



# Success Story: Monkeypod Kitchen By Merriman

Masters Workforce with HotSchedules







In a Snapshot

The team at Monkeypod Kitchen by Merriman are above all else, craftsmen. Located in Hawaii, their chef-inspired concept was founded in 2009 by the classically trained, award winning—Chef Peter Merriman and the CEO of Handcrafted Restaurants, Bill Terry.

Inspired by their State's culture, community, and native selection of delicious products, Monkeypod Kitchen combines a laid back island atmosphere with locally sourced ingredients, a dynamic selection of craft beers, and a unique spin on traditional cocktails.

Behind the scenes, another important ingredient rounds out the group's recipe for success: HotSchedules suite of workforce management solutions. Today, the restaurant group uses HotSchedules, GoHire, Logbook and HotSchedules Train, powered by Schoox across all of their locations.

While they didn't start with all four solutions, Merriman and Terry made it clear from the very beginning that technology was going to play a crucial role during the initial launch of the restaurants and in their ongoing growth efforts. "Bill has a background in operations and economics," says Christie Snopko, Director of Human Resources. "He's incredibly passionate about technology and what it can do for our teams and the overall effectiveness of the business."

## Paperless Paradise

Snopko joined the group in 2012 to launch their HR program. Her first big project: hire over 150 employees for the opening of the second Monkeypod Kitchen location in Ko Olina. "The very first day on the job, I was on the phone with the HotSchedules team to see GoHire in action."

Snopko decided it was exactly what she needed to get the new store open in record time without all the usual hassles of hiring and onboarding a lot of

## Their Story

Three unit, Hawaii based restaurant group marries a culture of excellence with cutting edge restaurant technology to simplify growth and expand employee engagement.

## Challenges

- Tech savvy founders wanted integrated solutions to easily manage their growing workforce.
- Human Resources Director wanted an online on boarding solution that would cut down the long and cumbersome hiring process.
- Managers needed a central location to communicate between shifts, record daily logs, employee notes, maintenance, supplies and other important company information.
- Human Resources needed a simple, online system to deliver back of house and front of house training, as well as ongoing development programs to keep employees engaged.

## Products

- HotSchedules
- GoHire
- Logbook
- Schoox

## Results

- Helped increase retention by 51%
- On boarded employees faster and without the hassle of lots of paper forms
- Reduced paper consumption and document storage costs
- Increased participation in regular training and development programs
- Solved shift-to-shift communication challenges for managers



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employees at once. “I was able to on board everyone in the new Ko Olina store in record time,” she says.

Before GoHire, Snopko was accustomed to three-and-a-half hour long orientations. Most of that time was spent filling out documents.

Before Monkeypod Kitchen, she would use around 40 pages of paper per person. With GoHire, her new hires fill out all the documents online before they come in. “Once they’re done, it all feeds straight into our Aloha POS which then pops right into HotSchedules so that managers can immediately start posting training schedules.”

Going from 40 pages of paper to practically zero not only reduced costs, it also helped Monkeypod Kitchen become a more sustainable organization. “One of our brand values is to leave the world a better place, which means we want to do our part to be as green as possible. With GoHire, we were able to easily cut down on all of our paper usage and storage” says Snopko.

When they became the management entity for another large Waikiki location, Snopko once again relied on the

tool to interview, rehire, and orientate employees in two weeks flat. “GoHire definitely helps me stay organized. I’m able to flag applicants when they’re a match.” She’s referring to the pre-screening questions that they create for each job at each location. “For us, it’s important to make sure we’re looking at people who have the right skill set and fit our culture. Honestly, I can’t imagine doing any of the hiring and onboarding without it.”

## Aloha to Online Schedules

For Snopko, using anything but HotSchedules doesn’t sound like a very good time. Most of their management team used the online employee scheduling piece at previous jobs and almost expected it when they joined Monkeypod.

“I don’t know how restaurants still manage schedules with spreadsheets,” she says, laughing a little. “We just save so much time especially when it comes to managing our staff’s time-off requests.”

Managing time on the line is important too. “HotSchedules helps reduce our overall overtime costs,” she says. But adds that, “really we just want to keep an eye on who’s working more because we care about our staff and want to give them downtime when they need it.”



The overtime warnings in the scheduler are color coded so that Monkeypod's managers can easily see staff hours. If they need to make last-minute cuts, they start with the employees who have been working longer hours. "We're looking to see who might be burnt out. If they're legitimately tired, that can sometimes impact their service."

Predictive scheduling is another piece they use to create better schedules. They're able to pull key sales and labor metrics out of their Aloha point of sale system which is integrated with HotSchedules. Using HotSchedules' labor pro forma they know, for instance, that Mother's Day holds the record for the best single day sales. Their managers can then go into the Staff Tab and create a schedule (or use a previous scheduling template) to make sure they've got the right volume of people scheduled. "The longer our managers use the tools and reports in HotSchedules, the better we get," says Snopko.

The same goes for employees. "It's great when we hire someone who has already used HotSchedules at their previous job," which she says happens more often than not. "They already know that their schedule, messages, and training are all online or on their phones through the app."

That's important, because they use the communication tools in HotSchedules for everything. "We put all of our pre-service notes, specials, policies, volunteer events, parking changes, you name it, online. It's a heck of lot more effective than posting signs all over the restaurant."

### "Lei" on the Logbook

Monkeypod doesn't fool around when it comes to shift-to-shift communication between managers either. They keep track of their sales counts, head counts, shift notes, staff issues, maintenance logs, and 86'd supplies in the Logbook, which sits online as a tab inside HotSchedules.

"Our new managers are often shocked at how much we communicate. And I kinda laugh, because it's just part of our culture to be borderline over-communicators. It's imperative for us, especially from shift-to-shift."

The team has gotten pretty crafty with the Logbook modules too. Each department has their own area to add agenda items for team meetings. There's also a module for managers to share stories about coworkers who go "above and beyond."





"We call it Po'Okela, which is a Hawaiian word for champion, or someone who strives for the best," says Snopko.

The management team hardly misses a beat with the Logbook. "Our managers are in it every single day creating new shift logs or replying to other managers about everything from regular inspections to interview notes with candidates. You don't even realize how many emails you're sending back and forth until you get the Logbook and you're able to see everything in one spot."

### A Merry and Bright Staff

Keeping their culture of craftsmanship strong is another big priority for Monkeypod Kitchens. But when their team started looking at their approach to employee training and development, they realized there was room for improvement.

"Some of our staff was operating off of outdated information they were given when we first opened," she says. "We had no way of making sure every employee had access to the most recent recipe, ingredient list, or prep sheet."

Once again, the tech-savvy team turned to HotSchedules for a solution. Which they got in the form of HotSchedules Train, powered by Schoox, a social, online learning management system. With HotSchedules Train, powered by Schoox, Snopko was able to create a branded academy that houses all of their locations' training and development materials. "We're saving so much money on the printing costs alone."

When there is a change to the menu, wine list or prep sheet, the edit only has to be made once. When it's updated, Snopko can easily create a course to test specific team members, a process that is automated because the systems are integrated. "Schoox feeds off the job codes in HotSchedules so you don't have to manually assign employees."

If the single sign-on with HotSchedules wasn't enough, Snopko says the focus on constant improvement is helping their retention goals. "Our turnover has decreased significantly. The first year it was 130 and in year two it was 77 at the Ko Olina location. We're slashing these numbers as we get comfortable and hit our stride."

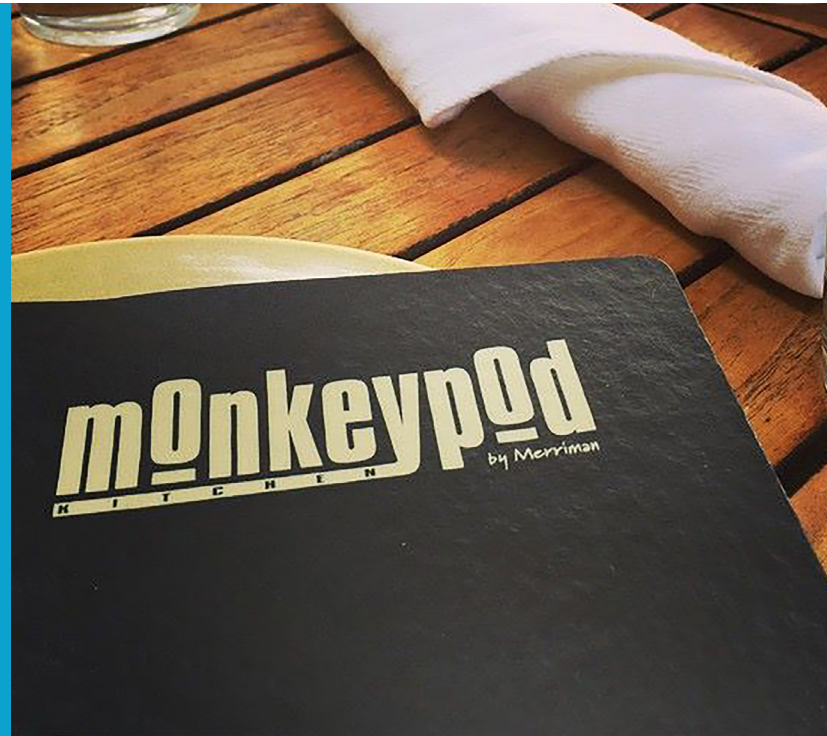
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Of course, there are always people in transition. If an employee is a little rusty, they'll ask them to go and take some refresher courses. The same goes for employees who want to move into a different department or into a position with more responsibility. "We assign the appropriate Schoox courses and ask them to go study. It's a systematic way for us to see if they're up for the challenge and an opportunity for that employee to show us that they're serious."

There's no mistaking the team at Monkeypod Kitchen are serious about their systems. As Snopko explains, "our founders want to be on the cutting edge of technology because when we use it we're not spinning our wheels on things like paper schedules. We're able to focus our time and energy on our food, our guests and on continuously practicing and improving our craft."