



**Heartland
Waffles**

CASE STUDY



SITUATION

When Shane Schaibly joined First Watch in 2014 as the new vice president of culinary strategy, the “daytime café” chain had already been working with Heartland Waffles for nearly 20 years. The restaurant had locations in the Kansas City area as well as Florida and Ohio at the time, but Schaibly realized that not every location was using Heartland’s waffle program. In addition, First Watch had also recently acquired another restaurant brand, The Egg & I, and its locations were being serviced by Heartland’s primary competitor.



SOLUTION

Schaibly saw a chance to really compare the two waffle companies to make an informed decision for First Watch as the company expanded.

“We had the unique opportunity to kind of look under the hood and be serviced by basically the only two national companies that are out there,” he said. “We like Heartland better.”

Heartland not only provided a superior product, but was able to cover all of the First Watch locations (now more than 200), providing a more convenient one-stop-shopping experience.

“They make it easy for us to order,” he said. “With all of their local distributors across the country, we’re able to get all of our restaurants serviced in a timely manner. They really do take care of us and make the lives of our operators much easier.”

“The quality of the product is far superior... we’ve certainly seen lifts in sales.”

- SHANE SCHAIBLY,
Vice President of Culinary Strategy



RESULTS

Schaibly said that not only do the individual restaurants appreciate the service and quality of the Heartland partnership, but they’ve also been able to realize increased sales by expanding their menus. Under Schaibly’s guidance, First Watch has introduced several waffle-focused limited time offers (LTOs), featuring unique creations such as an almond butter and jelly waffle, a cinnamon roll waffle, a strawberry cheesecake waffle, and even a banana waffle with bacon.

“Of course, waffles are on our regular menu and we serve them every day,” he said, “but the quality of the product is far superior to some of the other companies out there and I’ve chosen to highlight it on our LTO menus. It most definitely shows a spike in sales. It’s not so much people trading out of regular waffles and into a featured menu waffle; these are new waffle eaters. So, we’ve certainly seen lifts in sales when we roll out waffles as part of our LTO menus.”

