

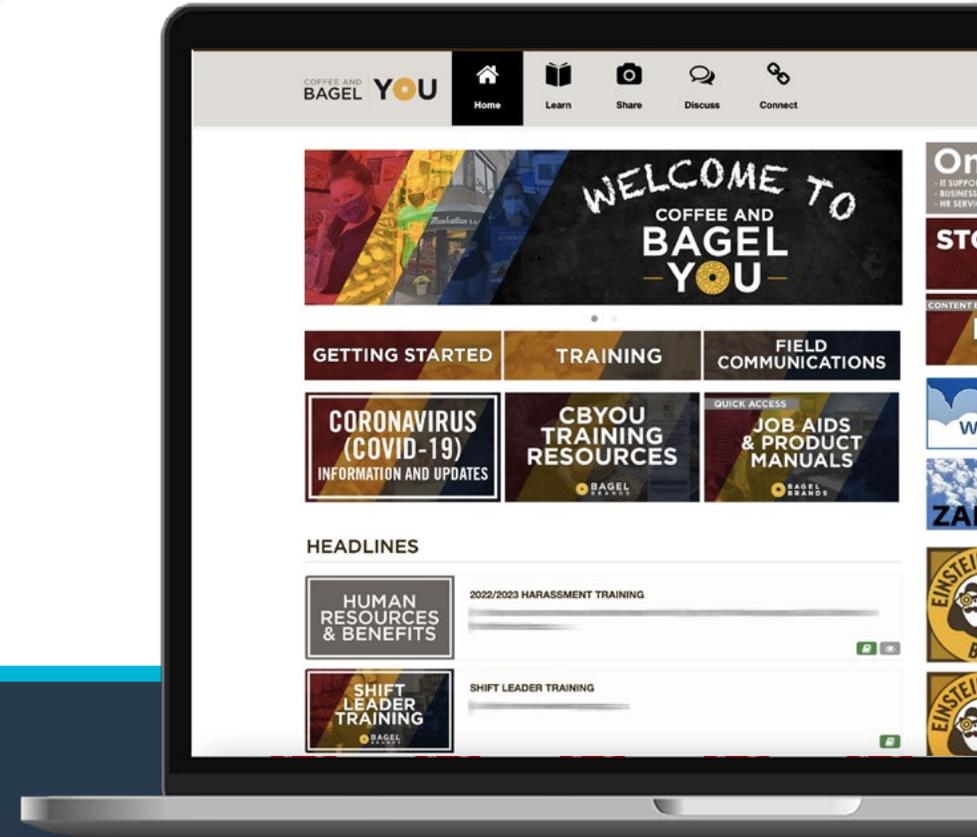
## BAGEL BRANDS



# Extraordinary Results with Essential LMS

How a Franchise Reduced Onboarding Time and Increased ROI

- **INDUSTRY**  
Franchise
- **COMPANY SIZE**  
Large
- **FOCUS AREA**  
Maximizing ROI of LMS & reducing onboarding time
- **IN THIS CASE STUDY**
  - Reducing onboarding from 22.5 days to 4.5 days & seeing ROI through customer satisfaction
  - Benefit of focusing on employee experience
  - Employee turnover reduction from 170% to 80%



## ○ Organization Overview

// Our LMS was an essential employee. That's where all of our messaging was. We wouldn't have landed where we are now, after Covid, without our LMS.

*Nick Kyle, Manager of Training,  
Bagel Brands*

Bagel Brands is comprised of four bagel companies: Einstein Bros Bagels, Bruegger's Bagels, Noah's Bagels, and Manhattan Bagel.

With a total of 988 bakeries in 44 states, Bagel Brands employs 7,500 employees — which means a lot of training to deliver. The training management team, headed by Manager of Training, Nick Kyle, implemented an improved new-hire training program using the company's learning management system (LMS) to find and fix training gaps and address pain points across the company.

**The average time for new employees to complete orientation and training was 22.5 days.  
Today, it's 4.5 days.**

## ○ A Matter of Time

The timeline adjustment is by far the most striking change – and a primary driver of the others. Prior to the program’s overhaul, the new hire training program at Bagel Brands followed a familiar, more traditional pattern. New employees received a training manual – over 100 pages long and 10 years old – intended to cover every general aspect of their work, whether they were preparing to clean a bathroom, take inventory, or stock the kitchen. The core manual was supplemented with additional material for specific positions, such as sandwich maker or barista.

Training materials were handed down through the chain of command, and practical skills training was left to local shift managers to convey to frontline employees. But filtered information can lose coherence and essential emphasis, so messaging that was clear, concise, and consistent at the corporate level was delivered to new frontline employees haphazardly and inconsistently.

In 2021, Bagel Brands decided to examine their training delivery program and test innovative methods for connecting with employees. Instead of trying to refresh a dated, inefficient training manual, the company refined onboarding and training methods using its LMS, and created a people-centric approach for building closer relationships with employees.

Recognizing that more than half of Bagel Brands’ employees are either Gen Z or young millennials, most of whom are highly tech-savvy, the training team created more engaging content – with enhanced focus on “the why behind the what” – and shortened the length of company training modules. The new strategy was quickly validated with measurable results.

The average time for new employees to complete orientation and training was 22.5 days. Today, it’s 4.5 days, and bakeries that achieved new hire training within four days reported guest satisfaction at up to 20 points higher than those with longer training periods.



## 0. Communication is Key

Direct communication is another primary factor in Bagel Brands' success. The training team decided to cut out the communication go-between in favor of direct contact with every employee. As Nick explains it, "We recruited them through email, we job-offered them through email. Now, let's make them part of the bigger story by communicating with them directly. Messaging was not being cascaded down effectively. The why behind the what was being lost, so we went to direct email with team members."

Using the comprehensive communication features of Wisetail's LMS, the Bagel Brands training team made themselves available for open dialogue with every employee – and it paid off. Employees feel more connected with the strategies and initiatives of the company and empowered to speak more confidently to customers, which enhances the overall guest experience.

When employees have opportunities to engage with training via an LMS, in ways they never could with traditional training, they recognize their part in something bigger and show more willingness to stay with their employer, observe the impact of their contribution, and grow with the organization. Access to direct, personal communication, training modules adjusted to deliver seamless, learning content in the flow of work, and a focus on career development makes all the difference in new hire retention – especially with the younger generation of employees.

According to Nick, "Creating promoters within the organization not only benefits the front end with better guest experiences and higher transaction amounts, but it also increases business acumen that benefits the back end – through better waste control, lower turnover, and better labor management. We're teaching about the business beyond putting schmear on a bagel."

The screenshot shows a user interface for a Learning Management System (LMS) for Bagel Brands. At the top, there is a navigation bar with icons for Home, Learn, Share, Discuss, and Connect. The main content area features a video player with the title "NEW HIRE ORIENTATION ROLE-BASED TRAINING" and a "Complete" status indicator. Below the video, there is a text prompt: "To learn more about all the functions of Coffee & Bagel You click here." Underneath this is a section titled "JOIN THE CONVERSATION" with a text input field for comments and a "POST COMMENT" button. There are two visible comments from users, each with a profile picture, a comment text, and a "Write a comment..." input field. The right sidebar contains a "WALL OF F..." section with a grid of sun icons and a "1st to Co..." label.

## ○ Realizing the Benefits

In an industry that routinely reports turnover rates at over 150%, the change in Bagel Brands' retention following the company's training upgrade was nothing short of remarkable. At the end of 2021, Bagel Brands recorded 170% team member turnover. After one year of an LMS-based training and communication approach, Bagel Brands' frontline team member turnover is down below 80%, making Bagel Brands an industry leader in employee retention.

Before the pandemic, Bagel Brands defined certification as completion of new hire orientation plus one specialty position, such as baker or barista. When new hires relied on text-heavy manuals for training, only about 30% completed certification. Now, with its new learning delivery model and accessible online learning content, 80% of company new hires achieve certification.

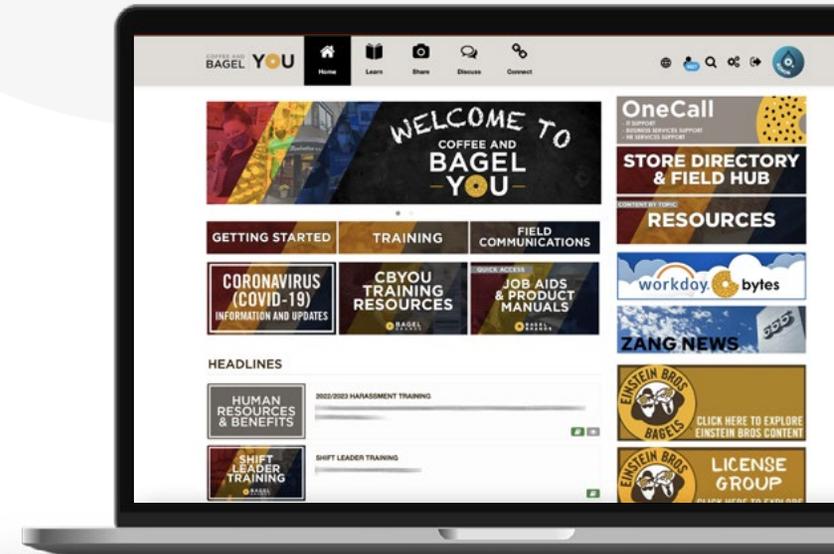
During the pandemic, the switch to a one-shift daily schedule also changed new hire certification requirements. Today, certification is orientation plus additional training for three roles. With this change, new hires develop more skills faster and are well-positioned to build a career with the company, contributing to both retention and a more well-rounded workforce.

Additional training also contributes to employee development. Bagel Brands is mindful that many new hires are just beginning their working journey, which presents a unique opportunity to build company loyalty and encourage retention from a new hire's earliest employee experience. Even seasonal hires can be trained and prepared for more responsibility when they return for summer or holiday work.

## Conclusion

With its people-centered view of training, Bagel Brands recognizes that today's new hires need more than a simple summer job. The newest generation of employees want to be part of a bigger story, and to encourage retention, their training must provide significance, stability, guidance, and a path to development.

Nick Kyle credits Wisetail's LMS platform as a significant contributor to the success of Bagel Brands continuous training improvement.



**“Creating promoters within the organization [results in] better waste control, lower turnover, and better labor management. We’re teaching about the business beyond putting schmear on a bagel.”**

*Nick Kyle, Training Manager, Bagel Brands*

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BRUEGGER'S  
BAGELS

Manhattan  
BAGEL

NOAH'S  
BY BAGELS