

# Herschend Family Entertainment reduces costs and improves purchasing with Crunchtime

The world's largest family-owned theme park company, including Dollywood, completely transformed its food purchasing and menu management in just under a year to improve profitability at its 180+ unique dining locations.

 Entertainment, Fast Casual, Fine Dining

 180+ Dining Locations

 US + Canada

 Inventory Management



**1%**

average reduction in cost of sales (COS) per property

**\$783,000**

in savings in one year at Dollywood alone

**2 hours**

average time savings per inventory count, per property

## Challenge

### The complex food and beverage operation lacked visibility into vendor pricing and contracts

With 180+ dining locations and a growing portfolio of properties, each with unique menus and seasonal offerings, Herschend was struggling with the complex logistics of managing procurement, ordering, and food cost visibility.

**“It was difficult to know where to start, as we had data coming from various inventory solutions across our company,”** said Heather Barnhart, Revenue Systems Manager. **“Some properties relied on spreadsheets, while others were utilizing outdated inventory systems. We were asking these teams to take a major leap with Crunchtime. We needed a platform that would meet a wide variety of needs and use cases, while also supporting our continued growth.”**

The team at Herschend had strict and specific requirements for a new inventory solution, including:

- A full range of capabilities for bid management, purchasing procurement, counting, menu production, recipe prep, and food costing
- Can scale to support a large number of purchases and diverse menu items across many dining locations
- Can support a large volume of data and complicated configurations

# Solution

## All food and beverage vendor orders, inventory counts, and item movements are now completed and visible through Crunchtime

The organization implemented Crunchtime Inventory Management and was pleased with the process and the support. **“Crunchtime’s implementation team helped us develop a strategy for how to organize and configure the large volume of data required to make this transition as seamless as possible for our operators,”** said Barbara Stanley, Director of Revenue Systems and Analytics. **“They were patient with us as we began to have those ‘ah-ha!’ moments, and they continued to support and train us throughout our implementation and beyond.”**

### Vendor management and improved ordering

The team’s first priority was to improve bid management and gain visibility into vendor contracts. **“Before Crunchtime, we were never able to easily compare pricing from property to property,”** said Brandon Willett, Corporate Food and Beverage Purchasing Manager. Crunchtime’s integrated vendor portal now allows the team to see all contracts and pricing in one consolidated place for faster comparison, easier ordering, and better oversight.

### Reports for recipe prep and menu costing

For the first time, all recipes were documented across all properties using Crunchtime. This includes over 1,600 prep recipes and over 5,000 active point-of-sale recipes. Documenting this information unlocked much-needed visibility into the state of their actual food costs brand-wide. The chefs also use Crunchtime’s recipe modeling to guide the development of new recipes and understand their cost-effectiveness in real time.

### Inventory transfers

With so many locations and diverse dining options, Herschend needed to have instant visibility and access to move inventory efficiently from one location to another. Now, employees can easily view inventory levels in Crunchtime and instantly transfer goods to meet fluctuating demand.

**“Ordering and receiving are much faster and more accurate because we removed the paper and manual processes for our operations and finance teams ... We’ve built an entire team of food leaders that better understand their P&L because of the tools within Crunchtime.”**



**Brandon Willett**  
Corporate Food and Beverage  
Purchasing Manager,  
Herschend Family Entertainment



# Results

## 1% reduction in COS resulted in \$780,000 in savings at just Dollywood alone

Since implementing Crunchtime, Herschend Family Entertainment has seen a complete transformation in how their properties manage inventory and control food costs. “Ordering and receiving are much faster and more accurate because we removed the paper and manual processes for our operations and finance teams,” said Willett. “Now, invoices must be paid at contract prices, and we’ve significantly improved the procurement process.”

Using Crunchtime’s powerful purchasing and reconciliation tools, Dollywood reduced its cost of sales (COS) by 1%, resulting in savings of over \$780,000 in just one year. The teams are now empowered to easily highlight pricing discrepancies and improve negotiations with their vendors. “We’ve built an entire team of food leaders that better understand their P&L because of the tools within Crunchtime,” explained Willett.

While some contracts are more complicated to audit, they have also uncovered simpler issues, like overpaying for garbage bags, which resulted in over \$50,000 in savings for one market.

The revamped processes are also saving teams significant time, with inventory counts and audits being completed up to two hours faster. At Dollywood, this equates to 100 labor hours saved per period at each dining location.

“Before Crunchtime, matching recipes to product costs across the entire enterprise felt like an impossible task,” said Stanley. “Now we can clearly see and monitor our food costs with real-time data. Crunchtime has transformed how we approach our food cost analytics.”

“Crunchtime also enables easy inventory transfers between parks within the system, helping to eliminate waste and cover any shortfalls between properties,” said Barnhart. “When a water park closes for the season, our team can seamlessly transfer products between properties, with Crunchtime documenting each transaction to provide visibility we didn’t have before. This process is now maintained by the food and beverage department, which streamlined operations and reduced the need for additional finance team involvement.”

**“So far, the cost improvements have exceeded our expectations, and we still have even more cost-saving features to explore,”** said Stanley.

The company is currently rolling out Crunchtime at five additional properties, and the team is excited to tap into even greater cost savings by utilizing more Crunchtime features like actual vs. theoretical reporting, auto-forecasting, and suggested ordering.



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**Barbara Stanley**  
Director of Revenue Systems and Analytics,  
Herschend Family Entertainment