

Martin Bros. Boosts Labor Productivity & Reduces Costs While Maintaining Legendary Customer Service



Martin Bros.
DISTRIBUTING CO INC

The Customer

Martin Bros. Distributing Company, Inc. is an independent, family-owned foodservice distributor based in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Started in 1940 by two brothers, the company emphasizes customer relationships defined by “legendary customer service.” Martin Bros. offers full-line food service distribution and services to more than 1,500 accounts throughout the Midwest. Martin Bros. collaborates with a diverse customer base serving restaurants, schools, senior living communities and more.



Martin Bros., current leadership, is a third-generation family-owned company. They employ six hundred people, and proudly operate as an employee-owned company.

The Business Challenge

Martin Bros. wanted to update its labor management standards and procedures to more accurately record and manage labor costs:

- Martin Bros. felt it needed a better system to track and evaluate its labor performance. The existing standard operating procedures were outdated and did not reflect the actual labor efficiencies available at the distribution center.
- Martin Bros. wanted to fine-tune its labor management cost structure to ensure it was making the most efficient use of the employee base and to do a better job of tracking the labor activities in the DC.
- During the implementation phase of the new labor management standards, management also needed to secure buy-in from front-line supervisors who were responsible for activating the new labor standards with associates.
- Martin Bros. wanted to always maintain peak performance levels on the floor.

CHALLENGE

Martin Bros. required a better system to track and evaluate labor performance to achieve peak productivity.

SOLUTION

Implement a Labor Management Program utilizing TZA’s ProTrack Labor Management Software, engineering services and professional management training across core operations in the distribution center.

RESULTS

- ◆ 12% increase in productivity
- ◆ 10% reduction in overall labor cost per case distributed

“Our employees appreciate that what they do for the company on a daily basis is visible, making it easier for employees and management to work together to achieve mutual goals.”

Ethan DeWall
Vice President, Operations

The Solution

Martin Bros. selected TZA to evaluate its labor performance standards and provide recommendations for improvement. As a first step, TZA consultants reviewed all the processes at Martin Bros. and noted weaknesses in the system. For example, TZA discovered that employees were not following the current SOP and that Martin Bros. managers and associates were following different SOPs. TZA engineers pursued a step-by-step methodology and got agreement with Martin Bros. on new standardized SOPs.

TZA consultants performed pre- and post-measurements and evaluated the receiving, selection and loading times for the company's dried, refrigerated, and frozen categories, the core activities within the DC. Under the new SOPs, Martin Bros. realized a 1.5% reduction in cost-per-case distributed in the first 3 months. Next, TZA implemented the ProTrack Labor Management Software, a state-of-the-art labor management system that accurately calculates work duration, tracks associate time against standards and provides initiative-taking management tools resulting in real time visibility and enhanced management decision making. As a result, Martin Bros. achieved increased productivity and a lower cost-per-case distribution.

The management of Martin Bros. was also concerned about the impact these changes would have on its workforce and asked TZA to implement a process that enabled managers and supervisors to work with floor associates to achieve a smooth transition into the new labor standards and maintain continuous improvement objectives.



TZA consultants implemented a Professional Management Training program for managers and supervisors. TZA facilitated a series of courses, combining classroom and on-the-floor training sessions that helped transition the existing operation from its current state to a high-performance culture:

- What is a Labor Standard?
- How to Do an Observation
- How to Explain the Standard to the Floor Personnel
- Coaching and Counseling for Peak Performance
- Managing Change in the Workplace
- Understanding and Managing People
- Creating a Self-Disciplined Workforce
- Purposeful Communication for Leaders
Motivating Your Associates

"Our employees appreciate that what they do for the company on a daily basis is visible, making it easier for employees and management to work together to achieve mutual goals."

*Ethan DeWall
Vice President, Operations*

The Results

The TZA Labor Management Program, supported by ProTrack Labor Management Software, engineering services and professional management training, resulted in the following improvements.

- Productivity improved by more than 12%. Martin Brothers managed approximately 5,000 more cases than under the previous SOPs.
- Overall labor cost-per-case distributed decreased by 10%.
- Overtime declined to a weekly average of less than 3%.
- Throughput increased by more than twenty-two cases per hour.

To learn how TZA can help improve your labor productivity, visit www.TZA.com



"We involved personnel at the beginning of the transition process, which made for a more seamless, immediate changeover to the new system. Floor personnel appreciate the new system because it's more reflective of the work they actually do, while our management team likes being able to rely on it for information on performance and operations. Now that we have it, we definitely would not want to give it up!"

*Ethan DeWall
Vice President, Operations*