



## CASE STUDY:

### How Moe's Southwest Grill Enhanced Franchisee Engagement by Sharing Data Openly



#### Introduction

How can you increase franchise engagement in today's world where information is power? One smart and simple way is by making operations more transparent to the franchisees themselves.

**Chris Hammond, the Regional Franchise Director at Focus Brands** did just this, while making the store auditing system more effective. Moe's Southwest Grill, affectionately known as Moe's, offers a variety of Mexican dishes, and was dubbed by the Harris Poll Equitrend Survey as "Fast Casual Restaurant of the Year" in 2016 and 2017. The name "Moe's" originated as an acronym for "Musicians, Outlaws and Entertainers" and anyone experiencing a location will witness their music-themed decor. The company was founded in 2000, in Atlanta Georgia, and has over 650 locations.

Moe's is now owned by Focus Brands based in Sandy Springs, Georgia with over 5,000 stores. We sat down with Chris and talked about how he engaged his franchisees in a unique way using technology.

#### The Interview

##### How has your audit process evolved over time at Moe's?

**Chris Hammond:** "I've been here for 12 years now. We started off with pen and paper – it was literally a yellow notebook and a Bic pen, and we took notes on what was working and what was not for each franchise. Later it evolved into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet where we would print a document off and fill it out with a pen on a clipboard. Afterwards, we would sit in front of our computer and type everything in. In terms of process – it was awful.

Then we moved to a software tool that was very 'bare-bones'. We created a report, saved it as a PDF and then we emailed it to the store. That was fine, but we could not get anything else out of it and there was no way to measure analytics or KPIs for the unit or as a system.

## How did that compare to using the FranConnect audit tool?

**Chris Hammond:** "With FranConnect we have the ability to look at analytics to see trends and averages. We can see how we're doing and what we need to focus on per category. We never had that before and it is a big help. The intuitive report platform takes our data and puts it into a powerful analytical report that shows our progress overall, scores on key indicators in the company, and on areas of focus."

## Do you have certain analytics that are your favorite or things that you look at on a regular basis?

**Chris Hammond:** "The year-to-date score averages; we like to compare the first half of the year year-to-date score averages by Franchise Business Consultant (FBC) and by region. Secondly, the top deficiencies which shows what are they getting marked the most for; it tells us what we need to be focused on. We also like to give credit for what are they doing the best."

## How do you use Opener in terms of your store openings?

**Chris Hammond:** "We do a scoring on a location before it opens to see if it is ready for the trainers."

We'll do a walk-through of that stores and do a digital checklist. They'll send it over to the corporate office and we will get back to the franchise and ask for updates based on the deficiencies that we found. That is a scorecard that is very valuable as well."

## How do you communicate scores to franchisees?

**Chris Hammond:** "We do a 'rack and stack'. My FBC team sends rankings on a weekly or monthly basis, where they will rank how a store performs on a report. They communicate both the top-ranking franchisees and the ones that are at the bottom. We use a snapshot of that dashboard report. We'll share these scores openly so there is no secret there."

There is a lot of competition in the franchise world; you have to be careful with what you share but we communicate this information pretty openly. It is a very powerful tool. It doesn't matter what concept you're in, there are always going to be franchisees who are critical of the corporate office, while their operations are below par. With the transparency, I can respond to a franchisee who is performing poorly in a direct manner, because everyone knows the numbers."





## When your coaches are using it what do you think is the biggest benefit is?

**Chris Hammond:** “The efficiency of how the reporting flows on the platform; it’s a very intuitive program and it’s easy for them to understand. It helps them to document and keep tabs on the scoring as well as they walk through and evaluation with a restaurant or an operator. “The coaches also like the other reports that we have made available such as a general food safety evaluation integrated with Steritech. We also use one for site surveys; if a franchisee is looking at going into a new area, we can do a site survey to assess if it will be a good area to build a new store or not.”

## How have your franchisees and multi-unit operators benefited?

**Chris Hammond:** “We made FranConnect available for franchisees to use as well so their multi-unit managers can do self-evaluations. That’s something that we’ve always wanted to do since the beginning to time. We wanted something that can be monitored from our end that the franchisees are using. We’re finally able to do that and we are really pleased with what the future has in store.”

### About FranConnect

FranConnect is the leading franchise management software provider. For 20 years, the FranConnect platform has served as the sales, operations, and marketing backbone for approximately 900 brands worldwide. Nine of the Franchise Times Top 10 Fastest-Growing franchise businesses rely on FranConnect to drive growth, improve profitability, and streamline operational performance. FranConnect customers span all sizes, growth phases, and industries and they grow 44% faster on average than the broader franchising market. Backed by private-equity investor Serent Capital, FranConnect is headquartered in Herndon, Virginia, with global operations in India and Canada.

**For more information on FranConnect, visit [www.franconnect.com](http://www.franconnect.com).**



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