

Abundantly Case Study




Introduction

Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) is an international organization in the quick service restaurant (QSR) industry. QSR organizations experience an average turnover rate of 144% with \$150k per year in revenue loss due to disengagement⁽¹⁾. In recent years, KFC has experienced a significant decrease in employee engagement⁽²⁾. This decrease has affected the overall performance of the company in the United States⁽³⁾. Customers experience this as longer wait times and incorrect orders. Owner-operators experience it as fewer applicants, absenteeism, shift no-shows, and increased staff turnover.

To address this issue, owner-operators Nanci and Jeff Baker piloted a new employee recognition program with Abundantly. The program's goal was to increase employee engagement and motivation in order to improve customer service performance. The Bakers and Abundantly targeted an 80% program adoption rate. Armed with direct experience and industry trends, the Bakers set out to validate the return on investment of Abundantly's recognition program.

From Form to a Family

Nanci and Jeff love being part of their southern California community. Jeff, who grew up cooking and working in the family business alongside his father, now continues this legacy as an owner-operator with Nanci and their extended family. The Bakers are passionate about providing their customers with delicious, high-quality fried chicken. They understand the value of a well-known and respected brand like KFC and work hard daily to maintain the standards that have made the brand a household name.



**"We need help in
this new world of
work."**

–Jeff Baker, KFC owner-
operator



The Bakers are committed to championing their employees, providing excellent customer service, and creating a positive experience for every customer who walks through their doors. They realize that recognition is a powerful tool that can engage and motivate their staff in the workplace.

When employees feel **recognized and appreciated** for their hard work and contributions, they are more likely to feel **valued and invested in their job**. This can lead to increased job satisfaction, improved productivity, and decreased turnover rates.

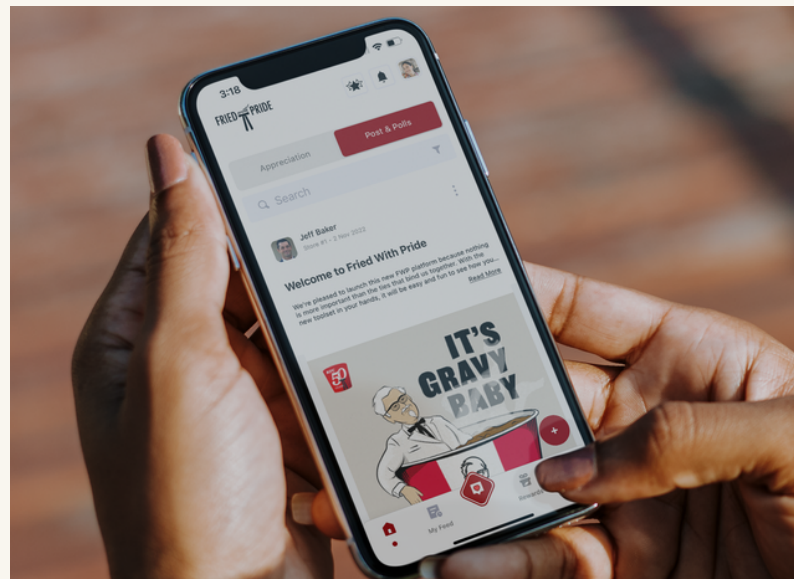
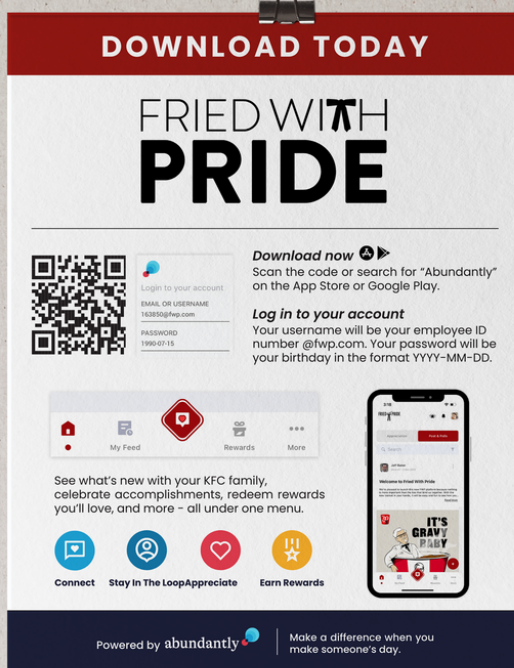
After careful research, Jeff reached out to Abundantly. Jeff was looking for a simple and effective way to engage managers and frontline service workers at each of his twelve franchise locations. The Abundantly team, led by founder Randall Diamond, walked the Bakers through the ins and outs of recognition and that “secret spice” only Abundantly provides. Nanci and Jeff wanted a dependable partner on this journey, and being able to access decades of employee recognition expertise from the Abundantly team made the decision to launch a recognition program easy.



Abundantly Founder, Randall Diamond (left), and KFC owner-operator Jeff Baker

Methodology

The Abundantly employee recognition program is designed to be simple and accessible for all employees. As the Bakers communicated their needs and their organization's structure, Abundantly listened and configured a specialized solution. Abundantly's client engagement manager led the Bakers through the implementation process, which included software customized to include personalized branding, e-cards, and bespoke visual designs. Special attention was given to integrating a digital program into KFC's deskless world. The Bakers helped the Abundantly team understand the diversity of their employees and the need for inclusivity. Together, the **Fried with Pride** program was launched.



The program included the following components:

1

Monthly recognition awards

Each month, employees were nominated for recognition by their managers. Points were awarded based on exceptional performance, teamwork, and contributions to the company. This included displaying courtesy to customers, fixing an incorrect order, helping others keep the restaurant clean, and more. A reward called the Big Bucket Award was used to recognize an employee that was exceptional at providing customer service. The Big Bucket Award was displayed digitally for all staff to applaud.

2

Personalized recognition

Employees who received recognition awards were presented with a personalized appreciation certificate, which was displayed in a prominent location in the store. The restaurant manager, along with the Bakers, would publicly recognize the individual, hand them a certificate, and display another certificate on the wall in the staff area.

3

Employee of the Quarter

An Employee of the Quarter was selected based on their overall contributions to the restaurant's success. The employee was given additional appreciation points at a public recognition event. Points were collected in a virtual wallet that can be redeemed for merchandise, gift cards, and one-of-a-kind prizes. As a bonus, Nanci created a special award called the "wash bucket" where Jeff would hand-wash the Employee of the Quarter's car.

Results

The employee recognition program had a significant impact on employee engagement and performance. The following are some of the results:

Increased employee engagement

Employee engagement increased by 28% within the first three months of implementing the program. This was attributed to the increased sense of appreciation and recognition that employees felt. In addition to using pre-and-post-program surveys, the Bakers mentioned unsolicited positive comments from their staff. While using Abundantly's recognition platform, managers at 19 locations actively engaged with the recognition process with their staff.



"From the moment a customer walks through our doors, we are all focused on creating a positive experience for them. We are excited about providing excellent food, drinks, and service. We know that our work is recognized by Jeff and Nanci."

–Silvia, KFC Cashier

Improved performance

The performance of employees who received recognition awards improved by an average of 12% compared to employee performance before implementation. Previously, employees were recognized monthly. With Abundantly, recognition experiences happened twice a day in each location. Jeff calls this increase in frequency "happiness spreading."

Analytically, the overall negative customer comments a store has received have dropped more than 30%. The employees are more engaged, resulting in better customer service at the restaurants.

The cross-organization communication element has encouraged best practices in customer service. When discussing customer service metrics with Jeff, he remarked, "It has made our staff more passionate about serving people! We see a direct increase in our sales comps and customer service survey scores."

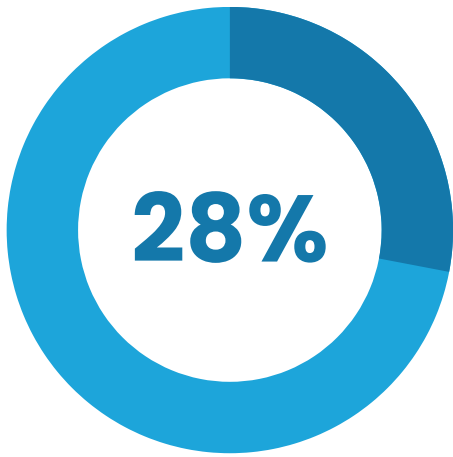
Decreased employee turnover

Employee turnover decreased by 27%, as staff felt more connected to the company and were less likely to leave for other opportunities. Before adopting Abundantly, the Baker's stores had a turnover rate slightly below the national average of 144% (4). With the implementation of the Abundantly platform and active guidance from the Abundantly culture strategist, the restaurants have reduced the turnover rate by 27%. The effort is ongoing as Abundantly provides tips and best practices to managers to encourage engagement. The software reminded managers to engage their staff, and the Amplify AI tool helped them compose more effective and appreciation messages.

"When I was able to wish Steve a happy birthday on the app, it was so heartwarming to see other stores chime in to wish Steve too. Our staff is bilingual, so there were comments in Spanish, too. **At times we feel separated by geography, so this was great to feel close and connected.**"

-Tony, KFC Office

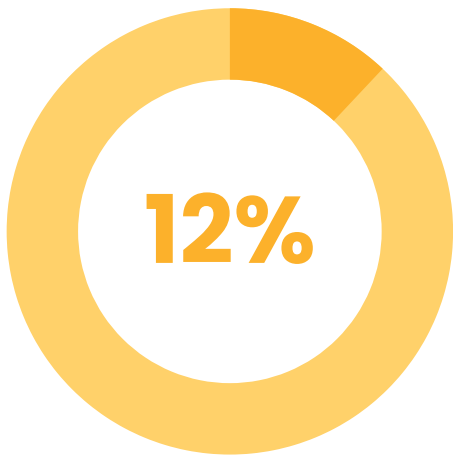




*increase in employee
engagement*

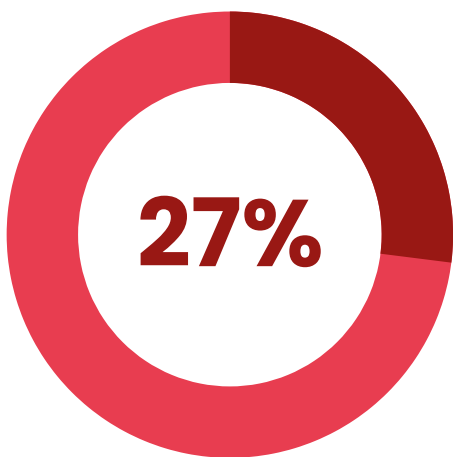
60 recognition
experiences per
month on average

*compared to one per month
before implementing
Abundantly*



*increase in performance
from recognized
employees*

30% reduction in
negative customer
comments



*decrease in
employee turnover*

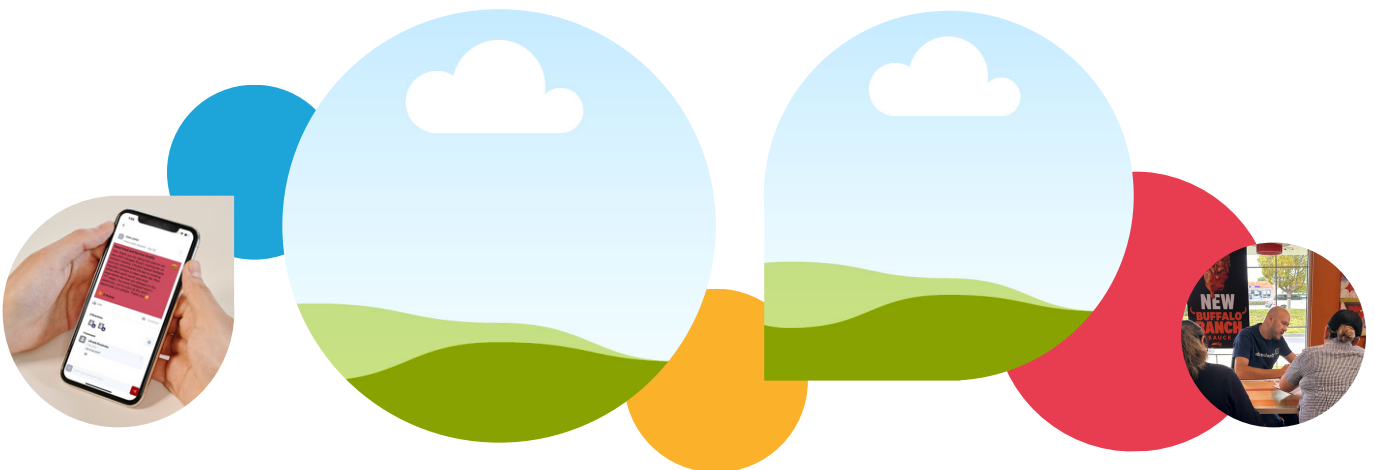
**"We see a direct
increase in our
sales comps and
customer service
survey scores."**

–Jeff Baker, KFC owner-
operator

Conclusion

“Analytically, when dealing with staffing, many HR people mention talent acquisition and retention. With our KFC family, it’s more than a return on investment. It is bringing our staff together and becoming a closer family.” said Nanci. Abundantly’s platform and the team’s ability to mold the Fried with Pride program to the needs of Nanci and Jeff’s organization will be ongoing. The employee recognition program implemented at KFC was a success in increasing employee engagement and performance. By recognizing and rewarding employees for their contributions, every location was able to improve overall morale and motivation. This, in turn, led to improved performance and customer service, and a more positive work environment for all employees.

To the Bakers, Abundantly's platform is a powerful tool that impacts everyone around them. **The Fried with Pride program has gone beyond increasing employee engagement – it has connected the Bakers and the KFC employees as a family.**



Citations

(1) "How Much Will Employee Turnover Cost QSR Franchisees in 2021?" *Workpulse*, 30 Mar. 2021
www.workpulse.com/qsr-employee-turnover-cost-in-2021

(2) "Turnover and Retention Rates for QSR Businesses." *DailyPay*, 15 Nov. 2022
www.dailypay.com/resource-center/blog/qsr-and-restaurant-turnover-rates

(3) "Why Is Guest Satisfaction Declining for Restaurants?" *QSR Magazine*, 21 Feb. 2023
www.qsrmagazine.com/consumer-trends/why-guest-satisfaction-declining-restaurants