

CASE STUDY

Pen-and-Paper to PAR: How Firebirds Wood Fired Grill Saved Time, Lowered Food Costs, and Improved Data Accuracy with PAR Data Central



**6 hours
more sleep**
every month



**Food cost
variance**
went from
-40 to 150 bps



**100% better
visibility**
into costs and
operational
challenges

Firebirds Wood Fired Grill - a polished casual dining chain - is renowned for its dedication to honoring the art of grilling and the power of the flame. With 62 locations across 20 states and plans to increase store count by 12-15% next year, the brand offers a distinctive dining experience where bold, wood-fired cuisine meets a warm, inviting atmosphere.

For 20 years, Firebirds relied solely on inventory management software for its back-office operations. Other critical back-office tasks like scheduling, food cost analysis, and more were handled manually, using time-consuming and error-prone pen-and-paper methods. With healthy growth in mind, Firebirds recognized the need for a modern back-office solution that could help them scale by automating manual processes and leveraging benchmarking reports to provide crucial insights into operations.

According to Steven Sturm, Senior Vice President of Food and Beverage at Firebirds Wood Fired Grill, "A big part of our growth was figuring out how to streamline operations by leveraging systems that enable automation. This allows our operators to access vital information and reporting faster and with less manual effort." By unlocking these capabilities, the brand can focus on key opportunities and what truly matters the most - its guests. "Whether it's opportunities to improve operations or praise great performance, we wanted to have the tools to be able to do just that," said Sturm.

After considering various vendors, Firebirds chose PAR Technology and implemented PAR Data Central for the solution's overall scalability and customizability. "In our search for the right solution, it became clear that PAR Data Central offered superior customizability compared to other vendors," explained Sturm.



Previous Technology Challenges

- Time-consuming and error-prone manual processes
- Needed crucial insights into COGS and benchmarking capabilities to track performance over time and across multiple locations

PAR Solution

- PAR Data Central Food & Inventory Management with Enterprise Reporting

Technology Results

- Lowered food and beverage costs
- Reduced time spent doing inventory
- Improved data accuracy with automation
- Found a trusted and collaborative partnership

“While many vendors claim they can meet all needs, not all can deliver. PAR Data Central has not only met but exceeded our expectations in this regard, proving its flexibility and effectiveness.”

Steven Sturm, Senior Vice President of Food and Beverage at Firebirds Wood Fired Grill

Enhanced COGS Reporting and Benchmarking

A primary reason Firebirds selected PAR Data Central was for its robust COGS Analysis reports, which track Theoretical vs. Actual food costs. With this report, Firebirds can quickly and accurately analyze its performance and costs against historical data. “Whether you are looking at it from a local store level or corporate level, PAR Data Central allows us to easily know where we have an opportunity to improve or a problem to address. The accuracy of information has vastly improved and the time it takes us to get this information is much faster. We can now fix issues quickly and consistently because everything is being accounted for.”

Prior to PAR Data Central, this process was tedious, labor-intensive, and time-consuming. Team members would meticulously track their usage of the top 20 items for each period, manually recording it and sending the data to Sturm for further calculations. “I would take all that data and input it manually into a spreadsheet to calculate only 50% of our food costs,” explained Sturm. “It would take me 6 hours and it would not even catch everything. Whereas with PAR Data Central’s COGS Analysis reports, we’re now capturing everything.”

Ultimately, PAR Data Central’s powerful COGS Analysis reports have helped Firebirds optimize both food and beverage costs. The system’s ability to easily benchmark sales performance and understand where opportunities to cut food costs lie has been invaluable, enabling the brand to narrow down its food cost variance. Per Sturm, “We have made some major recipe adjustments to high-velocity items, and that has had a tremendous impact. Our basis points have improved from about a negative 40 points to 150.”



“Since implementing PAR Data Central, we have really narrowed down our variance on the food side. We have made some major recipe adjustments to high-velocity items, and that has had a tremendous impact. Our basis points have improved from about a negative 40 points to 150.”

Steven Sturm, Senior Vice President of Food and Beverage at Firebirds Wood Fired Grill

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Lowered Food Cost Variance and Streamlined Inventory

By leveraging PAR Data Central, Firebirds Wood Fired Grill has been able to significantly improve food costs and enhance operator performance. Automating back-office processes, like inventory checks and benchmarking across multiple stores, has enabled the brand to give time back to its operators, allowing them to focus on delivering exceptional guest experiences. Inventory counts are now done much quicker and more accurately, ultimately empowering the brand to make informed and timely decisions that drive operational improvements. "PAR Data Central has helped us drop our costs both in bar and in food. We can troubleshoot and understand where our opportunities are much more easily. We can also now benchmark our performance against what it should be."

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Partnering with PAR Technology has been a true game changer for Firebirds Wood Fired Grill. Beyond automating and streamlining back-office operations with PAR Data Central, the brand has also found a reliable and collaborative partner. "We have direct access to real people who are experts with our accounts," said Sturm. "If there is ever a problem, we can jump on a call and find a solution immediately. Your teams are excellent and there has not been a single person who is not customer service focused. They always listen to our questions and then come back with an answer."

Firebirds Wood Fired Grill's transition from manual processes to PAR Data Central has significantly transformed its back-office operations. Automating inventory management and leveraging effective reporting and benchmarking capabilities has enabled the brand to not only reduce food and beverage costs but also empower its team to focus on delivering incredible experiences to its guests. The implementation of PAR Data Central and its partnership with PAR Technology has proven invaluable, providing Firebirds Wood Fired Grill with the tools and support needed for continued success and growth.



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