crunchtime

RESTAURANT EXPANSION:

How Miller's Ale House uses a Comprehensive Inventory and Learning Management System to Plan for Growth

MILLER'S ALE·HOUSE®

About Miller's Ale House

Originally opened in 1988, Miller's Ale House was a local place to be enjoyed by all walks of life. Today, Miller's Ale House is a sports-themed casual dining restaurant with 100+ locations in 10 states. Serving up burgers, salads, sandwiches, and over 35 beers on tap, Miller's Ale House is known for its large portions and warm service.

Classic Cheeseburger with Fries/Source: Miller's Ale House Website

The Challenge

As Miller's Ale House grew from a local restaurant to a national restaurant chain, inventory-related processes became increasingly painful. Previously, Miller's Ale House used spreadsheets to manage their recipes and inventory data, but the corporate office realized that in order to manage inventory and recipes consistently across stores, they needed a more accurate and robust solution.

The company also needed a new learning management system (LMS). Their previous LMS interface was difficult to navigate, and there was no support when problems came up. "Our LMS touches everyone from HR to the tech team, to managers, to restaurant-level team members," says Mary Lowe, Senior Director of Training and Development. "The system is supposed to make our lives easier, but we realized it was taking away resources."

Implementing Crunchtime

After much research, Miller's Ale House chose Crunchtime as their new back-office solution. They wanted a system that would make it easy to report across all locations and provide actionable insights at the corporate, regional, and store levels. "We selected Crunchtime because of its extensive reporting capabilities allowing us to capture and analyze data to make smarter business decisions," says George Sfetsas, Manager of Operations Analysis at Miller's Ale House.

Lowe and the training team chose Crunchtime's Talentlink LMS for two main reasons. The first was that the content library was specific to the restaurant industry. "It helps that their clients are in this sector and that they understand the specific training challenges we face," says Lowe. The second reason was the support and implementation team. "The customer experience has been so phenomenal. They're one of my favorite vendors to work with. I feel like they're part of my everyday team, and sometimes that's just through emails, but they're very responsive. They just kind of make it really fun and friendly to interact with them. It feels very personal versus just a ticketing system that you might never even connect with that person again."

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> **At Miller's Ale House, we are in business for our guests, and Crunchtime is an important tool for providing our guests with the best experience we can.**
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Managers are saving at least five hours per week on order preparation and order accuracy

Inventory Outcomes

Since implementing Crunchtime, Miller's Ale House has been able to use the information Crunchtime provides across locations to identify products and specific locations that have the opportunity to reduce waste. They've also used it to conduct an extensive menu analysis of each product served. "We can now track changes in product costs, sales mix, and margin trends more efficiently," says Sfetsas. "Since we are a value-driven concept, this tool helps us continue providing value to our guests."

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Crunchtime's central recipe management capabilities have also helped Miller's Ale House streamline recipe consistency and quality across all locations. The corporate office now uploads the recipes for all products into the digital recipe books, including production rules and pictures. When a location has a recipe question, they can pull up the latest digital version online, including recent modifications and limited-time offers.

Not only has Crunchtime helped streamline inventory management at the corporate level, but it's given back time to managers in the stores. "Someone who has never written an order can go into Crunchtime and order products for the week," says Sfetsas. "Since our business relies primarily on fresh products, it is essential to our success that we have an accurate and efficient ordering system." Sfetsas says that managers are saving at least five hours per week on order preparation and order accuracy.

Source: Miller's Ale House website
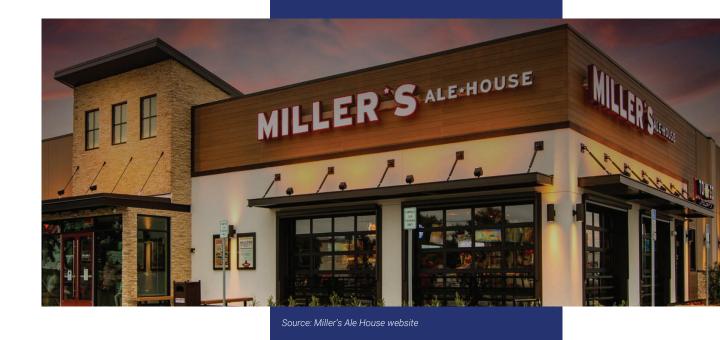
Training and Development Outcomes

Lowe and her team have heard nothing but positive feedback from operators and managers since implementing Crunchtime's TalentLink. "Our managers are very excited that they can easily assign, with one click of a button, team members to any learning program. If they have someone they want to start cross-training, they can assign those training immediately without having to go through corporate."

Another huge win for the team has been being able to geofence access to training for employees. For hourly employees, it's crucial to make sure they're only completing training while on the clock, for legal and compliance reasons. With TalentLink, Miller's Ale House is able to limit when users can complete their training by ensuring they're logged in to the restaurant's wifi and are on the clock.

"It provides an added layer of security for our content and proprietary information. Wage issues for hourly employees completing training are non-existent now, that's been a huge win for us since making the switch to TalentLink," says Lowe.

Overall, the system has made life easier for operators, managers, and the corporate office. Lowe says she's received dozens of emails from managers sharing how much better the new system is. One manager shared, "This is the most exciting system we've rolled out thus far. Thank you so much!"

Source: Miller's Ale House website

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What's Next

Miller's Ale House has a huge growth program outlined for their restaurants. As they're looking at their expansion plans, Crunchtime will play an integral role in keeping the business healthy.

"The more data and information you can get your hands on, the more you can learn about your business, which in turn makes us more reliable for our guests," says Sfetsas. "At Miller's Ale House, we are in business for our guests, and Crunchtime is an important tool for providing our guests with the best experience we can."

And, as Miller's Ale House opens more restaurants, they'll use the LMS to continue to expand cross-training opportunities for employees. "We're working on having specific training for different career paths that employees can master. Whether you're a kitchen manager, an AGM, a bar manager or an hourly supervisor, we want that career roadmap laid out so people can master various areas of responsibility," Lowe explained. "We want to reward restaurants for that cross-training and that will be incredibly important as we continue to expand."

About Crunchtime

Crunchtime is how the world's top restaurant brands achieve ops excellence in every location. Our software is used in over 100,000 locations in 100+ countries to manage inventory, staff scheduling, learning and development, food safety, operational tasks and audits.

For more information visit **www.crunchtime.com**

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