



CASUAL DINING SERVICES CASE STUDY



Casual dining chain slashes HVAC service expenses, cuts carbon footprint with Proliphix

PROBLEM

- Chronic HVAC problems and manual programming were time consuming and costly
- Multiple facilities needed to be managed remotely
- Staff and patron environmental comfort needed improvement

SOLUTION

- Proliphix Uniphy Network Thermostats
- Remote sensors for asset protection
- Univista Energy Management software for Internet-managed energy control

BENEFITS

- Greater damage protection – data and alarms showed at-risk equipment, saved thousands
- Improved control –all locations are programmed from a single site, by a single person saving 10 hours monthly
- More comfortable working and dining environment
- Less environmental impact

Lucille's Smokehouse BBQ is a staple among Californians for casual dining with a southern, country barbecue feel. As a family restaurant Lucille's is known for its comfortable environment and quality service. Establishing a wildly successful regional franchise starting with its Long Beach, California location, Lucille's opened several additional locations averaging ten thousand square feet each. Boasting 13 locations and quickly expanding, Lucille's demonstrates forward thinking and an innovative approach that attracts the interest of customers and competitors.

Scorching summer days and cool winter nights mean patrons look to Lucille's as a retreat from wild swings in outdoor temperatures. Restaurant managers pay great attention to keep environmental controls optimally set for the best dining experience possible. The original, traditional thermostats in the flagship restaurant proved frustrating, requiring constant adjustment. Thermostats were difficult to set accurately, lacked data monitoring and lacked remote access. Lucille's Facilities Manager Ryan Hofman knew they needed a better way to monitor the company's environmental comfort systems to ease the management of an increasing amount of restaurants. Experiencing a high amount of service calls and downtime for HVAC adjustments made the desire to change even greater.

Hofman knew remote management would be a huge time saver for himself and restaurant managers. He wanted to check on facilities and monitor the efficiency of HVAC equipment across independent zones and stores to protect the equipment assets of several Lucille's Smokehouse BBQ sites. Further, he wanted an affordable and highly robust system that could be easily programmed in a hassle free manner to reduce service calls and related expenses.

"I'm amazed at the simplicity, low-cost, time savings and diagnostic power of our Proliphix solution."
Ryan Hofman, Lucille's Facility Manager



Lucille's Long Beach location.



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SOLUTION

After painstakingly researching thermostats with remote Internet monitoring, mobile alarm alerts, data monitoring and easy programming, Hofman grew dismayed by the expense of outdated technologies viewed as industry standards. Doubts quickly disappeared after discovering Proliphix’s Internet thermostats.

Proliphix offered Lucille’s Internet-managed energy conservation at a fraction of the cost of other options. An industry leader for inexpensive energy conservation products, Proliphix worked directly with Hofman to equip two Lucille’s locations, in Long Beach and Cerritos, California, with the best possible equipment.

The Long Beach installation retrofitted existing controls with Proliphix products as a one-to-one replacement with additional sensors placed strategically throughout the facility. The Cerritos installation occurred during initial construction. Each location utilizes Proliphix Professional Series thermostats in addition to duct and zone temperature sensors. Duct sensors were placed inside the air conditioner supply plenum and zone sensors were placed throughout the building. In addition to controlling the air conditioners, there is one thermostat controlling a boiler for the patio radiant heating system.

BENEFITS

“Once the air conditioner sensors were installed we immediately found our problem,” Hofman said. “We found a unit requiring a simple adjustment and saved thousands over an HVAC service provider’s recommendation to replace the entire unit. What was once our worst location in terms of staff complaints for poor cooling is now one of our most comfortable.”

The plenum sensor of the faulty air conditioner helped Lucille’s discover a combination of airborne kitchen grease and an inadequate air filter preventing the unit’s condensers from sufficiently cooling the air. A little elbow grease and a proper filter made the unit operate more efficiently, saving Lucille’s more than 10 thousand dollars over its HVAC service provider’s recommendation to replace the entire unit. The restaurant also saved money and man hours through reduced truck rolls and service calls.

Lucille’s new thermostats are easily programmable by a single person, remotely, across every zone and store saving Hofman more than 10 hours per month in related work. Additionally, managers are afforded three hour override adjustments to fine tune temperature settings as needed. These adjustments are visible in the remote management interface allowing for monitoring of abuse or the need to adjust programmed settings. Further, equipment and installation cost a fraction of competing products.

“I’m amazed at the simplicity, low-cost, time savings and diagnostic power of our Proliphix solution,” Hofman said. “We installed the system in several locations and find new ways we are saving money constantly. Staff from neighboring, national dining chains checked out our system and they were as amazed as we are with the quality and simplicity!”

Lucille’s outfitted 5 locations with Proliphix Internet controlled thermostats and plans to install the equipment in its remaining facilities and its next venture, a series of quick casual restaurants averaging five thousand square feet. The company is installing Proliphix’s Univista software for local hosting and even greater flexibility. Hofman plans to use the software to track run-time to queue preventive maintenance by actual need, rather than arbitrarily opting for quarterly service.

Whether reducing service calls, monitoring and protecting equipment, streamlining programming or improving green energy usage, Proliphix thermostats help maximize profitability.