

## Customer Case Study

# Industry Leader Revolutionizes Audits to Transform their Future

### Creating Iconic, Authentic Brands

What does it look like to unite eight iconic brands across more than 1850 locations in 60 countries? Focus Brands International, a division of Focus Brands LLC (“Focus Brands”) has used brand, safety, and quality auditing for years to maintain consistency and high standards across all locations.

Prior to 2020, Focus Brands provided support and feedback for its brands’ international franchisees through traditional in-person, third-party audits. However, its global presence also made it difficult to have full visibility across the business with in-person visits alone.

“We rely on our international field team to help us be the eyes and ears in the business, but they can only be so many places at so many times and they can only speak so many languages,” said Johnny Tellez, Vice President of International Operations and Training at Focus Brands.

This meant that, until 2020, they were only able to visit about 10 percent of the locations in any given year. The company had been considering different solutions to these challenges but hadn’t finalized a new model when the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

The pandemic posed increased challenges, especially for international locations, with widely varying restrictions, travel access, and vaccine availability. This quickly highlighted the need to get eyes on all locations, without having to physically visit them, and play a bigger role in supporting franchisees with their success. Virtual visits were the obvious next step that created the spark for what came next. It was in this environment that the Customer Experience Center of Excellence (CECE) took shape and Operations Excellence Reviews (OERs) were created.



*“We wanted to make sure that our brand franchisees understood we’re in this with them and we can help them be bigger and better than they ever were.”*

-Johnny Tellez, Vice President,  
International Operations & Training

## Reimagining Franchisee Support and Success

Franchisee success was at the heart of every proposal for a new auditing solution. Tellez said, “Our goal ultimately is to improve the welfare of our franchisees and help them make more money. That’s it. We want to make their lives operationally more efficient, easier to execute, and raise the bar so they can achieve higher sales and be more successful.”

In building operational excellence best practices with franchisees, Focus Brands International sought a more collaborative approach. It was this realization that led to the creation of a coaching model for store reviews.

The new system is a radical reimagining of what continuous improvement and feedback can look like.

### 1. Online Coaching

The first component to the new review system was the creation of an online coaching team. Using a third-party call center in Costa Rica, a team of multilingual coaches was put together, and brought through an extensive training process to review and provide feedback on each brand’s standards.

Tellez said the Focus Brands International team spent months building a well-defined, tiered review system that would give both coaches and franchised location operators clear standards on what they’re reviewing, how it’s being evaluated, and what comes next.

“That’s our approach – coach, teach, recognize,” Tellez said.

### 2. Quarterly Reviews

More frequent contact with franchisees was critical to building the kind of system they wanted. Franchisees are better able to learn from and build on regular feedback, so each location has a quarterly Operational Excellence Review.

Using video calls, the coach greets the team, provides brand updates, walks each franchisee through the review, provides positive reinforcement, and highlights opportunities to improve. Each visit takes an hour and is held in the franchisee's language, providing for stronger dialogue and collaboration.

The detailed reviews include multiple picklist responses for each question and define corrective actions and training for each identified improvement opportunity. This also includes tiered actions so franchisees can put an immediate fix in place while working on a longer-term solution.

All reviews, checklists, corrective actions, and reporting are handled through the RizePoint application, which can accommodate the different hierarchies and access needs of the new system.

"The RizePoint application has been great for us because it's very adaptable to our needs. The RizePoint team has been very interested in supporting our needs and learning with us as we begin to understand the longer-term potential of this solution," Tellez said.

### 3. Unified Center for Success

The data collected from Operational Excellence Reviews (OERs) is just the first to be stored in a comprehensive hub that will house information and analytics to support franchisee success.

Tellez said that, ultimately, the CECE will capture data from multiple different business needs and will use that data to make best practice recommendations. Franchisees will also have access to a support portal and other individualized tools to help them drive greater success.

"We're building this data analysis engine to pull in metrics from the OERs and compare against sales activity, P&Ls, and training measures," Tellez said. "We're going to use that data to identify where changes in the operations can make an impact on their bottom line."

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## The Results

The immediate feedback speaks for itself.

“Our franchisees have raved about the program because they’re getting more attention and support,” Tellez said.

The rollout across all brands is ongoing, but the response from franchisees has been universally positive. Advantages include:

- Time spent per review is 65-75 percent lower than in-person reviews.
- Cost for online coaching is a fraction of in-person reviews.
- Clear reviews give franchisee-level operators specific, actionable feedback.
- Coaching in the franchisee’s native language improves effectiveness of reviews and connection between Focus Brands International and brand franchisees.
- Locations within the same market are adopting information from each other’s reviews to progress more quickly.

Tellez said the impact will only grow as they roll out data analysis and work to create a continuous improvement model not just within each location but within each brand, as the locations learn from the successes of others.

“Reviews are typically always about lag measures. ‘You did this wrong, fix it. You did this wrong, fix it.’ But we’re getting so much data out of these reviews that we can formulate that into a lead measure to try to identify activities that effect change within the business,” Tellez said.

Plus, rather than replacing in-person visits, Focus Brands International will be using virtual visits to make in-person visits more impactful. The field teams will be able to take the information from Operational Excellence Reviews to make market-wide and highly personalized recommendations.

Tellez said they are excited to see how the CECE will evolve and improve over time with RizePoint’s help. “It feels like if we can dream it, we can build it at some point. It’s been exciting to work with people who don’t say, ‘Well the system doesn’t do that.’ What we hear is, ‘Well the system could do that,’ and then we work our way to that point.”