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Achieving Operation-wide Efficiency

Optimizing Scheduling and Servicing at AFS for Rapid ROI

The Situation

For many self-service retail operations, the business case for cashless payments is a natural sell: today's consumers live in a technology-rich world, where card, digital wallet, and loyalty program payments have become the new norm, and so they expect cashless payments to be universally accepted. Often less obvious, however, is the case for investing in a new technology platform to optimize efficiency across operations.

Such was the case for Automatic Food Service (AFS), a premier vending machine and office coffee service company. While AFS had previously converted nearly 1,350 of their vending machines to cashless, they did not have a system in place to maximize operational efficiency and accurately monitor business outputs and metrics—and wasn't sure the benefit would outweigh the up-front investment. Yet, they recognized inefficiencies in their scheduling and stocking practices, and so decided to re-examine their business from an operations standpoint.

The Challenges

To start, AFS evaluated potential pain points of implementation in order to identify the right solution to bring added value and rapid ROI to their operation.

Interrupting Operations for a Prolonged Installation

Too often, implementing a new business system costs more time and headache than it's worth—particularly when the end result provides nominal added-benefit over the original. When seeking out a solution to improve stocking and scheduling practices, AFS was concerned that the implementation process would drag out, prolonging the time until they could utilize the technology and bogging down operator cycles.

Justifying the Cost of Onboarding New Technology

AFS always puts the customer first. As a result, when looking to invest in technology systems, their initial inclination was to onboard solutions that elevate customer experience, like the addition of cashless technology, rather than improve internal processes and practices. Before making a financial investment, AFS wanted to be certain that they would unlock both customer-facing benefits like improved stocking and machine maintenance as well as operational benefits.

Achieving Buy-in from the AFS Team

Integral to the success of any operational change is achieving buy-in from team members using the technology in the field day-to-day. For AFS, this meant training drivers on new equipment, new lingo, and new processes, and making sure they were comfortable and able to excel within the new systems. To guarantee a smooth transition, AFS wanted an intuitive, easy-to-learn system, and a partner able to help them every step of the way.

Automatic
FOOD SERVICE

The Solution

AFS selected USA Technologies' Seed Pro, Office, and Markets solution to improve operational efficiency across their self-service retail operation.

The USAT Team

Through the support of USAT's skilled project management team, AFS was able to rapidly deploy the Seed platform across their network. Moreover, the Customer Success Manager team was able to work with AFS to set benchmark business metrics to track before and after implementation, empowering them to maximize their investment and manage the installation process.

When executing, AFS opted to install Seed to their vending operation first, then follow sequentially with their markets operations. The rapid completion of each project, which took 6 months and 4 months, respectively, was accredited by AFS to the responsiveness and expertise of the USAT project management team.

Big Bottom Line Benefits

Through the efficiency gains achieved from onboarding Seed Pro, Office, and Markets, AFS was able to optimize route scheduling and servicing, making sure certain locations were always stocked with the items most desired by customers. As a result, according to AFS, its sales per route increased 45% even prior to the conclusion of the implementation process.

Today, AFS is looking to continue building upon the ROI of their initial Seed investment by onboarding Seed Delivery in the near future.
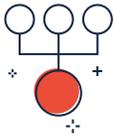
Ease of Use

From pre-kitting to dynamic scheduling, the Seed platform introduced previously unattainable functionality that led to an organization-wide simplification of scheduling and servicing—making it an easy sell to team members. "Our previous system didn't provide insight into machines' stock levels or maintenance needs, which slowed down service times as we stopped at machines that didn't need servicing, or in other cases, needed to circle back to the truck to pick up more inventory," said Trey Hamre, Operations Manager. "Seed's dynamic pre-kitting and remote insight makes restocking machines more efficient than our previous method, allowing us to get through our routes faster and easier than ever before."

As a result of increased efficiency, AFS's total number of routes consolidated from 17 to 13, leading to greater savings by reducing the operational costs affiliated with running a larger fleet of trucks.

Learn how USAT can elevate operational efficiency across your operation at www.usatech.com.

The Results

AFS has confirmed that, since onboarding Seed Pro, Office, and Markets, it has achieved the following:

- **Maximized time to ROI** by onboarding Seed for their vending and markets operations in **6 months and 4 months, respectively.**

- **Increased total sales per route by 45%** shortly before the implementation was completed.

- **Consolidated total number of routes from 17 to 13.**

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