

BUILDING A BBQ BEHEMOTH:

How City Barbeque leverages technology to streamline restaurant operations



About City Barbeque

City Barbeque is a fast-casual barbeque chain specializing in slow-smoked, award-winning barbeque and craft homemade sides and desserts made from scratch. City Barbeque has been proud to serve the flavor of America since opening their first joint in 1999. Today, and every day, teammates in all 52 locations are smoking tastes of the nation, from Kansas City to the Carolinas, and sharing their passion for the art and soul of BBQ. City Barbeque's smoked-on-site barbeque, classic comfort food sides, and homemade desserts are made fresh for folks dining in, carrying out, ordering delivery, or catering anything from tailgates and casual get-togethers to corporate events and elegant weddings.



A tray of City Barbeque staples | Source: business.facebook.com/citybarbequenevark, October 30, 2020

The Challenge

Even before implementing Crunchtime, City Barbeque understood the use case for restaurant technology to scale their business. Bryan Myers, CIO of City Barbeque, explained that the company already employed a variety of technologies to run their restaurant operations but lacked an enterprise solution that allowed these technologies to integrate and communicate with each other.

“When I got to City Barbeque, we actually had a wide variety of technologies; specifically, when it came to back-of-house, I saw a couple of major items that technology could help with,” said Myers. At the time, City Barbeque was using separate labor and inventory systems. However, neither of those tools were integrated with their point-of-sale (POS) system.

Myers and his team at City Barbeque began evaluating back-of-house platforms that could handle both labor and inventory management. During the evaluation process, the team at City Barbeque concluded that for a new technology to be successful with restaurant staff, there needed to be a seamless implementation plan.



Implementing Crunchtime

According to Myers, Crunchtime’s Customer Success Managers were instrumental in the overall implementation of the platform.

“City Barbeque has a lot of long-standing restaurant managers. Part of our niche early on was we gave the managers a lot of flexibility. We wanted to give them ownership of each joint because each managed their restaurants a little differently and did it with a lot of success. When we implemented Crunchtime, we saw an opportunity to standardize how we manage inventory and keep food costs down across locations.”

Initially, there was some skepticism among City Barbeque’s restaurant managers since managers had been operating successful restaurants for years and were seeing incredibly high sales.



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“The beauty of what the Crunchtime team did was listen to these managers and take their input seriously,” Myers explained. “But they were also really strong in presenting what other brands are doing and providing examples of not only why it’s beneficial to [manage inventory and costs] but how to do it. There’s a lot of ways you could configure the system but the team’s ability to listen to our managers and show them how to standardize the process was a huge differentiator.”

Outcomes

“The biggest benefit has been around inventory management,” says Myers. “We run a somewhat complex operation, specifically around how we manage food costs, since we are an almost 100% made-from-scratch kitchen. Given the multitude of steps and the process of how we make our food, a lot of our food involves multi-day prep. For instance, we smoke our brisket for anywhere between 17 and 24 hours. So, it’s fair to say that there were some complexities with food costs and managing food costs.”



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After rolling out Crunchtime in their restaurants, Myers and his team watched the numbers very closely, and they were pleased with what they were seeing. And it’s not just corporate: City Barbeque managers are also seeing the benefits of having a platform that analyzes food and labor together, specifically around timesaving benefits. “The simplest answer [to what are the benefits of analyzing food and labor together] is one less tool for our managers

to have to log in to. Our managers are just doing a lot; we ask them to do a lot, and just simplifying the number of pieces of technology they need to work with goes a long way.” Myers says that thanks to Crunchtime, the time it now takes to do inventory has been cut in half.

City Barbeque also relies heavily on Crunchtime’s BizIQ product. BizIQ is an enterprise data warehouse and business intelligence platform that’s fully integrated with the Crunchtime platform. Myers and his team saw the value of measuring success in real-time.

“Historically, our finance team would put together a spreadsheet that

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shows sales comps by market and by store and gets more granular to include things like labor and discounts. So, we had this daily report that’s sent out via a spreadsheet.” Utilizing BizIQ’s dashboards and custom reports, City Barbeque corporate, regional, and local managers now have the ability to analyze and report on every aspect of their operation. “We’ve been able to create some great dashboards in BizIQ,” Myers says. “It’s really about moving end-users away from static report mentality to real-time data and dashboard mentality.”



A City Barbeque location in Fairlawn, OH.
Source: www.fortneyweygandt.com/city-barbeque

What's Next

City Barbeque has its sights set on expansion, looking to double in size in the next few years, which is a lofty but perfectly obtainable goal for the BBQ powerhouse. “The benefit of [the Crunchtime platform’s tools] is the ability to onboard new restaurants seamlessly,” says Myers.

In addition to restaurant expansion goals, Myers says menu engineering has been a primary focus for the business and is looking to use BizIQ’s menu engineering reports to make data-driven decisions about the items they serve and promote. “The goal is to get [menu engineering] reports from BizIQ in front of our leadership team,” says Myers. However, one item that will never leave the menu is their award-winning brisket, which Myers claims is his favorite item of anything City Barbeque serves. “We stand by the product,” he says with a smile.

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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