

Ultra Steak Inc. is a long-established restaurant company headquartered in Fishers, Indiana that operates four unique restaurant brands, including Texas Roadhouse, Aspen Creek Grill, Aspen Tap House and Slim Chickens.

Employing over 3,000 employees across all their brands, the organization is faced with the typical challenges for a growing restaurant business. With such a large and diverse workforce, the Ultra Steak executive team must constantly be

looking at how they can implement the right technology solutions to help the business scale, and become more operationally efficient, while not losing sight of delivering a great customer experience and doing right by their employees.

For years, the Ultra Steak corporate teams relied heavily on each individual location to manually calculate, distribute and track the cash tips payments that they send to their tipped employee base. This process was fraught with challenges and operationally cumbersome.

THE CHALLENGE

As Ultra Steak's brands continued to grow and their workforce became more diverse, the process by which they paid out employees their daily tips was going to need to be addressed.

The leadership team at Ultra Steak, headed up by VP of Finance Kevin O'Bold, and supported by Laci Landes in Treasury and Jason Schmatz in Accounting, identified three main challenges that the organization sought to address.

1. Reduce Reliance on Manual Processes

The team wanted to get cash to their staff quicker, instead of having to manually distribute physical cash.

2. Improve Employee Safety

With employee safety as a top priority, the team wanted to find a solution that would prevent employees from having to go home at the end of their shift with an envelope full of cash.

3. Develop Clearer Audit Trails and Procedures

The treasury team wanted a clearer picture of where tips payments were going, and wanted to be able to reconcile this process much easier through technology.

THE PROCESS

When the time came for the executive team to review vendors, they started off on a recommendation from a colleague who had a great experience using Instant’s solutions in the past.

The core team in the decision-making process included members of Finance, Treasury, Operations, Accounting, and their Human Resources department.

The Ultra Steak team considered another electronic tips and card vendor, but upon further review, realized that that vendor did not have earned wage access as part of their solution portfolio. As Ultra Steak was planning to eventually also offer on-demand pay to their employees, it soon became apparent that Instant was going to be a good fit.

The final piece of information that sealed the deal was the question of fees. Once the team at Ultra Steak learned that Instant doesn’t charge any fees to employees for them to access their tips or wages, nor is there any cost to the organization, the decision to move ahead with Instant was made.

THE IMPLEMENTATION

Once the decision was made to work with Instant, the Ultra Steak team initially rolled out the Instant Tips solution to nine of their Aspen Creek locations, with additional locations and other brands to follow shortly thereafter.

Ultra Steak found the implementation process to be easy to understand, right from the outset. The corporate team was able to take a very hands-off approach to the overall implementation process, with most of the heavy lifting taken care of directly by the Instant team.

Unique to most technology projects, Ultra Steak did not even have to include their own IT department in the decision-making or implementation process, as the Instant team acted as the de facto IT arm of the project, helping to reduce internal costs and make the process more efficient.

With the majority of implementation now complete, the program has been structured so that any new individual operators or locations wanting to onboard their employees to Instant Tips don’t even have to work with Ultra Steak corporate - they simply work directly with the Instant team, once again reducing costs and making the overall process just that much more streamlined.

THE RESULTS

Since moving to Instant Tips, Ultra Steak has been able to address all of the challenges they had identified prior to rolling out a new electronic tips solution.

Over **\$100,000** per week in manual tips payments have moved from being distributed in cash to being distributed **via the Instant Tips solution**

Countless **administrative hours have been saved** in reducing petty cash handling time, change orders and more

Costs associated with courier cash pickups **have decreased by 50%** weekly in some locations

All tips payments are now managed via Instant’s Back Office portal, providing **clear and transparent audit trails** for treasury

Staff no longer have to leave work with an envelope of cash, and can instead **feel safe in using the Instant mobile app** to access their tips anytime they like

Additionally, Ultra Steak has seen significant HR benefits as a result of implementing Instant Tips. It's a valuable recruiting tool, and has helped Ultra Steak stand out as an employer of choice in very competitive local hiring environments.

And their staff love it. Each time Instant Tips is rolled out at a location, employees mention how great it is that they're able to get their tips instantly, and say they'd never go back.

✓ IN SUMMARY

Instant Tips has helped Ultra Steak gain a number of organizational improvements and efficiencies in how they pay their employee tips.

Individual locations have reduced the time spent each week on manual tips process – from hours to just minutes each day – while the organization has seen significant cost savings as a result.

And all of this time saved can go right back to focus more on guest-centric activities and keeping customers happy.

In the words of VP of Finance Kevin O'Bold, "Instant has helped our restaurants become more efficient with paying employees, retaining top talent, and recruiting team members at a time when labor is one of the hardest pieces of the business to manage. Through our partnership with Instant we have added an essential piece of technology to drive the organization forward."

For more information about how Instant Tips can help your organization streamline your tips disbursement processes, you can learn more at instant.co/tips.

Kevin O'Bold
VP of Finance

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Laci Landes
Director, Treasury

"Instant Financial has provided Ultra Steak, Inc. and its affiliates with a benefit that was timely and seamless. Our employees will find this experience exciting and very beneficial to their daily lifestyles. Thank you Instant!"

Jason Schmatz
Director of Accounting

"Instant has been extremely beneficial to our team by simplifying our tip share process, reducing cash on hand for our operators and allowing team members to collect tips more frequently. I look forward to utilizing more of what Instant Financial has to offer."

On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest), how would you rate working with Instant?

Treasury: **10/10**

Operations: **10/10**

On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest), what do your employees think of using Instant?

10/10