming back for more".

Alistair White, Director at KCM Catering Equipment who headed up the project comments "The project at Newcastle Students' Union was a huge success brought about by innovative thinking, great teamwork and a fantastic and flexible bar system.

It represents not just a great facility for the students at Newcastle, but also one of the most functional, creative and truly stunning bars in the UK."



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