

# Why bswift?

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Just ask Sandra Sakaida, Director, Benefits, for The Cheesecake Factory Incorporated, based in Calabasas Hills, CA. With its roots as a dessert business focused on cheesecake, the company opened its first restaurant in 1978 in Beverly Hills, CA, marking the beginning of the “upscale casual dining segment.” Today, its signature brand, The Cheesecake Factory® is widely known for its expansive menu (more than 250 selections, all made in-house with fresh ingredients), generous portions and, of course, the 50-plus varieties of cheesecakes and desserts. More than 33,000 staff members work at approximately 180 restaurant locations across the U.S.

Approximately 21,000 staff members who work at The Cheesecake Factory Incorporated and its subsidiaries are eligible for benefits, and there are fourteen different benefits classes within that segment. Sakaida describes the benefits-enrollment process prior to bswift: “We had paper forms for new hires and for open enrollment, color-coded to match each staff members’ particular benefit class. Our employees completed the forms by hand and they were returned to our Benefits Department. The information was then manually entered into the Lawson system and filed.”

Reliance on a paper-based system created a number of issues for the Benefits Department. There were challenges ensuring that every staff member in the system had received the appropriate form and that the Benefits Department received their completed forms. With such a large staff member base, it is common to have employees with the same name, so careful attention had to be paid to the staff member identification number on the forms. In addition, using paper forms presented storage issues. The IT department, which supports the corporate system, was also tasked with creating complex carrier files and transmitting them to the relevant carriers.

The factor that spurred The Cheesecake Factory Incorporated to seek an online administration solution was the passing of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and related regulations. To ensure compliance with the law, the company would need to track, determine and report eligible staff member hours—and the old manual system

could not do this without significant customization and IT project hours.

But moving to an online self-service system represented a potential roadblock to benefits enrollment. “We have a unique and challenging environment in the restaurant industry,” notes Sakaida. “In contrast to a corporate setting, most of our staff members do not have access to a computer at work and some may not have been familiar with the technology. The transition from paper to an online system represented a major change for our staff, and the solution had to be as user-friendly as possible.”

The Cheesecake Factory Incorporated selected bswift over other solutions largely for its streamlined user experience and easy-to-navigate screens. bswift’s ACA tracking and reporting tools were also a big win. The system can collect and track hours to determine new hire eligibility and to verify ongoing eligibility for staff members and includes an extensive number of prebuilt reports that are easily modified as needed.

To ensure the success of the rollout, Sakaida launched a pilot program, offering early open enrollment to a subset of staff members (approximately 3,000). She also implemented a post-enrollment survey to collect user feedback and then worked with bswift on updates that would improve the overall user experience for the rest of the staff member population.

This is where bswift proved to be the right solution. “One of the most important benefits of using bswift was their flexibility to meet our needs,” notes Sakaida. “Typically, bswift made the changes the same day, allowing us to meet the needs of our staff members effectively. Being able to make these types of updates during the enrollment process made this our most successful open enrollment to date.”

Rich Gallun, CEO, bswift, acknowledges the synergy between the two companies: “We’re thrilled to have The Cheesecake Factory Incorporated as a client, and we highly value the intelligent feedback and input they provide bswift, not only on a daily basis with our team but also as a participant on our Client Advisory Board.”



## INDUSTRY

Restaurants

## SOLUTIONS

Benefits Enrollment & Administration: bswift

HRIS/Payroll: Lawson

## WHY BSWIFT?

Streamlined user experience

ACA compliance

Eligibility calculations

Proven track record with carriers/EDI

Overall responsiveness

With the bswift platform and tools, The Cheesecake Factory Incorporated has provided its staff members an easier and more efficient enrollment experience. And for the Benefits staff, no longer having to rely on paper forms and manual data entry means the likelihood of greater accuracy of staff information and faster notification to carriers (within a week of enrollment). In addition, the automated eligibility determination has saved a lot of time previously spent checking hours and determining eligibility through manual processes.

The huge time savings is a direct benefit to the company and its staff: “By implementing a strong online solution,” Sakaida explains, “the Benefits Department can now focus on providing customer service and support to our staff members.”