

CASE STUDY

40 store locations
8000+ associates
90% in-store execution rate
86% reduction in time to complete assessments

Zipline

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How Festival Foods Increased Store Execution to 90% Within Weeks

Any business can sell groceries. For Festival Foods, its success is all about the people. That dedication to people – its guests, associates and vendors – helped Festival Foods carve a niche for itself as a top-tier option in Wisconsin’s fiercely competitive supermarket industry. The grocer is 8,000 associates strong, with 40 stores throughout the state.

Still, Festival Foods hasn’t been immune to recent challenges facing all grocers, including staffing shortages, increased omnichannel complexity and rising inflation. To maintain its focus on people and relationships, Festival Foods leaders recognized they needed to optimize operations, improve efficiencies and boost associate engagement. They found the answer in Zipline.

The Challenge

Festival Foods has five core values, among them servant leadership, associate development and execution. Festival Foods defines execution as “remaining focused on delivering results with excellence and displaying passion, focus and a sense of urgency in day-to-day work.” As the company continues to grow, execution is becoming more and more difficult to measure.

Zipline, with its advanced platform and easy-to-read metrics, is the perfect technology solution to help the retailer close that gap. Before partnering with Zipline, Festival Foods relied solely on email as its call-to-execute. Managers and associates in over 20 departments combed through a stack of emails daily. Requests – often duplicates – were easy to miss and misplace. Equally frustrating was the experience on the other side of each email – leaders had no easy way to track completion of assigned tasks.

The Solution

Festival Foods turned to Zipline for a holistic solution to streamline communication and improve execution. Today, several components of Zipline's Operational Excellence platform help Festival Foods reduce noise, streamline communication and drive accountability.

- **Communications and Task Management.** Zipline gives Festival Foods the ability to target information and direction to regions, locations and/or departments, as well as break out individual tasks that can be delegated across departments and teams. Additionally, the brand now has visibility into readership and execution, allowing the grocer to track progress and identify areas for improvement in real time.
- **Groups.** With one-to-one or group messaging capabilities, Groups keeps communication within Zipline, reducing the number of emails, texts and phone calls an associate must wade through in a day. Associates no longer need to spend time searching for a conversation or an email – it is all within Zipline.



- **Store Audits and Surveys.** The ability of Festival Foods associates to complete store audits and assessments on mobile devices has helped improve efficiency and gives stores the ability to communicate what a well-done task “looks” like. Store Directors and Market Leaders receive images of store set-ups to visually verify execution in real-time, making tasks such as closing checks – or setting up the brand’s famous Hot Ham Stand – even more effective.
- **Resource Library.** This knowledge-base product serves as a one-stop shop for all operational documentation and materials, allowing Festival Foods to keep things in one place. Everything is easily accessible and searchable – including important culture-building information surrounding the brand’s five values and 27 “Boomerang Basics” – principles that define how Festival Foods associates relate to guests and one another while ensuring they “boomerang” each guest back into the stores.

The Results

Just six weeks after a full-fleet launch of Zipline, Festival Foods was able to fully embody the brand value of “execution.” The brand saw 93% readership and 90% execution rates—more than 3x the industry average execution rate of 29%. Unlike email, communication in Zipline comes with built-in accountability: recipients in stores have the ability to delegate tasks, and department directors at the Support Office can verify what’s been completed and when. This continual feedback loop ensures Festival Foods team members can spot areas of opportunity faster, and ultimately correct mistakes before they impact the brand’s bottom line.

By creating a targeted one-stop-shop for all operational documentation and materials, Zipline has streamlined communication in stores and created efficiencies for teams. The time that associates previously spent behind computers completing tasks or responding to emails can now be spent out on the floor helping guests. In this way, Zipline helps Festival Foods team members fulfill the company’s service value; they have more time to embody the Boomerang Principle by taking actions that will bring guests back.



In addition to reducing the number of emails, texts and phone calls that stores receive, Zipline’s mobile device compatibility ensures audits happen quickly. In one case, Zipline reduced the time it took to complete an in-store assessment from 3 hours to just 25 minutes. Stores can send photos through Zipline’s surveys and assessments, which facilitates visual verification of execution at scale. Instead of managing hundreds of email attachments, Support Office staff now inspect store set-ups in seconds.

Implementing transformational technology – and facilitating the accompanying change management – isn’t easy. Fortunately for Festival Foods, the Zipline team supported implementation every step of the way by not only providing technical support, but also by teaching best practices. From the beginning of the pilot through implementation, the Festival Foods team worked cross-functionally to build processes based on best practices and their operational workflows. With the help of Zipline, Festival Foods successfully scheduled more than 80% of its communications and provided a clear, consistent outline of tasks that need to be completed by each department and team. Store teams now know that they can check Zipline first thing to get a solid understanding of what is important and what they need to do to keep the day on track.

“It’s a rare thing for new software to help a team transition so smoothly. Zipline is the exception,” said Michael Siakpere, Market Store Director at Festival Foods. “We chose Zipline due to its superior functionality, the company’s reputation, and most importantly, the general culture fit with Festival Foods. Through the pilot, tasks and duties never skipped a beat—because everything was in Zipline. Reliability is priceless, and Zipline gave us newfound confidence.”



About Festival Foods



Founded in 1946 as Skogen’s IGA, Festival Foods is a Wisconsin family- and employee-owned grocer that is committed to giving back to the communities it serves and providing guests with exceptional service and value. The company, which began operating as Festival Foods in 1990, today employs more than 8,000 full- and part-time associates and operates 40 full-service supermarkets across the state of Wisconsin.

About Zipline **Zipline** | Keep today on track™

Zipline is how best-in-class retailers bring brand strategies to life in stores. A unified platform for operational excellence, Zipline brings together frontline communications, task management, resources, insights, learning and more – so everyone feels connected to the brand and inspired by their work. With an NPS score of 90 and the highest adoption rates in the industry, Zipline isn’t just store operations’ most loved product; it’s also the favorite of store teams. Zipline. Keep today on track.™ For further information, **please visit: <https://getzipline.com>**.