

# CASE STUDY

USING FBR SURVEY DATA  
FOR ANNUAL BUSINESS  
PLANNING: HOW CULVER'S  
FRANCHISE DOES IT



## **How the Culver's franchise system uses the franchisee feedback for their annual business planning.**

When a franchise system undergoes leadership changes, it's important for leadership to check in with franchise owners to see where morale is, how they feel about any new directions, and gather helpful feedback for upcoming projects.

The Franchisee Satisfaction surveys from Franchise Business Review are a fantastic way to gather this feedback from franchise owners using a third party.

But truly great brands don't just gather the feedback and data, they integrate it into leadership planning and use it to determine the areas of improvement and impact for the coming year.

That's what Culver's has done for many years, especially through their shifts in leadership. The results are impressive and an insightful guide for how brands can take action on the data they collect to create a thriving system.

## MEET THE BRAND Culver's



Culver's is a burger franchise with small-town Wisconsin roots. The first restaurant opened in 1984 and franchise owners have been serving up signature ButterBurgers® and frozen custard to families since 1990.

Dale Ballweg, VP of Franchise Relations at Culver's, shares that they started working with Franchise Business Review after the brand's co-founder, Craig Culver, retired.

"For the first time, we had a new CEO and we wanted to get a feel from our franchisees on how they felt about the leadership and direction of the company," explains Ballweg.

"Ever since we started, the FBR team has been a great partner – they are extremely helpful, ensuring I have a full understanding of our results."

## HOW CULVER'S USES SATISFACTION DATA for annual planning

Since Culver's started participating in the surveys, they have taken the results extremely seriously as a leadership team.

"I think us listening to the data so closely is why our franchisees are so keen to complete the surveys," says Ballweg.

Culver's has a dedicated process for reviewing all the data, especially the comment sections where franchisees can provide more detailed feedback and insights.

**"The timing of the franchisee survey is perfect. We get results in early September and our annual planning meeting for our leadership team is in mid-late September. We read through every one of the comments shared by our owners and narrowed down the top three areas for improvement. Those become the following year's priorities," shares Ballweg.**

After the leadership team's annual planning meeting, the results are shared with the franchisee support team, the board of directors, the operations and marketing teams, and the Franchise Advisory Council (FAC).

"We want to make sure we're not missing anything, so we ask our FAC to weigh in on the priorities and how we're planning on making improvements" explains Ballweg.

The team even uses their on-location company presentations as a chance to present the results to franchise owners face-to-face and share the actions being taken based on the results. This approach aligns everyone in the brand with the data from their survey and shows how much the company cares about taking action from the feedback.

**"We take a lot of pride in what we're doing well, but we're always seeking ways we can be doing things better," says Ballweg.**



## THE CHALLENGE improvements to technology & training

“We rolled out delivery last year, so this year we’re fully focused on the other training materials,” says Ballweg.

**Culver’s rolled out delivery as another sales channel in 2024. Their initial goal was 300 locations but they did it system-wide in just one year.**

Other areas that the company is improving this year are in the *technology* and *innovation* categories.

“We were above the benchmark for the first time for technology, but it's still our lowest score. Innovation and technology are what we’re focused on the most this year in terms of our score results,” shares Ballweg.

Culver’s is tackling these areas in a few different ways:

- Launching their first-ever loyalty program.
- Brought on a role to support menu product innovation.
- Bringing in digital menu boards.
- Expanded training and resource development.
- Supply chain innovation.

These are all projects that have been on the leadership radar for a while, but by listening to the franchisee survey data to guide their next year’s priorities they have been able to move forward with the projects that will make the biggest impact for franchise owners.

# SEE THE RESULTS

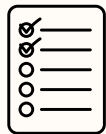
THANKS TO THE TEAM'S PROACTIVE APPROACH TO FRANCHISEE FEEDBACK AND INTENTIONAL GROWTH, THE CULVER'S BRAND HAS EARNED SOME IMPRESSIVE AWARDS AND RECOGNITION OVER THE YEARS.



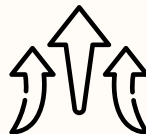
PART OF **FBR'S HALL OF FAME** – AN AWARD-WINNING BRAND FOR 10+ YEARS



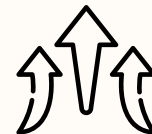
INCREASED PARTICIPATION, **40+ MORE SURVEYS** COMPLETED IN 2024



USE **KEY FINDINGS AND DATA** IN ANNUAL PLANNING MEETINGS



OVERALL SATISFACTION UP **FROM 77 FSI TO 79** IN 2024



TECHNOLOGY CATEGORY UP **FROM 51 FSI TO 59** IN 2024



OVERALL ENJOYMENT IN BEING A PART OF THE BRAND RECEIVED A **97% SCORE**

Interested in getting results like these for your own system? Franchise Business Review helps franchise brands at all phases of growth to understand your franchisee satisfaction and identify areas to improve.

**CONTACT US TO GET STARTED!**

