



# Success Story: UNO Restaurants

Improving Labor with Advanced Labor Forecasting



**UNO**

In a Snapshot

Uno was founded in Chicago in 1943 by Ike Sewell when he brought deep dish pizza to the world. Unlike any pizza that had ever been served before, Sewell had created a recipe that combined authentic Italian spices, quality tomatoes, layers of cheese and its signature, buttery, tall-edge crust. Once customers tasted it, they were hooked and kept coming back for more.

After opening his first two restaurants, Sewell was approached by Aaron Spencer, who had fallen in love with the concept and the pizza and wanted to franchise and expand Uno to other areas. Sewell declined for many years, but ultimately decided to trust Spencer and let him franchise. Today, Uno has grown to over 140 thriving locations in 24 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, South Korea, United Arab Emirates, Honduras, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Additionally, while Uno restaurants still make their deep dish pizza from scratch every day, they have also updated their menus to include amazing new flavors and choices.

## Grappling with Labor

As with any restaurant, margins are thin, expenses are high and there must be constant vigilance on ways to manage costs, while maintaining or improving quality and guest experience. It's a tricky dichotomy. At Uno, Thomas Broussard, Director of Performance Management, was working to find a tool to implement and execute a direct labor reexamination and process overhaul. It was a tall order, but Broussard was ready for the challenge.

"We were reexamining our direct labor model with the goal of understanding how we currently provided service to the guest and identifying how we wanted to provide that service. From there, we needed a tool

## Their Story

When Uno's Restaurants introduced HotSchedules to their stores, it wasn't necessarily an exercise in labor reduction. What they needed was a robust labor management tool to help them optimize their employees' hours so that they could provide the best guest experience possible.

## Challenges

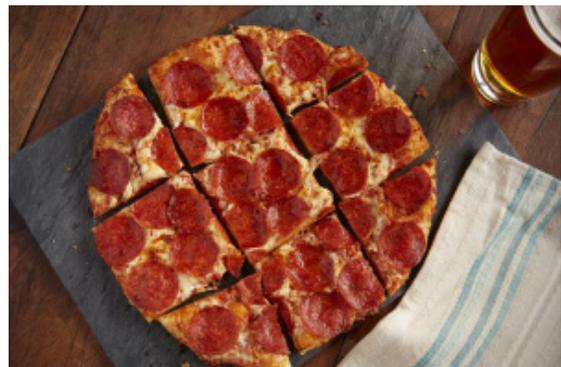
- Margins are thin, expenses are high and there must be constant vigilance on ways to manage costs
- Lack of tools to figure out how to measure, manage and articulate that labor model

## Products

- HotSchedules

## Results

- Labor optimized for ideal guest service
- Staffing appropriately, especially in peak periods
- More efficient use of time
- Reduced overtime
- Labor costs reduced by 70-90 basis points per location





**More efficient  
use of time**



**Labor optimized  
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to help us figure out how to measure, manage and articulate that labor model, as well as offer ancillary benefits to our managers and staff," said Broussard.

## Competitive Analysis

The next item on the task list was to research the market for the types of tools they were looking for and do a competitive analysis. They did their homework, performing field research and having conversations with several people in the industry, but it wasn't long before they decided to move forward with HotSchedules. Broussard said, "When we evaluated the competitive environment, one entity stood out among the rest, and that was HotSchedules."

## The Test Run

Uno began by rolling out the new labor model and HotSchedules to 5 of their locations so they could kick the proverbial tires. The leadership team chose those 5 locations based on the GMs' passion and aptitude for labor, and then they asked for their feedback. It was a good, but tough process because, as you might expect, their GMs had strong opinions. Broussard noted, "Labor to our GMs is a passionate, emotional subject. They run and own their restaurant and they know, from years of experience, the best way to serve their guests. To have someone come in and tell them they were going to have to do it a different way was hard. We wanted to make sure we went to them with a teaching and learning tool, with a model that provides the highest level of service to the guest, and to be able to say sincerely, this is the right thing to do."

The test time also revealed the importance of solid business relationships and the support and attention they provide. Broussard stated emphatically, "We really came to rely on the HotSchedules team during the test period, and I can't say enough about how important that relationship was and is to us. Their dedication, passion, detail-orientation and professionalism are things that I personally value and which were instrumental in making this all come together for Uno."

## Big Roll Out, Big Results

After those 5 test locations, the feedback loop was closed and the Uno leadership team made the announcement that the new labor model and HotSchedules would be rolled-out company-wide. The original 5 GMs became the ambassadors for the model and HotSchedules,

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assuring their colleagues during this time of considerable change.

Once the rollout was complete, Broussard and the entire Uno team began to see immediate results, and the necessary visibility into those results was provided by HotSchedules. Though their home grown labor system had allowed them to show how many labor hours should be given for a set volume of activity, it hadn't been able to provide them an easy way to recalculate what they should have run based on the actual results.

Broussard said, "HotSchedules really closed the mouse trap for us. It was the final piece. We always knew how many hours someone should get, but weren't easily able to get a consolidated roll-up or snapshot of that information. Now, there are multiple reports that we can show to our management teams, like the staff volume chart. It shows them what they did, what they should have done and then allows us to begin the discussion about what behaviors need to be changed or modified so we can run the level of labor that we want in order to provide the best level of service to the guest."

### ROI

One thing Broussard was clear about was that Uno did not enter into this exercise with the goal of reducing

labor. To the contrary, the goal was make sure they have the right labor to take care of their guests. He reiterated, "This wasn't a labor reduction initiative, this was an overall labor review to make sure that A) we're being efficient with our time, which is a precious commodity that costs us money and B) that we're appropriately staffing for our peak periods of time."

It turns out, though, that there's a bit of an additional "happy accident" that comes from doing the right thing for guests. Using a labor model to optimize labor levels and provide the top notch service has the consequence of also reducing costs. Broussard confirmed, "There's no question that restaurants who don't use a labor modeling or management solution are losing revenue. By implementing our model and using HotSchedules as the tool to provide us with the necessary visibility, we were able to lower our labor costs by 70-90 basis points per location."

Perhaps a portion of that savings can be attributed to the reduction in overtime costs the Uno team was to strip out, thanks to HotSchedules. Broussard noted, "The visibility that HotSchedules provides has allowed us to make material inroads into our overtime scheduling. Just by following the HotSchedules process, inherently, we're seeing great improvements in overtime scheduling."

### Happy Guests and Happy Staff Too

Upon implementing HotSchedules, one of the most satisfying benefits was how well it was received by managers and staff. Creating and maintaining schedules became quicker and more convenient and everyone appreciated the communications and anytime, anywhere access. Mobile access was a huge hit, particularly for staff who wanted to swap a shift. Broussard confirmed, "HotSchedules was very warmly received by all of the staff. When it comes to the convenience of maintaining the schedule, shift releases or swaps, that's all stuff they do on the mobile device, and they give it a Grade A++."

The warm welcome wasn't a big surprised to the leadership team either. He confirmed, "With HotSchedules, the benefit to employees is a given. It was just a known fact that our staff would appreciate and enjoy the flexibility, access, and communication capabilities. HotSchedules gets us into the current age of technology and makes life easier and simpler. It's a gosh-darned no-brainer."

Broussard then relayed an anecdote that occurred soon after the HotSchedules implementation, "When



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we first got HotSchedules, one of the GMs called me and said, ‘Tom, I gotta tell ya, for the first time, I’m at my home working on schedule, and I love it. One of my employees released a shift and within 15 minutes, someone else picked it up and I approved it. It was so fast and no one had to go into the store or call 25 people to make it happen!’”

## Partnered for Success

With the right tools in place—their sophisticated labor model and HotSchedules, the Uno team is primed for a new era in labor management, labor cost control and ideal guest service. Broussard confirmed, “We were able to leverage this process to get us to a better place and we’re definitely there.” Through the process, Broussard and team also found a new partner they know they can count on and appreciate the unexpected benefit. He concluded, “We have a very strong and continuously growing partnership with HotSchedules thanks to the hard work and dedication of the team there and their commitment to our success.”