

Chef Geoff's Deluxe Hospitality Finds the 5-Star Invoice Oversight & Inventory Management Solution They Need in MarginEdge



CGD Hospitality concepts



Earlier this year, two Washington, D.C.-area hospitality industry standard-bearers joined forces when Chef Geoff's merged with Clover Restaurant Group to form Chef Geoff's Deluxe Hospitality. The powerhouse partnership now includes two locations of Chef Geoff's (plus the management of a third location at Dulles International Airport), Lia's, four locations of Café Deluxe, and Tortilla Coast on Capitol Hill. The upscale casual concepts collectively rely on MarginEdge for in-depth inventory management and smooth, affordable invoice processing.

FOURTH TIME'S A CHARM!

The journey to use MarginEdge began long before the merger and was overseen by partner Chris Tracy. In 2010, Chef Geoff's and Lia's went digital with their accounting. Initially, they used a competing restaurant management software product. This involved internal staff inputting invoices by hand. "That was a disaster," says Tracy. "It was

poorly done because it wasn't their expertise. Plus, it was enormously time consuming and meant pulling a chef or another staffer away from focusing on the guests."

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Then the restaurant transitioned to having a dedicated staffer devoted to invoice processing and other basic bookkeeping. This approach was still incredibly time consuming, expensive and riddled with inaccuracies. "Plus, who wants to do that?" says Tracy. "We had high turnover in the position."

A few years ago, the restaurants attempted a third iteration of the system by outsourcing the work to an outside vendor. But they faced similar challenges – there

were still a lot of data entry mistakes and it was costly. Not even their accounting firm could retain the staff required to execute the data entry. The situation was clearly untenable.

Finally, Tracy turned to MarginEdge. "With MarginEdge, it was night and day. The amount of time we spent on invoice inputting plunged, the accuracy of that data entry went up, and the cost of the processing was lowered immensely."

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TRACKING COSTS TO SAVE \$\$\$

Between the nine restaurants, the group uses hundreds of ingredients. To simplify ordering and obtain the best pricing, the restaurant group identified half a dozen potential vendors for each of the major food categories – including meat, seafood, and produce – who then bid to be the exclusive supplier for those types of goods. The winning bidders then lock in their pricing with Chef Geoff's Deluxe Hospitality for a set period. There's only one problem: it's tough to track such agreements on a day-to-day basis.

To ensure the restaurant group is consistently charged the preset price for the correct products, Tracy set up price alerts within MarginEdge. That way, if a product's price goes up, he gets an email alert. "I love that you can drill down to the invoice level and item detail to determine whether you were given the wrong product, ordered the wrong product, or were charged the wrong amount because the vendor is not adhering to the bid pricing," he says. "You don't have to spend a lot of time investigating item price increases, one of the leading contributors to food cost issues, and you can react quickly. After all, if the price goes up even a few cents for a product you use consistently and in large quantities, it can add up to a lot of lost money over time."

Having this real-time oversight of the inventory and purchasing has saved the restaurant group inestimable money and time, while creating countless efficiencies for their operations.



EASY BREEZY COMMISSARY ASSIMILATION

A commissary kitchen in Lia's makes fresh pastas and sausages, while Chef Geoff's Tysons Corner location houses a pastry commissary that produces desserts and brunch breads for the company. To ensure the accounting management of these operations was integrated as smoothly as possible, Tracy turned to MarginEdge. To simplify the ordering process for chefs, the commissaries are treated as vendors within MarginEdge. That way, order guides can be created and chefs can place orders directly through MarginEdge. The commissaries accept those, process and fulfill them, and send an invoice. The receiving chef takes a photo of the invoice and uploads it to MarginEdge for processing. Smooth, straightforward, simple.

FEEDBACK CREATES CHANGE

"One of the best elements of MarginEdge is that they are willing to listen to customer feedback and incorporate that feedback into their solution," says Tracy. "MarginEdge has really good people, who respond quickly and intelligently to work through complicated problems. This feedback loop ends up positively affecting all their clients, because MarginEdge is always evolving their software and services."

SERIOUS SAVINGS

Tracy estimates that using MarginEdge **saves the restaurant group at least \$40,000 a year** – and too many man-hours and headaches to count.

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

Contact info@marginedge.com or 888.488.9612

[me] marginedge

FROM ONE PICTURE TO THE BIG PICTURE.