

## CASE STUDY: EASTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

### AUTOMATING PROCUREMENT, INVENTORY & INTRODUCING MOBILITY

#### Background

Eastern Washington University (EWU) has a long, rich history since it was founded in 1882. Located in Cheney, Washington with other campus locations around the state, the school offers over 100 different fields of study to its students. Focused on personal attention, faculty excellence and community collaboration, it is the mission of EWU to prepare well-rounded students to hit the ground running in their chosen career fields.

EWU offers nine various dining options for students on campus, resulting in a significant amount of food and beverage, yet they had no software system to help them manage it. Practically every task related to F&B was done on pen and paper. There were no systems in place, no formal process for ordering or inventory, and end of month was extremely labor-intensive as a result. Therefore, in 2007, EWU decided it was time to implement a system that offered inventory management, purchasing, integration with their vendors and robust reporting of data that would support their finance system. Ken Ripley, Procurement and Supply Specialist for EWU, took on the role of Project Manager and spearheaded efforts to implement the FOOD-TRAK® Food & Beverage Management System throughout their campus dining program.



#### The Plan and Solution

EWU wanted a hosted solution with a single database, multi-Profit Center software configuration that included both mobility and integration with their prime vendors. In order to get the highest return on investment, it was imperative that they focus on labor savings immediately. Ripley attended his first FOOD-TRAK training seminar to acquire the skills needed in order to train the rest of his team back on campus. Using this train-the-trainer approach, Ken was able to personally train each member of his staff and introduce new processes to streamline inventory, ordering, transfers and requisitions between all dining outlets and their central warehouse.

The deployment was a team effort at EWU, and everyone from the warehouse to the outlets and procurement department, got involved with FOOD-TRAK. Using the system for requisitions by the outlets, transfers between the warehouse and purchasing department and waste tracking throughout campus, the reporting at the end of the month is smooth, and the team is able to convert the data and balance it against their financial system.

**"WE'VE SEEN ABOUT 85% IN LABOR SAVINGS WHEN YOU CONSIDER THE ENTIRE PROCUREMENT PROCESS FROM ORDERING TO RECEIVING AND THEN INVOICE PROCESSING!"**

*-Ken Ripley  
Procurement & Supply Specialist, EWU*

#### The Results

Using the FOOD-TRAK Mobile Partner (FMP) scanners, EWU automated their inventory process which according to Ripley, "would take all day when it was on paper. When we went mobile, the warehouse went from two days down to six hours. An outlet like our Panda Express went from two hours down to between twenty and thirty minutes." The labor savings were immediate, and the accuracy and efficiency dramatically increased.

The labor savings continued to increase as EWU found more ways to utilize mobility throughout their dining operation. According to Ripley, "We've seen about 85% in labor savings when you consider the entire procurement process from ordering to receiving and then invoice processing!" FOOD-TRAK's Automatic Purchase Order Creation utility in combination with an interface to their prime vendors allowed EWU to move away from calling or faxing in orders to a fast, streamlined online ordering approach. Ripley's team went mobile here as well, using the

### The Results (continued)

FMP scanner to complete a shopping list directly on the handheld device. Running that shopping list through the Automatic Purchase Order Creation utility produced an instant PO for each vendor which was then converted to an invoice upon receipt of goods. According to Ripley, "Managers used to go through their menus and fill out their individual shopping lists which would take me an entire day to input for all of our locations and each of our vendors. Now I can get ordering done in as little as fifteen minutes or at the most two hours. FOOD-TRAK has saved us six labor hours a day on ordering."

"Receiving alone has been huge from an accuracy standpoint," Ripley states. With the FMP scanner, staff processing orders at the receiving dock can immediately check in the goods and complete the invoice electronically. "Catching the discrepancies at the dock is happening right away rather than after the fact. Way more accurate and easier for the invoice processor," claims Ripley. "It used to take four to six hours to manually input a 25-page invoice from one of our prime vendors, United Retail Merchants. Not to mention that we get deliveries from them two-three times per week. With the Vendor Interface, everything is handled electronically, and we can literally reconcile and process the invoice in just 45-90 minutes."

### The Experience and Future

"Our experience with SCI and the FOOD-TRAK product have been great!" states Ripley. "As the administrator of this system, I've developed a trust with your Technical Support department which I really appreciate." Having a strong relationship is also the key component to EWU's plan to expand their use of FOOD-TRAK moving forward. Ripley and his team are looking to build recipes and products as well as integrate with their POS system to get Ideal Usage reporting. EWU is also exploring the possibility of a few more Vendor Interfaces with smaller distributors since they have proven significant labor savings with electronic ordering. With 85% labor savings in the procurement process alone, the team at EWU is excited to see what additional opportunities the future holds.

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*-Ken Ripley*