



# Looker and Keboola help Roti deliver a more appealing customer experience

Case Study  
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Roti's mission, embodied by the "Food That Loves You Back" tagline, is to change how America eats. The fast-growing Mediterranean restaurant chain offers fast-casual dine-in, takeout, and delivery options. It has doubled in size to 42 restaurants in the past two years, and as the organization expands, Roti rapidly adapts to changes in industry trends while leveraging data insights to grow both footprints and profits. From working with manual Microsoft Excel spreadsheets two years ago to implementing an innovative data stack of Keboola, Snowflake, and Looker, Roti has experienced remarkable ROI and has gone from "zero to 100 really quickly," according to Director of Product Brett Kokot.

## Drowning in spreadsheets with no customer insights in sight

While Roti's focus is on "Food That Loves You Back," Vice President of Technology Jeff Miller says that, two years ago, the company "didn't have data that loved us back."

Roti was drowning in manual reports without a data model or a consistent data architecture. Miller explains that in the restaurant business, "every environment is different. The food preferences that characterize Chicago are totally different than those in Washington D.C., New York City, and Dallas." This hyper-localization, lack of visibility, and delay in identifying accurate information created data silos for each location. And, it distracted each location's general managers from delivering delicious food and a great customer experience.

Another challenge was delivering insights that led to clear, actionable decisions. "We had a vision around an integrated view into all our restaurants that not only provided a status of the business but also an indication of where we needed to drive certain actions," says Miller.

The company needed a data solution that would enable decision-making metrics in several areas: cost optimizations in ingredient purchasing, food preparation, and waste minimization; identifying individual restaurant performance; and engaging with customers on experience and feedback to drive foot traffic and correlated sales.

## Key Takeaways

Since deploying Keboola and Looker, Roti...

- Accurately forecasts food consumption, resulting in over \$1 million annual waste cost reduction
- Leverages customer feedback to adjust peak-time staffing for better customer experience
- Automates restaurant scorecard analysis to scale as the company grows

Kokot and Miller also had a cultural data challenge to overcome. “We were trying to explain data to a leadership team that ‘grew up’ in our restaurants and made decisions around gut feel and talking with customers. Trying to get to a conversation about data, and trying to understand the landscape within the restaurant workforce and how to make important decisions was critical for us in shifting the paradigm,” says Miller. The data solution they chose would have to intuitively reflect the business model in the data model, with results easily accessible and digestible from the boardroom to the dining room.

## Keboola, Snowflake, and Looker: from Zero to 100 quickly and painlessly

Roti selected Keboola’s data Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) as the core data platform for its transformation. Miller explains that speed to market and flexibility were key factors in this decision.

“We didn’t have a database or the ability to administer a traditional database. Keboola can spin up a database and do extract, transform, load, (ETL) and transformations right on the platform. It helps us connect to all our data sources and aggregate that data into a single location. We’re pulling data from many different systems, so the ability to aggregate and interact with all data utilizing the business data model is incredibly powerful. And it’s an easy-to-navigate, click-and-configure interface.”

Roti’s data is placed in Snowflake before being linked to Looker. “Snowflake is an incredible data warehouse. I wouldn’t want to use anything else,” says Kokot. Looker provides access to the data that Keboola orchestrates so all types of users can find value in the platform. Roti also chose Looker because of its usability, easily consumable insights, and data model flexibility.

“If you build out the business data model correctly, it informs how you build out your data architecture so that it closely mirrors the way your business actually functions,” says Kokot. In Looker, data flows through the data model the same way data flows through Roti’s business model. This was a critical requirement for business teams to easily understand and absorb data insights.

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“One of the things that we’ve talked about before is turning insights into actions. Here we’re taking it a step further. We’re turning insights into dollars, and no one can argue with that.”

Brett Kokot, Director of Product

“Looker is the place where our insights are consumed. People in our restaurants, our executives, and our analysts all go to Looker to either build out new insights through modeling in LookML or just to view dashboards,” explains Miller. “The visualizations are absolutely beautiful and simple enough to take from the boardroom all the way into our restaurants.”

Looker’s applicability to everyone in the organization offers insights for all parts of the organization, from administrative offices to the kitchen. “Our vision is that information can be understood and communicated at an executive level all the way down to an hourly shift level because what’s important at a corporate level is a result of actions that can be taken in a very real-time manner within our restaurants,” says Kokot.

The combination of Keboola, Snowflake, and Looker have helped Roti, increase sales, reduce in restaurant costs, and gain innovation. “Picking the right partners who know how to deal with that change in a cloud-driven environment was really important for us from a decision-making perspective, as we made these decisions going forward,” explains Miller.

## Measuring and responding to customer experiences means increased sales

Google or Yelp reviews wield a lot of power, which is clear to Roti. Customer feedback on issues like accuracy or timeliness of orders drives more than just reputation. “The better feedback you have and the more comments you have, the higher you show up in search results,” says Miller. Many people choose a place to eat by searching for “food close by,” so it’s paramount that Roti shows up at or near the top in search results. It’s critical that the company has constant visibility into customer feedback, understands what drives both positive and negative feedback, encourages increased feedback, and takes swift action to ensure that customers don’t have negative experiences.

“Our restaurant managers didn’t have the time to go and look at the data, nor did they know that it was out there for them to tap into. With Looker, we were able to pull all of the data together into a single place.

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“They’re able to scale as we grow. The sky’s the limit with Looker.”

Brett Kokot, Director of Product

We had already begun looking at food costs, and we were already looking at labor costs and sales. But now, we are beginning to correlate it with the customer experience,” explains Miller.

Roti began to place happy-or-not terminals in restaurants to simply and rapidly capture in-the-moment customer experiences. “We began to uncover really interesting insights about poor experiences on Thursday and Friday evenings and on the weekends, which is when you have different shifts or second-tier shifts. It was a big focus on really changing how we schedule shifts in order to increase customer experience scores,” Miller continues.

The marketing and operations teams used the real-time feedback to understand the correlation between customer experience scores, shift scheduling, and sales to help drive increased foot traffic into Roti’s restaurants.

## Trusting the data saved over \$1 million in food cost and waste

Part of Roti’s mission is to serve fresh, scratch-prepared foods. Ingredients have a shelf-life, and Roti wants “to serve our food to the customer at its optimal temperature and at its optimal hold time, so we are cooking consistently throughout the day,” explains Kokot. Without careful analysis and forecasting, this can be a source of considerable waste in both food and associated costs.

For Roti, this translates into two forecasts. “We’ve built forecasts by protein and by prepared sides and toppings to tell us, ‘this is how much of your cold sides you need to prep each morning so that you’re covered for the day. And, by hour, here’s how much of each protein that you should cook,’” continues Kokot.

Initially, there was some skepticism from field team members. As Miller recounts, “... it sounds really good to say you know what to cook, and when to cook it. But the big challenge was to shift that knowledge and experience from team members in the restaurant, and even leaders in our own organization who just didn’t trust they could rely on daily insights.” Consistent Looker insights led to a level of trust in forecasting.

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Jeff Miller, Vice President of Technology

“It was that collaboration with the business that got us over the hurdles. Looker enabled us to present the data in a language that could be easily consumed and trusted,” he concludes.

All of this has translated into two noticeable benefits for Roti. Trust between the operational and business teams was the first company-wide benefit of using Looker. The second was a significant, measurable reduction in food cost and waste in Roti’s restaurants. Over a 12-month period, they’ve saved over \$1 million from this data alone.

## Automated, consistent scorecards that scale as Roti grows

Roti evaluates each of its restaurant locations on a cross-functional performance basis each month. Evaluations are based on multiple metrics: revenue, budget, profile, turnover, and feedback. The score requires thousands of calculations, and before the integrated Keboola, Snowflake, and Looker solution, the assessment process was manual. “I’ve saved four hours a week, and we were able to eliminate data quality issues that we had from someone trying to do this manually in Excel,” says Kokot.

The scorecards have been fully automated, and Roti has immediate, consistent insight into how each location is performing cross-functionally against company standards. “It wasn’t scalable before. Now, it doesn’t matter how many more locations we open—we don’t have to do any additional work to produce this scorecard,” explains Kokot.

## Standardizing digital orders and third-party delivery

Roti is also using data insights to stay ahead of ever-changing trends in the restaurant industry. As Miller explains, “The experience of going to a restaurant that is defined by four walls is being totally outrun by the idea of delivery companies, mobile ordering, and being able to

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pick up packaged foods. This idea of a restaurant experience is being redefined. For us, from a mission perspective and from a technology perspective, the question is: how do we go after our north star—the ability to accept orders from anywhere and be able to fulfill them anywhere?”

Roti faced a challenge in integrating multiple third-party ordering and delivery services—DoorDash, GrubHub, and Uber Eats—that were not standardized in the restaurants. Ordering instructions arrived in different formats, and restaurant staff interacted with different devices. It was critical to maintain consistency and efficiency for the consumer experience. Roti paired its existing data analytics systems with a restaurant automation partner, Brightloom, to consolidate and standardize all digital orders into its point-of-sale terminals.

“We couldn’t control what the orders looked like or the instructions. Everything would show up in different places. Driving consistency around that makes it a lot easier. Now everyone interacts with a single iPad app, so we know how we’re building orders on the digital line, just as much as we know the step-by-step process for how a customer orders on our web app. We can scale the number of third parties that we have per location without worrying about adding complexity,” reveals Kokot.

As Kokot concludes, Roti is “really starting to apply an analytical lens to improve our operations.” The partnership with Brightloom, along with data analytics capabilities of Keboola, Snowflake, and Looker have enabled Roti to move from painful manual spreadsheets and a lack of visibility to truly delivering “Food That Loves You Back” in an ever-increasing number of restaurants, and with greater innovation.

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“What are the decisions that we can make today with forward thinking, leading technology solutions, and data solutions, to scale?”

Jeff Miller, Vice President of Technology