



Success Story: Brooklyn's Restaurant

Brooklyn's Restaurant Finds Comfort in HotSchedules





In a Snapshot

There is no bigger melting pot in America than the New York borough of Brooklyn. Each neighborhood has its own unique culture and delicious cuisine.

In the early 1900's, the Geresi family arrived in Brooklyn from Italy and settled into the Italian neighborhood of Bensonhurst. Four generations later, their love of food, wine, family and fun morphed into a brick-and-mortar business they named Brooklyn's Restaurant.

Today, those Italian roots stretch down to the college-town of Stillwater, Oklahoma, where the Tuscan pizzas, Sicilian meatloaf and chicken-fried steak feel right at home among the student population.

"In fact, students make up the majority of the restaurant's 65-person staff," says General Manager Carly Rodreick. For seven days a week, they need staff to be on-time and ready to serve their steady stream of young guests.

But between semesters, study hours and finals, their schedules are all over the place. For Rodreick, just creating one schedule was taking two hours and that didn't include the constant availability changes, last minute shift trades and time-off requests in the form of slips of paper and late-night calls.

For the longest time, Rodreick used Excel. When that became too cumbersome, she moved to an online scheduling system in an effort to streamline the process. But the system had limitations and so Rodreick turned to HotSchedules after hearing about it from industry friends.

Brooklyn's Restaurant made the move to HotSchedules in May of 2014 and hasn't looked back. "We felt that HotSchedules was a better option because it had so many additional features like the forecasting capabilities and Logbook," she explained.

A Made-to-Order Schedule

The back-of-house of Brooklyn's follows a pretty static schedule. The front-of-house, on the other hand, is always in flux. That's not uncommon for a restaurant, but working around employee school schedules still proved difficult.

Their Story

Located in the college town of Stillwater, Oklahoma, Brooklyn's Restaurant is staffed primarily by students. While their schedules are fairly consistent from week-to-week, managers found it difficult to handle availability requests and easily accommodate last minute shift-swaps and time-off requests using spreadsheets.

Challenges

- Constantly changing shifts due to student schedules
- Difficulties handling availability requests and last minute shift-swaps
- Time-off requests using spreadsheets

Products

- HotSchedules (POS-Integrated with Restaurant Manager)

Results

- Manager creates the schedule in half the time
- Employees manage shift-swaps, availability and time-off requests through mobile app
- 3% cost savings on labor in the first seven months
- Overtime reports keep costs in check
- Employee incident and maintenance reports recorded in one spot





**3% Labor savings
in the first seven
months**



**Slashed schedule
creation time in half**



**Shift-to-shift
communications all
in one online hub**

“A lot of times they will work a three-hour shift, go to class and then come back to work for another shift,” she said. “Before HotSchedules, we were still scheduling people when they weren’t available.”

The Permanent Availability feature in HotSchedules fixed that problem. “It’s a huge benefit for us because we’re able to take all our employees’ availability and create accurate schedules in one spot with a click of a few buttons,” she said.

When an employee submits an availability request either Rodreick or her shift manager is prompted with a “Pending Task” pop-up that they review and then decide whether to approve or deny the request. After that, HotSchedules sends an automatic notification to the employee letting them know whether or not their request has been approved or denied.

“Before, there was a lot of miscommunication when employees wanted to get their shifts covered or picked up.” Today, there are no phone calls, no one saying they didn’t know that they were scheduled. “People aren’t randomly stopping me to let me know that their schedule changed,” she adds. Instead, employees submit last-minute time-off requests and shift trades with the touch of the finger on their HotSchedules mobile app.

Rodreick and her managers also benefit from the app. They can view the Daily Roster, which shows a snapshot of scheduled employees and different ways to get in touch in case something comes up at the last minute.

“Getting the schedule done only takes me 45 minutes now. I’m saving so much time,” she said. “Plus, it’s web-based, so I can do it from home instead of being back in the office late at night.” They also save a lot of time and headaches creating schedules for private parties. Brooklyn’s has two additional rooms that are regularly booked for celebrations—something that happens a lot in the college town. “We are able to quickly create a house shift for pop-up events, which is great.”

She also likes that HotSchedules lets her set up specific job locations. “Everyone knows what area of the restaurant they are working in for each shift, whether it’s a private party or the main dining room.”

Trimming Overtime

In a busy restaurant like Brooklyn’s, overtime was a real challenge and affected the bottom line in a big way. With the Overtime Reports, however, they’ve



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not only been able to get a handle on it, they've made tangible improvements to the bottom line.

In just the first seven months using HotSchedules, they had two consecutive months with zero overtime, something the owner is happy to see.

"The owner is in another state, so it's great that he can log-in and we're both looking at the same numbers. Which is way better than trying to explain things over the phone."

When overtime is necessary—like when the restaurant gets busy during graduation season or when school starts—they once again lean on the Overtime Reports to see where they can make adjustments to keep it at minimum levels.

"The Daily Overtime Reports show us just how much overtime has occurred, where we can tweak things and then how much we've been able to cut down on from week to week."

All the tools combined have helped Brooklyn's Restaurant save three percent in labor costs within the first seven months.

Easy—as-Pie Personnel Tracking

Brooklyn's Restaurant is open seven days a week for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Obviously, it's impossible for Rodreick to work every single shift.

The Management team keeps the lines of communication flowing with HotSchedules Logbook, an

add-on that is accessible from a tab in HotSchedules.

"Right now, we lean on Logbook to keep track of personnel issues and ongoing repairs and maintenance," she says. Usually, it's people who are late or have repeat offenses during their shift.

"It makes the not so fun part of my job easier."

Logbook is permission-based, so only Rodreick and her shift manager have access to the sensitive information.

When something happens during a shift—which thankfully, isn't all that often—all they have to do is log into HotSchedules and click on Logbook tab to create a time-stamped entry. They can categorize the entry or use the Staff Journal to make notes about a specific employee.

"It makes it so easy to go back and search for a specific incident later on," Rodreick says.

For the maintenance and repairs, Rodreick likes the fact that she can go month-by-month, or week-by-week and see when equipment was serviced and then set up tasks and notifications for future maintenance.

So Long Spreadsheets

Rodreick wonders what took her so long to move away from her beloved spreadsheets. Looking back, the HotSchedules implementation process was smooth and getting employees to start using the app was like a cake walk.

"The Best Practices webinars were a huge help and

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the HotSchedules Implementation team were great about giving us lots of different opportunities and times to get everything up and running.”

About a quarter of her new hires have already used HotSchedules at other jobs and are already familiar with the tool. “They are young and totally get it. We hardly have to train anyone.” And if they do need help, the videos on HotSchedules Train—the social, e-learning platform that lets restaurants design their own online training academy—are there for the new hires to watch on their own time.

“HotSchedules has been totally worth it,” she adds. “There’s a peace of mind that I’m removed from the text messages and the late night calls. Everything is organized and simple and I think it takes the manager out of the back-and-forth schedule changes and allows us to focus on other areas of the restaurant.”