

# Driving Growth in the Restaurant Industry through the Power of Business Analytics

## Client Profile

Atlanta-based Focus Brands is a leading developer of global, multi-channel foodservice brands, delivering 100+ products and \$1 B+ in annual retail sales. Founded in 2004, the private equity-backed corporation franchises and operates 6,400+ restaurants, cafes, ice cream shops, and bakeries in the U.S., Puerto Rico, and 55+ foreign countries. Its iconic brands include Carvel®, Cinnabon®, Schlotzsky's®, Moe's Southwest Grill®, Auntie Anne's®, McAlister's Deli® and Jamba®, as well as the Seattle's Best Coffee® brand on certain military bases and in certain international markets.



## Business Challenge

Foodservice corporations like Focus Brands maintain thousands of stores across a wealth of global markets. With so many franchised locations, ensuring customers receive consistent, positive experiences and product quality across stores wherever they go is a major priority.

The ability to make informed, agile decisions about product mix, sales, and business development opportunities like rebranding or remodeling are also essential ingredients for growing revenue and measuring performance in the hyper-competitive foodservice industry.

However, Focus Brands **lacked consolidated, real-time visibility into sales, foot traffic, and brand quality across its 1,650+ international locations.**

While some information existed piecemeal across different reports, the inability to combine sources made it difficult to accurately measure sales and quality in terms of single stores, franchisees, and regions. For instance, comparing data on Thanksgiving sales in a region to the previous year or actual vs. planned revenue for a franchisee.

As a result, **leadership often spent many cycles identifying locations with areas of opportunity.**

Focus Brands had also recently partnered with Auxis to build a Customer Experience Center of Excellence (CoE) at the **Auxis Global Outsourcing Center in Costa Rica**. Rapid-fire growth and pandemic restrictions had made it difficult for Focus Brand field operators, or brand coaches, to visit every international store to ensure they meet quality standards.

Instead, brand coaches at the Auxis CoE leverage top-notch virtual tools to help franchisees operate at the excellence Focus Brands expects for its locations without physically being in the stores, gaining the ability to visit more often and more cost-effectively.

**A real-time, consolidated data view would also maximize the benefits of CoE quality audits;** for instance, helping leadership gauge correlations between improved audit scores and sales at a single store.



## Solution & Approach

### 1. Determining key business questions.

Auxis came to the table with 25+ years of delivering advisory services that help businesses achieve peak performance and deep restaurant industry experience. It began by helping Focus Brands leadership identify key business questions for driving business strategy and growth. For instance, is foot traffic up or down? Does the cleanliness of a store impact long-term performance? Is this region performing better than that region?

Focus Brands leadership provided an initial checklist of data it wanted to track. **But unlike technical analytics providers who don't also provide business expertise, the Auxis team worked as a strategic advisor to Focus Brands, helping design KPIs and metrics that effectively monitor and manage its international business.**

Auxis experts led daily brainstorming sessions with leadership to build analytics that made the most sense for their business goals, ensuring they understand decisions that different data points could enable and business benefits.

### 2. Identifying 4 key data dimensions.

As teams continued to identify strategic questions, Auxis provided the **flexibility to tweak dashboards and add new data points throughout the project.** Ultimately, the Auxis team helped Focus Brands zero in on 4 impactful data dimensions:



**Sales.** Leadership has visibility into key data points such as year-over-year growth percentages, foot traffic, budget vs. actual sales, sales trends at different locations like airports and hospitals, regional comparisons, and more.



**Brand quality.** Leadership can measure quality performance as well as the success of the CoE coaching program within various regions. For instance, they can easily view the CoE's market penetration and determine key areas of improvement by market or individual stores based on audit scores.



**Product mix.** Data points help identify the biggest drivers from a product perspective, drilling down into upsale drivers for other items like beverages, as well as time of day and channels like Uber Eats or to-go orders that deliver the best sales.



**Business development.** Data helps leadership determine the best ways to invest marketing and business development dollars, tracking the impact of store openings, rebrandings, remodelings, product/category launches, and more.

### 3. Data gap analysis

Data quality stands as a common stumbling block to a successful analytics journey. Many businesses know their data isn't good enough to enable informed decisions but are unsure where to start fixing problems.

For Focus Brands, the Auxis team determined which business questions could be answered immediately with available data. Then Auxis **identified necessary changes to provide answers to other important questions in the long-term**, such as improving data accuracy and timeliness.



### 3. Microsoft Power BI analytics.

After building a roadmap for answering key business questions in the short- and long-term, Auxis delivered a single Power BI app that offers Focus Brands leadership visualizations that provide detailed and customizable visibility into their business. **Not only do dashboards offer a 10,000-foot view, but analysis can also be drilled down by market, country, region, or single stores.**

To seamlessly support the Power BI dashboards, **Auxis consolidated Focus Brands data from different sources into a centralized data warehouse - ensuring data flows from a single location and is summarized properly.**

## Results

The advanced analytics program Auxis created delivers real-time, accurate data that continues to help boost brand quality and sales for Focus Brands.



The program **paid for itself within 3 months by boosting brand perception, sales performance, and optimized product mix/promotions.**



After a 3-month pilot period, the **client experienced a 12% lift in average regional sales.**



Focus Brands leadership now has live information about brand quality and sales at their fingertips, **enabling informed and agile business decisions.**



Regional leaders can **easily identify growing and declining markets.**



**Correlation analysis of store audits and sales optimizes improvement opportunities.**

Pleased with the success of the analytics program Auxis created for its internal leadership teams, Focus Brands has engaged Auxis to deliver a similar project that supports informed decision-making for franchisees. Focus Brands is also working with Auxis to advance analytics even more, expanding from reflections on past performance to forward-looking insights.

