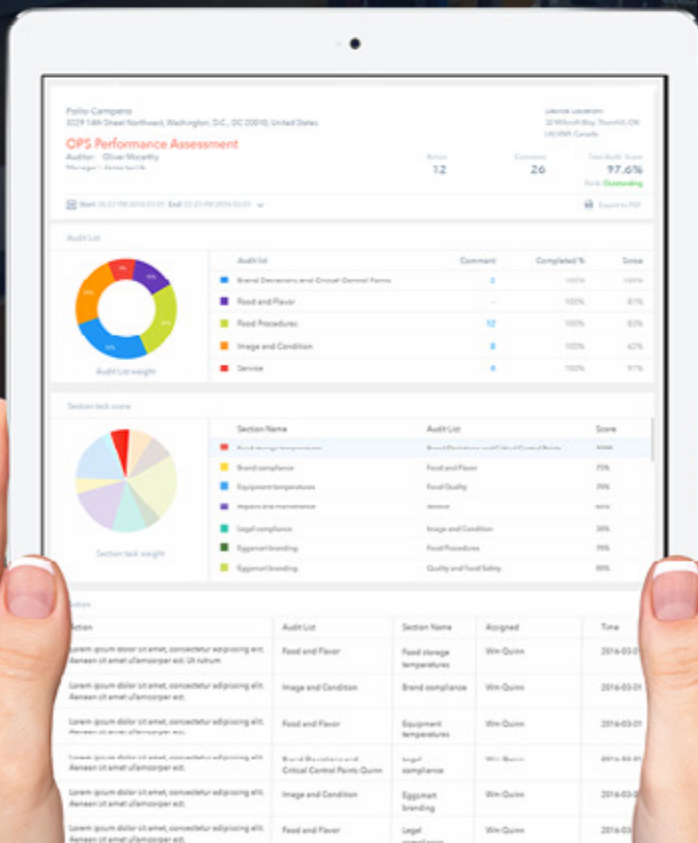




Case Study: Kernels Popcorn





For this Customer Case Study, we met with Paula Hurley, Director of Retail Operations at Kernels Popcorn. At Kernels, Paula is responsible for overseeing the Operations side of the business. Everything from Hiring and Training to Sales, Health/Safety and Internal Inspections would fall under her accountabilities.

“Practice Safe Snacks”

Since opening their first location back in 1983, Kernels Popcorn has consistently been a leader in the Foodservice industry growing their business to over 75 locations total. What has set Kernels apart from the fierce competition of their peers, is the consistent devotion to product quality and customer demand. In a time when snack food was considered unhealthy, Kernels created an alternative product satisfying the need for low fat but great tasting snack food. With unique and interesting flavors such as Creamy Caramel, and BLT on Rye, Kernels began selling their products across the country. Sunflower Oil soon became the new base for all Kernels popcorn making the new slogan “Practice Safe Snacks” the company mantra. Over the years, Kernels has continued expanding, recently partnering with Baskin & Robbins Ice Cream to create co-branded locations. This amongst other innovations has led them to become the household brand name that they are today.



Life Before MeasureUp

For Paula and her team, tracking, managing and conducting field assessments of their stores was a time-consuming process. District Managers were constantly completing store assessments with each Corporate Store receiving one visit per month and Franchised stores twice per year. In Kernels’ previous process, their checklist consisted of 8 pages that was completed using nothing more than paper, and excel. Not only were there 8 pages, but there were three different types! When a Field Manager went out to conduct an assessment, they were required to print the specific type and hand write the notes right onto the paper. This created quite the manual mess, especially for Paula as each individual Field Manager would begin sending her PDF’s of their notes. It was now Paula’s responsibility to review and “translate” these documents into informed data that store managers, and the corporate team could use. Paula mentioned, “it could take hours just to organize and complete reports, wasting both my time and lowering the value of the data I was creating.”

It was only once this entire process was complete, could Paula begin to send out summary reports to the various relevant stakeholders. The issue that constantly arose was the time it took from the actual assessment, to the date that a finished report was complete, were completely out of sync. In many cases, it could be up to two weeks before a store received anything. With a 14-day turnaround time, it made follow-up planning and business coaching less effective. When a store eventually did go through the report, the information might have been outdated or simply no longer relevant. Any photos taken during the initial assessment had to be carefully stored on the individual District Managers cell phone so that they could be included in the final reports.

Making it Seamless

What Kernels desired, was an easier process for producing reports so that management could help stores identify areas of improvement without the two-week delay. With store assessment data generated quicker, Paula and her team would now begin to tackle issues in a manner that could benefit locations immediately. Scheduled store visits and

their subsequent reports, would no longer have gaps that required interpretation or direction in their results. Kernels needed the MeasureUp solution to provide them with detailed analytics and data capabilities in real time, that anyone could understand. Moving them to a seamless process that could be easily scaled was Kernels main priority.

MeasureUp's Impact for Kernels

In any restaurant business where food is the product being sold, two things are necessary to be successful. First, having the right personnel to execute on brand strategy, and second, the correct equipment to cook or create the food. For Kernels having operationally sound equipment is a differentiator in their line of business. Producing Popcorn is a process that is dependent on very specialized equipment meaning that any downtime in such equipment negatively impacts their bottom line.

Since introducing MeasureUp into store visits, downtime has decreased. This is a direct result from faster response times to operational issues. When machinery is down,

management can track the status of their Action Plans relating to equipment fixes. This is done right inside of the MeasureUp application. Franchisees and General Managers alike can rest assured that the impact on revenue will be limited.

Ultimately, the direct benefit from MeasureUp has been that Kernels can deal with their service issues faster than ever before. Potential issues can be identified and serviced before they happen and when issues do occur, they can now act on them in an expedient manner. Identifying them quicker means getting their machinery back online earlier, allowing for zero disruptions in sales.



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