

## CASE STUDY

# CLEAN BY DESIGN

## HOW A RESTAURANT GROUP LEVERAGES KEYSTONE CLEANING TOOLS TO BUILD CLEANING INTO THE FABRIC OF ITS BUSINESS

Like any seasoned veteran of the restaurant world, AJ Benga, the executive sous chef of Bailey's Restaurant Group, knows cleaning is important—but far from easy. To help remove some of the barriers to consistent cleaning, Benga and his restaurant group take a “clean by design” approach. From the layout of spaces, to the products they use, to staff training and culture, they're finding creative new ways to make cleaning as simple, efficient and effective as possible.

### Bringing the Community Together

With nine unique restaurant concepts all within St. Louis city limits, Bailey's Restaurant Group feeds about a million people each year. Benga says community is the hallmark of all Bailey's restaurants. “We're committed to being local, hiring local, sourcing local,” he says, “and we're creating places that bring the community together—where you can come sit next to your neighbors and get to know the people of your community.”

Creating these inviting community centers starts with cleanliness. “That's the first thing you notice when you walk in any restaurant—is it clean or not?” says Benga. But Benga admits that achieving consistent clean doesn't come without costs—time and money. So, why invest in clean? “We say we're guest-forward, and cleanliness is paramount to guest satisfaction,” says Benga, “But not keeping things clean also slows down service. All in all, unclean spaces are a hindrance to the efficiency of the business.”

### Clean By Design

Recognizing that various aspects of day-to-day operations can often get in the way of cleaning, Benga says Bailey's Restaurant Group intentionally builds the concept of clean into every aspect of its restaurants:

- **Clean spaces**

From reducing clutter to create more open spaces, to choosing the right materials (“We like wood and brick. They're comfortable, look sharp and are easy to keep clean.”), Benga keeps cleaning in mind as he helps guide the initial design of all Bailey's restaurants. The group also focuses on placing cleaning tools and products to optimize efficient cleaning workflows. “It's all about moves when you're in a kitchen, whether you're building a dish or cleaning the floors,” says Benga, “We try to maximize flow, so our people aren't zig-zagging around as they're completing their cleaning tasks.” Benga says clean space design is even more valuable in the restaurant group's older, smaller urban spaces:

“Everything's smaller; everything's tighter,” he says, “So flow is huge—plus there are more nooks, crannies and corners where debris can collect, so attention to detail is even more important.”

- **Clean culture**

To ingrain cleaning in the staff culture at Bailey's restaurants, the group includes a specific section on cleaning responsibilities in every job description. “We set the expectation from the start,” says Benga, “and we create a team mentality around cleaning—things like cleaning parties with pizza and beer to make it a little more fun for everyone.” Training also plays a huge role in building a culture of clean. All Bailey's employees get a chemical handling and training guide, as well as dedicated instruction on how to use cleaning products and how to use cleaning equipment. “We even call out what not to do, and it really helps promote safety, efficiency and effectiveness,” says Benga.

- **Clean operations**

Knowing that cleaning can often fall by the wayside if it's not made an official priority, the restaurant group created daily cleaning checklists for each location, detailing exactly what to clean, how to clean and who is responsible. But these checklists aren't limited to the end of the shift or the end of the day: **"We really believe in cleaning as we go,"** says Benga. From the front of the house to the back, the standard is to **"leave the space better than you found it—every minute of every day."** Benga says following the classic "ABCs"—"always be cleaning"—not only ensures their spaces are consistently clean throughout the day, but also makes their cleaning easier and more cost-effective overall. "The longer you let something go, the more work it will be—so it ends up costing more labor and more chemicals," he says,

**"IT'S MORE ECONOMICAL TO BUILD CLEANING INTO THE DAY-TO-DAY. EVERYTHING'S JUST EASIER WHEN YOU WORK CLEAN."**

#### **The Right Tools for the Job**

"The reality is labor is expensive," says Benga, and it's always a challenge to keep staff motivated to clean. At the end of the day, Benga says the key to a successful cleaning program is to make cleaning as easy and fast as possible, "and that really comes down to giving them the right tools—not just relying on elbow grease." "That's where having a cleaning chemical vendor you can really rely on makes a big difference," he says. Through their partnership with Sysco, all Bailey's restaurants have been using Keystone cleaning products throughout front- and back-of-the-house spaces—from dishmachines to floors to kitchen equipment. The restaurant group also uses

Keystone's specialized cleaning hardware, including mopheads and brooms designed to make everyday cleaning easier and more ergonomic. "They really give us the right tool for every job," says Benga.

#### **A Partner that Removes Burdens and Adds Value**

Benga notes that while they love the Keystone products because "they just work really well," it's his close relationship with the Keystone service representative that really stands out. "We have the same rep for all our restaurants," he says, "He knows our spaces, he knows our needs and he's 'Johnny-On-The-Spot' with getting me more products when and where I need them." And as the restaurant group continues to grow, Benga says their Keystone rep helps recommend the right products and cleaning process for new spaces and new surfaces. "That relationship and that service is huge for me," says Benga, "It takes things off my plate; it gives me fewer things to worry about, so I can focus on running my restaurants."

#### **Giving Every Guest the Best Possible Experience**

Like any good leader, Benga takes great pride in the details of his restaurant operations—including cleaning. "It's never easy—it's always a balancing act," he says. But fueling their "clean by design" approach with the right products and tools for each job helps remove barriers, making cleaning as easy and efficient as possible.

**"WE WANT EVERY GUEST TO HAVE THE BEST EXPERIENCE AS HUMANLY POSSIBLE," SAYS BENGA, "AND THE ONLY WAY TO DO THAT IS TO BE CLEAN."**

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