

Herschend Family Entertainment Reduces Costs and Improves Purchasing with Crunchtime Inventory

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 350+ dining locations across all its properties.

 Entertainment, Fast Casual, Fine Dining

 350+ Dining Locations

 US and Canada

 Crunchtime Inventory



1%
average reduction
in COS per property

\$783,000
saved in one year
at Dollywood alone

2 hours saved
(average) per inventory
count, per property

Challenge

Complex F&B Operation Lacked Cost Visibility and Control

With 350+ 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 **“Some properties relied on spreadsheets, while others were utilizing outdated inventory systems.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 Inventory. We needed a solution 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

Centralized Ordering and Oversight

The organization implemented Crunchtime Inventory 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. **“With Crunchtime Inventory, recipe development isn’t just about creativity—it incorporates cost from the start,”** Barbara added. **“As our culinary leaders ideate and build new menu items, we can use Crunchtime to model recipes in real time, so we know exactly how each item will impact our profitability before it goes live.”**

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

\$780,000 in Savings at Dollywood Alone

Since implementing Crunchtime, Herschend Family Entertainment has seen a complete transformation in how its 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,”** Brandon said. **“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,”** Brandon explained.

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 Inventory, matching recipes to product costs across the entire enterprise felt like an impossible task,” Barbara said. **“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,” Heather added. **“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.”**

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

Herschend Family Entertainment continues to roll out Crunchtime at additional properties. The team is excited to realize significant cost savings by leveraging features such as actual vs. theoretical reporting, auto-forecasting, and recommended ordering.

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



Barbara Stanley
Director of Revenue Systems and Analytics
Herschend Family Entertainment