



Food Express Goes All-In with Seed to Optimize its Business

Food Express sees meaningful increases in fill and collection quantities just weeks after Seed implementation.

The Situation

In business, one of the most important factors for success is scale. While growing quickly increases revenue and profit, it can also result in a hodgepodge of processes across branches of your business. This is what Food Express experienced as one of America's fastest growing food service companies in the Southeast. Like many vending operators, Food Express is family-owned. It was founded in 1985 and has successfully expanded in the Southeast United States —with headquarters in Greensboro, North Carolina and 4 branches in Raleigh, Charlotte, Spartanburg, and Atlanta, GA. Food Express is also a USConnect® affiliate, which allows them to support thousands of clients with their fresh food vending machines, Bistro to GO!® Markets, customized dining, and office coffee services.

While Food Express rapidly grew over 2.7 decades, they started to experience critical challenges in managing multiple branches under one streamlined set of processes. Each branch had a different process for managing inventory, scheduling routes, and reporting. Food Express needed greater visibility, productivity, and efficiency across all sites.

Key Challenges

Difficulties managing multiple branches.

Food Express has multiple branches and depots across the Southeastern part of the country. These depots had limited driver accountability when it came to scheduling and lacked operational transparency.

No consistent set of processes across branches.

Processes varied significantly amongst the two largest branches. Each site was using different vending management systems and followed different guidelines from picking to reporting. Their existing system was outdated and difficult to use. Much of their time was spent being reactive and putting out daily fires, verse being proactive.

No way to force regular inventories.

Food Express's existing VMS was not an effective tool for managing or forecasting inventory needs. During the Seed implementation process, they found machines that hadn't been inventoried in months, years, or ever.

Inaccurate data forcing static scheduling.

They drained a lot of company resources manually scheduling routes.

The Solution

Food Express elected the Seed Pro and Seed Office platforms, with added features to support their deliveries, merchandising, and micro markets. The all-inclusive platform offers one centralized view for managing all lines of business across multiple branches, helping operators like Food Express scale more efficiently.

Food Express's leadership team only had one hesitation about the transition to Seed. Would their employees respond well to the change? As good leaders, they were concerned about the workload of the transition and how it would affect employee morale. Cantaloupe quickly addressed these concerns by training Food Express's employees on how Seed would make their lives easier. With a greater understanding of Seed, the team's hesitations were eased, and the employee feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

Cantaloupe completed implementation in record time because Food Express didn't have to switch out any devices in the field to implement Seed. The Seed suite works with nearly all devices leveraging Seed Sync to seamlessly integrate into their VMS. Cantaloupe's implementation team provided project planning with daily communication, onboarding, and on-site training to ensure implementation was successful at multiple branches.

The Results

One view reporting for all branches.

Eliminated hours of manual work downloading, manipulating data and consolidating it into one report.

Simple processes that drive accountability.

Schedulers are scheduling an entire branch in 15 minutes. They also improved cross-branch alignment on standard processes.

Accurate data our team can trust.

Moved to dynamic scheduling, which significantly reduced bring-backs. They are now servicing accounts when they need it.

Inventory management improvements in the field.

Our team can force inventories, and the drivers like the easy-to-use Seed Mobile app for in-field management.



30%

reduction in vending service visits.



75%

increase in average fills per service six weeks after implementation.



97%

increase in average collections per visit 6 weeks after implementation.

Scheduling

"It's so fast, it's unbelievable. I can schedule an entire branch in 15 minutes."

—Angela Morgan
Operations Manager



Customer Service

"We get the help we need right away, there is no jumping through hoops."

—Billy Whitacre
Senior VP of Operations



Leadership

"I've been in the industry for 34 years, and I didn't expect us to be up and running in 30 days. I was impressed with the entire process."

—Hugh O'Neill
President