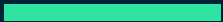


harri

Protect The Profits

How A Simple Mantra Helped Spur a Labor Transformation
At One of America's Most Iconic Restaurant Brands



The Labor Investment Mindset: Why Cutting Hours Kills Growth

Twenty years in this business has taught me one simple truth: an investment in labor is an investment in sales. No operator has ever cut labor and seen sales go through the roof. You need people to serve guests well, so those 100 customers today turn into 200, then 400, then 1,000 tomorrow. It sounds simple, almost cliché, but it's the foundation that's carried us from a single location in New York City's Financial District to 36+ units across four brands and XXX employees.

When I joined Salz Group, we already had a strong reputation for service and execution — but we were still operating like a mom-and-pop shop in many ways. Lots of paper, manual scheduling, and “that’s how we’ve always done it” processes. It worked when we had a few locations. But as we scaled beyond 30 units across four brands, it became clear that what got us here wouldn’t get us there.

We also had to evolve from reactive management to proactive leadership. That meant thinking differently about labor — not as a cost to control, but as the foundation for sustainable growth. Thinking differently about labor, especially as a quick-service-restaurant

(QSR) operator, means addressing the elephant in the room: **turnover**.

Industry-wide, QSR turnover rates hover around 75%, and some segments push past 100%. Every turnover event costs four to six months of that employee’s salary once you factor in recruiting, onboarding, training, and lost productivity. It’s not just an HR problem — it’s an operational crisis.

At Salz Group, we started treating retention like the financial priority it really is. Because every employee who stays longer gets more efficient, provides better service, and requires less supervision. They become the prep person you trust to open the store, the shift lead who can run a busy Saturday without you there.

Retention, in our world, **is profit protection**. The solution isn’t complicated — give people predictability, clarity, and connection. That’s why we turned to Harri. With one platform for scheduling, communication, and real-time operations, we empowered employees with the visibility and flexibility they wanted, and freed our managers to focus on coaching and service instead of spreadsheets.



The Technology Turning Point: Scaling To 100+ Units & Beyond

Manual processes don't scale. As we pushed toward our goal of 100+ locations, we were spending far too much time on administrative work and not enough on growth. We needed a platform that could handle our complexity without adding more complexity. After evaluating several options, Harri stood out — not because of flashy features, but because it aligned with where the industry is headed:

1. **Retention as the new ROI:** Turnover is the number one cost driver in QSR, and technology must help reduce it through better scheduling, communication, and engagement.
2. **Compliance as a non-negotiable:** Fair Workweek, meal breaks, attestations — these aren't optional anymore. Automation is the only sustainable path forward.
3. **Real-time labor optimization:** Operators need live visibility into labor efficiency — scheduled vs. actual — and the ability to adjust staffing based on sales, weather, or events.

4. **Ease of use for the frontline:** A system only works if managers can use it easily and consistently. Harri delivered that intuitiveness our frontlines teams needed.

It's not rocket science. Modern operators need to be able to provide flexible schedules, clear communication, and empower employees with technology. When people know their schedule in advance, can easily communicate with management, and have the tools to do their jobs well, they stick around.

Today, **Harri serves as our central hub** for scheduling, compliance, communication, and integration across brands. It connects directly to our payroll, ensures accuracy, and gives every manager across our entire portfolio a single source of truth they can use to make better decisions, faster.



Scheduling As a Superpower

Let's get tactical about one of the biggest operational challenges we face: building schedules that actually work in the real world. Forecasting in restaurants isn't about predicting sales, it's about predicting the unpredictable. You've got regular patterns like lunch and dinner rushes, but then there's weather, local events, no-shows, and sudden delivery surges.

When a snowstorm cuts traffic by 60%, we can adjust staffing in real time instead of keeping full coverage and losing money, or cutting too deep and damaging the guest experience.

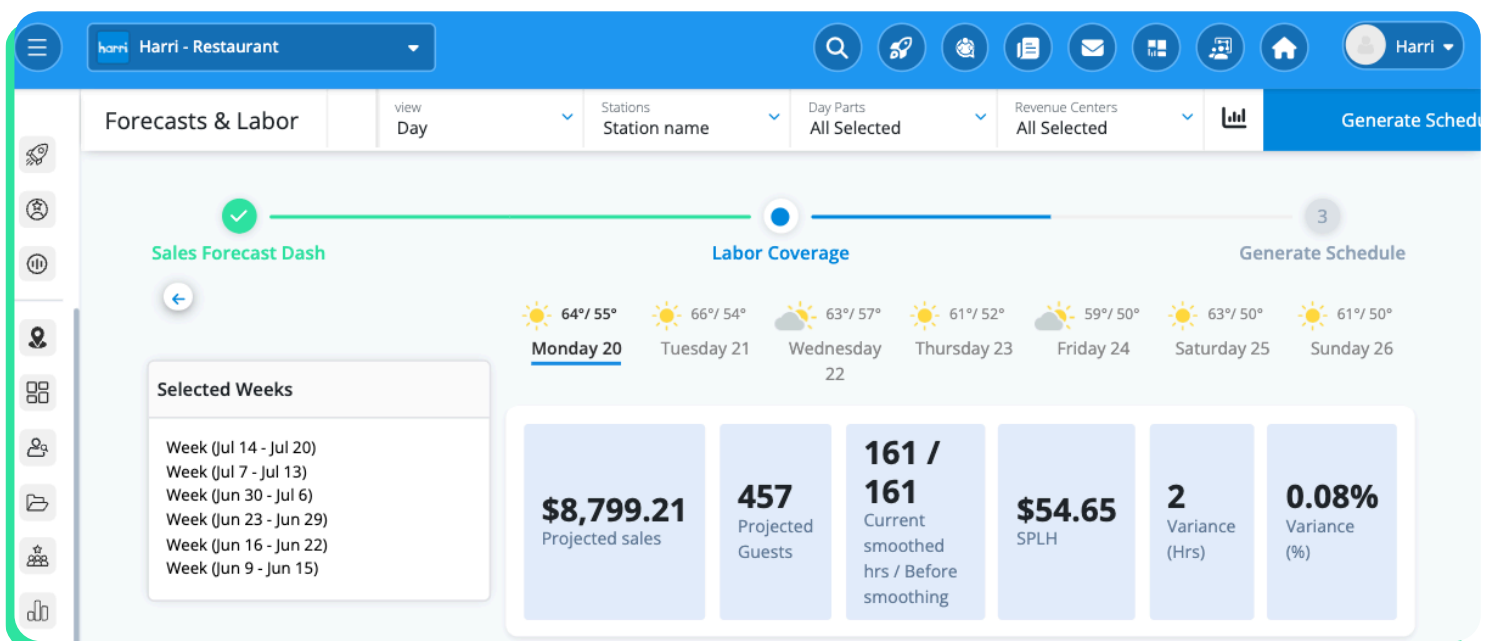
At Wendy's, where labor complexity varies from other concepts we run, this flexibility has been game-changing. We've used Harri's scheduling and real-time labor data to balance efficiency and experience, ensuring that whether we're serving 10 customers one at a time or all at once, we're staffed to deliver consistent, fast, accurate service.

And the results speak for themselves:

- **30% faster scheduling completion** with better coverage
- **15-20% higher guest service scores** during peak periods
- Managers reclaim **30-45 minutes a day** to spend on coaching and quality control

We've built over 100 communication groups across our Wendy's locations, so teams stay connected. Shift changes, coverage requests, or celebrations all happen in one place. No missed texts or fragmented chats.

Even better, employees can access instant pay directly within the app as soon as hours are approved, one more way to show trust and improve retention. Scheduling isn't just a process anymore. It's a strategic advantage, but only when done in the context of complex and fast-changing labor laws.



Navigating Labor Compliance And Avoiding The Wall of Shame

Let's talk about Fair Workweek in particular, because if you're operating in New York City—or anywhere predictive scheduling laws are spreading—this isn't going away. The current guide on nyc.gov is 47 pages. If you hand that to a 22-year old manager already juggling hiring, training, truck orders and everything else, they're going to give notice faster than you can say "compliance."

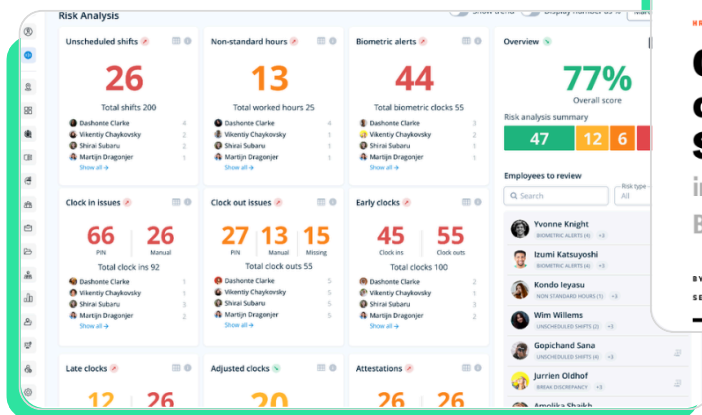
At one point, we were losing 1.3% of our weekly payroll to penalties — thousands of dollars that could've gone to growth or team bonuses. The penalties aren't small: they start at \$10 per infraction but can escalate to \$75, even \$100 for repeat violations. When you're managing 30+ locations with hundreds of employees, these add up fast.

I'm happy to say that in a few short months with Harri, our compliance penalties dropped to 0.28% of weekly payroll, with a target of 0.15%. That is a dramatic difference. There's not a CFO right now reading this who won't want to call me and say, walk me through how you did it and how can you advise us so we can do the same thing.

In the spirit of that, here's exactly how we systematically tackled compliance with Harri:

1. **Dashboard visibility:** Every potential violation is visible in real time.
2. **Manager education:** The Risk Analysis Dashboard flags issues in simple green/yellow/red terms that managers can act on immediately.
3. **Automated safeguards:** The system prevents scheduling violations before they happen.
4. **Documentation tracking:** Every decision and change is logged automatically.

And here's what I tell every operator — posting schedules in advance, ensuring rest periods between shifts, and giving employees control over their schedules aren't just legal requirements; they're competitive advantages. Predictability drives retention. Retention drives profit.



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Chipotle, Amazon, and Uber All Land on New York City's Employer Wall of Shame

New York City's comptroller released an interactive dashboard that compiles a list of some of the Big Apple's worst labor law offenders.

BY MELISSA ANGELL, POLICY CORRESPONDENT @MELISSAANGELL
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Winning With Labor in 2026 & Beyond

The operators who will win in 2026 and beyond are the ones who remember that labor isn't a cost center—it's your growth engine. Every dollar you invest in having the right people in the right place at the right time comes back multiplied in sales, customer satisfaction, and employee retention.

Consolidating five or six disconnected systems into Harri gave us more than efficiency — it gave us clarity. Everything now lives in one place: schedules, task lists, communications, and compliance tracking.

We're targeting 40+ locations by year-end and 100+ within the next few years. And we're building the infrastructure to get there responsibly — not by adding chaos, but by **designing for scale**.

But here's what's really exciting: we're just scratching the surface of what's possible.

AI and automation aren't going to replace the human element—they're going to amplify it. Better forecasting, smarter scheduling, predictive maintenance, enhanced guest experiences. The technology is going to get better, but the fundamentals remain the same.

My advice to fellow multi-unit operators: you can't save your way to growth. You can't do it. Instead, invest in tools and systems that let your people be their best, give your managers the information they need to make smart decisions in real-time, and build processes that scale.

The secret sauce isn't in the kitchen—it's in taking care of your people, your process, and your product. Do those three things consistently, and everything else follows. The operators who will win in 2026 and beyond are the ones who understand that labor isn't a cost center — **it's your growth engine**.



Justin Hall is HR Director at Salz Group, operating 36+ restaurant locations across four major brands in the New York metropolitan area. With 20+ years of restaurant industry experience spanning operations, management, and human resources, Justin specializes in helping multi-unit operators scale profitably while maintaining compliance and operational excellence.