

SANDELMAN



A S S O C I A T E S

25790 W. Apache, Barrington, IL 60010
Phone: (847) 277-7603

Contact: Paul Clarke
Phone: (847) 277-7603
E-Mail: paul@sandelman.com

Feb. 2, 2012 — For Immediate Release

Secret to rapid expansion for top chains: Excellent customer satisfaction

SAN CLEMENTE, CALIF. — A number of the fastest-growing fast-food and fast-casual chains, including Jersey Mike's Subs, Zaxby's, Five Guys Burger & Fries and Jimmy John's, are also among the nation's best-rated large chains and have sustained their "overall customer satisfaction ratings" as they've grown. Indeed, most have *improved* their ratings as they've grown. They've made excellence a part of their institutional DNA and that has allowed these chains to grow at a rapid pace at a time when many businesses are stuck in neutral.

These chains' success inspired Sandelman & Assoc. to recognize the **Top 10 Excellent Large Fast-Food Chains** (500 or more U.S. units) rated "excellent" overall in its Quick-Track study.

They are:

Quick-Service Restaurant Chain	Home Base	% rating "excellent" overall for most recent occasion
1. Chick-fil-A	Atlanta	63%
2. Panera Bread	St. Louis	58%
3. Chipotle Mexican Grill	Denver	57%
4. Jersey Mike's Subs	Manasquan, N.J.	53%
4. Five Guys Burger & Fries	Lorton, Va.	53%
6. Papa Murphy's Pizza	Vancouver, Wash.	52%
7. Zaxby's	Athens, Ga.	51%
8. Starbucks	Seattle	50%
9. Jimmy John's Gourmet Sandwiches	Champaign, Ill.	48%
10. Whataburger	San Antonio, Texas	45%

In 2011, fully 63 percent of Chick-fil-A's customers rated their most recent visit "excellent" overall (rating of "5" on a 5-point scale).

"Some of the best-rated large chains have so ingrained excellence in the minds of their employees, not only have they grown, but they've grown better in the minds of their customers," says Bob Sandelman, CEO and founder of Sandelman & Associates. "These Top 10 chains offer high-quality fresh food, served in comfortable and inviting surroundings. Several of the fast-food giants have responded with better food and better spaces."

-more-

To honor the top-rated chains regardless of size, Sandelman each year recognizes a number of the best fast-food chains in its **Quick-Track Awards of Excellence: Top 10 Excellent Chains**.

Café Rio, a fast-casual Mexican chain based in Salt Lake City, earns top honors in Sandelman & Associates' 2011 Quick-Track Awards of Excellence for the second year in a row. In 2011, fully 65 percent of its customers rated their most recent visit "excellent" overall (rating of "5" on a 5-point scale). Perennial favorites and standard bearers Raising Cane's, Chick-fil-A and In-N-Out tied for No. 2, each garnering an "excellent" rating from 63 percent of their customers.

Quick-Service Restaurant Chain	Home Base	% rating "excellent" overall for most recent occasion
1. Café Rio Mexican Grill	Salt Lake City	65%
2. Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers	Baton Rouge, La.	63%
2. Chick-fil-A	Atlanta	63%
2. In-N-Out Burger	Irvine, Calif.	63%
5. Capriotti's Sandwich Shop	Las Vegas	61%
6. Pei Wei Asian Diner	Scottsdale, Ariz.	59%
7. Lenny's Sub Shop	Memphis	58%
7. Panera Bread	St. Louis	58%
9. Chipotle Mexican Grill	Denver	57%
9. Firehouse Subs	Jacksonville, Fla.	57%

Awards of Excellence are given for overall satisfaction and for the best performances on 16 attributes of the dining experience, such as "taste and flavor of the food" and "value for the money." For the fourth consecutive year, Little Caesars garners the top spot for "value for the money" and "affordability of the prices." Fast-food unit leader Subway continues to be highest rated for healthy and nutritious food. Sales leader McDonald's for the first time has been supplanted in the No. 1 spot on kid appeal by Chick-fil-A.

The awards are based on results reported in the quarterly syndicated Quick-Track® study conducted by Sandelman & Associates, a San Clemente, Calif.-based market research firm that tracks attitudes, awareness and usage for the restaurant industry. The Quick-Track Awards of Excellence are based on ratings provided by the study's respondents on fast-food chains they visited in the past three months. Quick-Track surveyed more than 107,400 quick-service restaurant users in 87 individual U.S. media markets during 2011.

Information from this press release must be accompanied by a statement identifying Sandelman & Associates as the publisher and Quick-Track as the source. The information contained in this press release cannot be used for advertising, public relations or promotional purposes without the express prior written consent of Sandelman & Associates. *For more findings, call Paul Clarke at (847) 277-7603 or E-mail paul@sandelman.com.*

-more-

About The Study

Quick-Track® is a syndicated research study that tracks attitudes, awareness and usage for all major fast-food and pizza chains in individual media markets. Quick-Track has been conducted continuously and reported quarterly since 1988 by Sandelman & Associates, a San Clemente, Calif.-based market research firm. In 2011, Quick-Track surveys were conducted in 87 media markets across the U.S. among a total sample of 107,400 fast-food users. Respondents provide an overall rating of their last purchase occasion for each monitored chain they have patronized in the past three months. They also rate selected chains they have patronized in the past three months on 16 customer satisfaction attributes that define a chain's image, including food, service, cleanliness, convenience and value. A five-point rating scale is used, "1" being "poor" and "5" being "excellent." Quick-Track scores reflect the percentage of patrons giving an "excellent" rating (top-box score).

To ensure reliability, data is reported only for those chains that were rated by at least 150 past-three-month users. Customer base sizes range from hundreds to tens of thousands. For some chains, the sample of respondents providing an overall rating was sufficient, but the base providing ratings on specific attributes was below the 150 minimum requirement and attribute ratings for those chains are not included in the report. Importance ratings for the same 16 attributes are provided by the quarterly Quick-Track National study, which was conducted among 2,400 quick-service restaurant users in 2011. Respondents rate the importance of each attribute in their selection of a fast-food or pizza restaurant, with "1" being "not at all important" and "5" being "extremely important."