

Caribou Coffee Cut Scheduling Time by 67% and Gained Cost Control with Crunchtime Labor

The very first Caribou Coffee opened in 1992 with a vision to build personal connections into the coffeehouse experience. For over thirty years, that unwavering focus has cultivated the company’s global standard for high-quality ingredients, specialty-grade coffee, sustainable practices, and real connections, and continues today across more than 800 locations in 11 countries.



 QSR
  800+ Locations
  Global
  Crunchtime Labor

67% decrease
in scheduling time

Increased scores
for guest satisfaction

Real-time visibility
into payroll costs

Challenge

Inefficient Scheduling and Labor Challenges

Minneapolis-based Caribou Coffee was losing hours of productivity each week to inefficient scheduling—an issue many quick-service restaurants can relate to. Although the brand had a scheduling system in place, it didn’t alleviate the burden of creating and maintaining schedules. In fact, it often created additional labor challenges, largely because the schedules were not created based on need. This reliance on guesswork meant managers were constantly managing by “gut instinct” rather than the precise, data-driven guidance required to protect profitability.

Managers were operating blind during scheduling. This delay in visibility led to reactive management and unexpected overspending. When stores borrowed

employees from other stores for coverage, the borrowed employees often went into overtime. Team members were also frustrated by the system because they had to visit the store to check their schedules.

Systems Product and Project Manager, Kim Olson, explained that there was no way for team members to interact with the scheduling system. “There were Post-It Note wars on random calendars in the back, and time-off requests appeared after schedules were made. The system generated schedules based on the estimated amount of time it would take to make our products, and would say we needed 4-6 employees scheduled at a time. But it didn’t break that down and say we needed a manager, a greeter, and baristas,” said Kim.

Solution

Achieving Scheduling Efficiency with Crunchtime Labor

Caribou Coffee implemented Crunchtime Labor to alleviate this burden. Since the organization had used other Crunchtime solutions for more than a decade, the transition was seamless.

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Kim Olson
Systems Product/Project Manager
Caribou Coffee

Crunchtime Labor provides time benefits, such as eliminating confusion about time-off requests and shift swaps, enabling employees to request those directly in the system or see payroll costs immediately. “With Crunchtime Labor, team members walk into a shift knowing where they need to be and how they will fit in with the rest of the team. We save time there, and team members come in better prepared.” Kim stated.

Because Crunchtime Labor also automatically integrates with the company’s HR system, managers can also post open positions, recruit, and interview candidates within the HR platform. This makes sense for their managers, who no longer have to manually enter employee information, eliminating the potential for errors.



Results

Saving Time and Improving the Team and Guest Experience

With Crunchtime Labor, Caribou Coffee achieved a 67% reduction in weekly schedule creation and admin time, leading to industry-leading efficiency gains.

New stores now have the added benefit of copying schedule templates from other stores, so they no longer have to guess at their initial schedules. Team members also enjoy checking schedules remotely, and because the entire company shares the Crunchtime Labor’s mobile scheduling app, there

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Caribou Coffee

is no risk of accidental overtime when employees are borrowed by other stores.

Kim concluded, “Now that we have Crunchtime Labor in every store, we have the best people in the best positions for every shift. The deployment is a major part of increasing our guest satisfaction scores, because our team members are happier and we’re able to work more efficiently with our team.”