



Scaling Scratch-Made: How Festival Foods Standardized Production and Recipes Across 40+ Stores



Strong sales lift

across fresh categories

Reduced shrink

and out-of-stocks due to
better forecasting

Increased

associate confidence due
to consistent workflows

The Customer

Festival Foods is a family-owned grocer operating over 40 full-service stores across Wisconsin. Known for its culture-first approach and focus on operational excellence, Festival stands out for its commitment to scratch-made fresh foods. From hand-prepped heat-and-eat meals to in-store meat cutting and daily bakery production, the company prioritizes quality, consistency, and community service.

The Challenge

Festival Foods built its brand on fresh, scratch-made excellence. But delivering that vision across 40+ stores meant navigating complexity—especially in demand planning, production, and recipe execution.

Over time, Festival had layered on new programs and expectations to better serve guests and grow its fresh offering.

“The accuracy of forecasting through Upshop has given us a level of comfort to lean in with innovation, balance space to sales and maintain availability for our guests. And in turn, that’s helping drive our mix and helping drive our sales.”

Ken Wicker
SVP Fresh, Festival Foods



But the tools supporting that complexity hadn't kept pace. Production planning relied on Excel-based systems tied to recent sales, without accounting for broader demand drivers like weather, events, or promotional activity. Recipe workflows were also more manual, making it harder to ensure consistency.

Festival needed to evolve beyond disconnected tools and reactive routines—to support growth, simplify store execution, and give associates a clearer path to succeed every day.



They set out to:

- Forecast production volumes more accurately, with inputs beyond past sales
- Simplify store routines while supporting high standards in fresh
- Digitize recipe workflows to ensure compliance and consistency
- Reduce associate guesswork and enable store teams with a unified system

The Solution

Rather than starting with technology, Festival started with a vision—what they called “FreshOS.” It was a grassroots initiative that defined where they were headed: a fully connected fresh operation, powered by tools that made execution easier, not harder.



That vision guided the rollout of Upshop's Fresh 360 solution. Festival began with Production Planning, onboarding store teams in phases, aligning workflows, and building change management from the ground up. They trained district-level champions to support adoption and deliberately throttled the rollout pace to balance speed with sustainability.



Once Production Planning was in place and embedded in store routines, Festival moved to Recipe Management. This included digitizing and centralizing core recipes, incorporating nutrition and allergen data in the mobile application, and preparing to eliminate outdated SOP binders altogether. These tools became part of FreshOS: a unified approach to driving execution, supporting associates, and unlocking smarter decisions at every level.

These changes went far beyond just putting in software. They were about building a strong, scalable foundation that supports associates and strengthens fresh operations.

The Results

With Upshop in place, Festival Foods brought new levels of consistency, visibility, and control to its fresh operations, driving growth, reducing complexity, and building momentum across departments.



But the biggest impact wasn't just in metrics—it was in mindset. Teams shifted from reactive to proactive, with clear daily plans, shared standards, and a system that supported both new associates and seasoned leaders.



The results they saw across their stores included:

Higher sales in fresh departments

- Improved forecast accuracy and better on-shelf conditions supported strong growth across deli, bakery, prepared meals, and fresh-cut produce.



Fewer out-of-stocks for guests

- Automated production plans helped ensure the right items were made at the right time—especially in high-volume, high-velocity categories.

Faster onboarding, less reliance on tenure

- With workflows and prep logic embedded in the system, new team members onboard faster—and internal transfers are smoother.

Digitized recipe management

- Nutrition, allergen, and prep details are now centralized and mobile—eliminating paper SOPs and raising the bar on consistency.

More consistent execution chainwide

- All stores now follow the same production logic and cadence, enabling Festival to scale its scratch-made standards with confidence.

Culture-first, change-ready teams

- By leading with vision and listening to feedback, Festival built broad-based support for change—turning FreshOS into a rallying point for innovation and operational excellence.

By streamlining production and recipe workflows as part of Upshop's Fresh 360 solution, Festival did more than solve immediate challenges. They built a scalable foundation for future growth. As the business grows, the Upshop platform grows with it—unlocking the next phase of opportunity in areas like Ordering and beyond.



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Upshop is a global leader in total store operations technology. Our platform streamlines forecasting, ordering, production, and inventory optimization for food retailers. Serving over 450 retailers and 50,000 stores, we enhance operations across Fresh, Inventory, Waste, and eCommerce, driving improvements in sales, shrink reduction, food safety, and sustainability. With a focus on simplifying tasks and connecting teams, our technology empowers retailers to operate smarter and more efficiently.