

CASE STUDY

A 401(k) on a ‘Silver Platter’: Saving Time with Vestwell’s Toast Integration

Employer

Starting a retirement plan helped the restaurant group overcome industry recruiting, retention, and turnover trends.

High turnover represents a major concern for restaurants. Workers in the leisure and hospitality sector are **twice as likely** to quit their job compared to the national average. And depending on the position, it can cost anywhere from **16% to over 200%** of a worker's annual salary to replace an employee in a restaurant.

Row 34, a high-end restaurant group in the Northeast, chose to be proactive in overcoming these industry trends. The management team invested in a company-sponsored retirement plan with Vestwell in January 2021, which has become a noticeable differentiator for recruiting and retaining top talent. To do this, Row 34 needed a retirement plan that would be **simple, seamless, and hands-off.**

The Problem: Row 34’s HR Team Didn’t Have Time for Day-to-Day Management of a Retirement Plan.

On any given day, Krista Hasinger, Director of People at Row 34, has a very full plate.

From administering benefits and running payroll to overseeing the full employee lifespan for the restaurant group (including recruiting, onboarding, and employee retention), Krista’s list of daily responsibilities is packed to the brim.

Having the time to research retirement plan providers and evaluate options was difficult, let alone managing a retirement plan day-to-day. In this dynamic, Row 34 was not alone: a [Pew Charitable Trusts](#) survey found one of the top reasons small business owners say they don't offer a 401(k) is "resources required to start and maintain a plan."

For always-on-the-go team members like Krista, managing a retirement plan needed to be as painless and time-saving as possible.

"Part of our issue was having the time to find the right program, the right company, the right product, and [it] was literally just set up for us on a silver platter."

Krista Hasinger, Director of People, Row 34

The Solution: A Fully Integrated Retirement Plan with Vestwell and Row 34's Payroll Provider, Toast

Vestwell's comprehensive integration with Row 34's payroll software, Toast, makes payroll a breeze, so it was a natural choice for Row 34 to partner with Vestwell. This time-saving integration, paired with Vestwell's straightforward platform design and dedicated client success team, made Row 34's partnership with Vestwell seamless from the get-go.

#1: Vestwell's Comprehensive Payroll Integration with Toast Removes Manual Work

As a user of Toast payroll software, Row 34's payroll is fully integrated with Vestwell's retirement platform. This means that **Vestwell automatically receives information about Row 34's plan and employees from their payroll system**, sends employees' contribution decisions to the payroll software, and processes employee and employer contributions. This [reduces administrative work](#), eliminates manual errors, and creates a more seamless experience overall.

This efficiency was a major benefit to the Row 34 team. Rather than manually transmitting payroll data to a retirement provider, Vestwell's integration with Toast created the hands-off experience Row 34 needed.

#2: Vestwell's Easy-to-Use Platform Makes Self-Service Simple for Employees

Before opening a retirement plan, one of the Row 34 team's major concerns was finding a provider with a portal their employees could navigate on their own. "I was scared of ease-of-use for the portal, because **I know our employee base, and they prefer things that are super easy and can be self-guided.**"

The simplicity of Vestwell's platform assuaged these concerns. The intuitive and jargon-free portal makes it easy for employees to sign up and **set deferral rates in less than three minutes.** Employees can also view their statements in just a few clicks, making the overall experience simple and self-guided. When asked about employee feedback, Krista said, "**The biggest thing I get is: 'This is so great. I'm so happy. Thank you so much.'**"

Without needing to allocate time in her day-to-day answering employee questions about the platform, Krista can focus on what she does best - supporting her team.

#3: Vestwell's Dedicated Client Success Team Supports Row 34 Every Step of the Way

Upon starting their plan, Vestwell paired Row 34 with an implementation manager who ensured a smooth onboarding, helping select critical plan features and ensuring frictionless payroll contributions. Krista's take: "...having implemented many different products and services, this was very, very simple in comparison."

Beyond onboarding, Row 34 also has a dedicated customer support contact who works closely with the restaurant group. Asked about her experience with the Client Success team, Krista shared, "**Any time I've had a question, I send an email, and I don't think it's ever gone more than 24 hours without getting a concise, clear answer to my question, which I love! It checks all my boxes.**"

The Impact: Standing Out From the Competition in Recruiting

Vestwell's direct payroll integration, ease-of-use, and dedicated Client Success team have given the Row 34 team the tools they needed to start a retirement plan and help employees build a nest egg for their golden years. However, the real impact has been demonstrated in their recruiting results.

Recruiting top-flight hospitality talent is never easy, but restaurants can find success by differentiating their benefits from others. When asked if offering a retirement plan has made a tangible difference in their recruiting, Krista said, "Definitely, certain areas such as front-of-the-house, for sure. **And with any management position we have, it's been a huge selling point for us. A lot of restaurants can't or don't offer a plan and we're really proud that we get to do that.**"

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Krista Hasinger, Director of People, Row 34

A study by the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College found that [only 48% of small businesses](#) offer a retirement plan, and since [90% of restaurants qualify as a small business](#), there is a particular scarcity of retirement plans in the industry. Investing in a 401(k) has been a surefire way for Row 34 to stand out from the competition.

A 401(k) through Vestwell's Toast platform has been a major boon to Row 34. When asked if she would recommend a Vestwell 401(k) to other Toast users, Krista said, "Yes, 1,000%...if you want to have longevity in the industry and have loyalty amongst your staff, this is important and it's going to continue to be important to anybody that you continue to hire. I would say you absolutely should do it."

Conclusion: Restaurants Can Upgrade Their Recruiting with a Painless Retirement Benefit

Vestwell is a digital retirement plan platform that makes it easier for you to offer and administer a company-sponsored 401(k) or 403(b). By combining modern technology with blue chip retirement plans and user-first design, Vestwell offers a wide range of services to businesses of all sizes.

Restaurants that use Toast will benefit from the same direct payroll integration that makes Row 34's retirement experience seamless. Plus, Toast customers can access exclusive pricing and plan options with Vestwell. For those restaurants looking to recruit and retain top talent, offering a 401(k) can help you stand out from the competition.



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