Success Story: Truluck's

Managing Labor Swimmingly

TRULUCK'S
SEAFOOD · STEAK · CRAB HOUSE

If you have been fortunate enough to dine at the Truluck's Seafood, Steak and Crab House locations in Austin and Houston, Texas you would agree that these people know seafood. They call it a getaway for the senses, and it sure is.

They offer the freshest crab direct from their own fisheries, and their fresh-catch menu and tender, juicy steaks are prepared to perfection. Compliment it all with the perfect wine and it's pure bliss. Open Table and The Wine Spectator agree, having honored them with the Best Seafood award for 2012 and the Wine Award of Excellence.

Truluck 's also helps you feel good about what you're eating because they believe in being champions in the sustainable seafood movement. They never serve endangered or overfished species and follow all Ocean Conservancy guidelines. What's more, Truluck's serves 100% antibiotic-and hormone-free all natural beef, pork and lamb. They only work with U.S. family-owned farmers that raise livestock both traditionally and humanely. As they put it, Truluck's works hard to bring their customers the best-tasting, sustainable ingredients that make sense for the plate, the palate and the planet.

Swimming Upstream

While the food, wine and atmosphere at Truluck's have always been divine, their behind-the-scenes labor management processes needed a dash of modernization. Creating employee schedules using the traditional spreadsheet method was not only time consuming, but full or errors. Employees were double scheduled, or they were over or under scheduled compared to the volume of sales. There was also a general inability to forecast volume using spreadsheets.

The Truluck's team went in search of a solution, and started with HotSchedules, which they had continuously heard about from their staff and at

In a Snapshot

Their Story

Serving up swimmingly good seafood and steaks, Truluck's is all about quality service. But when staff were over or under scheduled and miscommunications caused even more commotion, the growing chain turned to HotSchedules for help.

Challenges

- Created and managed schedules using spreadsheets.
- The traditional spreadsheet method of scheduling was not only time consuming, but error-laden as well, including over or under scheduling when compared to sales volume.
- Employees were scheduled erratically— over or under volume needed for sales.
- Schedules were laden with errors.

Products

- HotSchedules

Results

- Average labor savings of 2.2%.
- Enforced punctuality savings alone cover costs of HotSchedules.
- Cut schedule creation time in half.

other restaurants. Riley Hutton, General Manager in Austin, Texas said, "The HotSchedules footprint in Austin is pretty massive. At that point, Truluck's was in the minority for not using it. Plus, every time we hired a new server, they'd ask why we didn't have it. We did some due diligence research to see what it was really all about, and were impressed with what we found out."

While the scheduling solution was a key piece, the real catalyst to make a change was the fear of using the book. Used to document shift changes, swaps or time-off requests, the book was always missing, or hard to read and a general pain to manage. Hutton stated, "Searching hard copy log books is difficult and time consuming enough, and then if you need something from some time back, you have to go to storage and dig it out. When we learned that HotSchedules had a solution for that too, we were even more interested in signing up."

Testing the Waters

Thankfully, the Truluck's team did make that call to HotSchedules and began moving forward with HotSchedules' POS-integrated scheduling Logbook solutions. During the rollout, all managers were trained via web-based modules and a dedicated Implementation Manager from HotSchedules. Additionally, the Customer Care team was, and is, available to anyone, at any level of the company seven days a week.

"Training was thorough and well organized, and it helps that the product is so intuitive," says Hutton. "Everything comes really naturally. Still, it's wonderful to know that I can call Support any time I need to, or just jump onto their online forum for help—however you want to reach them, they are there for you."

Teach a Man to Forecast …

With the rollout complete, Hutton began seeing substantial changes. The first, and perhaps most obvious change, was the decrease in the amount of time it took to create schedules. "Before HotSchedules, creating the schedule took about four hours. We've been able to cut that time in half using the scheduling templates. But what's even more important is that we've eliminated spreadsheet formula and data entry errors. There's no more double booking, for example. That accuracy is critical for us."

Managers are able to achieve that level of accuracy through the integration between HotSchedules and their Aloha POS system. HotSchedules syncs with the POS system on a daily basis, pulling sales details out and pushing scheduling details in seamlessly and with no interruption to their operations. The sales data then feeds their HotSchedules forecast, which makes recommendations about the amount of labor needed on any given day or time.

Results You Can "Sea"

Another labor savings benefit that comes from the POS integration is the option to enforce punctuality. Because the schedule is pushed into the POS system, management can set clock-in-and-out times so that staff members can't clock-in early, ride the clock on their out times or clock-in using an incorrect, potentially higher paid job code. HotSchedules also updates the POS system when schedule changes occur, eliminating duplicate manual entry.

"HotSchedules' enforced punctuality feature alone completely covers the monthly cost of HotSchedules," says Hutton. We used to have a lot of early clock-ins, but now we control that by setting a five minute grace.

Cut schedule creation time in half.

2.2% labor savings.

100% ROI using punctuality controls.

> # HotSchedules is so much more than just a scheduling tool— it's an overall labor management solution, which can help increase productivity and profits.
>
> -Riley Hutton,
> General Manager, Truluck's

Anything before that, and they have to get manager permission. Those minutes add up fast—it has truly been invaluable."

Casting the Lines of Communication

For staff and managers alike, the spreadsheet schedule was a huge hassle. Particularly when it came to communicating company-wide messages in changes. "Managers had to rush through the schedule-making process to ensure that they posted it in time for employees to get it. Now, with one push of a button, it goes out to everyone and they can pick it up instantly on their phone," notes Hutton.

Scheduling details aren't the only information HotSchedules communicates; several managers and staff also have ways to reach out to each other. "HotSchedules' staff communication features are incredible—the messaging system, the splash pages that pop up on their screen when they log in, all of it. It has been instrumental in our training processes and getting everyone to meetings and events. Plus, we have the confidence of knowing everyone is informed about new policies and procedures," explains Hutton. "Our staff really appreciates how much easier it is to communicate too. If they want to trade a shift with someone, it's no longer a multiphone call process to get that done. It's simply a matter of putting their shift up for trade and waiting for someone to pick it up."

"Reel" Time Reports

Visibility into store operations was an important feature to Hutton and his team. For instance, The Daily Roster, Overtime Alerts and Proforma Report helped him compare actual to scheduled labor data.

"Every day, the first thing we do is print the Roster Report for lunch and dinner and see who we have coming in," says Hutton. "Also, we can include the day's topics to discuss during pre-shift—it's a great way to make sure everyone is on the same page. Instant printing saves us an hour of our reservationist's time because she no longer has to manage shift sheets. But the best thing by far is the lack of mistakes. Because HotSchedules updates the roster with any shift changes that occur during the week, it is up to date and error free when you come in to work."

The overtime alert feature has reduced the number of overtime hours that get scheduled at Truluck's as well. It also allows the management team to make any necessary staffing adjustments earlier in the week. "There are no more last minute scrambles to get someone on or off the schedule. HotSchedules makes us proactive about our labor, instead of reactive," Hutton says.

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