Scorecard | Reducing Food Costs and Variance Gaps

While every restaurant will have a unique set of reasons why its food cost fluctuates from what is expected, having actual food costs very similar to theoretical food costs is ideal in order to position your brand for growth.

Mark your confidence level: How well does your organization execute these food cost strategies? Plus, key tips for improving how this work is done	CONFIDENCE LEVEL		
	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Every item purchased for the restaurant is matched against the invoice **KEY TIP:** Conduct invoice and product checks as quickly as possible once an order arrives, as many vendors will not offer refunds or replacements if too much time has passed.			
Measuring cups, spoons, and scales are used to properly portion food during prep **KEY TIP:** Have backup utensils available for when utensils need to be washed, get broken, or are misplaced so team members have backup options to use.			
High-cost, low-margin menu items are evaluated and/or eliminated **KEY TIP:** Regularly evaluate menu profitability and customer preferences to ensure that the menu drives ROI. There may be seasonal differences in customer preferences and ingredient costs which can drastically affect profitability.			
Orders are directly transmitted from POS to the kitchen to avoid unrecorded sales **KEY TIP:** Make sure employees have a way to log remakes, substitutions, and modifiers (with or without an upcharge) to help track product usage. Tie modifiers to a product rather than just adding text to receipts, which can significantly alter your theoretical inventory on hand.			
Processes are tracked to identify where food waste can be reduced **KEY TIP:** Use an inventory management system with built-in waste tracking to make recording waste easier and more accurate. The data can be used to find patterns on when and why certain items are being wasted so that your team can develop an action plan to address excess waste.			
Customer food waste is monitored and portions are cut where possible **KEY TIP:** Evaluate portion sizes offered by competitors with similar types of menus to gauge customer expectations and industry standards.			
Staff is educated and incentivized on food costs and waste management **KEY TIP:** Incentivizing best practices for food costs, order-taking, and remakes will result in more accurate management of food costs and waste.			
Free or discounted employee meals are provided to build team morale and reduce shrinkage **KEY TIP:** Set a limit on food allowances per shift that is within reason based on your restaurant's menu and communicate that the free/discounted meals only apply before, during, or immediately after the employee's shift.			
Food and supplies are purchased in bulk when applicable **KEY TIP:** Before buying a large amount of bulk product, ensure that your restaurant has enough space for storage, or the items may be improperly stored, raising the likelihood of them getting damaged, misplaced, or not used in the right order.			
Quarterly food pricing reviews are held with vendors **KEY TIP:** Research current prices and trends for key items so that you can go into each meeting with fair expectations and can use the information to advocate for your restaurant when appropriate.			

See end of scorecard for rankings and additional resources

Scorecard | Lowering Your Labor Costs

By implementing small changes to reduce labor costs, your stores can become more agile without sacrificing quality or efficiency to better position your brand for growth.

Mark your confidence level: How well does your organization execute these labor cost strategies? Plus, key tips for improving how this work is done	CONFIDENCE LEVEL		
	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
You are tracking how often shifts are over- or under-scheduled **KEY TIP:** Overtime is often accrued unintentionally. To avoid surprise overtime pay, set clear expectations and goals with your store managers and use relevant historical data to create attainable labor goals for each store.			
Seasonal and part-time workers are being hired **KEY TIP:** Seasonal workers can be less expensive to hire without having to bring them on as long-term staff, and this also ensures that you won't have to cut your long-term staff's hours during slower seasons.			
Staff are cross-trained for different roles to make them as versatile as possible **KEY TIP:** Cross-training makes it easier to create schedules since you can easily pivot mid-shift in case of a last-minute vacancy. This can also help reduce turnover—the more hours worked, the more knowledge gained, and the more employees feel invested.			
Scheduling is based on your sales forecast to increase accuracy **KEY TIP:** Analyze your historical sales to predict how busy your restaurant will be, while factoring in various inputs, like guest counts and holidays, to ensure the right mix of staff is scheduled to accommodate both peak and slow hours.			
Employees can easily swap shifts when needed **KEY TIP:** Scheduling flexibility is closely linked with employee satisfaction. With an employee scheduling app, managers can approve changes on the schedule and jump right back to work on their other responsibilities.			
Key tasks are optimized to help teams work smarter, not harder **KEY TIP:** Automate work that can easily be reduced or removed altogether, so your team doesn't need to spend countless hours on mundane tasks, and can feel more invested in more valuable, higher-impact work, like helping customers.			
Technology and equipment upgrades are regularly considered **KEY TIP:** Upgrading technology and equipment can make each shift more effective and efficient. For instance, robots that can fry food are safer, faster, and less error-prone, don't need vacation days or raises, and can work 24/7 without overtime pay.			
Labor law compliance is carefully monitored **KEY TIP:** Make sure you're up to date on the latest jurisdictional labor law requirements in every store to reduce costly violations or penalty pay.			
Attractive compensation and perks are offered to employees and candidates to improve retention **KEY TIP:** Gym reimbursements, bonuses, and stock options are great ways to differentiate your company and incentivize your workers to stay longer.			

See end of scorecard for rankings and additional resources

Scorecard | Improving Food Safety Execution

To better position your brand for growth, food safety should be a top priority, as it protects customers, team members, and your brand's reputation.

Mark your confidence level: How well does your organization execute these food safety strategies? Plus, key tips for improving how this work is done	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Photos and reminders are used to help teams communicate more effectively **KEY TIP:** The more you can remind staff what success looks like, the better. Use photos and automated tips to remind employees what a successfully completed task looks like.			
Stores are equipped with tools that automatically calculate and print expiration dates on food labels **KEY TIP:** Ensure products and ingredients are always labeled with accurate details, expiration dates, and allergen information, whether printing labels for multiple products at once or printing single labels for one ingredient.			
Data is used to identify at-risk stores sooner **KEY TIP:** Preventative alerts will allow proactive intervention before a problem becomes a crisis. District managers receive real-time insights into each store's temperature data.			
Managers/teams receive mobile alerts when equipment temperatures go out of range **KEY TIP:** By automating this process, operators better protect their inventory from spoilage and customers from foodborne illness, save employees time by eliminating manual temperature checks, and ensure compliance with internal and government safety standards.			
Refresher courses on safe food handling are regularly offered **KEY TIP:** It is essential to consider and reinforce even the food safety smallest details. These are the easiest to overlook but could have the biggest consequences and training is an effective reminder.			
A food safety plan is implemented and regularly reinforced **KEY TIP:** Every food safety plan must include a hazard analysis for all food processes and a preventive control implementation strategy, including but not limited to process controls, sanitization, and allergen controls.			
A routine workplace sanitization schedule is in place **KEY TIP:** Implementing a workplace sanitization schedule will create accountability, prevent food safety concerns, and assist with the identification and tracking of issues that emerge.			

See end of scorecard for rankings and additional resources

Scorecard | Enhancing Training Methods

To better position your brand for growth, transition away from paper-based or desktop-only training programs by offering on-demand training on any web browser or mobile device with a user experience that mimics streaming media apps.

Mark your confidence level: How well has your organization enhanced its training methods? Plus, key tips for improving how this work is done	CONFIDENCE LEVEL		
	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
You created a pilot to find your starting point **KEY TIP:** Creating a pilot will allow you to evaluate which positions could benefit the most from e-learning. You can also incorporate validation tools such as exams, surveys, and checklists to assist with the pilot.			
Results are measured pre- and post-launch **KEY TIP:** Before introducing new online training, ask someone unfamiliar with the material to go through the content and take the exam. If they cannot pass the exam, you may need to adjust your questions or break the training into smaller chunks.			
An on-demand e-learning program is implemented **KEY TIP:** With on-demand learning programs, your staff receives consistent training across all locations, and managers gain back valuable time, leading to better customer service and brand experiences for your guests.			
Training is set up and designed to accommodate modern attention spans **KEY TIP:** You'll get better results if you identify the most critical information the learner needs to know and put that material online. Microlearning has been proven to be more effective with better knowledge retention than excessively long courses.			
Your LMS provider works with you every step of the way **KEY TIP:** There are hundreds of LMS providers out there, but only a few focus on the hospitality industry. It's best to look for a provider who is willing to start small and help you grow over time.			
Materials are broken up into smaller sections to avoid a data dump **KEY TIP:** Employees will find it easier to retain information if it is broken up into separate quizzes on each section instead of one giant test at the end. You should also consider whether or not every single page of your operations manual needs to be converted to an online format.			
Benchmarks have been established to assess training methods and measure the results of e-learning **KEY TIP:** You'll want to evaluate how long your training methods are taking from the time of initial hire to scheduling an employee for a solo shift.			

See end of scorecard for rankings and additional resources

Here are some different ways you can use this scorecard:

- Assess your current state of operations
- Create an action plan
- Prioritize where to focus
- Guide conversations with leadership

See how you stack up

Follow the rankings below for more insight and additional resources

If you marked "high" confidence for most items

Great work—sounds like you're achieving next-level operational excellence to unlock new growth opportunities for your business. Interested in seeing how you compare to your peers? Download the 2023 Restaurant Operations Report.

If you marked "medium" confidence for most items

Nice job—seems like you've nailed the fundamentals and can continue to improve operational excellence in one or more focus areas. Next, we suggest you download Measuring What Matters in Restaurant Operations to learn the impact of operations work—from inventory management to employee development—to reduce costs, improve efficiency, increase profits, and boost customer satisfaction.

If you marked "low" confidence for most items

Off to a good start—now that you know where you stand, you can create new goals to reach. To help you get started, we recommend downloading The Restaurant Operators Guide to Ops Excellence for a framework for achieving operational excellence with modern processes, technology, and automation.
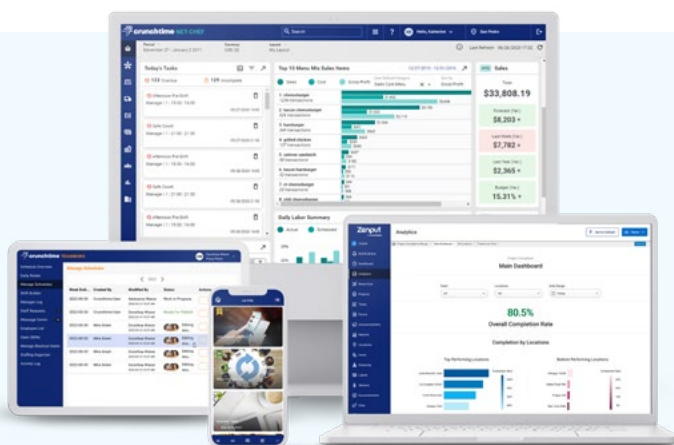
Crunchtime is how the world's top restaurant brands achieve operational excellence to grow confidently. We're here to help your organization realize these outcomes with confidence.

For more information or schedule a personalized demo, get in touch with our team:

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