HOW ISOLVED STRENGTHENED THE ONBOARDING AND PAYROLL EXPERIENCE FOR QSR EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS

What You Need to Know

To most Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) customers, front-line workers are the business. Whether it's by providing quality service or resolving customer issues, they're the ones who maintain the customer experience. That involves everything from taking orders and maintaining facilities to troubleshooting delivery delays and making sure a customer's request for "mayonnaise, not mustard" is fulfilled.

It follows, then, that QSRs view the employee experience as critical. Because the industry's wages tend to be low and vary little, workers will switch employers for a minimal raise, slightly better benefits, or a more professional working environment. Combine that with the importance of experience in dealing with the public as well as the business's operations, and you begin to see why employee experience is such a high priority. When workers depart, they take their training and expertise with them, so retention makes a difference.

Onboarding and payroll are important components of the employee experience. Workers view training as a valuable contributor to their long-term prospects, while companies aim to transition new hires from the candidate pipeline to revenue-generating operations as quickly as possible. That makes the selection of smoothly functioning technology essential. Complicated approaches to learning and compensation dilute the employee experience, making it easier for workers to consider job offers they might otherwise forgo.

To get an idea of how QSR companies approach the selection and use of technology to educate and pay their workers, 3Sixty Insights spoke with the leadership of S J Quickbite, Inc, the operator of nine Burger King restaurants in the San Francisco Bay Area. Priya C., one of the company's leaders, explained how S J Quickbite, Inc, melded its recruiting, onboarding, and payroll into a single process that satisfies the demands of employees and the needs of the company itself.

Organization Interviewed

S J Quickbite, Inc, employs about 180 workers across three corporate entities. Since its founding in 2000, its growth has been "measured but steady," Priya said. Rather than focus on building new facilities in new territories, S J Quickbite, Inc, grows by acquiring undervalued and undeveloped locations, improving its performance, and increasing its value.

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AT A GLANCE

Solution

isolved

The Situation

- Paper-heavy onboarding and payroll causing errors and delays
- Inefficient processes limiting manager time for team development
- Risk of disengagement and turnover from poor early employee experiences

Success Highlights

- Digital onboarding and payroll automation cut processing time by over 60%
- Streamlined operations improving employee engagement and first impressions
- Managers freed to focus on culture, training, and customer service

Culture and employee engagement are important to S J Quickbite, Inc's, success. The company prides itself on its open-door policy. Owners and employees know each other by name and often work for hours side-by-side to keep operations running smoothly.

The Company's Requirements

QSRs recognize that every interaction they have with workers is a part of the employee experience. That underscores the importance of what could be called "housekeeping" chores, such as onboarding and payroll processing. Whether they're training, booking time off, or accessing their pay, each interaction is an opportunity to demonstrate the importance the company places on the individual employee.

S J Quickbite, Inc, is always looking for ways to boost efficiency and data quality and strengthen usability and processes. Payroll, in particular, is important for reasons that go beyond the obvious. The company required a platform that simplified the process for both managers and employees, reduced errors, and assured compliance across multiple locations. Accuracy is especially important when manager bonuses are awarded each month based on their store's key performance indicators (KPIs), such as speed of service, labor cost management, and meeting sales targets.

At the same time, the company needed an efficient platform that included up-to-date employee information and simplified access to payroll and other tools. S J Quickbite, Inc's, hands-on management style has created strong bonds between workers and managers, and whatever technology it uses must support that. Plus, simply upgrading its onboarding and payroll technologies would save leadership a notable amount of time, allowing them to spend more of their days in-store, focusing on team development, training, and customer service.

When it comes to onboarding, QSRs face a perpetual challenge. Manual, paper-based processes are prone to missing information, such as signatures or missing personal data, which can lead to compliance issues. Typically, such issues are resolved through follow-up conversations and emails between the company and its store managers, although this often leads to frustration and wasted time. That's challenging enough for smaller organizations, which make a handful of hires each month, Priya observed. It's even more difficult for larger operations that make dozens of hires during the same period.

S J Quickbite, Inc, was also concerned a purely digital approach might overwhelm or confuse new hires, possibly leading to their ghosting the company before they started work. Paper forms offered a more straightforward approach, albeit with a trade-off between usability and addressing errors and inefficiencies.

From the user's point of view, new hires don't always have the basic tools necessary to complete onboarding or digitally access payroll. To get around that, S J Quickbite, Inc, allowed new hires to arrive 30 minutes before their first shift to complete their employee welcome packet in person. Managers could then directly assist the new hires and ensure all processes were complete and understood.

Evaluating Solutions

Priya and S J Quickbite, Inc, believed automation would eliminate the inefficiencies that burdened the old hiring, onboarding, and payroll processes. Digital onboarding would offer a simpler and more seamless process to both managers and new hires: managers would no longer need to print and file paperwork. Priya would spend less time auditing and correcting incomplete forms, as she estimated that 25% of the paperwork came back with some kind of error. For new hires, an improved digital approach offered more organized, professional onboarding and streamlined payroll. Both would aid engagement and retention, beginning on an employee's first day.

isolved Payroll and isolved Onboard & Develop addressed a number of specific pain points. Automating payroll meant fewer hours were spent on data entry, printing, and physically submitting paperwork. The platform's step-by-step approach addressed incomplete data by requiring users to fully complete one section before moving on to another. Because onboarding tools are integrated directly into isolved's payroll solution, information entered by employees is fed directly into the database for subsequent use. For Priya, such simplicity and automation made isolved the most appealing option.

Results

The implementation of isolved's platform significantly streamlined payroll and HR tasks, Priya said. Payroll processing time dropped from between 7 and 10 hours with the previous provider to about 2.5 to 3 hours with isolved or even less in some circumstances.

When employees clock in and out through S J Quickbite, Inc's, point-of-sale system, data is exported as a CSV file, uploaded to isolved, and matched with employee IDs for processing. Errors are easily corrected, W-2s are accurately generated, and fund withdrawals are automatically made for check payments and direct deposits.

All of this allows the company's owners to spend more time in their stores, focusing on team development, training, and customer service. The platform has "allowed me to be more present in the restaurants, provide better training, and help maintain a strong culture," Priya said.

Upgrading S J Quickbite, Inc's, platform has done more than improve the efficiency and usability of its onboarding and payroll tasks. isolved has relieved the burden of managers, who spend less time completing and troubleshooting processes. Employees are assured their payroll is run correctly and on time. The company itself gains from streamlined operations, reduced mistakes, and the elimination of needless follow-ups, while everyone – owners, managers, and workers alike – benefits from a work experience that requires less time managing overhead and more involvement with colleagues and customers.

Conclusion

Spending less time shepherding managers and employees through an unwieldy process also provides Priya and her colleagues with more time to spend on strategic work. Exerting less effort in gathering documents and juggling calls during payroll processing is a significant relief in pressure, she said. By getting started more quickly and with less confusion, new employees get a stronger first impression of S J Quickbite, Inc, as an employer and workplace, an impression that's underscored each week by the simple and predictable operation of its payroll system.

Customers depend on QSR employees for efficient service, accurate orders, and rapid delivery. Technology allows the workforce to focus on these key objectives rather than struggle with procedures and policies or clean up mistakes in compensation. Straightforward onboarding and correct payroll reinforce the employee experience and improve retention, which in turn improves customer satisfaction and repeat business. The connection between employee experience and customer experience is direct. The right technology results in the strengthening of both.

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Dylan Teggart is a Principal Analyst at 3Sixty Insights, specializing in Human Capital Management (HCM) and Workforce Management (WFM).

Dylan's expertise lies in understanding how technology impacts workforce engagement, retention, and overall business productivity. He is passionate about addressing modern workforce challenges and redefining how we work by breaking the traditional role of the "9-to-5" job. Whether it's through workplace optimization, leveraging AI, or experimenting with flexible work models, Dylan is always interested in hearing what's new and different in the world of work.

His key contributions at 3Sixty Insights have included instrumental work in our 2024 benchmark report with Eightfold, exploring the misalignment between HR leaders and the C-suite, as well as authoring numerous other blogs, reports, and thought leadership pieces. Dylan is also one of the primary hosts of 3Sixty Insights' HRTechChat podcast and has appeared as a guest on podcasts such as Up Next @ Work and PeopleTech.

As part of his 2025 research agenda, Dylan is investigating the long-term impacts of AI, workforce dynamics, talent management solutions, and the future of work beyond the traditional 40-hour week. His forward-looking research equips businesses with the knowledge needed to stay competitive.

Before joining 3Sixty Insights, Dylan held positions at UKG and Dayforce, and is an alumnus of New York University.

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