



Success Story: Buffalo Wild Wings, Brea, CA.

Getting Saucy with HotSchedules





In a Snapshot

Defying tough economic times, Buffalo Wild Wings Grill and Bar (B-Dubs) is among the fastest growing restaurant chains in the country and continues to enjoy increasing success. B-Dubs is the quintessential sports bar with wall-to-wall big-screen TVs, a full menu of varied options and their all-important 14 signature sauces. Whether you are there to watch a game, play trivia or just hang out with friends, you'll find a fun, high-energy, but easy-going restaurant.

The largest of the B-dubs franchises is located in Brea, Calif. and just opened in May of 2011. The location boasts two stories spanning 12,000 square feet and seating for nearly 600. There are 80 big-screen, high definition flat screens for viewing sporting events. As Vivian Neubauer, general manager of the store noted, "We appeal to a broad audience. Not only do we attract the sports bar-goers, but also the families with kids. It's a comfortable place for everyone and that makes us unique."

Winging It

With a restaurant the size of the B-Dubs franchise in Brea, there are also challenges to managing labor costs and ensuring the staff stays informed and connected. "We've got a large base of about 170 employees, as well as a complex layout, with cashiers, bartender, and servers on both floors of the establishment," notes Neubauer. "It's a lot to manage. Separate employee schedules are created for each group, as well as the second floor. Additionally, we generated and printed the 'starting line-up', noting the location of each staff member."

To create those schedules, managers were using spreadsheets, and then printing them out and posting

Their Story

Quintessential sports bar franchise in Brea, Calif. defies economic times with the elimination of paper schedules and reduction of labor cost.

Challenges

- Large employee base with complex seating layout.
- Time consuming scheduling process.
- Ever changing student schedules and scribbled post-its.
- Lack of visibility into critical labor-saving data.

Products

- HotSchedules
- HotSchedules Logbook

Results

- Spend 75% less time creating schedules.
- Increased communication between employees with Broadcast Messaging.
- Overtime prevention led to labor costs savings.
- Every shift included a balanced staff with various skill levels.





**75% less
time creating
schedules.**



**Cost savings
by preventing
overtime.**



**Improved overall
communication.**

them in the store. Availabilities and requests off were scribbled on post-it notes or written into the request off book, but often, requests were lost or inadvertently overlooked. “We’re really close to UC Fullerton, so we employ a lot of students. Their schedules change constantly, so managers had to keep track of all that manually, too,” adds Neubauer.

Once completed, the schedule was posted on Thursdays, but by Sunday, it was a mess. Covered in hand-written scribbles of shift releases, shift pick-ups, manager sign offs and the like, it’s no wonder it was practically illegible. What’s more, tracking overtime was next to impossible. “With so many changes hand-written on the schedule, it was difficult to tell which staff members might slip into overtime. Managers really had to watch for it very closely and it was difficult to catch,” she says.

Taking Off with HotSchedules

Neubauer went in search of a solution, and found the answer right in her own store. Speaking to one of her managers, she learned about HotSchedules, a web-based scheduling and communications tool that is designed to simplify the scheduling process, reduce labor costs and amplify employee communications.

Neubauer called HotSchedules and got a demonstration set-up right away. Within days, she made the decision to move forward with HotSchedules and Logbook; she immediately started the implementation and training process. “In addition to training all our managers on how to use the solution, the HotSchedules team created all the scheduling categories for me and showed me how to use them. It made it so easy to get up and running quickly,” said Neubauer.

She also noted early on how helpful the HotSchedules support desk was to her and her staff. “If I called with a question, someone either answered or called me right back. It gave me a lot of confidence knowing they were there for us,” said Neubauer.

Speedy Scheduling

The first thing Neubauer and her managers noticed was the extreme reduction in time it took to create and maintain employee schedules. The staff’s permanent availabilities are built into the system and are immediately reflected in the schedule templates. Requests off have to be made in HotSchedules in order to be considered, so managers no longer have to go looking for those either.



As the general manager, just having the insight into what's going on at the store, even when I'm not there, is amazing.



-Vivian Neubauer,
General Manager,
Buffalo Wild Wings, Brea, CA

Now, when the schedules are finalized, they are pushed out to the staff through HotSchedules, where any changes or updates are also managed. "My employees love it, and the access is fantastic. Most of them use their phone to get their schedule and to put in requests for shift releases or trades. If they go out the night before, and they find they need to release their early shift, they do so with a few clicks. If a family emergency pops up, they can release their shift and it gets picked up right away," explains Neubauer.

HotSchedules also helped B-Dubs eliminate the manual work of typing out and printing their starting line-up. Because that line-up was constantly in flux due to last minute shift trades and other changes, it had to be double-checked, typed out and posted immediately before the start of the shift.

"I love HotSchedules' Daily Roster Report. That thing is genius. Before HotSchedules, someone had to type up each starting line-up of who's where and on which floor and which shift. It took at least an hour just to do that every day. But not anymore because HotSchedules does all that for us. All we have to do is click print when we walk in."

The time and frustration saved in the scheduling process cannot be understated. "Between creating the schedule, managing the changes and availabilities, as well as managing the roster, there's no doubt that we're saving many hours of time. I'd say at least 75% less time, if not more."

Out with Overtime

Perhaps even more important than the time savings in creating and maintaining the schedule is the greater visibility into critical labor-saving mechanisms. Now that shift trades are maintained in HotSchedules, managers receive alerts when a shift change will throw someone into overtime. "There's no more studying the hand-written notations on the printed schedule. HotSchedules lets managers know when the approval of a shift trade will send us into overtime so they can prevent it from occurring. Clearly, avoiding overtime has a real cost benefit to us."

Since B-Dub's employs a ranking system that is tracked in HotSchedules, there are no longer issues swapping highly experienced staff with those who are less experienced. "During peak sales hours, we need our best and most experienced staff on the floor. With HotSchedules, I can rest assured that there won't be accidental shift trades that leave my top-talent on the side lines," says Neubauer.

Champions of Connectivity

Not only do employees communicate amongst themselves through the HotSchedules portal, but managers can now post Broadcast Messages about important events or key information. "It's great to see them all sending messages to each other via HotSchedules," says Neubauer. "And anytime we have meetings, we tell them through HotSchedules and we have confidence that they actually get the message."



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For managers, HotSchedules Logbook has revolutionized the way they track employee performance and make important shift notations. Because Logbook can be accessed online or via smartphone, it's much easier for managers to add notes or search for content at any time. And since the content is all date-bound and spell checked, it's a great resource for clear, crisp documentation. "Managers can pull up Logbook on their phone as needed during the shift to make notes. They no longer have to try to remember everything so they can come back to the office after closing to write it all down. They can also clearly document staff performance, and search to find whatever they need later on."

The ability to jump onto HotSchedules and see what's going on, what is being communicated, and take care of tasks has proven to be more than just convenient, Neubauer feels like it makes her a better manager.

Just having the insight into what's going on at the store, even when I'm not there, is amazing. I went on vacation to Hawaii recently, and I could jump on my phone, read Logbook, approve schedules, and completely stay in touch without having to physically be there.

The Secret Sauce

Without question, HotSchedules has brought a new level of connectivity, efficiency and business intelligence to the Buffalo Wild Wings Brea location that simply couldn't have been achieved previously. Neubauer and her team are proud to be employing tools and technologies that enable them to be an example of great success in the industry. "Because we're such a big store, we're something of a showcase and we get visited by other B-Dubs franchisees. They ask me what we're doing to keep such a big establishment running so smoothly and successfully, and I'm always excited to tell them about HotSchedules," concludes Neubauer. "It just makes sense."



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