

Everything's in Place at Raising Cane's

Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers, a quick-service chain based in Baton Rouge, La., spent a decade building the infrastructure required for the type of rapid expansion that founder Todd Graves envisions. Today the chain, whose claim to fame is fresh, marinated, cooked-to-order fried chicken fingers with a small menu of sides, is on its way to becoming a national brand.

Grown to 42 units in eight states since its launch in 1996, Raising Cane's has developed a program and team of vendors that will help it open 40 new stores over the next 18 months. Some of these units will be franchise locations, according to Brad Sanders, Raising Cane's vice president of real estate design and construction.

"We're taking franchising cautiously and looking for quality partners who are committed to Raising Cane's concept and culture," he says. "We're definitely on a growth track, and we envision our expansion eventually going international as well."

The company's cautious approach and quest for quality partners also extends to its suppliers. To better manage its back-of-house storage space, Raising Cane's partnered with Leggett & Platt. Three years ago, through the Fortune 500 company's Storage Products Group, Raising Cane's began sourcing modular shelving units that Sanders says provide more efficient ways to use limited work and storage space.



Leggett & Platt works with Raising Cane's to develop customized storage systems when each new unit opens.

"When we were developing a new store prototype, our equipment dealer introduced us to Leggett & Platt," says Sanders. "We later saw their display at the National Restaurant Association Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show and found that what they offered was what we needed: flexibility and the ability to source multiple products customized to our facilities all in one place."

Smart Solutions, Ongoing Upgrades

Since that time, Leggett & Platt and Raising Cane's have formed a partnership that begins at the R&D and design stages and encompasses regular, on-site product performance evaluations, top-to-top communications and ongoing product upgrades to address specific operational issues.

"We haven't made major design changes, but we have tweaked



Equipment: Storage Solutions

Supplier: Leggett & Platt

Why it Works: Customized storage optimizes back-of-house space.

some of the components to meet specific needs," Sanders says. "We have a direct relationship with Leggett & Platt's design and development team. They spend time in the stores, see how we work and get an understanding of what our needs are and how they can help. They work with our designers and help us make sure that we're smart about how we use our back-of-the-house space."

Leggett & Platt also supports customers with a customized software program that uses computer models to map out storage optimization. "It takes the dimensions and volume of every package a particular chain receives and creates planograms of storage areas—cooler, freezer, dry storage," explains Ron Murray, executive vice president of global business development. "We factor in delivery frequency as well. If we're able to better optimize storage space, we can often reduce that frequency. That means big savings for the operator."

A Place for Everything

The manufacturer's ultimate focus is to help chain restaurants maximize their use of space and improve efficiencies. As Murray says, it's all about having a place for everything, and everything in its place. "Our engineers audit how specific spaces are used and come back with proposed layouts. It can be in a prep station, warming station, drive-thru station or home-delivery station. Or it could be in a cooler or dry storage area. The bottom line is that when employees have easy, organized access to everything they need to do their jobs, productivity and morale increase."

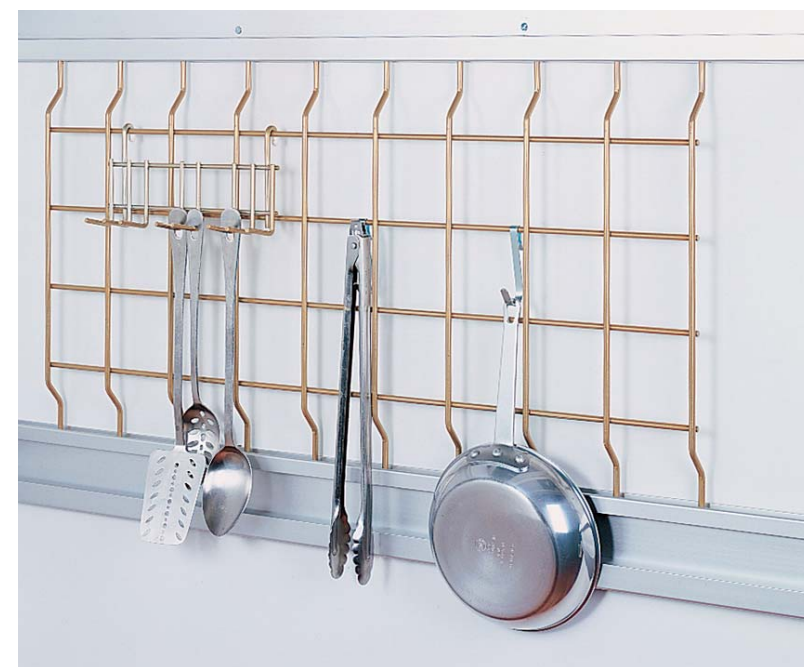
To that end, the company provides a wide range of shelving and storage products, including:

- Can storage systems with a range of capacities
- Modular stationary and mobile stainless steel, wire and plastic shelving units
- Lockable stationary security units
- Wall-mounted accessory storage
- Modular work centers

It's this last category that first attracted Raising Cane's. The work centers, comprised of a variety of shelves, grids, hooks, baskets, holders and ledges, can be configured to meet any specific work-station needs. "We mix and match," Sanders says. "It's a system that's working very well for us because it's so flexible and customizable."

Many Components, One Customized Kit

An added attraction, Sanders says, is Leggett & Platt's "bundling" service. "They provide us with our own customized Raising Cane's 'kits.' They bundle all of the components we need for specific work stations packaged together for fast and easy ordering and installation," he says. "It's an example of how they approach the relationship and think about things from a



Wall-mounted accessory storage is a Leggett & Platt option for keeping utensils organized and accessible.

program-management point of view instead of just a product point of view."

Colleen Keenan, national accounts manager at Leggett & Platt, says solutions like bundling do help set the company apart. "We don't just provide shelving products, we try to provide solutions and make things easier for customers. The kits enable them to order a single product instead of ordering and receiving what could be up to eight different components for a single work station. It's easier for installers as well. They have everything they need to get the work station put in correctly and quickly."

Keenan notes that as Raising Cane's continues to grow and the relationship between the two companies evolves, working together on product enhancements has been a priority. Adjusting standardized shelf heights to fit specific box sizes, for example, was a small change that's making a big difference. "We also found that they were having some problems with tipping due to the need to store heavy packages on a particular type of shelf. We devised a grate to fit over the shelf, which has eliminated the tipping problem," Keenan says. "By staying in touch and tuned into the customer's business, we're able to make a real difference and help them grow."

