

Iconic Chicago Restaurant Brand Creates a Culture that Drives Retention



www.homeruninnpizza.com

Restaurants and Hospitality /
Manufacturing

450 employees

9 locations across Illinois

Founded in 1923, Home Run Inn Pizza is a Chicago institution. Taking its name from an incident where a baseball from a local game crashed through the window of its first restaurant, the company invented the tavern-style thin crust pizza in the 1940s, and today runs six pizzerias.

Still owned by the founding family, Home Run Inn also pioneered the development of frozen pizzas, and operates two manufacturing sites and a nationwide distribution network. Add in a commercial partnership with the Chicago Cubs, and you have a unique business with a unique culture.

Kelly Griffith, Talent Acquisition & Culture Manager, explains: "The best thing about Home Run Inn is our focus on supporting our teammates. That's why we have people who have worked here for 50+ years, which is so unusual in the restaurant/manufacturing industry! I'm the third generation of my family to work at Home Run Inn, and no other job I've done has been as fun and fulfilling."

Home Run Inn has built its success on four key values: family, pride, grit, and courage. To put those guiding principles into practice in the HR sphere, the company uses Paylocity to manage hiring, communications, and customized recognition and engagement programs.

"We want to maintain the family feel within the company and ensure that everyone feels that this is a great, supportive place to work," continues Kelly. "Paylocity makes it easy to do that, enabling us to enhance the employee experience and connect people across all of our locations."

"Paylocity is our one-stop shop. Once you're in the platform, it's all there for you: recruitment, scheduling, training, and recognition. Nobody has to remember countless logins anymore."

Kelly Griffith, Talent Acquisition & Culture Manager, Home Run Inn Pizza



The Challenge

New Batter Up

With a long and successful history behind it, Home Run Inn looked to build for the future by streamlining HR processes, consolidating systems, and enhancing internal communications.

Integrating New Hires into the Family

Despite high retention rates, Home Run Inn still ramps up hiring at certain times. “Our recruitment ebbs and flows,” explains Kelly. “For example, we take on a lot of high schoolers in the summer, and hire extra teammates over the holiday season as people are keen to earn a bit more money. We’re also expanding our corporate operations at the moment, so we have open roles throughout the organization.” During the hiring process, the company aims to ensure all interactions with candidates carry its unique brand voice. “From the outset, we want people to see and feel our distinct identity,” adds Kelly.

Ensuring Employees Feel Engaged and Valued

Maintaining the people-first culture at Home Run Inn takes ongoing effort. “We want teammates to understand our story, buy into our values, and feel valued for their work,” notes Kelly. In the past, Home Run Inn relied on informal, in-person processes to recognize employee achievements. To drive engagement, the company now looked to introduce a more systematic approach. “When we ran surveys, people often asked for more ways to give and receive recognition,” adds Kelly. “At that time, we didn’t have a structured way to share news and let people reach out to each other.”

Moving Past Fragmented HR Systems

While Home Run Inn has always been an innovator in the kitchen and manufacturing fields, its core HR processes were a little outdated. “When I joined Home Run Inn when I was 16, we were still managing onboarding on paper,” adds Kelly. More recently, the company was using separate systems to manage training, shift schedules, background checks, and employee surveys. “During orientation, I would give out so many different login credentials to new hires,” explains Kelly. “Inevitably, people would forget usernames and passwords, and I spent a lot of time sorting out those issues.”

“We really appreciate the continuous innovation that Paylocity brings to the table. For example, the recent enhancements to the integration with the E-Verify system have simplified things for us.”

Kelly Griffith, Talent Acquisition & Culture Manager



The Solution

Stepping Up to the Plate

With Paylocity, Home Run Inn has an integrated all-in-one HR platform that helps to replace paper-based workflows, enhances the candidate experience, and inspires employee engagement.

Streamlining Hiring and Digitizing Onboarding

Today, Paylocity's [Recruiting](#) module is central to Home Run Inn's hiring strategy. "Recruiting is super-easy to use," notes Kelly. "Being able to connect with candidates via text message is really handy, as so few people pick up calls today. Plus, we can send automated emails, incorporating our unique brand voice, to thank candidates for completing their application."

With the [Onboarding](#) module, Home Run Inn has replaced paperwork with digital processes, and created customized orientation packets for restaurant, manufacturing, and corporate roles. "Joining a new company can be scary, so we add video messages from individual restaurant managers into the packets to ensure new starters know who to go to with queries," explains Kelly.

Aligning Recognition with Corporate Values

Using the [Recognition & Rewards](#) module, Home Run Inn has launched a tailored employee appreciation program. "We created a system with badges awarded for great work aligned with our key values," says Kelly. Similarly, the company uses the [Community](#) hub to share organizational news, updates to HR policies, cultural initiatives, and more. "We'll post great customer reviews, run contests and giveaways for teammates, and our CEO does a monthly update on the company via a video that everyone can enjoy," notes Kelly. "It's a great way to connect people and promote transparency and openness."

Gathering Feedback Straight from Employees

Meanwhile, Home Run Inn harnesses the [Employee Voice](#) module to run 30, 60, and 90 day reviews, and identify areas for improvement. "We had well over 80% participation in our first survey in Paylocity," notes Kelly. "What's really cool is that we can use visualizations such as heat maps and break down the responses by generation, location, and demographics."

Finally, the [Learning](#) module has enabled Home Run Inn to move trainings from a separate system into Paylocity. "We have our anti-harassment trainings and specific sessions for different roles within Paylocity," adds Kelly. "We can track completions and send reminders through the system."



Recruiting empowers HR to scale out the workforce efficiently during peak periods.



Onboarding helps new starters find their feet and reduces paperwork for the HR team.



Recognition & Rewards ensures employees receive appreciation for their efforts.



Community enables announcements of news and events and connects the company.



Employee Voice collates data and insights to inform smarter processes and policies.



Learning provides one place for all mandatory and role-based employee training.



The Results

Grand-Slam Performance

With Paylocity underpinning its HR operations, Home Run Inn is saving time, raising efficiency, simplifying things for employees, and strengthening a unique company culture.

Building Faster, Leaner Core HR Processes

Switching to Paylocity has enabled Home Run Inn to consolidate four systems to one, simplifying the HR environment and cutting the risk of employees losing credentials. “I now spend less time dealing with lost logins, and more on valuable work,” says Kelly. The platform also supports more lean, agile processes. For example, onboarding now runs much faster. “When we opened a new manufacturing site, we onboarded 25 people in one day in Paylocity,” adds Kelly.

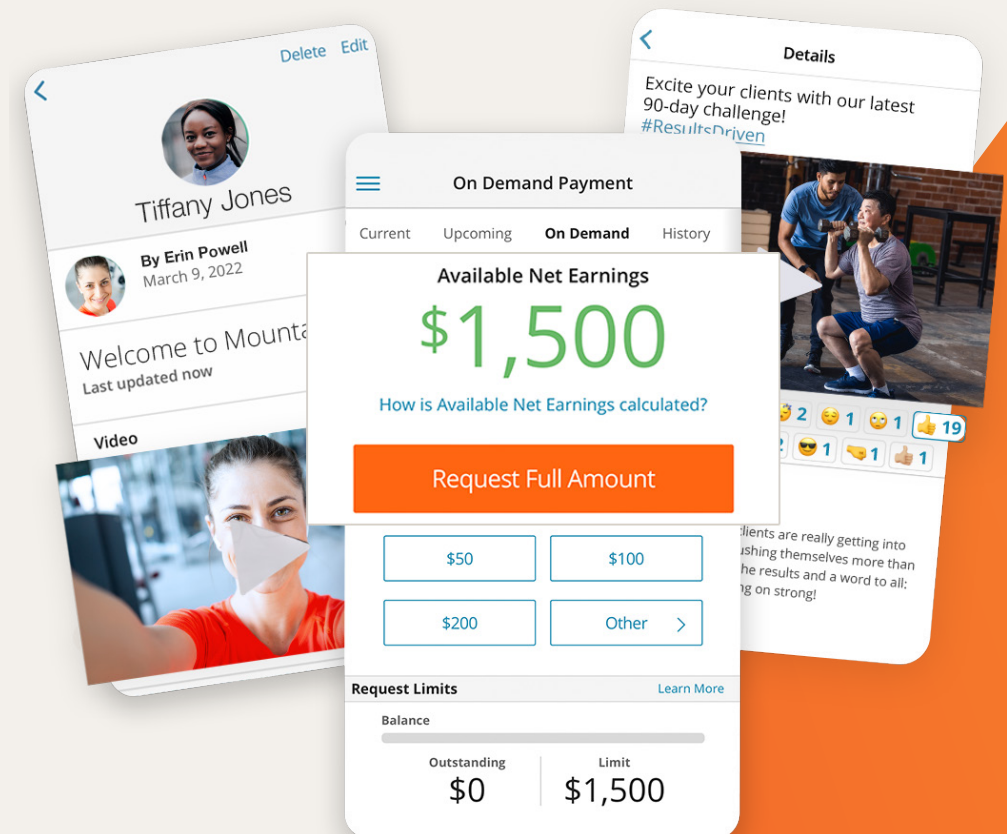
Creating Comms that Showcase the Brand

Similarly, Home Run Inn has crafted a hiring journey with Paylocity that reflects its brand identity and immerses candidates in the company story from the first interaction. “When we set up an initial call with someone, we say ‘Batter up, come talk to Home Run Inn!’ then ‘You’ve rounded the bases, let’s meet in person!’ when we want to schedule an interview,” says Kelly. “Paylocity allows us to create a friendly, upbeat experience for candidates that really showcases our brand.”

Reinforcing Positive Behaviors

In addition, the structured, formal recognition program has helped to strengthen the Home Run Inn culture. “If our team completes a long shift or manages a large catering order in a restaurant, we’ll celebrate their efforts,” explains Kelly. “That reinforces positive behaviors and nurtures a great, supportive culture. And that 100% helps to retain our talent.”

Furthermore, the survey data gathered in Paylocity enables Home Run Inn to fine-tune operations and continue to enhance the employee experience. “We can analyze what millennial and Gen Z employees want in the workplace,” concludes Kelly. “From the data, we always work out our three strengths and three areas for improvement, then meet with our leadership to plan next actions.”



“We firmly believe our teammates are our best ingredient, and when we take care of them, they take care of us as a business. Paylocity helps us to make their lives better and ensures they feel appreciated for their work, and that is the secret to our success.”

Kelly Griffith, Talent Acquisition & Culture Manager

