



Success Story: Tacos and Tequila

A Shot of HotSchedules





In a Snapshot

Tacos and Tequila is an Austin-based independent restaurant that focuses on simple, high quality, handmade foods, freshly squeezed juices and over 100 premium tequilas.

Fast becoming an Austin essential, they promote sustainable restaurant practices, using local produce and paper products made from post-consumer materials. Additionally, their up upbeat and eclectic music tracks set the mood for a great time. Employing up to 50 people during peak seasons, Tacos and Tequila is a bustling, hip, hang out with amazing happy hour specials that regularly pack the house.

David Pencsak, operating partner at Tacos and Tequila has grown up in the restaurant industry. As a previous owner of five restaurants, he fully understands the challenges restaurateurs face on a daily basis. Food, fuel and labor management costs carve into what are already razor thin margins. While little can be done to bring down the impact of rising food and fuel costs, labor costs can often be managed more efficiently and cost-effectively.

Well aware of these challenges, Pencsak quickly realized that spreadsheet-generated scheduling was definitely one area that could stand some improvement. As he noted, "Requests get lost and errors are easily made. For example, when you have different schedules on different tabs, like the bar and server schedules, it's very difficult to see when you have double-scheduled someone who works under multiple job codes."

The manager at Tacos and Tequila, Michael Kuras agreed. "It took quite a bit of time to create a schedule on a spreadsheet or on paper, and yet it would still have mistakes."

Welcome to HotSchedules

Using their past experiences as a guide, Pencsak decided to open Tacos and Tequila with HotSchedules already in place. Pencsak contacted HotSchedules and requested the Workforce solution, which integrates seamlessly with Tacos and Tequila's Aloha POS system.

Their Story

Tacos and Tequila centers around two bars of its namesake, a grill bar where tacos, skewers, burritos, wraps and salads are served up straight off the grill and on to your plate, and a tequila bar where over 120 premium tequila, fresh squeezed juices, and artisan liquors are used to make signature cocktails.

Challenges

- Double-scheduling team members who work under multiple job codes.
- Lengthy schedule-creation process (the final schedule would still contain errors). Bring down the impact of rising costs of food by managing labor and labor processes more efficiently.

Products

- HotSchedules

Results

- .5% labor savings from overtime alerts and enforced punctuality, equating to \$17,500 annually per location.
- Additional point of labor savings through HotSchedules sales forecasting reports.
- Hours of time saved in creating a more accurate schedule.



“We got started with the training, which is really good—HotSchedules really has the training down now. It shows you step-by-step how to use it. If you need it, the help section contains all the videos as well if you need to refer back to them,” said Pencsak.

In addition to great training, all new HotSchedules users are provided with a Welcome Sheet detailing all the ways they can login and how to access the system. “We really appreciate the Welcome Sheet. It’s one less thing we have to worry about and it’s a quick and easy way to ensure all our employees know exactly how to access HotSchedules,” said Kuras.

Shaving Time

With HotSchedules in place and everyone trained, Tacos and Tequila immediately began seeing the benefits. “It shaved a good couple of hours off of the time to create the schedule. And not only that—it also helped me generate a more accurate schedule than I’d have made with a paper version. So it’s faster, and results in fewer errors,” Kuras noted.

As an example, double-scheduling is no longer something Tacos and Tequila needs to worry about. Once an employee is placed in any schedule, he or she can’t be put in another schedule on a day or time that conflicts with the original.

Another time-savings achieved through HotSchedules is managing requested schedule changes, which seem to always pour in throughout the week. Employees can login, release shifts and notify other employees of the desired change. Once the shift is picked up, the manager can approve (or not) and the schedule is automatically updated. Pencsak said, “Even if shift

changes happen the morning before a lunchtime shift, by the time you walk in for the lunch shift, the roster is already updated in HotSchedules.”

Overtime alerts further aid Tacos and Tequila’s ability to generate more accurate, less costly schedules. “HotSchedules has great overtime warnings that immediately let you know when you are scheduling someone into overtime and how many hours and shifts employees are scheduled for each week. Even if your schedule changes later in the week, it will alert you that actual overtime is about to occur so you can go in and adjust it, if possible,” said Kuras.

With the Workforce solution that Tacos and Tequila has deployed, the integration with the POS supplies additional benefits. Specifically, by pushing the schedule into the POS, operators can enforce punctuality, ensuring that employees aren’t punching in early, or with an incorrect, higher paying job code. Pencsak noted, “Just by turning on the controlled clock-ins/outs, HotSchedules will pay for itself in the first week. As we became more efficient across the board, we’ve gained an even greater ROI.”

17,500 Reasons to Get HotSchedules

Pencsak’s previous five restaurants were very successful, each averaging between \$3 and \$3.5M a year. And as any savvy restaurateur, Pencsak was always on the lookout for additional ways to improve his margins. He found that in HotSchedules. Pencsak noted, “With just the enforced punctuality and overtime alerts in HotSchedules, we were instantly able to save .5% on our labor costs. When you do the math, that’s \$17,500 a year per store. Now multiply that across five locations—it’s has a very real and immediate impact.”



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**Additional labor
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HotSchedules Sales
Forecasting reports**



**Hours of time saved
in creating a more
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-David Pencsak,
Operating Partner,
Tacos and Tequila

Additional costs savings are captured through the use of HotSchedules' sales and labor forecasting reports. Once fully up to speed on how to use them to build the schedule, additional savings are attained. Pencsak confirmed, "Once we really started utilizing HotSchedules' forecasting reports, we saw another half point-to-point in labor savings."

Access Ability

Among the many features there are to like about HotSchedules, one of the favorites is the ubiquitous access via the web, a phone call or a smart phone. And this access applies not only to the scheduling information, but to the employees themselves. Pencsak noted, "The smart phone apps give me instant access. Let's say you open at 10 and its 10:05 and one of your openers isn't there. You can pull out your iPhone, see who is supposed to be there, touch their name and it calls them instantly. No looking up the schedule or their number."

Alerting employees to important messages is also made unbelievably easy. HotSchedules users have multiple ways to receive and view important messages. "It's a communications tool on multiple different levels. If you have a meeting or a message you want to focus on, you can send a text, email or broadcast message

out to everyone. And you can accomplish that with one message, sent one time," said Pencsak.

Managers can also have alerts set up to track employee certifications in HotSchedules. By logging particular certifications and their expirations, managers will be notified if an employee is going to need to re-register or take additional training. "One of the things I like most is HotSchedules' certification tracking feature. Things like TABC (Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission), food handlers licenses, etc., you can just enter into HotSchedules and when the expiration date comes up, it'll tell you so you can take care of it before it becomes a problem," said Kuras.

Communication is further improved by using HotSchedules Logbook. Logbook is the online solution for the staff journal and shift notes. Managers can log employee praise or incidents, make notations of items needed, or simply make notes to other managers. Additionally, the Logbook's time-bound, spell checked entries are easy to enter from any computer or smartphone at anytime from anywhere.

Count on It

HotSchedules is backed by automated, bilingual (English and Spanish) support 24 hours a day and live support seven days a week. Pencsak noted, "If you

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Operating Partner, Tacos and Tequila

ever need HotSchedules support, you can count on them. They always pick up the phone immediately and are very knowledgeable. What’s more, the service is the same for staff as for managers.”

This means that HotSchedules Support will be there for you, whether it’s for an issue, a question or when staff can’t get to a computer to access their schedule online. “Gone are the days of employees calling the store to get information about the schedule. If an employee calls me for schedule information now, I tell them to call HotSchedules,” said Pencsak.

Resolving Inefficiencies

HotSchedules boasts one additional advantage that may get easily overlooked: it’s a benefit to employees, just like other benefits they receive, such as employee discounts or their medical plan. Because it makes attaining work-life balance easier for managers and staff alike, it is a benefit that can be used to attract and retain the best talent. “There are many things that get people to stick around, and HotSchedules is just one more thing that they like. Managers are calmer, less frustrated, and probably easier to work for. And it definitely makes us work more cohesively,” said Kuras.

In the end, there are countless benefits that HotSchedules can deliver, both tangible and intangible, whether it’s for one location or multiple locations, 10 employees or hundreds. Pencsak concluded, “There was a lot of potential for scheduling, forecasting and communications inefficiencies, all of which HotSchedules has resolved for us. There’s no question that it’s worth it.”



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