

## INVESTING IN EXPERIENCE – HOW ONE TEXAS RESTAURANT CHAIN CARVED OUT A SPECIAL PLACE IN THE HEARTS OF ITS EMPLOYEES

Finding and keeping the best team is a constant challenge for any business.

Every business, regardless of size, location, or industry is fundamentally defined by the people that work there. Every business is, at its heart, a people business. So, it's not surprising that one of the biggest challenges any business faces is to ensure that they can recruit, develop, and retain the best employees. Yet for some industries, retention of talented staff can be especially difficult. This is especially true for restaurants, where employee turnover is often a constant problem.

How can food services businesses keep great employees, especially when they may not be able to compete by simply paying more? This is the challenge faced by Lacey Davidson, Human Resources manager at Texas-based JumBurrito. Luckily for her, the founders

of JumBurrito had decided to focus from the very beginning on the overall employee experience, a decision that has proven to be a valuable investment.

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### JumBurrito and isolved take on Employee Experience

In 1979, Jose and Diane Cuevas, still in their early 20s, took their life savings and purchased restaurant equipment from a small pharmacy closing in their hometown of Midland, Texas. Their vision was as simple as it was compelling: open a restaurant where quality of food and service were everything. JumBurrito was born. In the four decades that followed, Jose and Diane remained true to that vision – they made their own ingredients locally, and focused on investing in their employees to ensure every customer was looked after as if they were family.

Six restaurants (and one factory) later, they are still growing, proudly serving the communities of central Texas with the best homemade Tex-Mex food, brought to the table, fast.

To help ensure that they had the tools in place to manage multiple locations with a small staff yet deliver an exceptional level of HR and payroll service, Lacey turned to human capital management (HCM) solution provider isolved.

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#### AT A GLANCE

##### Solution

isolved

##### The Situation

- JumBurrito faced high employee turnover and needed a way to retain staff without solely relying on higher wages.
- The founders' commitment to investing in employees needed to be supported by a modern HR system.

##### Success Highlights

- Automated HR processes with isolved People Cloud, reducing manual workload and increasing efficiency.
- Implemented employee benefits like free meals, tuition reimbursement, and a 401K plan, enhancing retention.
- Improved recruitment and onboarding through automated job postings and AI-powered interview scheduling.

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Its intelligently connected HCM platform, isolved People Cloud, is specifically built to help businesses both automate and manage HR, payroll and benefit processes while delivering the insight and tools to build an exceptional employee experience. This is exactly what JumBurrito needed as it continued to expand.

## Investing in the Employee

“Jose, our founder, always wants to care for our employees,” explained Lacey. Even so, like every restaurant, JumBurrito had its share of turnover.

“High turnover makes things like maintaining compliance difficult,” said Lacey. “We had a small team, and we needed a system to help us manage everything.”

With bigger restaurant chains using their deeper pockets to tempt employees away with higher wages, Lacey needed a way to keep employees without simply throwing higher wages at them. She also needed to keep a constant eye on recruitment, to bring new employees into the business as others left.

“We needed to be recruiting everywhere,” Lacey said, “absolutely everywhere we could be. We also needed to make the recruitment process easy, for managers and potential employees too.”

With a small team and much to do, Lacey needed to automate as much of her day-to-day activity as possible, so that she could focus on bringing new employees into JumBurrito and delivering a wonderful experience to those currently working there.

Jose and Diane’s vision had always been for a business that took pride in the quality of its food and service and well-being of its employees.

“Jose visits our locations every day,” said Lacey. “He’s very engaged with the business and the employees themselves.”

For recruitment and retention, Lacey uses isolved People Cloud to automate posting job ads wherever possible, reaching as wide an audience as she could. She also makes use of the AI-powered chatbot to help coordinate interview schedules and make sure candidates don’t miss their meetings.

Payroll and benefits administration is now heavily automated, significantly reducing the time and effort to keep up with these essential functions.

In keeping with the philosophy of investing in their employees, JumBurrito also offers a range of benefits such as free meals, tuition reimbursement, and even a 401K plan (turning to isolved to help track eligibility and offer retirement benefits). The idea was always to compete with other businesses for the best employees by simply offering the best employee experience.

## A Business Built on Excellence

The effect on JumBurrito’s business speaks for itself. It has grown, and continues to grow, despite the pandemic and the pressure for bigger businesses with deeper pockets. Lacey can deliver on the vision of a great experience with only a small team operating across multiple locations. The capability of their HCM platform, isolved People Cloud, to automate most tasks across the full employee lifecycle has multiplied her impact, letting her stay on top of the day-to-day tasks while also focusing on the most impactful areas where she can improve the lives of the employees.

In one area, for example, she noticed that employees weren’t always taking full advantage of the offered 401K, despite it being so unusual for a small business like JumBurrito to make that level of investment in their team.

# CASE STUDY VIGNETTE

“We realized our employees weren’t checking on their 401K accounts online, and so were missing out on the full value it was potentially delivering. So, we switched to paper statements instead.”

It was a minor change, but once employees saw on paper just how much they were able to save for their retirement, the effect was electric. They adopted the plan enthusiastically, once again proving how having an HR team able to focus on the strategic impact of employee experience can be so powerful.

“We want to invest in the whole person,” Lacey explains, describing their philosophy towards employees. “We provide an atmosphere where all our employees feel connected and appreciated. On Thanksgiving every employee receives a Turkey, on Christmas every employee receives a \$50 gift card and a gift we also reward our 5 year, 10, year, and 15 years plus employees, with end-of-year bonuses. We strive to touch every employee.”

## The Power of Investing in Experience

While basic compensation is always important to employees, the example of JumBurrito demonstrates so powerfully that a philosophy of investing in the whole employee experience, and really understanding what matters to the team, can be so effective in building and keeping an industry-best workforce.

Lacey, working alongside her management, and supported by a centralized and automated platform such as isolved People Cloud, was able to focus her efforts not just on the critically important tactical aspects of running payroll smoothly, compliance reporting, and so on, but also evaluating and tuning the entire set of benefits.

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While many HR teams struggle to step back from the day-to-day demands on their time, a committed HR leader, working with her management team, and utilizing the capabilities of a modern and intelligent HCM platform like isolved People Cloud to do everything from employee self-onboarding to tracking employee tax credits can truly set their business apart as a coveted place to work, and a place to really grow as an employee.

## isolved Customer Snapshot: JumBurrito

Founded in 1979 by Jose and Diane Cuevas, JumBurrito had a single vision: to create the best homestyle high-quality Tex-Mex available. They also started out with the belief that investing in their employees would always pay dividends. No restaurant chain is immune from the challenges of hiring and retention, but a firm focus on delivering that exceptional experience, and truly investing in their employees, has helped the business grow to six restaurants and their factory to produce everything they need to deliver on that promise of the best food, fast.

HR Manager Lacey Davidson, tasked with supporting all aspects of day-to-day HR and payroll, knows that the investment in offering great benefits is essential to keeping their team. Working alongside HCM vendor isolved, and using isolved People Cloud, Lacey has been able to automate and streamline much of her work to give her time to really tune the benefits that matter to her employees.

### Investing in the Whole Employee

With the constant support of co-founders Diane and Jose Cuevas, Lacey has been able to take much of the time-consuming work of payroll and compliance reporting and automate it using isolved People Cloud. She uses that time to keep a clear focus on engaging with the workforce and helping provide an exceptionally good work experience.

Delivering everything from tuition reimbursement to retirement savings, the philosophy of JumBurrito's management has always been to invest in the whole employee, as a person.

"We are all about the benefits," Lacey explained, and that is what has allowed her to successfully compete with much larger businesses in hiring and retention.

### The Better Approach

Any small to medium business can and should follow the JumBurrito model. With a stated goal of investing in their employees and rewarding them whenever possible, the business has been able to grow despite constant competitive pressure for the best employees.

While many HR leaders are often swamped with repetitive and highly tactical tasks, JumBurrito's HR leader, Lacey Davidson, has been able to recapture much of her time by using automation and AI-powered intelligence in their HCM platform, isolved People Cloud. Pairing a commitment to employee experience, with an HR team focused on delivering on that commitment, and powered by modern HCM technology, has been, and remains, a recipe for business success.



## Geoff Webb

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Geoff Webb has over 25 years of experience in the tech industry working alongside marketing and product teams to help define strategy for businesses.

Webb often provides commentary on the intersections of technology, business, and society, and has written on a number of related topics for such journals and websites as: CNBC, USA Today, CIO Update, Healthcare IT News, The Tech Herald, Dark Reading, BankInfoSecurity.com, Wired, InfoSecurity magazine, HelpNetSecurity, and Forbes.

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