

How Sweetwater Sports Bar & Grill Saves 4 Hours Each Day With TouchBistro & MarginEdge

When Chris Lorusso, Managing Partner of Sweetwater Sports Bar & Grill, took over a restaurant in Lake Wylie, South Carolina, he envisioned turning it into a family-style establishment focused on providing great customer service and an extensive menu. **Sweetwater Sports Bar & Grill** is the manifestation of this dream. Customers come to the restaurant to enjoy an extensive craft beer menu, hand-crafted burgers, and award-winning wings.

“We’ve got a great community here in Lake Wylie. We’ve got a great clientele, and we’ve been able to retain a lot of our staff, which just really helps us continue to be that mom-and-pop shop where you get that extra attention that’s lacking at chain restaurants. We’re focused on treating our guests like our family when they’re in the building,” Chris says.

Unfortunately, an outdated POS system and manual bookkeeping were preventing Chris from focusing on hospitality at his restaurant. By upgrading to TouchBistro POS and the MarginEdge integration, Sweetwater Sports Bar & Grill has been able to:

- Save four hours each day on administrative tasks
- Spend less on inventory
- See food costs in real time
- Instantly understand how the business is performing



Challenge: An Outdated POS & Time-Consuming Bookkeeping

When Chris initially took over the old restaurant, he inherited a POS system that didn’t fit Sweetwater Sports Bar & Grill’s needs. He went looking for a more robust, user-friendly POS and found TouchBistro.

“TouchBistro has worked really well for us. It’s been super easy to use and adjust our menu and modifiers. We have a pretty big menu and it was super easy to put everything in and make everything work properly, set up all the taxes, and set up all the printers,” he says.

Chris and his team were really happy with their new POS setup, but then their bookkeeper – who had been doing all the back-office management – announced she was retiring. Because the bookkeeper had been doing everything by hand with spreadsheets, she spent four hours each day collecting data, organizing the numbers, and uploading them to QuickBooks. Chris was worried about how he’d be able to do the books and run the restaurant.

“If you’re a single operator without a lot of help, which I was, you can’t be wasting your time on bookkeeping. I’ve always thought of bookkeeping as an obituary. It’s what’s already happened in your business. But your time needs to be focused on the here and now,” he says.

Solution: TouchBistro and MarginEdge

In need of a way to reduce his newly inherited administrative work, Chris got a recommendation from a friend and fellow restaurateur to try MarginEdge: a profit management and back office solution that integrates with TouchBistro POS.

“MarginEdge really gave us an awesome daily snapshot of what’s going on. It basically takes over your filing cabinet, it takes over your Excel spreadsheets, and it takes over your menu pricing spreadsheets,” he says.

After a referral from his friend and a one hour meeting with MarginEdge, Chris signed up. And with the seamless integration with TouchBistro, Chris now had everything he needed at his fingertips.

Time Savings With Bookkeeping Automations

TouchBistro's MarginEdge integration made it incredibly easy for Chris to take over bookkeeping.

"MarginEdge is like having a team of bookkeepers," he says. "It allowed me to take over the bookkeeping job and not spend 40 hours a week doing it, so I could spend more time running the restaurant."

Instead of the multi-tool, manual process the bookkeeper used to go through, Chris could process invoices much faster with TouchBistro's MarginEdge integration.

"You take a picture of the invoice, upload it, and as long as MarginEdge has the information that's needed for the vendor, you hit 'pay invoice' and you're able to send an electronic payment directly through the MarginEdge app," he explains.

After Chris takes a picture, it gets sent over for review and automatically goes into the system. He can see in MarginEdge when payments have been paid and received. And, all of this information is automatically uploaded to QuickBooks from MarginEdge – no manual data entry required.

Chris was later able to hire on a part-time bookkeeper and says it made her job significantly faster than ever before. **"MarginEdge took four hours of our day down to literally 15 minutes," Chris says.**



Savings on Sweetwater Sports Bar & Grill's Menu With Inventory Management Tools

And bookkeeping was just one of the ways MarginEdge helped Chris run a more efficient operation. With the MarginEdge integration, Chris could also easily customize Sweetwater Sports Bar & Grill's inventory management settings.

"You can really set it up specifically to how your operation functions. There's a lot of flexibility as far as how you want to count your items, how you want them to be labeled, and how you want them to appear on your reports," Chris says.

This tool also perfected and sped up the restaurant's inventory process. Instead of cross-referencing spreadsheets and TouchBistro's sales records manually, MarginEdge's Product Mix Mapping feature maps every recipe that uses a specific ingredient and does the math for you. TouchBistro immediately communicates with MarginEdge, so Chris could see how much the restaurant has used in real time.

"We do a weekly bar inventory, which I'm not sure would be possible without MarginEdge and TouchBistro," Chris says.

Chris says these tools gave him instant visibility into each item on Sweetwater Sports Bar & Grill's menu so he could make money-saving adjustments and catch problems, like staff errors, from the start.

Easy Budgeting With Recipe Costing Features

MarginEdge's recipe costing feature has also helped Chris stay on top of fluctuating food costs at Sweetwater Sports Bar & Grill. First he built out the restaurant's recipes in MarginEdge, then, as he uploads invoices from vendors, those prices update in real time.

"If ground beef fluctuated from Monday to Friday, you immediately can see that in your recipe cost that ground beef has gone up. That's a great feature because with the last couple of years of supply chain issues and COVID, the fluctuation in prices has been insane," Chris says.

Equipped with MarginEdge, Sweetwater Sports Bar & Grill has been able to navigate those big cost changes with ease.

"MarginEdge allowed us to see how invoices were affecting our menu item costs and make adjustments faster than we had made them before," Chris says. And by reacting to these changes faster, Chris has been able to protect his profit margins.

A Better Business Overview with Seamless Integration Between TouchBistro and MarginEdge

With detailed reporting from TouchBistro and MarginEdge, Chris can understand how his business is doing at any given time. Thanks to the seamless communication between these solutions, he no longer needs to use two separate systems to access these insights.

“MarginEdge is the first thing I open every morning. I give it an A, A+ for sure,” Chris says.

And, with the help of MarginEdge’s local benchmark feature, he can understand Sweetwater Sports Bar & Grill’s performance compared to competitors.

“You see how you’re doing against yourself, and you also see how you’re doing against the rest of the industry,” Chris says.

With benchmarks for key metrics like revenue and profit margins, Chris can better set and achieve his business goals.



Results: Time & Cost Savings

Chris has used similar softwares in the past, but says none of them have come close to MarginEdge’s integration with TouchBistro.

“I would say it would take a lot for me to move away from MarginEdge right now. There’s definitely a percentage of savings that we have made through MarginEdge. I’ve caught mistakes that I’ve made on the point of sale, I’ve caught pricing mistakes, and I’ve caught menu costing mistakes. We’ve even caught ourselves selling things at a loss because we just weren’t thinking about it,” Chris says.

Between features that reduce operating costs and time-saving automations, TouchBistro and its MarginEdge integration are irreplaceable tools for Sweetwater Sports Bar & Grill.

“I recommend TouchBistro Profit Management Powered by MarginEdge to anyone in the restaurant business that I talk to,” Chris says.



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Do you want to manage your entire restaurant from one system?

TouchBistro is a powerful, flexible all-in-one restaurant management platform that helps restaurateurs increase sales, deliver a standout guest experience, and save time and money.

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