

SUCCESS STORY



Collier Restaurant Group Optimum HRIS Advocate: Royce Pruitt, CFO



For over 20 years, Collier Restaurant Group has served up Southern-style hospitality in their 18 restaurants in the beautiful Smoky Mountains resort and tourist area of Gatlinburg, TN. They served 2.5 million guests in 2016 at their restaurants which include nationally known brands TGI Friday's, Corky's Ribs & BBQ, Golden Corral, the Melting Pot in Gatlinburg and a Quaker Steak and Lube, home of famous wings. They also own delicious specialty restaurants Flapjack's Pancake Cabins, Old Chicago Pizza, Smoky Mountain Pancakes and Log Cabin Pancakes. They are in the process of expanding their hospitality empire to the bustling tourist area of Myrtle Beach, SC. The 1100 employees of these 18 busy restaurants are supported by Optimum Payroll from Optimum Software and Hagel & Company.

Collier Restaurant Group's CFO, Royce Pruitt, offers insight into the firm's experience of selecting and implementing the new Payroll system.

The Problem:

Collier Restaurant Group was using Sage MAS 100 for payroll and a custom built database to track other HR related information. Royce states, "*The database for all employee master information was getting ready to break.*" This is a serious issue for a mission-critical application and a major concern for Collier. The current Sage MAS payroll also failed to support the Affordable Care Act reporting which was another reason why the Collier Restaurant Group began looking for a new system.

Another common issue found in the hospitality industry, which Collier Restaurant Group was also experiencing, was the need to process negative checks for servers. Restaurant servers often have a negative check when their Social Security withholding is calculated on their tips rather than their hourly rate. This was another problem that was not being controlled by their Sage MAS payroll.

Search for a Solution:

Collier Restaurant Group had many criteria specific to the restaurant environment that were required for their new payroll system. They needed a system that could handle tips reporting, their weekly payrolls for 1100 employees, multiple companies, and overtime calculations for servers. Collier has multiple EINs as well and needed very strong ACA tracking and reporting.

At least six different solutions were considered as they went through their lengthy evaluation process. The cloud model of Sage Abra was considered, as well as other cloud solutions. Ultimately, Collier Restaurant Group selected on premise Optimum Payroll. Some of the many reasons why Royce and their team selected Optimum Payroll are:

- Optimum has excellent Open Database Connectivity (ODBC) and the ability to quickly access the time data from their Point of Sale system.
- Optimum has other restaurants as customers and could demonstrate the ability to handle restaurant pay-rolls.
- Optimum has the functionality they needed.
- Optimum has the most functionality of systems reviewed for the least cost.
- Optimum is the “best value for Collier.”

The Implementation:

Hagel & Company began the implementation of Optimum Payroll mid-year of 2015. Royce found that the implementation went very well and any hiccups encountered were worked through very quickly. Optimum made importing the data from their former system a breeze, enabling the implementation to finish ahead of schedule. Royce said, *“It was the smoothest implementation of a major system I have ever been involved with. We had an extremely aggressive implementation schedule to begin with and we got done one week early. Jeff was great to work with.”*

Results and Benefits:

Two years later, Collier Restaurant Group is still very confident that they made the right decision in choosing Optimum Payroll. They now have a powerful SQL Payroll system that is handling their complex restaurant-based requirements extremely well.

Royce concludes that they continue to discover many ways Optimum can streamline their processes as they utilize its expanded functionality. One example is the accrual functions have a much broader ability than what their previous Sage product could provide. The Sage MAS software had a very limited ability on accruals. In terms of their health insurance, and all deductions, Optimum automatically calculates both the employee and employer side of deductions and accruals. This functionality has saved Collier a considerable amount of time.

Negative checks for servers, a common restaurant issue, are easily handled in Optimum. *“Optimum will compute all that for you and will reduce the withholding correctly, and if necessary push deductions into arrears so we don’t have to worry about it anymore. What was a manual process with MAS has now been automated.”*

Collier has since added another company and found this addition to be very easy and straight-forward. Royce states that *“the ability to manage employees across multiple companies is easy in Optimum. Not so much in MAS.”*

Optimum Software’s corporate support has been excellent throughout the process as well. Royce thinks very highly of Lindsay, his dedicated support account manager, affirming that she is extremely responsive and helpful.

The intent of selecting Optimum Payroll for Collier Restaurant Group was that it would be a workhorse payroll solution that could handle the complexity of a hospitality and multi-company environment. Royce affirms definitively, *“Indeed it is doing just that.”*



For more information about
Optimum HRIS or Hagel & Company,
please visit us at www.hagel.net
or call us at 877.860.3735