

Crooked Hammock Brewery Teams up with MarginEdge to Control Costs.



Meet Crooked Hammock

Crooked Hammock's three water-front breweries around the Mid-Atlantic serve fresh, beach-inspired pub fare and some killer house brews. They're famous for their Nachos — featuring jalapeños, cheese sauce, pico, chipotle crema, corn and black bean salad, pickled jalapeños, and sour cream — all made in house. In addition to their core beers, they also have a sour that changes season to season, like pina colada for the summer or acai berry for the winter. The visionary behind these amazing creations is Culinary Director, Ted Deptula - big time chef, big time user of MarginEdge.

A few years ago, Ted was frustrated with old systems that weren't talking to each other or intuitive for his staff to use. He wanted to do more to control costs on his food and beers — take inventory to the next level,

monitor vendors and products, and have the ability to cost out the new menu items he was coming up with.

When Ted and his team came across MarginEdge in September 2019, they were thrilled that one system could solve a lot of their needs and more, "Just from an accounting standpoint alone, this made total sense. But as we dove deeper and learned about all the features and the robustness, it was a *'for sure!'*"

Costing Recipes to Manage a Dynamic Menu

Ted found a multitude of tools he could leverage in MarginEdge to improve profitability. He started building his recipes in MarginEdge, specifying the quantity of each ingredient needed, and the system would produce the overall costs and the food cost percentages. As his accountant sent MarginEdge



“**Every chef out there should have a financial understanding of the food they’re serving.**”

Ted Deptula
Culinary Director – Lewes, Delaware

Crooked Hammock’s invoices to be processed, these recipe costs were updated to reflect the most recent prices, or an average of any custom range of time he specified.

When you’re managing a brewery and a restaurant, there are a lot of details to track and costs to watch.



“I always want to be there for my guests. I always want to put new things on the menu and keep them on if I can, so having this confidence that a menu item is in fact profitable is huge.”

This tool made it a lot easier to manage the dynamic menu at Crooked Hammock — as Ted was equipped with data to decide what items earned a spot on the menu. “Every chef out there should have a financial understanding of the food they’re serving.” Ted comments. “We can’t put caviar and truffles on everything! We have to rein it in sometimes.”

Once the recipes are entered into MarginEdge, they can also be displayed in the kitchen to instruct the kitchen staff how to make them, along with photos and videos and the ability to scale the quantity yielded. As a busy and expanding brewery, when they opened their Myrtle Beach location last October, having recipes pre-loaded in MarginEdge was immensely helpful for training the staff and getting the food made correctly right out the gate.

Monitoring Ingredient Prices

MarginEdge also helped Ted manage his recipes costs at the ingredient level. He set price alerts on key items like crab, avocado, and chicken wings so whenever any of those items came in over the limit he set, he would automatically receive an email letting him know.

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“We’re always looking to see what we can get out of MarginEdge and it keeps providing more!”

Sometimes even when he has agreed on prices with vendors, items still come in over the arranged prices so Ted reaches out to resolve any mistakes.

Ted can also use these insights from price alerts and graphs of prices over time to answer questions like, should we switch vendors for a particular item? Should we charge more for the menu items that include this item? Should we make the menu item “market price” or take it off the menu completely? Ted always tries to evaluate if closer management of a less profitable menu item can help him avoid removing it from the menu and disappointing guests. “I always want to be there for my guests. I always want to put new things on the menu and keep them on if I can, so having this confidence that a menu item is in fact profitable is huge.”

Tracking Usage, Reducing Waste

Ted wants to run a tight ship on the prices of ingredients, but also on the quantities used. That’s where MarginEdge’s Theoretical Usage comes in. Since MarginEdge knows what you buy (from processing invoices), what you sell (POS connection) and your inventories, we can highlight the variances.

Pretty quickly into implementing this new tool, Ted realized the kitchen was putting too many fries on sandwich plates and it was costing the restaurant real money. He equipped the kitchen with more portioning wares and instructed the staff they didn’t need to fill the entire plate with fries — boom! Money saved. The solution was simple but Ted admits there’s a lot that goes into extracting insights from the tool, “It takes a lot to coordinate how it all comes together; that’s just the nature of theoretical usage, but MarginEdge does a great job of taking those complicated parts and putting them together into something much easier to navigate.”

Uncovering More Uses of MarginEdge

MarginEdge has been an upgrade to Crooked Hammock from a cost saving perspective and also from a time savings perspective! We’ve saved the Crooked Hammock team countless hours on bookkeeping functions like processing invoices. This was especially meaningful to them in the pandemic, when Crooked Hammock was running a take-out burger operation with a skeletal staff. Ted wasn’t able to spend as much time running the back-office, steering the business — he was at the grill flipping burgers!

Ted and the team at Crooked Hammock have been thrilled with the features and results from MarginEdge to help manage a rotating menu of food and brews. And they’re looking to dive deeper into the platform to see what more they can do to save money and time. “We’re always looking to see what we can get out of MarginEdge and it keeps providing more!”

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