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CASE STUDY

Boston's experiences the benefits of "paperless" I-9 compliance

Busy national franchise restaurant group deploys Quick Search's I-9 software solution to Texas locations, and notices immediate impact

About Boston's

Headquartered in Dallas, TX - 4 corporate-owned restaurants and over 40 franchises throughout the United States

Uncovering the challenges of I-9 compliance

Like all organizations in the restaurant and hospitality industries, Boston's is faced with the immense task of managing and maintaining their I-9 documentation in the wake of increasingly strict Federal and state compliance regulations. But as Director of Human Resources Stephanie Forand notes, "nothing has come from the government in terms of an online tool to help with this. With paper-based systems you have to essentially rely on managers to remember and stay on top of these records manually – but in a busy restaurant, quite honestly, this doesn't always happen."

Realizing the inherent flaws of their paper-based I-9 system, Forand and a colleague decided to perform a self-audit for one of their busy corporate locations in Texas. Not surprisingly, they discovered a variety of problems:

- I-9 documentation was not always being filled out completely, or accurately
- In some cases, I-9 documentation was missing altogether, for either current or past employees
- Inconsistencies with how forms were filled out (manager was not same person who collected documentation)
- Incorrect dates and dates not recorded within required three-day window after employee was hired

"Pretty much every document we reviewed had its own issues," said Ms. Forand. And these "issues" can cost businesses a lot of money in the case of an actual audit: even if all employees are fully authorized to work, each mistake or missing item on an I-9 form can result in a \$100 penalty up to \$1000 for each form. A missing form automatically incurs a \$1000 fine.

The costs associated with trying to maintain compliance with an outdated solution would be even more crippling. "Imagine the hours that would be spent by each manager in each location if they had to go through all of their records and check which are accurate, which aren't, which documentation is about to expire, which employee needs more documentation ... it's overwhelming." For help in this area, they turned to Quick Search's new I-9 compliance software solution.

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Experiencing the benefits of a “paperless” solution

Boston’s decided to roll out Quick Search’s solution to the same Texas restaurant and document the results. They were able to input all of their existing I-9 forms (about 70 overall) into the system within a day, and store them electronically in one centralized, secure web-based location. For the first time, all of their forms were immediately accessible and verifiably up-to-date.

Among the immediate benefits they discovered from using the solution were:

- The ability to be alerted when filling out a form incorrectly, when an archived form contains errors or when documentation is set to expire
- Having one central place to access and manage all of a restaurant’s forms easily
- The option to print and sign, or “click to sign,” a newly-entered I-9 form on the fly
- The ability for managers to “look in” (via the software) and see exactly what the status of a location’s I-9 compliance is from a remote location
- The ability to generate instant reports with a click of a mouse, so that managers know instantly which employees they need documentation for or which have documentation that needs updating

Forand praised her experience with Quick Search, saying they “came in and listened to what we needed, and are working to make sure the system is going to meet our specific needs.” She especially appreciates the fact that while the manager of her corporate-owned stores can log in and review their own location’s records, she can oversee compliance on an operational level, and even know when a particular manager has achieved perfect compliance for his or her store. “It’s nice for our busy managers to be rewarded for compliance, rather than be in fear of it.”

The bottom line: compliance = protection

“The great thing about this solution is that it gives us a valuable tool to protect ourselves from the errors and oversights that are so common in this industry and others as well,” Forand summarized. Rather than relying on the memory of individual managers or trying to find the time (and budget resources) to have corporate executives travel to each location to check on compliance, the Quick Search I-9 software solution provides one centralized, easy-to-use, reliable system to eliminate the guesswork and the risk.

Contact Quick Search today to learn about how your organization can electronically prepare and store critical employee documentation, receive alerts for errors and missing information, generate reports summarizing compliance readiness, and more using our I-9 software solution.