



# Consolidated Restaurant Operations

## Company Facts

- Location: In 18 states and Canada
- Industry: Full service restaurants
- Web site: [www.croinc.com/](http://www.croinc.com/)

“Using Epicor Enterprise Hospitality, our management is getting accurate information on a timely basis which allows them to better manage cash flow and profitability.”

Dave Seebeck, Vice President of IT | Consolidated Restaurant Operations

## Success Highlights

### Challenge

- Disparate systems and manual processes created unneeded cost and inefficiencies

### Solution

- Highly functional and customizable hospitality solution

### Benefits

- Ability to maintain low G&A through solution automation and integration
- Integration with line of business solutions creates added efficiency
- Tier-one comparable solution without expensive implementation or maintenance expenses
- Flexible solution adopts to growing business without increasing corporate headcount

Consolidated Restaurant Operations Inc. (CRO) operates more than 100 corporate locations, 27 franchised, and 23 joint venture full service casual dining restaurants. With brands that include Spaghetti Warehouse, El Chico, Good Eats, Cantina Laredo, Lucky's Café, Silver Fox Steakhouse, Ill Forks Steakhouse, and Cool River Café, CRO has a long history of continued success in the highly-competitive and tight-margined restaurant industry.

CRO manages most of its processes at the corporate level—which means a tremendous amount of operational and financial data from its various restaurants must be tracked and compiled. Formed through a series of acquisitions and poised for growth, CRO found that the use of disparate systems to manage this information was creating unneeded cost and didn't provide timely access to information to make better business decisions. As CRO reached the turn of the century, the company sought to implement a single solution to be used that could eliminate manual processes and effectively manage corporate and restaurant information while still allowing the company to operate with a lean staff.

“In the restaurant business, we are tied to very tight margins. It's critical that we accomplish as much as possible with as little as possible,” said Dave Seebeck, vice president of Information Technology at CRO. “We wanted a solution that would enable us to align operations on one platform, streamline our processes and would allow us to double in size without having to replace the system.”

In its search for a solution, CRO considered a wide spectrum of solutions from different vendors, ultimately chose Epicor for its functionality, scalability and integration, and customization capabilities. According to Seebeck, larger vendors like PeopleSoft® and SAP® are not a good fit for CRO. “The large tier-one vendors require a significant amount of resources to implement their solutions. We don’t have the money to pull consultants in to do lengthy, complicated implementations,” said Seebeck. “Epicor provided tier-one comparable functionality in a solution that enabled us to get up and running quickly without draining financial or human resources.”

### Streamlining Processes Through Tight Integration

For CRO, the integration and customization capabilities of the Epicor solution were essential. “We are a best of breed shop, and we require tight integration to line of business solutions,” said Seebeck.

Information is collected from the restaurants daily via a tight interface with CRO’s point of sale (POS) system, Aloha, and fed into the Epicor Enterprise back office solution. In addition, the company is able to feed labor from its UltiPro human resources solution and sales and revenue information into Epicor Enterprise to create regular the profit and loss (P&L) statements for its managers. CRO is also leveraging the Advanced Allocations and Electronic Funds Transfer capabilities in the Epicor system.

Through the centralized and inter-company capabilities of Epicor Enterprise Hospitality, “Information is automatically uploaded from the store-level at the end of each day,” said Seebeck. “Our store level people can operate in their world knowing that the necessary information is getting to corporate. Instead they can focus on providing great food and great service.”

The tight integration also creates a wealth of information which CRO corporate and restaurant staff can tap into to help with budgeting and strategy. “With so many brands across the country, we have diverse needs for managing and leveraging our financial and transactional data,” said Seebeck. “Epicor Enterprise Hospitality allows us to pull a broad range of reports including budget-to-actual summaries for each of our concepts, plus individual store operations expenses and 12 month rolling P&L statements.”

Further capabilities have been uncovered on the budgeting side. CRO has been using Epicor Active Planner to create a top-level budget, but wanted to get more granular in its management of store-level operations. “We wanted to get better control of the store performance and be able to manage store by store instead of at a concept level,” said Seebeck. “This year we plan to use Epicor Active Planner to create a store-level budget for each of our 98 stores.”

### Keeping Costs in Check

Using Epicor Enterprise Hospitality has enabled CRO to automate manual processes and become more structured in management of corporate and store-level data. The company has kept general and administrative expenses (G&A)-specifically headcount-costs low as a result of the efficient infrastructure built around Epicor. According to Seebeck, this is critical to the company’s success. “As tough as the restaurant business is, when you can shave points off of the G&A it’s a tremendous help,” he said. “Epicor gives us the ability to do a lot with a little.”

In fact, accounting and payroll processes for the entire company are managed by 18 people, and one IT full time employee supports the entire solution. “For a \$250 million business, that’s a significant accomplishment,” said Seebeck.



A key example of the automation capabilities is seen in the integration between CRO's store level systems and the Epicor system. "Our store managers key in invoices and feed them into accounts payable via Epicor so they can be paid. Previously, this required re-keying of information," said Seebeck. "This is just one example of how we've been able to streamline our workflow and business processes using Epicor."

### Going Forward

Next, CRO plans to implement Epicor Procurement to further enhance and streamline their back-office processes. "Epicor Procurement will allow us to compare purchases to a budget," said Seebeck. "This will be very helpful in managing CapX expenses."

With an eye toward growth in the coming months, Seebeck is confident that Epicor Enterprise Hospitality will be able to accommodate their needs. "The Epicor solution goes back almost 13 years with CRO," said Seebeck. "The longevity of the solution in the organization is a testament to its reliability. It has and will allow us to operate effectively now and in the future."

### About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation is a global leader delivering business software solutions to the manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industries. With more than 40 years of experience, Epicor has more than 20,000 customers in over 150 countries. Epicor solutions enable companies to drive increased efficiency and improve profitability. With a history of innovation, industry expertise, and passion for excellence, Epicor inspires customers to build lasting competitive advantage. Epicor provides the single point of accountability that local, regional, and global businesses demand. For more information, visit [www.epicor.com](http://www.epicor.com).



Contact us for more information on Epicor Products and Services

+1.800.776.7438 [info@epicor.com](mailto:info@epicor.com) [www.epicor.com](http://www.epicor.com)

Worldwide Headquarters  
San Francisco Bay Area  
4120 Dublin Boulevard, Suite 300  
Dublin, CA 94568 USA  
Toll Free: +1.888.448.2636  
Direct: +1.925.361.9900  
Fax: +1.925.361.9999

Latin America and Caribbean  
Blvd. Antonio L. Rodriguez #1882 Int. 104  
Plaza Central, Col. Santa Maria  
Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, CP 64650  
Mexico  
Phone: +52.81.1551.7100  
Fax: +52.81.1551.7117

Europe, Middle East and Africa  
No. 1 The Arena  
Downshire Way  
Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1PU  
United Kingdom  
Phone: +44.1344.468468  
Fax: +44.1344.468010

Asia  
238A Thomson Road #23-06  
Novena Square Tower A  
Singapore 307684  
Singapore  
Phone: +65.6333.8121  
Fax: +65.6333.8131

Australia and New Zealand  
Level 34  
101 Miller Street  
North Sydney NSW 2060  
Australia  
Phone: +61.2.9927.6200  
Fax: +61.2.9927.6298

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