

# 2019 Franchisee Satisfaction Survey

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- Survey completed 5/30/2019
- 201 of 336 Operators participated
- 330 of 475 stores represented
- Graded on a scale of 1 to 5:
  - 1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree
- Survey Topics and Overall Scores:
  - Operations/Technology – **2.02**
  - Purchasing/Costs – **1.88**
  - Marketing – **1.98**
  - Future and Past – **1.68**
  - DBRI Leadership – **1.69**

# Demographics

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## Question

- How many Dickey's outlets do you own?
- 1.73 stores per owner on average

## Answer

- 60% - 1 Store
- 24% - 2 Stores
- 8% - 3 Stores
- 5% - 4 Stores
- 2% - 5 Stores
- 1% - 6+ Stores

# Demographics

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## Question

- How many years has the store been open?
- 4.97 years per owner on average
- 76% surveyed have been in the system longer than 3.0 years

## Answer

- 24% - Less than 3 years
- 25% - 3 to 5 years
- 42% - 6 to 10 years
- 5% - 11 to 15 years
- 3% - 15-25 years

# Demographics

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## Question

- Was this store profitable in 2018?
- Was the financial performance of this store better in 2018 versus 2017?
- Are you considering closing this location?

## Answer

- No – 58%: 117 ppl, 191 stores
- Yes – 42%: 84 ppl, 139 stores
- No – 69%: 139 ppl, 228 stores
- Yes – 31%: 62 ppl, 102 stores
- No – 61%: 123 ppl, 201 stores
- Yes – 39%: 78 ppl, 129 stores

# Operations & Technology

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## Question

- My Franchise Director provides strong strategic support for me and my restaurant.
- Overall Score: 2.11

## Answer

- 67% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 135 ppl, 231 stores
- 12% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 24 ppl, 40 stores

# Operations & Technology

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## Question

- I feel my Franchise Director and DBRI support staffs tactics and coaching help motivate me to improve my restaurant(s) performance.
- Overall Score: 1.97

## Answer

- 72% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 145 ppl, 238 stores
- 11% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 22 ppl, 36 stores

# Operations & Technology

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## Question

- The 1-866-Barbecue is a useful benefit for my business.
- Overall Score: 2.23

## Answer

- 58% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 117 ppl, 191 stores
- 20% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 40 ppl, 66 stores

# Operations & Technology

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## Question

- I am informed of operational changes in a timely manner.
- Overall Score: 2.02

## Answer

- 69% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 139 ppl, 228 stores
- 13% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 26 ppl, 43 stores



# Operations & Technology

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## Question

- The BOH programs (TIB, OLO, Smokestack) are dependable and a good value for the money I spend.
- Overall Score: 1.80

## Answer

- 69% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 157 ppl, 257 stores
- 9% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 18 ppl, 30 stores

# Operations & Technology

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## Question

- I am excited about the new upcoming POS system DBRI is rolling out, and confident that it will improve my operations.
- Overall Score: 2.01

## Answer

- 63% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 127 ppl, 208 stores
- 7% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 14 ppl, 23 stores

# Purchasing & Costs

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## Question

- The DBRI purchasing department negotiates and purchases food and supplies on behalf of the franchisees with unit level profitability of the franchisee as their top priority.
- Overall Score: 1.82

## Answer

- 77% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 155 ppl, 254 stores
- 9% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 18 ppl, 30 stores

# Purchasing & Costs

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## Question

- The entire Franchisee system would benefit from utilizing either a reputable third party purchasing co-op or establishing an Owner's co-op.
- Overall Score: 4.09

## Answer

- 6% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 12 ppl, 20 stores
- 72% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 145 ppl, 238 stores

# Purchasing & Costs

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## Question

- I have confidence that DBRI's proposed 'Road to 30' will provide a system-wide 30% F&P.
- Overall Score: 1.74

## Answer

- 78% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 157 ppl, 257 stores
- 2% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 4 ppl, 7 stores

# Purchasing & Costs

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## Question

- I am able to run a cost of goods at 36% according to the Dickey's Success Matrix.
- Overall Score: 2.07

## Answer

- 68% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 137 ppl, 224 stores
- 12% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 24 ppl, 40 stores

# Marketing

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## Question

- My restaurant directly benefits from DBRI's national advertising strategy.
- Overall Score: 2.05

## Answer

- 67% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 135 ppl, 221 stores
- 14% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 28 ppl, 46 stores

# Marketing

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## Question

- DBRI's national social media advertising is effective in driving customers to my business.
- Overall Score: 1.88

## Answer

- 73% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 147 ppl, 241 stores
- 7% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 14 ppl, 23 stores



# Marketing

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## Question

- I feel informed and prepared for marketing promotions in a timely manner.
- Overall Score: 1.99

## Answer

- 70% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 141 ppl, 231 stores
- 11% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 22 ppl, 36 stores

# Marketing

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## Question

- DBRI supports my local store marketing efforts with beneficial marketing materials and media.
- Overall Score: 1.99

## Answer

- 68% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 137 ppl, 224 stores
- 12% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 24 ppl, 40 stores

# The Future and Past

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## Question

- My current Franchise Agreement contains provisions that are fair and equitable to the franchisee.
- Overall Score: 1.85

## Answer

- 75% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 151 ppl, 248 stores
- 12% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 8 ppl, 13 stores

# The Future and Past

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## Question

- I feel that as a Brand we're on a path that will make 2019 my most profitable and best year ever as a Dickey's Franchisee.
- Overall Score: 1.90

## Answer

- 75% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 151 ppl, 248 stores
- 12% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 8 ppl, 13 stores

# The Future and Past

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## Question

- If I had it to do over again, I would invest in a Dickey's franchise.
- Overall Score: 1.50

## Answer

- 85% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 171 ppl, 281 stores
- 3% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 6 ppl, 10 stores

# The Future and Past

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## Question

- I am considering opening/developing/acquiring more Dickey's restaurants.
- Overall Score: 1.48

## Answer

- 84% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 169 ppl, 277 stores
- 4% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 8 ppl, 13 stores

# The Future and Past

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## Question

- My investment with this Brand from construction costs, time investment, monies spent and return on investment **has met my expectations.**
- Overall Score: 1.63

## Answer

- 84% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 169 ppl, 277 stores
- 7% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 14 ppl, 23 stores

# The Future and Past

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## Question

- My investment with this Brand from construction costs, time investment, monies spent and return on investment is **reflective of how it was initially represented to me.**

- Overall Score: 1.65

## Answer

- **81% Disagree/Strongly Disagree**
  - 163 ppl, 267 stores
- 4% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 8 ppl, 13 stores



# The Future and Past



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**The survey participants ranked the following priorities to have the greatest impact to their financial health and longevity of the brand.**

1. Remove purchasing from DBRI and allow either an Owner's co-op or a reputable third party co-op to take over purchasing while ensuring a reduction in food and paper cost.
2. Increase the amount of marketing contributions and that are applied to medial and local store support while decreasing the amount allocated to cover corporate administrative, technology and non-media related items.
3. Changes in Franchise Agreement to allow for protection of territory, catering territory and removal of penalties to exit the system.
4. Switch to a proven off the shelf POS and reporting system.
5. Redefine job duties, with Franchisee input, of Franchise Directors so that they will be more effective and impactful

# DBRI Leadership

## Roland Dickey Jr and Laura Rea Dickey

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### Question

- I believe the DBRI Leadership and Executive team are honest and ethical.
- Overall Score: 1.68

### Answer

- 80% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 161 ppl, 264 stores
- 4% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 8 ppl, 13 stores

# DBRI Leadership

## Roland Dickey Jr and Laura Rea Dickey

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### Question

- The DBRI Leadership cares about me as franchisee.
- Overall Score: 1.61

### Answer

- 83% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 167 ppl, 274 stores
- 6% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 12 ppl, 20 stores

# DBRI Leadership

## Roland Dickey Jr and Laura Rea Dickey

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### Question

- I believe the DBRI Leadership responds to franchisees with helpful actions in a timely manner.
- Overall Score: 1.67

### Answer

- 80% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 161 ppl, 264 stores
- 3% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 6 ppl, 10 stores

# DBRI Leadership

## Roland Dickey Jr and Laura Rea Dickey

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### Question

- I am confident that the current CEO Laura Rea Dickey and Roland Dickey Jr. have the desire and ability to improve this brand over the next 5 years.
- Overall Score: 1.81

### Answer

- 71% Disagree/Strongly Disagree
  - 143 ppl, 234 stores
- 7% Agree/Strongly Agree
  - 14 ppl, 23 stores

# Operations & Technology



## Open Comments

- There's been enough tech failures and the lack of urgency in fixing them is a huge concern.
- Need to be more strategic and have a better culture of treating humans with respect.
- 1) no operations or systems experts. 2) corporate pays lip service to partnership. 3 ) rank and file personnel will not respond to requests for information relative operations
- DBRI systems are a joke. We are hampered in running an effective and efficient operation because of these systems. DBRI should not be in the business of developing a system. There are plenty of systems available from quality vendors.
- Developed and owned by Dickey's at the expense of the Franchisee as opposed to the benefit. Forced to pay for unnecessary tech like SPARK. Could easily accomplish everything on back office computer.
- For me this is a labor of love. I feel the conveyance of ethic is lost between DBRI and franchisees. I had great help before opening. Now I feel concerns directed from corporate are misguided. And my concerns are ill-received.

## Open Comments

- Customers should not be able to make partial payments on SPARK. If customers have issues on SPARK they should be given a pop up with the store's phone number so they can get questions answered. Makes no sense why people can't order fried items for online ordering. Smokestack is a complete joke, you have to load 3 to 4 reports to get all the info you need, if they load properly. Smokestack takes way too long to load reports, half the time they don't load and you have to keep on going back. Tipping for SPARK orders is a waste of time, if we have the option to refund them, we should have the option to get our tips, 90% of the time a customer tips after their pickup we cannot get the tip added on and it sounds like begging to call them up and ask for all their information after the fact, very awkward. But since Dickey's doesn't get royalties on tips, I doubt they care. The catering department should filter calls back to the store that will make the order, this way we can upsell and ensure all info is correct. The iPad tablet is useless because Dickey's doesn't trust their owners. I am getting raped by the additional fees Dickey's forces on us for subpar products and services like SPARK, IT support and Smokestack, basically a cash grab from Dickey's of almost \$300 a month.

# Operations & Technology



## Open Comments

- DBRI is only in business to sell franchises. This is why they continue to diminish the brand, Q4 concept is a great example. Roland Jr and his wife have no business being in this business.
- I honestly don't think DBRI think about me as a franchisee before making any decisions.
- I have one of the greatest franchise directors in the company and I'm very appreciative of him in the help that I received from Dickey's the only thing that I have to say about Dickey's is that I do not like using US foods their services in their way they deal with owner operators is absolutely terrible it's not fair that we are forced to use them.
- We used to get lots of caterings with 866 but that has gone down. CRM has been a disaster.
- They have taken 18.5 % between royalties/advertisement from me last month and do not reply when I inquire about it
- Not sure about the new POS.
- Completely incompetent.

## Open Comments

- Money spent on FD visits is confusing and a waste of money. OLO tablet currently provides zero value. Hopefully the new POS will make use of it. Confusing why the development was in house when so many turn key options are out there.
- I have a new franchise director so no opinion on him yet. As of yet no support offered by anyone at DBRI, only threats. Have not received an order from 866 barbecue in long time. Never informed. OLO is great. Never use smokestack it never loads, don't use TIB. Do not believe DBRI could properly maintain and build a system that supports us.
- I am excited about the new POS, but based on my 7 years experience with corporate, I'm not necessarily confident it will work well enough to improve my operations. If it does what it says it will do, then I think there is some value added.
- The catering dept routinely screws up orders and loses sales for me. BOSS tickets are closed without solutions. OLO is up and down at best. It's routine that I have to put in a BOSS ticket to get OLO back online. The FDs are of ZERO help. Some of them are good folks, but the ridiculous tasks they are given render them useless to me and a waste of my time.

# Operations & Technology

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## Open Comments

- High turnover rate at DBRI, its hard to get them to do things right.
- Dickeys hardly knows how to run the BBQ bushiness. The first two generations did but not the current one. I have a very low expectations for the tech piece and those probably won't be met!
- There has NEVER been a successful IT implementation since I've been an owner. DBRI should stick to BBQ and leave the IT to the experts.
- I have had "5" FD's in less than 2 years. 1-866-barbecue doesn't make sense (how do you get 7 digits out of an 8 letter word?). Plus, they booked a wedding and gave a 10% discount. Weddings require set up and tear down of not just the food, but the entire hall. If they knew what they were doing, they would know this, but they don't. Instead, they sign us up for a "discount."
- Am scared to death of new POS system. DBRI technology/accounting platforms are a nightmare to sort through.
- Technology is clunky at best.

## Open Comments

- Marketing and leadership needs to improve in this company dramatically. Social media accounts belonging to dickeys BBQ sucks. Look at the last few Facebook and Instagram posts, they are horrible. A picture with a lemonade cup with no dickeys food in the picture ??? Whoever is in charge of the marketing department needs a dramatic overhaul. Catering department is atrocious as well. Why is that department even in place when it doesn't even give my restaurant more than caterings per year. Are the five years ago that open we probably had over thirty area directors. They do not know or do anything for me in the past 5 years and you waste money training them over and over and over.
- I do not feel that DBRI should be spending all of their resources developing a POS when they have not been able to develop technology in the past. DBRI should save the money they are spending on franchise directors for a different employee role. With the current turnover it is not worth getting to know your franchise director.
- Frequent technical problems, poor communication from DBRI and Franchise Director provides no beneficial support to my particular market.



# Operations & Technology

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## Open Comments

- The OLO system on the tablets have never been dependable. You can't keep the tablets logged in and we are still getting continual messages about putting in an apple ID or signing into iCloud. It is super frustrating to have to try to by-pass these messages daily. I can't imagine having the entire register system on the tablet.
- It would be helpful to know what available equipment there is, including the upcoming POS and its functionality.
- I have had 6 Franchise Directors in 3 years. they keep sending out the new people to the north east area. when in fact they should be sending veterans who have been doing this job with dickeys for a long time.
- It is difficult to run a company when the average person only stays at DBRI for 2 months. Then the next person has no clue what' No leadership. No organization. No clue.s going on.
- If DBRI wants to be a tech company they should get out of the restaurant business.
- No leadership. No organization. No clue.

## Open Comments

- Operations changes so much and employees change so often at corporate that half of the time the new FD's are so inexperienced that they cannot be of real help or value to us as franchisees. Then anytime you ask a question that in my opinion they should be able to help with, they tell you that you have to put in a BOSS ticket. Recently, they stopped having the Morning Cue daily because it was too redundant. They moved it to once per week which was fine. However, now they have a morning call that you are supposed to dial into every day. As an owner that has to work as a manager opening up the store each morning or getting lunch caterings together, I do not have time to dial into a daily call. If the daily Morning Cue was too much, why did someone think a daily call would not be. I have tried to go back and listen to a few later in the day, but most of the time the information is not relevant. Having another owner on there telling you what a large catering they just executed does nothing to help my operations.
- Constant turnover at store support level and lack of knowledge never provide support and motivation that is required and promised

# Operations & Technology



## Open Comments

- My FD is better now than in the past. Rob Faust has done a descent job so far. Way to much turnover in my opinion as to the FD positions. I feel micro-managed by DBRI when I am the one paying the bill. Dealing with DBRI is often comical. This is a great product and could be a great brand if we could work together for the bottom line instead of top line.
- My system is 9 years old and has needed an upgrade for a couple of years. I've been told to "wait" for about 2 years now. Something needs to happen sooner than later. OLO has been very frustrating this past year. With its recent restructuring, I sure hope it is better.
- Neutral about 866 because if it was run correctly, it would be useful. They should just have online leads auto forwarded to closest store instead though and have someone answer 866 to just give them a local store's number. They are not closing deals very well.
- It never works
- Very high cost to build and there is no resale value at all. Very high cost to build and there is no resale value at all.

## Open Comments

- The Franchise Directors micromanage at an unhealthy level. They will send random texts regarding my restaurant's labor. A recent example that pretty much sums up the franchise directors job description came on a recent Sunday when he texted me at 10:34 am, twice, called me twice/left two voicemails and emailed me two separate emails within about a 4 min timeframe.....all to tell me that he had created a document on how to take flyers out to the community and put them on cars in parking lots. That sums up about every interaction I've had with a franchise director. On more than one occasion, the previous franchise directors keep in touch after leaving DBRI, and they speak of the horrors to work for DBRI. TIB is useless. Smokestack is cumbersome, and none of the BOH programs are valuable and worth the money spent. I spend less money on BOH programs to run a restaurant with another brand, and that restaurant does three times the sales. Doing an in-house POS system never works, and that is proven, there is data that supports this with other brands. The POS will only become another profit center. We have had several thousands of dollars left in abandoned carts with the 1-866 catering, it is completely useless at this point and I cannot believe that DBRI is reporting that they are using marketing dollars to fund this program.

# Operations & Technology

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## Open Comments

- The entire IT package, of various platforms, is a huge disappointment. They aren't reliable, user friendly, or helpful. Aloha is not good and I am confident the new platform will be even worse. I have zero confidence in anything the Dickey's IT department does. Frankly, for a company the size of Dickey's it's an embarrassment. There are multiple other off the street platforms that would be much better than anything we have.
- In my opinion, Dickey's corporate should waive any fees associated with any technology and stop micromanaging the technology as Dickey's has robbed owners enough. In addition, stop inventing new items and making owners carry it as it does not work for all locations. Finally, stop billboards for locations because it's the best marketing tool not junk items that are sent to the stores to be put up.
- The technology rollouts that DBRI has done to date are weak compared to software I have seen other franchisees use. DBRI is not a technology company. We are a restaurant system. Spending money and time trying to develop technology does not make any sense when you have so many stores on the verge of going out of business.

## Open Comments

- Very concerned that DBRI has not been successful in system updates with the current systems we have now a new technology rollout that is birthed from the home office? Our livelihoods should not be taken lightly.
- 866 barbecue is completely useless. The whole department should not exist. All calls should be forwarded to owners to handle themselves as numerous sales have been lost due to incompetence and customers complain about it when they come in.
- Is this a joke? We aren't informed of operational changes until after the fact. It doesn't matter how many operational changes you make if you don't/can't enforce them at any stores. FDs are currently useless. They should be checking procedures and holding stores to a certain brand standard. All the calls they are required to do prevent them from being able to do
- Not happy with DBRI at all. The brand's success is dependent on our success. If your franchisees are not happy, profitable and growing, how can DBRI. If you asked me "would you do it again" the answer would be a quick "NO". I really hope things will change soon. anything productive.

# Operations & Technology



## Open Comments

- 1. Approximately 30+ Franchise Directors assigned to my location in about 2.5 years. They seem to be very inexperienced in business, restaurants, and not aware of Dickey's processes. The last FD didn't know the difference between a Pork Butt and Brisket. 2. DBRI starting sending marketing folks to store recently only to hand out BOGOS and catering forms. I do that already. I don't see any televised marketing or bill board marketing or anything other than marketing persons handing out BOGOS. 3. Smokestack is usually inaccurate. So much so, that my accountant preferred to use POS sales report instead. 4. TIB never worked properly. Signing on to the tablet takes several minutes after timing out. BOSS ticket recommended to ask Franchise Director for help. Later, BOSS ticket requested to send the unit back with no replacement. 5. Internet issues and NCR issues have plagued my stores for past few years. I have had stores down without IT service for up to 2 weeks. IT, NCR was very slow to resolve. Franchise Director never got involved to help. 6. US Foods and/or Sysco issues; My stores have constant issues trying to get supplies each week - especially proprietary supplies such as BYCs, LYC lids, DBRI cleaning products, packaging material such as bags and plastic wrap, etc. No support from DBRI or Franchise Director. TOO MANY ISSUES TO LIST!

## Open Comments

- Franchise directors keep changing so hard to feel supported with such turnover. 866 BBQ no benefit as it would be better if sent direct to stores without Corporate being involved. Get us leads and let stores take from there. Operational changes seem to occur with little advance notice. Smokestack not dependable. OLO is burdensome to make changes, needs better organized, etc., otherwise fine. New POS- Concerned that it will work right and be easy to use.
- We have been in constant state of change since G4. G4 was very costly to my business. We seem to be on a mission to flip Dickey totally away from the core business model that I purchased. We are in a trend of coupon and discounts that kills our profit margin. Let's leave delivery to the pizza guys. Tell the world how good our food is and stop discounting the profit out of it. Tells us how our marketing funds are spent! We should not be able to go to box stores and purchase items cheaper than our food distributor.
- Their systems are bottom of the line within the industry. Horrible products.
- An enema needs to be done at corporate.

# Operations & Technology



## Open Comments

- DBRI ruined my livelihood when the menu changes were instituted in 2016. We have not recovered and we're still struggling. The switches from US Foods to Sysco in 2016, and the switch again from Sysco to US Foods cost us a great deal of money that's hard to recover. DBRI can't seem to figure out which direction to head and embarks on other misdirected campaigns, the latest one being the new POS. Every time they embark on anything new it ends up failing and we the O/O's are the ones left to clean up and pay for it.
- Operations teams do not assist with the business they are too busy working off a daily/monthly check list and are focused on checking items off their list and have no ability to actually provide any assistance. They are watch dogs only.
- Technology provides a lot of benefit but there are 4 different charges totaling approximately \$300 a month per store.
- Smokestack is a good tool for information. OLO was better years ago as I could control the menu. Now Dickey's IT messes with it all the time. Guests won't use it because they can't get it to work right or it's more work than calling.
- My FD is actually very helpful. DBRI is not a partner. I feel they don't really appreciate the O/O.

## Open Comments

- No one ever calls you back. No one ever follows up on issues.
- I feel DBRI is out for themselves. Food cost is extremely high. What are we suppose to do with the POS system that we bought for over \$12 grand? I just don't understand how we are suppose to survive when every turn of the way we have to spend more money.
- I find it difficult and time consuming using their BOSS system to try and figure everything out. Why can't we have point of contacts to call or email directly?
- Franchise Directors are not provided the leniency to utilize their expertise in the restaurant industry. They are too busy checking boxes and getting tracked on apps to spend quality time assisting us in building a better and stronger brand. The operational tools we currently pay for are much like our promotional and marketing strategies....not well thought out, poorly tested and created in order to introduce yet another DBRI revenue stream to make up for lost royalties.
- 866 has potential to be valuable, but it's a wasted resource currently.
- Not owner friendly company

# Operations & Technology



## Open Comments

- 1) What I've noticed so far during my transition is that when DBRI needs something from me then they want it right away and when the roles are reversed then they are quite slow to act. 2) My transition/purchase has been quite horrible. I have a strong feeling that they wanted the old owner out so bad that DBRI wants me to accept every ridiculous demand from the seller even though they should not try to butt in on the negotiation and if anything make the buyer happy and not the seller which is on his way out anyways. 3) The new POS is configured ridiculously and quite unnecessary. It is overblown as far as the configuration and it is too expensive for a small store with a small budget. I can configure it with the right hardware for over \$2500 cheaper instead of the \$4200 that CDW is asking for. 4) CDW is also one of the most expensive IT suppliers and there are far better and cheaper suppliers out there. Not to mention that the account manager that I dealt with is rude and have zero customer service skills. 5) The new digital menus are expensive as well and quite overpriced and I really don't see a reason why there should be a monthly charge for this. DBRI needs to try to keep the costs lower for us franchisees. 6) I am happy with my NSO, Todd Larson and my RDL seems to be fine so far. 7) DBRI needs to focus on keeping the franchisees recurring expenses low and keep the new equipment at low cost of ownership as well.

## Open Comments

- DBRI is a scam and management should be prosecuted. Most disorganized corrupt company that I have seen. This company destroys people's lives for the dickleys family gain.
- We have had issues with almost everything technology put out by DBRI. Smokestack is ok once you learn it. There was zero training on the system and there are much better reporting software available for the price we pay.
- DBRI investment in technology has not provided any value. Should leverage off the shelf technology and focus on restaurant business.
- Catering hotline and platform with app and loyalty etc built by dickey's is a complete joke and no telling how much catering money and guest we lose.
- I don't believe that DBRI looks at our stores as individual personal businesses. They only look at their bottom line and not the impact of some of their promotions have on us.
- DBRI Technology is a joke. We have had to roll our own for all aspects of the business and it is much more reliable.
- I look forward to the new POS. I am hoping it will eliminate some of the cost to NCR we pay now and will give us a cleaner, more modern look with an iPad POS.
- Hopeful about new POS system but afraid it will be like all other roll outs.

# Operations & Technology



## Open Comments

- I had 7 or 8 regional leaders changed over the period of 16 months - never any help from Operations, except for the marketing person, Haven Duncan. Technology is also of little help, TIB keeps asking for the password to download updates, but the password is never shared with the owners/operators. So practically we never use TIB in our store. Also, had continuous issues with Aloha which IT department was not able to fix for more than a year. Very poor support from Operations/Technology.
- I thought buying a franchise would get support instead they tend to hinder your chance for success every time your turn around. We are the only store in our area so they don't advertise for us because it isn't cost affective. It don't matter if we succeed to them at all this is obvious by the way they do business.
- The expectations placed on FDs is unrealistic and not set up in a manner to really help Owners. It seems to be more a checklist for corporate answers.
- I.T. doesn't coordinate well enough with the franchisee. We've had upgrades/installs occur without knowing about it and then things don't work.

## Open Comments

- NCR Aloha is a powerful tool but poorly setup by Dickey's. The data from it is completely flawed and useless, we don't have a solid system for bagging items hence why many stores are plagued with missing customer item issues. Dickey's has taken away all of our functionality at a local level, so I can't even fix things to work for my store.
- Smokestack has loading issues frequently, and occasionally the payroll reports don't reflect properly. The way DBRI recognized revenue is extremely inaccurate. Ringing in caterings as soon as they book doesn't allow for meaningful sales data as the catering doesn't reflect on the day it is serviced, sometimes not even the same month causing a big discrepant in numbers. If I book a \$2,000 catering in April and the date of the event is in May, my COGS for April look fantastic, then terrible in May due to this practice. Same goes with reporting 3PV, especially Door Dash being once per month.
- Technology is a bit lacking. Too many trial and errors at the expense of the owners. Olo and pos should have been left to 3rd party professionals. Big mistake as failure after failure. TIB, OLO, Smokestack all are terrible

# Operations & Technology



## Open Comments

- Technology is out of date and non-adaptable in a very dynamic environment. The so-called Field Operations leaders (franchise directors) are not here to help. more like spies. No wonder they quit so soon when they realize that they are wasting our time and theirs. We have had five of them in the six months we have been open.
- Very much Bully tactics
- Smokestack is far from good.
- I've basically stop talking to dbri and no body reaches out to me.
- Didn't know there is a new POS system coming out. My NCR system has frozen, unable to update the POS & froze my drawer closed. All within a month of opening.
- 1-866 catering is useless
- I am not impressed nor am I confident in either
- It is not clear the pricing on all the technology. It seems charges appear that were never there before.

## Open Comments

- I certainly hope that the CRM system and OLO system are not an indication of the quality of software that we can expect from the upcoming POS system. I have been using it and as a 20 year software engineer I would suggest that this software is at best 75% done. The way it works is using 1990 methods. Having to use +/- buttons to change quantities is not acceptable. When you type in quantities the prices do not update. Having to press update is something that most programmers stopped doing at least 20 years ago. All of the payment methods do not work. When you add items to an order it does not always reflect in the total. I would never have given this software to a customer to try and use let alone place it in wide use. At best I would say the software is incomplete, amateurish, cumbersome, and bug prone.
- Smoke stack is useless - it does talk to veriphone and does not have accurate numbers. The new I- pad platform takes forever to wait on a customer. We or can not see our 3 party vendors sales on a day to day basis. IT has not been help as they don't know how the system works. You can never get ahold of your coaches to help or address issues.
- Highly unreliable. No clear path or plan. Support systems is BROKEN.



# Operations & Technology



## Open Comments

- I have had 7 FDs in 1.5 years. I will say the most recent has potential, but other than most questions or issues I have experienced have fallen on deaf ears with no real assistance provided. I have had to overcome most issues on my own.
- For most part it's always one solution for any issue, taken up with Franchise Director that is, submit a Boss Ticket. For most part resolutions achieved by this is less than 30%.
- Do not do a POS system. Many have tried and failed. DBRI has two jobs, marketing the brand properly and getting good prices on consistent quality products. Failing at both.
- DBRI is not typically run as a true franchise operation. Their technology is typically on the line of sub par and have had to go through many changes at my cost that typically leads to an inconvenience for me in the past. There is too much change without valid reason and often leads to owner loss of dollars.
- My store is struggling each month to make ends meet. I pay a 4% marketing fee & I have not seen one Dickey's commercial. The marketing fee should be 1%.
- I would like to know more about Smokestack.

## Open Comments

- We should have stayed with NCR and paid the extra money if that was necessary to keep their services relevant to our operational needs. We completely reinvented the wheel when it comes to technology and it was unnecessary when many other companies have already fine tuned many of the systems we created. Instead we recreated systems that were never 100% operational and had many issues and at the same time the IT support isn't there to keep us going with minimal down time. NCR has true 24/7 support which is what we need and we don't need to be in the middle of NCR and Dickey's especially when both companies point the finger at each other. My other concern is now getting to the point that they have almost full control of all financial reporting and there are no checks and balances in place to ensure that the integrity of those reports are accurate. Based on Dickey's history when it comes to technology there is a strong chance these reports are not accurate resulting in over payment of royalties.
- The online ordering system is not user friendly or ordering and catering. I have lost many catering opportunity. I've received more catering when we have our catering department. I have closed 3 catering of 150 person from 9 abandon cart.

# Operations & Technology



## Open Comments

- I do not have anything good to say about the technical support we get from Dickey's. I am angry and terrified of what will happen with the new POS system rolls out. This is not something Dickey's should be taking on. It is going to be disastrous! OLO is working okay now, but it has taken YEARS to get to this point and has had many points of frustration and failure along the way.
- I feel like no one really cares or is there to help when I actually need it. But they are johnny on the spot to call when I need nothing.
- I don't know anything about new POS system. TIB is not user friendly or reliable. OLO prices keep changing and it is not my doing.
- This must be outsourced to professionals. The in-house programs are very poor. We aren't a tech company.
- It is difficult to find information on upcoming changes
- We need revenue sharing from money DBRI is making from Sysco, Coca Cola, Wycliff Douglas, and all the other vendors where they make kickbacks and we lose money!

## Open Comments

- \$7,101.69 that was owed to me came up missing hasn't been found Dickeys said they would pay amount owed haven't received amount. When I was considering buying Dickeys they told me I could use Dickeys yellow van for catering never received title or keys later found out from previous owner the van was towed in doesn't run used only as billboard no keys title. Dickeys store was roach infested leaking drain pipes. air conditioning went out main Dining Room. information about replacing card reader server having to be replaced was never provided when I was buying Dickeys.
- When I was buying Dickeys previous owner damaged Dickeys brand buying SAMS Club food I heard starting November last year and started closing for Dinner I'm suffering the repercussions from this action. I paid \$60,000 for Dickeys they only offered \$15,000 to buy it back. There's more too much to list I feel deceived.
- I think there are better POS systems already available that already have the big errors corrected. I think we are way behind other restaurants with scheduling, loyalty apps, pmix, msr and other areas of technology.

# Operations & Technology



## Open Comments

- FD's mainly cut and paste DBRI narratives or will reach out asking us to help them meet their goals. Actual store visits are rare. Rarely are they willing or able to address our needs. 866-barbecue has gone down hill since it has been funneled through OLO. Leads are not being followed up on. Guests are contacting us about caterings they thought were finalized. Booked caterings are down through the department. OLO has been a failure with guests constantly having problems with ordering. They give up and call us, or worse, go to our competitors. TIB over promised and under delivered. Constant errors with Smokestack make it worthless. Wrong info is worse than no info at all. The new POS system SCARES THE HELL out of us. If it is anything like TIB, OLO and Smokestack we might as well close our doors.
- When I call Dickey's Corp I rarely get anyone to answer the phone unless it's the catering dept. When I tried to rectify an over charge due to an open ticket being added to my daily totals I got no reconciliation. Open tickets should not be automatically transacted as cash transactions. After paying for OLO I still have an inactive printer I paid over \$400 for.
- The technology is old and wastes time. This company is so disappointing in general!

## Open Comments

- Anything that Dickey's Tech department rolls out is unreliable and changes often with out notice. I feel we would be better off to find the best products on the market in those areas. We should be able to negotiate good deals on that with 500 store buying power. I feel like my royalty money is funding a start up tech company and my stores (my investment) is being used as a research laboratory for these products to work the bugs out. Also it takes way too long to get issues resolved with these systems. There have been Boss tickets closed 6 months old still not satisfactorily resolved. Then on top of that I am forced into contracts and I have to pay subscription fees for these sub par products.
- I very rarely hear from Dickey's, the only time is the one day we weren't allowed to open due to significant weather we had, Dickey's was right on the phone asking what was wrong. This was a time most of the Midwest had significant weather. Sad they were so quick to respond but I can barely get response back on anything on my end. I have had many different FD's, they always start strong but fizzle within a few months. The daily call is scheduled horrible, I don't want to get up at 6am everyday to listen to something that should be communicated better, email, and if you miss the info is days out from being listenable on demand.

# Operations & Technology



## Open Comments

- 1) DBRI Operations has lost focus of the "Family Owned" business that the franchise was built on. The new leadership is focused on PROFITS first at the O/O expense. DBRI DO NOT invest \$1 in these restaurants, all of their growth is from families investing their life savings into a franchise that takes more than they give, with no mercy on the investors. As a result - we barely make enough money to make a living, do not make enough profit to invest in other restaurants in our market area, which would deter our major competitor, Mission Barbecue, from infiltrating our locations. 2) DBRI will continue to loose the stores in the smaller markets because they do not have an aggressive marketing program. 3) Until DBRI allow O/O to make more profit to be able to afford better store locations in high traffic areas, competitors like Mission Barbecue will build in prime locations on major highways and taking the business from DBRI. Another way of putting it: DBRI is cutting their foot off by keeping the marketing money for profit instead of investing it effectively in our market areas. I'm the only restaurant within a 30 mile radius, they get \$450+ every week but will not do a billboard advertisement on a highway that get 20k cars a week going onto a military base! 4) Technology is overpriced for ALL the services they provide.
- OLO is not a user friendly system. TIB is not operational most of the time. Smokestack is fine.

## Open Comments

- The technology used are not user-friendly, the requests made by Dickey's to provide reports on top of online reports that provide the same information and other third party reports are not connected and can be seen by myself and corporate yet we have to combine them every month. Too much work, for one person. The solution to everything is to make the owners work as much as they can to help with the numbers. My promotional ideas and in store promo have been stolen by the art department and sold for others to purchase and promote in their stores. The corporation seems like a joke, I cannot believe such things go on.
- Very cumbersome inconsistently performing software with in corporate and Point of sale Aloha. Very disappointed with this software suite
- I don't want any technology they design or manage because DBRI sucks at everything except finding any angle to suck my money out of my pocket.
- I am currently between directors again with no one to help me. I've not heard a thing about a new POS system (ugg more expenses) and the new Portal I still haven't figured it out.
- I have no confidence in any tech out. In the past 5 years of ownership this company has failed to release any product with tech lasting more than a year

# Purchasing & Costs

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## Open Comments

- You can hit 36%, but you have to buy off program. Also the rebate program being held hostage is unacceptable.
- Only way to get to 36% or lower COGS is to go over program.
- Should be able to purchase items much cheaper for us.
- 30%COGS will never happen if we want to have competitive prices and use quality products. I run at 34% currently.
- I would love to see better negotiations specifically for our beef prices. I understand beef prices are driven by demand. But if we could reduce these costs it would greatly increase profitability. And allow us pass a lower cost to our guests.
- I have not seen any real progress in the current system
- Anything that comes off the truck marked "Dickey's" is overpriced. Other franchises do not operate this way. Chick-fil-A is a good example, they do not overcharge their operators. If it comes in the back door marked "Chick-fil-A", it is at cost. They also operate a warehouse for equipment and small goods with no mark up.
- US Foods costs should be uniform across the system

## Open Comments

- The only way to save on COGS is buying off program. I should not be able to find identical products for less cost than my order sheet from US Foods. Dickey's looks out for their own interests and the rebate joke of a program is the perfect example of that. The road to 30 is a joke and not real world examples or obtainable, the road to 30 should be removing rebates and pass those savings on to the owners so we can get to 30 without changing system operations, and possibly passing those savings on to our customers.
- Many items are grossly overpriced compared to whole sale outlets or other company's
- Have never had COGs lower than 40% in 6+ years and no one from DBRI has offered any advice except to tell me I have too much waste.
- We need to get rid of you US Foods as they do not treat owner operators correctly and they are very on organized.
- All rebates should be net, not requiring any forms to be filled out. DBRI, should not get any of the suppliers rebates.
- I can purchase things from smart and find I can purchase things from smart and final cheaper

# Purchasing & Costs

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## Open Comments

- It is impossible to make money given the ineptness of purchasing
- Been with DBRI FOR 5 years have never seen 36%
- Cost should be lower at back door not a possible rebate. Absolutely co-op. Have 0 confidence without pricing ourselves out of business. I do run between 36-38%
- BRISKET same price as at grocery store. What's the benefit of being a franchisee?
- I think getting to 30% food and paper cost is quite ambitious. I'd obviously like to get there, but I'd be happy if we can get to 33%
- The COGS need to come way down. A co-op needs to happen because DBRI wont help.
- The switch to US Foods has increased my food costs and the distribution centers have been consistently running out of product. This includes running out of brisket.
- I have no confidence that DBRI runs the rebate program properly

## Open Comments

- I should not be able to find better pricing on my own. An Owners' CO-OP is needed to get our purchasing in line. I have zero confidence that expertise exists in Purchasing (or their leaders) to put best pricing together for me.
- Rebates are a JOKE. DBRI should pass through EVERY rebate to ALL owners on the front end and allow us to have the benefit in order to help us get profitable. Once the O/O's get profitable DBRI will see greater profits that are more sustainable in the long run.
- The reason why over a hundred fifty dickeys have closed their doors because you guys jacked the prices on our cost of goods. if you guys would have cut the cost of our products 50% of those stores that have closed will still be open today. why should we buy products from US foods when I can buy cheaper products from the grocery store down the street. why did I sign up with a nationally-known franchise to supposedly get your buying power when I go buy cheaper stuff on their average Joe down the street.
- Our costs from US Foods are not even close to the cheapest available. I don't know what a 3rd party co-op is, but anything is better than what Dickey's has done. And, I never meet 36%. It is impossible, with the cost of goods Dickey's has "negotiated."

# Purchasing & Costs

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## Open Comments

- Don't appreciate the fact that rebates are held hostage to jumping through a bunch of meaningless hoops that provide no benefit to anyone other than preventing franchisees from participating in rebate program.
- When I used all on program purchasing, my COGS were consistently 40%. In order to survive and keep two of the three of my locations operating, we purchase some cleaning products and paper products off program. This allows me to reduce my COGS by 2 - 3%. It is still a stretch to hit 36% throughout the year because of the increased cost of core food items to my locations since we have lost all the locations in the state except for my 2 locations. My costs went up because I am the lone survivor in my US Foods distribution hub.
- food cost are bad we went from us foods to Sysco back to us foods and they say its better pricing. the only thing that happens is meat goes down paper goods go up so you don't see any change.
- I fear with the road to 30 we will sacrifice quality which is our main selling point.

## Open Comments

- The 36% COGS is a bit difficult to stay within, given our existing pricing and anticipation for upcoming product. There are times, at least 1x month that I will order a staple item (i.e. 32 oz BYC or straws) and it will say it is out of stock.
- Everything is cheaper at retail stores. EVERYTHING
- Rebates should go to the person/company paying for the product. Just like a fuel surcharge should go to the person/company buying the fuel.
- This has been one of the biggest areas of frustration for me. We haven't been able to ever run under 40% despite even having over 30% catering. Our family owns other stores in fact 1 of them is a barbecue restaurant and his local pricing for choice and prime meats and sides is so much cheaper and he is with US Foods also. So where is this buying power that you talk about?
- I can buy comparable COGS items for less than I can buy on program. It takes buying off program to run lower numbers. It's a shame. Greedy?
- COG last year were 37.1%

# Purchasing & Costs

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## Open Comments

- 36% F&P isn't a good food cost, however DBRI's MO is that they try and sell you on the fact that you will use less labor, which isn't so. However, I have been able to run successful restaurants, one even across the street from my Dickey's at a 33% F&P, with an all you can eat buffet. We have an owner's purchasing co-op. I have had discussions with leadership about purchasing. I have asked Jeff Gruber to open up the contracts and allow a third party to purchase on our behalf, but DBRI refuses to allow this. They claim that they have to protect their revenue from rebates and affiliates. Our F&P with Dickey's runs around 39-40%. What DBRI is refusing to acknowledge is that continuing down this road of a profit center with their affiliates will not produce the growth they will need for success with this Brand. DBRI's road to 30 will not produce a 30% F&P because as I've pointed out to them, not one of their proposals on the road have anything to do with purchasing. In not one area do they even mention reducing prices in purchasing. I have spoken with the third party IPC, who the POA engaged and asked to work with DBRI, and they have confirmed that DBRI is refusing to open up the contracts and allow them to bid, even though they have claimed that they can get a significant reduction in our prices. (Con't)

## Open Comments

- (Con't) In the other brand that I operate, we can literally purchase apples to apples items, same spec, same brand at a third of the cost. We have shown this savings to various franchise directors who come into the restaurant, who look at our invoices and say..."go ahead and continue to purchase from the other distributor, and just put it into one of our boxes". Even the FD's can't fathom as to why we are paying 3-4 times as much for certain products. I've mentioned this outlaid at board meetings with DBRI Leadership, only to be squashed down and silenced by others, as DBRI then continues on with their meeting. So maybe if it's in black and white, someone might acknowledge this. I even conducted a test with our grand opening, after noticing that the required aprons were about 3 times the price that they should have been, around \$20, I obtained the spec and found the same spec, dimensions and brand on a popular web restaurant link and purchased them for less than \$6 each. When DBRI trainers and VP's came into my restaurant and spent a few days during Grand opening, they never mentioned the aprons, and on about the 4th day, I asked, do you see anything different? They said no, to which I pulled out the invoices and showed them that the only difference was a saving's of about \$15 each. I brought this and several uniform items up to Renee Rozeen who was a VP at the time, and nothing was done about any of it.



# Purchasing & Costs

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## Open Comments

- There is no doubt the entire system benefits from one source buying. In my opinion DBRI purchasing is not impressing to say the least. Coke is a great example. Cant even get true information about a little coke rebate. To many special orders at the expense of the franchisee. Takes 4 weeks to dish soap. Come on!
- We should not be able to go to Sam's Club and purchase 10 different items for less cost than our USF pricing.
- We pay more for a lot of things at US Foods that you can buy at Sam's club cheaper. Stupid.
- Start kick-backing to owners not just Dickey's!
- When I can go to a store down the street and beat the prices that I get from US Foods is can't be good. The prices are an absolute joke and there is not way I could be convinced that franchisee profitability is a priority for the Dickey's family.
- DBRI has only their own profits and rebates in mind when it comes to purchasing. I can negotiate better prices on my own with one location. If DBRI wants stores to stay open they need to stop taking money from owners so they can be profitable. Owners should work open to close 7 days a week for hardly any profit.

## Open Comments

- Things are costly at DBRI for example portion cups @ Sams club are \$28 and DBRI \$55.
- Why are we able to buy items from street accounts with vendors and/or local grocery stores at better prices?
- I have a lot of experience with other franchise systems that used coop's to purchase food. We are in a competitive business. Not allowing or providing the franchisees with the best possible pricing ensures the likelihood of franchise units failing because they can't make money. If franchisees are not making money they won't build more stores. DBRI's strongest asset should be its franchisee's. Sadly that's not the case.
- It is very easy to find cheaper products, and sometimes same brand, nearly anywhere other than US Foods or Sysco; such as souffle cups and lids, sandwich wrap paper, plastic wrap, paper plates, utensils, paper towels.....We Identified several pricing discrepancies and had to notify DRBI and vendor to get corrected. CAN GO ON AND ON.
- Eliminate Wycliffe Douglas.
- Impossible to keep food costs at 36%.

# Purchasing & Costs

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## Open Comments

- I also have a 6 unit deal with coke (not Dickey's, another business) and am able to get my coke cheaper through a business with only six stores (Yes that includes the rebate). This does not include the paper towels and even pork or ribs I can buy cheaper 90% of the time.
- DBRI should provide pricing guidelines and better help to help stores achieve even better than 36% COGS. I don't believe they do a service to franchisees when they give little guidance on proper pricing to owners.
- DBRI should want owners to achieve proper margins without wasting time on special reports to get rebates so a coop would be good.
- It is clear that store profitability is not a priority in purchasing. DBRI has a vested interest in store COGS being higher because they make money off of the food and supplies each store purchases.
- Prices went up with the change to US Foods despite being told they will go down. Items are systematically being replaced with more expensive items. 38%-40% is normal.
- A joke and 36 percent is not success. It is a lie.

## Open Comments

- Hard to understand why some items such as film and paper are so much less money at Sam's club than they are through US Foods. Don't think we are really getting the best value on many items. I am thinking I can save more by buying items from Sam's club at lower costs and give up my rebates and overall will be money ahead. 36% COGS is not at all in line with the restaurant industry.
- there is no way I can get my food cost at 36%. Food cost is way too expensive. Certain items are now way more than it was with Sysco
- Non-Dickey's items such as paper goods should be priced fairly. As it is, the vendor can and is allowed by DBRI to price these items so high that looking around, I can get some items at a lower price locally.
- Currently, I can get a better grade brisket from a different supplier at less cost. Paper and produce are much higher than other vendors as well. It is obvious that we are paying for DBRI rebates. I save \$8/bag in wood pellets alone.
- Consistently run 38-39% food costs
- Way way way way way too much markup on products that go back to corp office.

# Purchasing & Costs

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## Open Comments

- Currently, I can get a better grade brisket from a different supplier at less cost. Paper and produce are much higher than other vendors as well. It is obvious that we are paying for DBRI rebates. I save \$8/bag in wood pellets alone.
- DBRI use of Dallas redistribution center and taking margin from purchases is a violation of its fiduciary and ethical obligations under the franchise agreement. COS targets fail to take into consideration local market pricing. CPP pricing levels are not realistic in all markets. This causes significant disconnects between DBRI COS targets and what O/O can achieve market by market.
- US Foods prices appeared to be higher than those of the previous supplier (Sysco). Also, I do not get why prices in retail are often lower than those that the purchasing department managed to "negotiate" for us.
- Their attempt to lower our cost of goods only cheapen the products that we get.
- US Foods prices appeared to be higher than those of the previous supplier (Sysco). Also, I do not get why prices in retail are often lower than those that the purchasing department managed to "negotiate" for us.

## Open Comments

- US Foods should have to deliver any item on the long order guide within 3 weeks of when it is ordered. Letting them take over 8 weeks to deliver ice cream cones just makes more hassle for us.
- Purchasing seems to be based on how much DBRI makes rather than whether it is a workable price for the franchisees. REAL cost reductions in what we purchase need to be made. Tactics such as getting rid of foil and wrap or reducing portion sizes of sauce will not get us down the Road to 30. We are not able to consistently get below 36% COGS even with buying some items off program. The fact that so many owners feel the need to buy off program speaks volumes.
- Third party Purchasing CO-OP is the only way that COGS is lowered.
- I believe we should be able to save money where we can on non-branded food items without repercussions. I can purchase wood pellets at a \$6.50 savings per bag. But am told that it is not right and I can't do that.
- Paper products and many other ingredients can be purchased from other vendors at considerable savings. I can only keep my COGS below 36% because I purchase about \$140K off program each year

# Purchasing & Costs

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## Open Comments

- Getting these cost of goods down is essential to this system getting to the next level. What that 5-10 difference would mean to owners is the make or break to a lot of us. As I shop around and price compare, everything in our system is slightly higher or significantly higher than exact same items on the open market. Could someone please tell me why that I am paying 9% of all my sales out to be in a system with 500 store buying power only to pay more for goods than I could get on my own? The force shipping on LTO's and Holiday meats burn me too. I get expensive goods rammed into my store that takes forever to move or ruins and has to be thrown away. Holiday meats are at 50% COGS already. Why am I paying \$2.50 a pound for a pre smoked turkey when I have a \$10,000 smoker sitting in my kitchen and I can get fresh turkeys for 49-99 cents a pound. Heck the same time you were force shipping me pre-smoked Butterball turkeys for \$2.50 a pound I could walk across the parking lot to Walmart and get the exact same turkey for \$1.99 a pound. I think someone is taking advantage of me and lining their pocket. I think at times DBRI is more concerned about how much they can pump through Wycliff Douglas than they are my stores being successful, open, and generating them royalties. That's what all this never ending couponing is all about. (Con't)

## Open Comments

- (Con't) Buy a cookie get a whole brisket for free. DBRI gets a royalty and a brisket moved through Wycliff Douglas and the customer gets his free stuff but the poor owner has to take out a second mortgage on his house to fund the party. I know that is an extreme example but I am saying it that way to get your attention. This has to stop and we have to get in a buying coop like yesterday. You need to stop all the wheel reinventing changing the brisket rub recipe, dreaming up LTO's, and developing software and do the most important thing and that's get us in a Coop and get our COGS down. Saving us a dollar a bag on brisket rub or some of the other stuff I have heard that saves a nickel a year does us about as much good as peeing in the ocean. Set a goal to have us in that Coop by the end of 3QTR 2019 and give us something we can sink our teeth into. Thanks Eric Evans
- We run at about 37-38% food cost. We also buy probably a third of our inventory off program at either Sams Club, GFS or a third party pellet supplier.
- Every negotiation corporate makes is with the intention of improving their bottom line instead of creating a strong franchise with profits for owners, which in my opinion would strengthen the brand and improve their bottom line even more.

# Purchasing & Costs

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## Open Comments

- Lower cost products are one thing however moving to a lower quality product is never good for business. Stop trying to buy cheap crap and just give us back our rebate money! I spend \$7,000 a week on all of my groceries through US Foods. All of my meat and most everything else comes from US Foods however I buy a better plastic wrap from Sam's at a much lower cost and I don't get my rebates. How does that make sense? Of course! It keeps all of you people paid. Similar to our US government
- I do a lot of "non standard" purchases but maintain all dickeys branded products to keep costs down. If dbri would lower the prices of their own products then a significant amount can be saved. Too many people complain about paper goods but the real money to be saved are in the core meats and sides.
- It is completely unbelievable that we have the purchasing power of 500 restaurants yet I can buy many similar products off program for less. Very funny math. Similar situation the downfall of Quiznos as far as the corp greed when it come to forcing purchasing on franchisees.
- getting to 30% without increasing sales for every day we are open is a pipe dream.

## Open Comments

- We can generally keep COGS around 36-38% by setting higher prices. Dickey's is driving the price of our products up by controlling the supply. I strongly disagree with this practice and think it is completely counter productive to growing and sustaining this brand. Taking rebates from franchisee's and controlling prices is NOT a sustainable practice and extremely short minded.
- Purchasing department is terrible
- I'm able to keep my cost of good at or below the 36% according the "Success Matrix", but even adhering to that target it is not a formula for success.
- Paper good and clean supplies price is outrageous, can not even run 38% with these.
- While belonging to a franchise system I should NEVER be able to get any supplies cheaper from a supplier that is outside of the system. I can routinely & consistently do that with a significant portion of paper, cleaning, and food supplies that are necessary to run my restaurants in the DBRI system.
- a person can get cheaper paper goods, meat, potato, onions, chemical from Business Costco, Cash & Carry or Restaurant Depot then US Foods through DBRI.

# Purchasing & Costs

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## Open Comments

- Would love a different purchase program relative to sales performance. Average cost should be 28 to 32 percent based on some franchise systems. DBRI has consistently retained extra margin for the organization which leads to owner increased cost. Paper products are getting more and more poor in quality as well.
- DBRI only does what is in its best interest. They do not actually care if I am profitable, only if I am sending them 9%.
- USFoods continues to mess up orders, example I order gloves and get fruit cups instead or I order sugar and get cooking oil. Right now the struggle is with the Double Berry Bar that was a one time forced purchase. So now my guest want it and I can not get it.
- While road to 30 is a step in right direction... we are far from getting cogs to 30%. Rebates should go back to the owner/operators.
- DBRI should reduce the cost of their brand products, paper and consumable foods, to allow the O/O to make more profit. The LTO's and other specials they introduce is to increase the sale of their products, i.e. Free BYC, free sides, BOGO...

## Open Comments

- Dickey's at the end of the day has too many rebates built into the system. We as owners should get 100% of those rebates back to us. It is good that we are getting some now but we should get the full amount and if we are plan then there shouldn't be any other hoops attached to how much we get. For example sales year over year shouldn't be tied into it. This isn't a bonus program and shouldn't be used as one. Were the ones making the purchases and paying for them therefore we should get the rebates back from those purchases.
- Lack of transparency as to the reasoning behind the selection of products available to us. The pricing will always be questionable until a franchisee Co-op is created. The rebate program is convoluted and sets up franchisees to fail.
- The rebates to Dickey's make it impossible to buy products at a fair price. Its literally less expensive to buy products like film and foil for half the price at Costco and Sams Club.
- When one buys into a system with buying power that means the cost are passed onto the franchisee and not kick backs to the corporation because the more money I can save/make the more outlets I can open and create more royalties for them.

# Purchasing & Costs

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## Open Comments

- I hate that we can't get the rebates without an MSR turned in I'm busy enough running my store to keep labor down that looking at multiple websites( for online sales, delivery sales etc) to get the MSR filled in is stressful.
- We should not have to fight for this so called 2% rebate from US Foods. It should be given to us in our pricing
- When one buys into a system with buying power that means the cost are passed onto the franchisee and not kick backs to the corporation because the more money I can save/ make the more outlets I can open and create more royalties for them.
- US Foods cost is too high.
- I could negotiate a better deal for myself. DBRI makes the deals for themselves!
- my COGS tend to be 38%. 36% is a pipe dream.
- As the largest Barbecue Brand in the US, we should be able to secure better protein pricing. Coming from other brands, our Brisket pricing is not competitive. Paying at or above market is not a good strategy for profitability.

## Open Comments

- Dickey's rolls out new items and doesn't provide marketing support to its franchisees to move those items and notify the public of the new items in our stores. They expect us to start at a set date to start to sell items that we may not want to carry or can't carry and forces purchases of minimums down our throats. An example is the Au Jus, Dickey's require us to buy a certain number of Au Jus which we are not able to sell, next thing we know we are getting more before the items are even gone. It should be left to the franchisee to order the items they carry and replenish as they run out.
- Very disappointing

# Marketing

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## Open Comments

- Social media is terrible. Need better content.
- Dickey's is not a big market in my area.. Therefore I do not benefit from any TV or radio advertising. Usually the posts aren't exposed on Facebook if they don't get boosted..I'd like to see corporate boost posts from time to time rather than leaving this up to us.
- The marketing is a joke. The Facebook posts are super lame and show little to no focus. I have been here for 5 years and people are still discovering us, which shows there needs to be a local focus as well. When I see our ads on TV the same ad will play on the same commercial break 15 or 30 seconds later, so we are only getting half the exposure intended. Put locations on the adds like other brands, we don't have thousands we have very few and very few in areas that show commercials.
- Need to be more transparent as to how marketing dollars are spent
- I have no local advertising for over a year
- DBRI marketing is not organized or effective.

## Open Comments

- I need local control of some portion of marketing dollars.
- I had recently made a deal with a local media company here in my area as I don't get any benefits from the national advertising due to the distance. I am far from any big city. So marketing has promise to pay for this advertisement but I have not yet received a payment for the three months that I have paid and they agreed to do so. My local advertisement has made a great impact on my sales from what I can see
- I think we lost a lot a few years ago with the menu board change. Guess want to see Sandwiches, entrée and combos first , then side items. Only Texas customers under what it is to buy items by weight. That should not be our focus. Need to build lunch/Dinner with pre designed sandwiches, entrees and combos.
- Been in this almost 5 years and it has gotten worse
- I do believe we benefit a little but should be so much more
- Still not a lot of transparency as to what corporate is spending our marketing royalties on.....
- There is no ROI on the 4%. It's wasted money.



# Marketing



## Open Comments

- The DBRI marketing is horrible. It does NOT drive sales or traffic. In fact I have to delete the social media post because it is absolutely ridiculous.
- DBRI should help new owners get up and running with marketing then once a store can stand on it's own 2 feet the entire 4% of the marketing fund should then be optional for the owners to either coop with DBRI or spend it themselves (but it should be spent on marketing, not just put in the bank) however they see fit.
- You need an overhaul in the marketing department there is no good marketing from Instagram or Facebook. Have you even looked at those posts that they put on there? No food shown and a blurry picture of a Byc. How does that help us.
- DBRI is trying to drive in customers without the focus on the bottom line. Customers come in and then I sell them a \$1 BYC when they were willing to pay more. Running multiple LTOs at the same time is confusing for our guests and hard for our employees to manage.
- I have a G4 store with no fryer, so I am getting zero value from Wings and other fried protestations such as the Stacker.

## Open Comments

- OMG, you got to be kidding???? The Marketing or Branding, or whatever they are calling it does "ZERO" to drive business. And, I get nothing in return for any local strategy. I could write a book on this, and why it is failing. I think the marketing fund is two things: a employee fund (give people jobs) and a Dickey's family travel fund. That is all it is good for.
- I NEVER WORK WITH DBRI SO I DON'T KNOW HOW WILL IT WORK OUT
- I answered the supports my local store with a neutral answer because they are beginning to approve some local marketing by my choosing again since I own the only two locations in this market area. I recently was approved for a print distribution verse TV because all the money they were spending on TV was not driving customers into my locations. Our marketing was much more effective several years ago when you could put in requests and spend the 1/2 of the marketing dollars taken from your locations. That was what we were told when we first opened in 2012, before those funds and capabilities we taken away in favor of dumping all the funds into a "National" Campaign.
- DBRI does provide billboards for my local market advertising

# Marketing

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## Open Comments

- Some portion of the marketing HAS to happen within a 5 sq mile radius of my store where my business comes from to be effective.
- If your store is not in Texas California or anywhere else on the west side you don't get great marketing! My store has been open for 3 years and people who live right down the road still come up to me and say did you just open. The east coast doesn't get the attention we should for marketing. We only do well when they run a tv ad but that doesn't happen a lot
- No one watches commercials on tv anymore! There are a lot of good digital platforms that can reach a different base other than the 85 year olds that still watch commercials.
- Their support only comes when I email them 500 times and send receipts for things I have paid for.
- We should be able to put in requests, like in the past, and have them analyzed and supported by Dickey's. Some markets have 1 store, some might have 10. Every market is very different.
- They take 4 percent of the total sales as advertising but I'm not getting anything.

## Open Comments

- Case in point. I didn't receive the Au Ju or berry cobbler until 3 weeks into the LTO. I got the Marketing Material but no product. As for the Marketing: Marketing should be allowed to be used locally. I would have no problem paying 4% Marketing if it was a 2% national and 2% local. Where we could regionalize our marketing to the best of our ability. Local Community Marketing is the only thing that helped turn my Transition store around. But anytime I asked for any marketing funds I was told "No it is all going to TV and National ads" which didn't help my bottom line 1 bit. My store is an hour away from any major town and did not benefit from TV ads. A better use of money would have been doing radio, billboards, community banners, facebook ads.
- National advertising is a joke. 2 to 4 commercials in a two week period on 3 different stations. I feel like as long as you are getting MY 4% and spending at your will is hardly benefiting the franchisee. This is a bitter spot that do not like about DBRI!
- Billboards, billboards, billboards are the most effective way. Stop wasting owner's money on junk items sent out quarterly! Put some owner's marketing funds to work now!

# Marketing



## Open Comments

- My first year open was 2016, which is when DBRI stopped allowing us to submit a request for a refund in marketing dollars to use on local marketing. Since opening, I have spent \$500 plus per month, each month to locally advertise in print. I have asked marketing for some time to acknowledge this or respond to my request, of which they have ignored me. Even Jeff Gruber said, when I called him about a month ago to ask that we have some of our marketing dollars given back to us to use locally, that we should not have to spend extra money each month on local marketing.....yet he proceeded to do nothing. Our national marketing spend that they send us consist of about 19-20 TV commercials over a 3 month schedule, no where even close to saturation. And digital marketing. A DBRI marketing person came to my store about 3 weeks ago to 'help' put together a marketing plan for the next month, and the document literally consist of one initiative, which was to reach out to the local library and ask if we can cater for a meeting. The rest of the 29 days were literal follow up on asking the local library for a catering. It's both hilarious and sad at the same time. (con't)

## Open Comments

- (Con't) As I told Jeff G. a month ago, if we were to have our local marketing dollars returned to us to use in our trade area, in no way would that pull us completely out of the ditch, but it could go a long way. As it stands now, we are a brand of two restaurants in a State, and 17 TV commercials shown over a 3 month period isn't producing anything of benefit.
- It's difficult to measure national advertising effect. They never inform us in a timely manner of promos. It's always after my local marketing deadline. Chicken wings...supposed to be next week...no clue how to make them or pricing or how they'll be promoted. They don't spend a dime of OUR money anymore on local advertising.
- Not timely. The marketing doesn't start when it should for any promotion. I can't think of one promotion that has actually been effective. They waste so much money, I would prefer to have a portion sent back that I was allowed to spend. I would agree to spend it without hesitation. Dickeys must be more transparent where they are spending the money. What they do doesn't work!

# Marketing

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## Open Comments

- Local advertising with addresses and phone numbers go a long way. Markets outside of DFW don't know what Dickey's is. Our current market has advertising for Ruby Tuesday's and Red Robbin and neither of those restaurants are in our State. So if any Dickey's commercials are Aired, potential consumers assume it's just a national restaurant chain advertising.
- The marketing could be a lot more effective if they spend less money on administrative costs and more on media placements.
- 1. TOO MANY ISSUES TO LIST. 2. Marketing is far from robust. 3. Collateral for new products usually arrive after promotion already hit. 4. DBRI's marketing support is basically to tell the OO to walk the streets and hand out material. Not sure why I am paying Marketing fees for that. McDonald's, Jack in the Box, Famous Dave's, WABA, Jimmy John's, etc. just to name a few -- seem to constantly promote on television, especially in preparation of events such as games, holidays, etc. I may have seen a Dickey's commercial on TV twice in one year.
- I disagree with promotions that include the price of the product

## Open Comments

- The success I have had with this franchise is because of the marketing efforts I have made and make on an almost daily basis. DBRI does not have a large marketing budget like Large franchises. Our units are spread throughout the country making TV and radio advertising almost unavailable in many markets. Dickey's Community Marketing Managers can make an impact on a small market. Invest more dollars in these team members and you will see tangible results quickly. Many other franchises are already doing this..Chicken Salad Chicks, Zoes kitchen, Jasons Deli, etc.
- I wish I could have a more clearer understanding on where and how the marketing dollars are being spent to help me see how it affects my store. I hear of the commercials but haven't seen any. It would be nice to see more of the marketing fund matrix explained.
- Other than Dickey's app marketing, help from corporate has been negligible. Thankfully I recently requested more support direct to my store and they are now changing in a positive way. I am anxious to see how that develops.
- The marketing Dept is like a bunch of 5th graders without a clue

# Marketing

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## Open Comments

- I would like to see a lot more free marketing materials (flyers, pamphlets, etc) sent to the store on a regular basis. It would also be nice if there was a certain amount of free marketing materials I could order each month specific to my store. The marketing fees that we pay should more than offset that cost for DBRI.
- Sorry! We get very little, if any, from the national advertising. We have ZERO local marketing dollars. That means no marketing and no growth.
- Marketing with Dickey's is giving away discounts and not about driving traffic.
- The marketing is horrible. I would rather be given that money and I would do it myself. The Facebook posts are just horrible. Some post of have nothing to do with our food.
- Recent commercials in February 2019 sparked one of our best February's. The April/May commercials fell flat and did not boost sales.
- I do feel it's better with Tony now leading dept, however his hands are tied with the CEO and family making the calls and cutting his budget.

## Open Comments

- Marketing materials used to be provided, free of charge, in a timely fashion. Now, you have to download the materials, pay for printing, etc. Who has time to do that when you're actively running the store. We end up being late on the promo items or not being able to do it at all. And why do we have to pay for the materials that we need to download - that should be part of marketing \$\$ available to us. Also, I don't benefit from all the current marketing campaigns either, e.g. TV ads, radio ads. We're in a small market and not seeing the benefits. We will benefit more if we are allowed to do more local marketing campaigns through reduction of marketing fund contribution. We need to bring down the marketing fund percentage as it does not benefit everyone.
- DBRI does just enough marketing to not demonstrate a total disregard entirely but falls well short of putting forth effort to truly bring about brand awareness on a local, regional and national level. Smaller brands have been able to make more significant impacts with less. I receive zero direct marketing assistance locally. DBRI takes an insurance company approach....deny, deny, deny and hope you get tired of trying.
- I have definitely seen good results with their most recent Television commercials. Their social media doesn't necessarily pertain to all stores.

# Marketing

## Open Comments

- Promotions run by DBRI are generally targeted to bring traffic based on giving away free items, while profitability is not taken into account. I get no local store marketing at all. I asked whether any funds from the marketing fund could be allocated for local marketing, but was told that all marketing fund is spent for national TV campaign. I placed a BOSS ticket once with a request to develop some art work for my store - it took them 2 months to develop 2 artworks, the remaining 3 have never been completed.
- Also a joke . All marketing fees are not going into promoting locations.
- Social media posts average on logo and link daily. Those posts have no pictures to entice the guest. If I used all my marketing fund dollars in my community, I would project sales to go up at least 50%. Currently, there is no marketing plan in place for local communities using any Ad fund.
- Either not enough money is spent on marketing our stores, or the message is ineffective.
- Dickey's advertising has to be the worst by any franchisor in the industry. We don't have any support at all for our store.

## Open Comments

- Marketing has been heavily promoting direct delivery that is not a workable business model. Most stores are not providing direct delivery yet our marketing dollars are going towards promoting it. Marketing dollars are spent on TV in large markets. We are told that our target market are the Millennial's, but our marketing is placed through mediums that the Millennial's do not use. Ads are placed in large markets that don't have an impact on the smaller markets. Marketing requests for local marketing are turned down with the justification that we are covered by the large market marketing plan along with a copy of the flowchart that does nothing to explain how much is being spent on our behalf. Our marketing is also been focused on giving deep discounts. This works for McDonalds because they are selling cheap food that everyone knows is cheap food. Dickey's is not cheap food. We are devaluing our product and our brand.
- I do not hear ads in my area. The Double Berry bar ads are just hitting now, a month after we received the product to sell.
- Local store marketing is nonexistent. DBRI used to listen to the local franchisee about how to spend money in their market, they don't even review these submissions anymore, it is just national ad buys that are ineffective.

# Marketing

## Open Comments

- As much as I am being honest about the bad I will take a moment to brag on the good. As far as the local marketing for my stores the marketing department has been very helpful in that area. I have two billboard signs and they were very helpful in getting me up and running on those whether it was contracts, art work, or anything associated with the signs marketing came through with flying colors on those, Now the bad in marketing. I get my local 2% put back in my market no problem and I feel I am getting my moneys worth on that. However the other 2% for regional and national I just am not seeing anything happen with that. We don't have a national presence and that needs to change. Also marketing needs to make people aware that we have great food with ads that say who we are and how great our food is. Sadly right now and for a long time marketing's idea of marketing is to print coupons and give away food that the owner has to buy. If this continues we as owners need to start being reimbursed retail price for those goods through the marketing fund not just food cost because it took more than just food cost for me to produce that good. I always hear as justification for this is well it brought people in the door yes but that doesn't mean it helped my business. You all have the motto sales cures all ails well the reality is more sales doesn't always equate to more money in the bank for us owners. (Con't)

## Open Comments

- (Con't) More sales is always better for DBRI because they get 9% on every sale that rings up but the owners don't have the same luxury. Ours is sales minus expenses and sometimes there are sales that cost more than it brings in when you coupon too much. Thanks for hearing me out . Eric Evans
- Local store marketing is nonexistent. DBRI used to listen to the local franchisee about how to spend money in their market, they don't even review these submissions anymore, it is just national ad buys that are ineffective.
- Nicole Cantu has been helpful in aiding me to set up and pay for through DBRI funds for local marketing efforts equal to roughly 2% of net sales quarterly. This has been a big help. We do not honor really any national marketing campaigns.
- Overall marketing has improved with Tony on board. But I don't think the dollars spent are effective enough. I think there has been mismanagement of the fund and Not near enough brand awareness. Marketing dept needs a stronger support staff that can come up with better ideas for social media and better pictures for social media. More money should be spent geotargeting for each store and boosting "good" ads for each store.

# Marketing

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## Open Comments

- we create our own local marketing collateral. asking via the Boss system does not produce any result. asking the marketing team directly does not produce any result. Community Impact newspaper informed us that Dickey's takes too long to pay them and they cannot reach anyone there to talk to, so they do not accept orders routed through DBRI
- We're too far from a lot of other restaurants to benefit from national marketing.
- The benefits from Marketing are minimal. In 5 years, I haven't been able to get Dickey's marketing to approve many requests. They have approved 2 requests total out of the over 40 I have requested. At this point, I don't even bother asking anymore. It's extremely motivating.
- Multiple LTOs confuse customers and staff.
- Over saturation of store fronts 4 of Dickey's own store competing with me , forget about the other chains.
- The DBRI system has ZERO interest in understanding and marketing to my local demographics that would DIRECTLY increase my sales

## Open Comments

- The #1 problem I have with dbri is market. I have been in the system back when we were able to tap into our marketing funds. We were encouraged to find local advertising for our store then submit to dbri for approval and they would pay direct or we get reimbursed. That would be the best system. Downfall of that would be owners may complain that they have to find it and do the work but it's the only way to best spend out money. I cannot emphasize this part enough.
- I receive materials after the promotion begins. I haven't seen any media since opening
- Of all the departments this department does the best.
- The marketing fee should be 1%
- Stop Discounting! If DBRI would do discounting during slow time such as 2-5pm then it could be beneficial. Also, have an expiration date, not 2 weeks and customers use multiple times for free sandwich on for their birthday or anniversary sandwich.
- I feel like they just give my food away not really market to make money.



# Marketing

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## Open Comments

- The local marketing guy (Dave Tisthammer) is awesome. He is the only competent person I've met in the marketing department besides the Marketing VP since I've been here. He has great practical ideas. But, of course, they always cost me money and never come out of the 9% I've sent off to Dickey's. In addition, we should not be paying the advertising and marketing percentage on our 3rd party sales. It's ridiculous.
- Not sure about the program anymore unfortunately as I have often work hard to still support my efforts in generating business. Media Marketing does not work for the DBRI system from my perspective.
- I have had a number of guest come in mentioning they say an ad on TV particularly for the Double Dip sandwich.
- Where is my 4 percent going? They take my money and can't show me where it goes!!!

## Open Comments

- My restaurant is benefiting from a local store who does advertising on TV. People who have come in through social media adverts, just get the free deal and nothing else. Marketing purchased a billboard for my location that is 30 miles away on the left side of the hwy with no nighttime lighting that is partially covered by another sign.
- The training for new products is very hit and miss. I know DBRI thinks all the owners are getting the message but the owners are not. They might have FD hold training classes to help make sure locations are ready to go for new items.
- I would rather have a marketing agency control it.
- Wish I could find information on LTOs and upcoming offers in a simple centralized format
- Asked for catering menus never received.
- See previous comments on lack of local marketing.

# Marketing



## Open Comments

- This is the worst issue about Dickey's Corporate. Their national marketing and advertising strategies are poor at best and the actual local marketing is left completely to the Owner Operators. Dickey's rolls out all kinds of coupons and offers without properly informing owner operators about them, most times we find out from the customers when they arrive and the stores and present them. Also, customers if redeeming online are able to redeem the same coupon as many times as they want by placing multiple orders.. To make matters worse. They charge us 3VP Royalties, 3VP Marketing fees and on top of the fees 3rd party vendors charge themselves so a 20% tablet sale gets an additional 15% marketing fee from Door Dash, on top of a 9% fee Marketing Royalty from Dickeys and another 15% 3VP Marketing fee from Dickeys. End of Day we make no money from the tablet sales we make unless we ask dickeys to take us out of the "marketing program" in which case we still get charge the 15% dickeys marketing 3VP fee, and only the actual marketing that was being done is removed. Go figure???? On social Media Dickeys spends zero 0 dollars to target their marketing efforts in each market they are. All the marketing done in the market falls on the owner operators, but dickeys charges Marketing Fees which include social media marketing that never trickles down. (Con't)

## Open Comments

- (Con't) When looking at Dickeys social media campaigns anyone can notice that most responses are from people in Texas; Specifically, from the Dallas/ Ft. Worth Area. All marketing materials Dickeys have available come to the store in 1 box every 3 months (or so). These don't have enough materials and if you go to order more many times the items are unavailable. Any artwork for reproduction is not available. Unless you use one of Dickeys Vendors. And finally the catering books are not available for reproduction or purchase on the Dickeys marketing sites. If you ask the marketing Department for copies of the Catering books to promote Corporate sales efforts at the Franchisee level they ask you to go to their marketing site which doesn't have it. And if you try to ask for the art for reproduction the answer is no. What gives? The whole point should be to make the franchisees successful. The marketing staff mostly is rude and when you get to build rapport with one person, the next day the staff has changed. Is a nightmare!
- The commercials are great. However, you are discounting the most expensive products. Also you run specials that cause us to buy new products and we already have more products than most restaurants have.
- get more involved

# Marketing

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## Open Comments

- I feel a strong disconnect from the media team to know what is best for my store, and there seems to be little flexibility on DBRI end.
- Terrible marketers. Everything is to drive royalties, not profit. No control group therefore no knowledge of what does and does not work. Way to many discounts....eroding the brand and damaging the customer base that know expects offers.
- We see no push in marketing in my market place. We would better benefit from the 4% marketing fund staying in our account and getting us push our own local marketing.
- could use the 4% more effectively then they can. That is also why I am considering throwing dickeys out of my building and start over.

## Open Comments

# The Future and Past

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## Open Comments

- I have been with dickeys for less than 2 years. Last year alone I contributed \$39k to the marketing fund. I get nothing back from it. There is no "national marketing/branding" going on in my area. The one thing I want is for some of that money back so I can drive sales (maybe 20-25%). I am not asking for all of it, but to expect me to spend \$39k on "marketing" then throw in additional money (i.e. they want us to spend more money on our own local marketing...are you kidding? I am only making about 10-12% margin. If I spend an additional 2% on marketing, I am down to barely pulling in \$80k in a year. And for what? I am busting my ass everyday, for \$80k? I can go get a job for \$100k and not have the stress and threat and harassment everyday). So, that is my number 1 issue (get them to give us some of our marketing money back). Two is the costs at US Foods are too high. I will admit, I don't participate in the rebate program (which is a scam, btw) partially because I buy some items outside of US Foods (never food products, but film, fryer oil, forks, knives, spoons, etc...). Third item is they need to stop harassing us (and tied to this is they need to quit firing FDs!!!!). We have literally been through 5 FD's in less than 2 years. (Con't)

## Open Comments

- (Con't) So, harassment is number 3 (I dread getting a phone call from anyone, it is never "good"). Fourth, the damn TTD bs. It is true that some complaints are legit. But, rewarding people for complaining (and more importantly, going online to complain, versus coming up to a manager on the spot and getting it taken care of right then and there) is unacceptable to me. I don't get a lot of complaints (I did when we first opened), but again, philosophically, I don't agree with rewarding people who hide behind a computer screen. Which, while I am talking about that, feel free to use my name (Brendan Powers). These people are horrible to me and my managers, so I couldn't care less if they know I am telling the truth (which I have told them these things to their faces, but it doesn't matter). And, they have called to ask if potential franchisee's can call to talk to me....and I have told them, "sure, but I will never lie, and you probably won't like what I have to say." The truth is I would NEVER do this again with these people. They are horrible. The only reason we have had some success is because of us (and despite them). I have 14 of the original employees still working at my store (compare that to the merry go round I have had on FD's alone). That is all you need to know about who knows how to run a business.

# The Future and Past

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## Open Comments

- We need better leadership. There's been too many missteps. Any restaurant chain with as many closures as we've had would replace their CEO.
- Too many decisions made by DBRI that have hurt the franchisee. Our bottom line is critical for the brand's success, but is at the bottom of what we perceive DBRI is doing, even with the "NEW INCENTIVES" to lower cogs and become more profitable. DBRI does not seem to understand the health of the local restaurant is critical for their success also.
- DBRI seems to be trying to increase profitability finally, its a small step in the correct direction, but is it too little too late?
- Cut food, paper and product costs and most of the issues will be resolved to make our stores profitable instead of operating at losses.
- Advertising and cost of good sold needs to be redefined
- I was told we would have net sales 1 to 1.5 m per year in net sales. What a joke.
- Life savings gone with no real hope on any return. It's good food though.

## Open Comments

- DBRI seems to have lowered interest in store profitability. I have noticed a great deal of store closures or "transitions". Even in a high income store lowering COGs has a mid level of importance. It seems to me that selling franchises is most important to Dickeys corporate than keeping them alive. Due to my extensive food service experience I have a good idea of how a businesses can achieve longevity. Competitive food purchasing is the first place to start in order to lower costs. Providing multiple outlets for our "static" products such as, chicken, pork, brisket, turkey would create pricing competition between distributors in which would provide us owners with lower food costs. This is just one of the improvements I feel could be made.
- The food is great, that is way we joined. Get the menu retro back to 4 years ago. We built a store, it is a thankless good, once you ask to do so they are not please and thankful, it is we want it done yesterday. Don't think they care where you build it, just build it. Would have taken a application to build one in my garage if submitted. We need local and national cable advertising.
- would sell TODAY if these things were worth anything

# The Future and Past

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## Open Comments

- In the past DBRI has lied to and deceived me from day one. I am not a happy franchisee. My store is just slightly profitable (NOTHING LIKE I WAS TOLD TO EXPECT!!!) If I took a descent salary the store would not be profitable. I've been at it 5 years and own 3 unopened franchises. Going forward there is no way in hell I would open another with Dickeys. This thing has gone to hell in a handbasket since Jr took over.
- I am so disappointed in DBRI. If I would have known then what I know now there is NO WAY I would have opened this franchise. Thank goodness I was smart enough to not open more. Change in the amount of 3rd Party such as UberEats, Grub Hub, etc have take a huge cut of the profit. While EzCater sales increase, DBRI Catering sales have decreased. We should not be forced to pay marketing fees to both DBRI and 3PV.
- Past DBRI actions, tone & lack of communication, frequent changes of products and menu items, personnel turnover, operational changes, inadequate support and technical problems have resulted in little trust and confidence for the future.
- Dickey's is a terrible. Worst decision I have EVER made.

## Open Comments

- This Brand was grossly misrepresented to me by the salesman. My construction cost were an extra \$300,000 due to the incompetence and mismanagement of the DBRI approved contractor that I was forced to use. My top line sales have decreased 45% over the past 3 years. I was under the impression that we would have marketing dollars refunded to us for use of approved local marketing. This was a point that was hammered home to me, and drilled into me as a selling point, of which they immediately took this program away. The affiliate Wycliff/Douglas was not disclosed to me in my agreement, and I did not know about them until the 2015 FDD came out. Therefore the disclosure of the millions of millions dollars that are generated as revenue through this affiliate were also not disclosed to me. Had I known that such an affiliate exists, and the fact that they take so many millions in revenue, I would not have signed with this brand. I cannot speak to any positive experience on any level, that I have had with this brand. Everything has been a struggle from the day I signed.
- I really think this could be a really great brand. I think some of the changes are great and love trying to stay ahead of the curve. Going forward I would like to have less micromangement. Better marketing going forward. Together we can buy much better and spend it more wisely.

# The Future and Past

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## Open Comments

- The past has been pretty bad and DBRI is a greedy company that doesn't care about its investors. The future looks bright because hopefully I can just claim bankruptcy soon and move on.
- Going forward the Franchise Directors should have some say and authority in helping with localized marketing and operations decisions. Get rid of Direct Delivery Marketing Material. Stop forcing bad marketing down our throat that doesn't bring an increase in profits. Driving existing customers to us with discounts only reduces our profitability and doesn't drive NEW sales. Focus more attention on the Quality of food with better meats and better pricing.
- No leadership. I am treated like a manager for Roland's store. Just so much lack of respect for my investment into his name brand.
- We have been so burned by this organization and see no hope for change. Allow your franchisees to gracefully exit the system.
- Feel things are somewhat improving but still a long way to go. They need experienced restaurant leadership guidance

## Open Comments

- We should learn from our past but we apparently haven't as we keep making the same mistakes. Stop making so many change. We have too many wheel re inventors at corporate. Our food is great so let's just focus on what we already know. We are not a tech company and should not be focusing on creating our own POS system just for DBRI to sell it other restaurants to make more profit. If Laura wants to do that then she should leave Dickey's and start up her own tech company. We need a CEO and leader who is focused on our brand, our food, our service, and recognition.
- We need to stop reinventing the wheel and start focusing on allowing owners to use their marketing dollars to market their store. Lower food cost, waive technology fees as well as any additional corporate fees to ease owner's pain, and change corporate and it's people!
- The measure of the long term success of DBRI will be predicated on the success of individual franchisees. If DBRI chooses not to make good business decisions that benefit its franchisees community this pattern of closing and churning stores will continue until DBRI's reputation is bankrupt.
- As long as RDJ is still in charge, the future of this brand is bleak.

# The Future and Past

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## Open Comments

- Stop trying to reinvent the wheel. We had a great concept when I started 5 years ago. Great Barbecue. What happened to that? DBRI is attempting Brand Suicide!
- If corporate and owners were on the same team, there would be over 2000 stores in existence. As it is, owners are looking to sell (unsuccessfully) rather than open new stores.
- I pray for a brighter future.
- Make promo items with a discounted price, not a set price across the board. \$5.00 footlongs hurt lots of subway owners.
- DBRI has focused on selling franchise and not the profitability of the stores. Since I opened there have been 4 stores opened ranging from 1.2 miles to 5 miles surrounding my store and cutting off my profitability.
- Buying this store has probably been the worst financial decision I have ever made in my life.
- Food costs and marketing - with some many needs and issues, these 2 would have the biggest and most immediate impact in our bottom line.

## Open Comments

- Our stores flourished in the early years. We had less over-saturation of our market. However, with the reckless desire to open 500 stores, DBRI allowed less than qualified owners/operators to open stores and degrade the brand. Further adding to this they allowed underperforming/failing stores to remain open regardless of the negative impact it had to the brand and neighboring stores. This brand will cease to exist in the near future unless there is sweeping and drastic overhauls at the top. Without changing the culture and adversarial approach at DBRI this brand will not survive. I pray each night that DBRI will go bankrupt and a real food service company takes over or allow all franchisees to go independent.
- The changes instituted back in 2016 caused a lot of hardship to owners. Many have been impacted, many have ceased operating, and many are on the brink. We have not been able to return to pre-2016 volume, as hard as we try. DBRI will cease to exist if it continues in this direction. The owners have to be more empowered and their voices heard by DBRI. The owners' voices and inputs should be solicited and considered before making changes.
- We need more marketing collateral at no cost to owners.



# The Future and Past

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## Open Comments

- Obviously the menu flip was devastating to the brand from top to bottom. That seemed to be the start of a series of knee jerk reactions and changes. We don't seem to be on a direct course. We have lost who we are. Too many layers of profit for the Dickey's Capital Group have been built. DBRI has also prioritized the profit of the companies they required us to use, (and this list continues to grow). These layers have been placed squarely on the backs of the franchisee's. Combined with the fact that franchisee's were given misinformation from day one has led to many stores closing their doors. This has crippled the brand and devalued our investment. If DBRI continues to place the franchisee's at the bottom of the food chain both franchisee's and franchisor will die off.
- If I could find someone to buy this I would be gone tomorrow. I don't believe Dickey's will ever put the franchisee's success ahead of their greed.
- New leadership... stronger barriers for entry of new franchisees... leave money with owners instead of kickbacks on everything.... i could go on and on
- If i could return time i would had never invested in this corrupt brand.

## Open Comments

- As much I have frustrations with the system, this brand has so much potential and the food is so good I have customers rave about it all the time. This brand has the potential to be every bit as big as Chick Fil A or insert anyone else in her you'd like. I said that I don't feel that I am not satisfied with making an investment in Dickeys but I also said I would open more stores. If we can get our issues fixed the main thing being purchasing where I could get my cost of goods down I would feel better about this investment and would start having the money to consider opening more stores and I would open more stores. But I have to start getting a return on investment from the ones I have open now.
- Dickey's is a dying brand. The sales show it, the store count shows it, and the only way out is to remove Roland and family from the picture.
- Until we get a CEO/President that is qualified to run this company, independent of the Dickey family, we will never thrive. I feel that given 100% control Barry Barron was the right person for the job but interference from RDJ stopped him.
- I am paying 9% fees to Dickeys . It is beyond the pale . Fees should be no more than 4-5%.

# The Future and Past

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## Open Comments

- Barbecue is approx. a 2.9 billion/year industry in the United States (Out of a total of 798 billion for Restaurants). Our piece of the pie is WAY too small to continue the tactics DBRI has employed - Namely taking rebates from Franchisee's, getting kick backs on vendors (especially US Foods through Wycliff), construction, their own data company (Spark), etc. System wide we already suffer from low AUV and HIGH COGS. The only way to survive in this franchise is to run it as a single owner running your own store as there isn't enough cash left to pay for a manager. This is not a multi-unit friendly concept. Finally, I strongly feel that Dickey's needs to expand out of the Core Barbecue Menu. Either merge the Barbecue Concept with a grill (Burgers, wings, grilled chicken, etc) or with a southern cuisine like Texas South Cooking (Chicken Fried Steak, Chicken Fingers, Meatloaf, etc.). This would allow our piece of the pie to go from 2.9 billion/year to much higher. I know this is probably an un-popular idea with most franchisee's. But in order to see growth and increase AUV - Dickey's needs to expand beyond their current offerings and minimize Barbecue.
- DBRI needs to reconsider expansion and take a more strategic approach vs. opening as many stores as possible regardless of location and proximity to existing units.

## Open Comments

- Most franchises are too NEW to see the full Dickey's Potential. We are starting our 6th year and starting in our 5th we saw substantial growth and that has even grown going into our 6th year. Dickey's talks about 5% growth year over year, so once your initial start-up period is over, for us that was 4 years, we are starting to see that and more!
- We started with a plan to open five restaurants in a development agreement. During the construction of the first location, we began to doubt DBRI as a worthy partner. After start of operations, we have reached the conclusion that DBRI is either unwilling or incapable of helping us develop the territory. This will be our last Dickey's Restaurant.
- The best way to ensure growth of the brand is to ensure profitability for its investors, the owners. Currently all efforts seem driven by corporate profits at the owners expense.
- I will file for Chap 7 protection in 2019. Multiple stores will be closed and multiple markets lost. I'm sure I am only one of many. While I will take my medicine and understand the role I played in my own downfall it would not have happened within system that is not blind to the greed and corruption that starts at the top.

# The Future and Past

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## Open Comments

- Franchise has changed significantly in last 5 years. Prior to that, proposition was fair. Changes in last 5 years have been detrimental to O/O and the brand. Future survivability of brand is in doubt.
- I feel it doesn't matter what the franchisees say they are ignored and DBRI is going to do whatever it is they have planned. They only pretend to listen when face to face. If things continue as they are I can see a complete failure of the brand.
- The single most negatively impactful issue I fight against is our own brand. In my area there is literally no other Dickey's with a public review rating over 3 stars while we maintain a 4.5 star rating. Dickey's did not effectively vet other owners in my area and have done nothing to maintain high standard. Therefore, countless people in my area won't give us a chance. They have dropped the ball and reduced the overall value of my investment. I work 60+ hours a week, adhere to all of Dickey's standards and am going well beyond the average owner in terms of local marketing and business development regarding catering and am still at risk of losing everything.
- I made mistakes in the past. I hope I have a future.

## Open Comments

- Examples of past ineptitude by DBRI staff are too numerous to list. DBRI promoted overbuilding in parts of the DFW area and those of us still here suffer regularly from bad operations by other owners. Our most frequent comment heard from guests is "Why is your food so much better than the other Dickey's?" points out clearly that the ones who do not actually protect the "brand" are within DBRI itself. So we spend our time and dollars constantly trying to convince guests to try us and not judge us by DBRI overall. Based on DBRI past attitude and responses to us we have given up trying to get any form of rebate from DBRI for our marketing dollars. And the tech dollars we send them for Spark etc are a waste. Cumbersome tech, weak reports (what are my net sales, including taxes paid and tips collected, from all sources so we can pay TX State tax? - cut and paste several DBRI reports to get the answer - sad) As stated, the examples are too numerous to fully elaborate, but thanks for ruining my morning by reminding us how bad our investment in DBRI has been.
- The Dickey's name itself is so bad that even good stores can't sell for a decent price so good or bad people are stuck. Dickey's reputation is just bad all around. They just have no clue on marketing BBQ outside of Texas.

# The Future and Past

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## Open Comments

- 1. I see no value in the Franchise Director role. Definitely a waste of money for both Corporate and the Owner. With over 30 FDs in less than 2.5 years, it is obvious the role is not effective. I honestly do not know the FD role. The only time I hear from an FD is to forward me a negative survey. 2. I did not receive any help or email, or text or any assistance from the FD, when I lost internet/NCR/IT service for 7 days. 3. I did not receive any help from the FD when I could not get basic supplies from our food vendor for several weeks and even some items still today that are basic daily items required by DBRI. 4. FD's or Marketing folks expect to eat for free (under the guise of "sampling") for a full 1 or 2 days they are in town. Nope - I'm already paying Marketing and Royalties - nobody eats for free. I pay full price when I eat at the store so they must as well. MANY MORE TO ADD.
- I'm hopeful for the direction that we are headed. I'm hopeful that DBRI will listen to the franchisees and do something that will treat us truly as partners NOT just give up the "low hanging" easy "wins" I don't think they realize that we can make more if they didn't operate as dictators. I was more optimistic in the past, the past few years with the G-4 changes really hurt and at times it seems to have fallen of dear ears, yet I'm still hopeful for a fair partnership.

## Open Comments

- There needs to be market analysis' and impact studies completed prior to opening a new location with a new franchisee close to an existing location. We were told that we had our county locked down and they would not allow another owner to open close to us. About 12 to 18 months later, they allowed another owner to open right in-between our two locations. We all struggled and fought for the same business for over 2 years until the other owner finally closed. We also had to close one of our three in order to make a go at keeping the remaining two open. It has been the hardest thing we have ever done. We were excited to join the Dickey's family in the beginning and thought of it as a partnership and "investment". Turns out that it has been more like a "dictatorship" with the feeling that we bought ourselves a job that we can't even make minimum wage doing at this point. It is a struggle for survival every day. After over five years of owning the locations, we should not be in this position.
- opened Tx1516 bay town in Feb-17 was on my way to build million\$ sale in 1st year. DBRI crippled me and my Business opening one store just one Exit down from me cutting of my Residential customer flow . since then I been treated like an orphan child. its just unethical and Bad business Model.

# The Future and Past

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## Open Comments

- Current management needs to be replaced or change priorities. All efforts need to be focused on getting food costs down. Downsize the home office so DBRI is not relying on the kickbacks and the price gouging from Wycliffe to support the home office. Second, marketing needs to focus on a strong strategy to build the brand through solid marketing practices locally. Not constant desperate discounting to "increase traffic". Develop great looking marketing collateral then work with owners on spending the marketing money locally. The owners know their market better than someone in a cubicle in Dallas and We are not big enough to use national ads effectively
- I do not think how it was presented to us is how it actually worked. From cost to operations. I think big strides have been made in the past 3-5 months to improve this. Looking for a better future.
- i am in a city by my self and the support that i receive in marketing and promotion is almost none. but the percentage of marketing and percentage for the franchise goes out every week or more.
- Better timely and accurate for 3 party vendors and pos so we can better manage our staff and tax reporting.

## Open Comments

- Dickey's is pushing the sales up by encouraging 3rd party delivery services which only helps the home office. We are not benefiting from increased sales at all as they are all eaten up in fees. This is one more way that Dickey's is self serving. They claim to be guest first, but they are really DBRI first, guest 2nd, and owners VERY VERY last. The future can not be bright if this mentality does not change.
- Dickey's has really never been a Franchise that has a proven model. The food is good however, the perpetual changes have caused consistent Chaos in the brand. There is not a true brand (smoked meats?) in their system in my opinion and not a draw for customers such as the Big Mac etc. What are we known for (smoked Meats?) in the space that is original etc. Their current is truly profit prohibitive to build out along with leasehold etc. They need a buy back program so that they should be able to take a store and buy it back and prove their model works in other place except Texas as it appears that those stores do thrive. Wonder why?
- Future - Have DBRI employees physically work with us in the store for a week to see how we function rather than judge us from one visit, maybe this way they can understand that we are in it to succeed. Past - wish I had not been pushed into opening a second store.

# The Future and Past

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## Open Comments

- I would love to feel that DBRI is a partner with us and I would invest in more stores. I will not make any further investments with climate of DBRI leadership. This could be a great franchise if it was run by professional management. Every high in leader they have brought in has left very quickly. If Roland had any business sense at all he would look in a mirror and see where the problem is.
- Five years ago I felt Dickey's was focused on serving great bbq. Now they seemed to be focused more on creating a POS and technology. It isn't working in my opinion.
- We need to have fair sharing from DBRI. By allowing us to make money, we will be the biggest barbecue chain in the world forever. If hundred of franchises keep going under, we will all be a joke!
- Biggest mistake of my life.
- they don't stand behind there words
- See previous comments related to DBRI future. This franchise is on the verge of loosing a lot of stores, especially in the most northern regions that have less saturation of Dickey's restaurants like you see in the Texas area.

## Open Comments

- Bites
- I purchased an existing Dickey's and have had little support from the time I took over the location. It has been extremely frustrating and painful. I would have appreciated help with things like setting up accounts (they do send the paperwork for US Foods) We were off the 3rd party applications for weeks, didn't have the bank account to the POS for 10 days. I bought a franchise because I needed guidance. These things were not taught at BBQ University. There should have been a check list with direction given. I keep asking who I should be talking to at Dickey's as I expected someone would be assigned to help me with the transition. Its resulted in lost sales for all of us.
- Again, remove the 4% marketing funds to better help our cash flow and let owners do their own marketing in local areas. Any of the marketing I get in my area is not specific to my area so I see no push from in in mt 4 locations. Give the owners the best case pricing upfront to better their everyday cash flow situation. Not have to TRY and earn it with unrealistic goals. This is a way for DBRI to keep the rebate money for themselves.
- Too many changes way too fast without notice and or seemingly franchisee input or voice. Franchise Agreement is onerous and difficult to exit.

# The Future and Past

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## Open Comments

- 1) Past actions taken on DBRI's part have clearly demonstrated Dickey's has been overly eager on opening as many stores as possible without any evident concern for existing stores profitability, or even the ability of previously opened stores to maintain ongoing operations. It appears from the great number of closed locations in the last several years this strategy has benefited neither DBRI nor the franchisees. 2) A second point of contention is what appear to be kickbacks or a means to create revenue streams for DBRI from the franchisees' pocketbook, such as Smokestack or rebates to DBRI from Sysco and US Foods. 3) Instead of charging each franchisee around eight or nine hundred dollars a year for Smokestack, why isn't it a one-time setup charge of say \$200 with a \$5, or 10-dollar monthly maintenance fee? If DBRI or associated parties receive a monthly income stream from Smokestack, it would seem to be designed chiefly to fleece the pockets of the franchisee's month after month into perpetuity. Why is there an ongoing charge for what should cost virtually nothing to operate on an ongoing basis? Where is that money going? (Con't)

## Open Comments

- (Con't) 4) Certainly, other owners this one has spoken with believe these concerns show that DBRI may talk a good talk, but really view the franchisees as nothing more than vehicles to keep just profitable enough to stay around and provide DBRI with an ongoing income stream. 5) DBRI has demonstrated it can do a good job of opening new stores. It also does relatively well in supporting stores when the goal of that support appears to be in DBRI's interests - like maintaining product quality. It does not seem DBRI is interested in helping already opened stores be profitable.
- There must be better control of the qualifications of new franchisees who come into the system. The brand must be protected and standards must be set and monitored.

# DBRI Leadership

Roland Dickey Jr and Laura Rea Dickey



## Open Comments

- Too many locations have closed, the current strategy isn't working. We need big changes.
- They need help they don't know what they are doing and will not lead us to better times I fear.
- I understand about looking at big picture items like future technology, but what are they doing to cut product costs to save stores on the verge of closing? It is not the fault of every owner who has closed when the Dickey's model cannot sustain a profitable store due to lack of support from the brand we all pay royalties and marketing fees to.
- The way the franchise is doing its business is nothing more going of shutting down stores because it is one way business, never been win-win situation
- I have never lead on such a major scale as either of these two, and could not imagine the responsibilities they must have on their plate. That being said I would like to see a more fruitful improvement process for the Dickeys brand.
- I believe they are concerned with their own profitability.
- I can see myself closing up the 2 stores in the next 6 months if things do not improve

## Open Comments

- Either delusional or just don't care.
- This brand will only move forward without RDJ and LRD. They have no professional business running this at the top. Sell sell sell or appoint those to the top to run this brand in a way to make franchisees happy and successful. If owners aren't happy or successful then this is a failed brand.
- The brand is 75+ yrs old, what were you doing when it was growing in stores and sales. Go back to doing that. Yes, brands need to evolve, but the changes over night away from sandwiches to meat by weigh killed the every day customer.
- when your corporate saying is persistence stops resistance there is no concern for the franchisee
- Some of the Dickey's leadership are extremely honest and ethical, and some are not. Likewise, some care about the franchisees and are helpful and others are not. Based on past decisions such as the mid/late 2016 menu flip and G4 design specs, confidence is not high that Jr and Laura Rea are the ones best suited to improve the brand in the future
- They don't care about the franchisees. They are self serving. They are smooth talkers and will never admit they have lost control of this Brand.



# DBRI Leadership

Roland Dickey Jr and Laura Rea Dickey



## Open Comments

- Zero vision for brand management as it relates to the franchisees' interest. From where I stand, it seems DBRI is moving to a Tech company and away from restaurant management. Both lacks leadership to retain quality employees and continuity. Their leadership has spawned a horrible outside view of the brand both from an employee perspective (glass door) and an investor perspective. Too many restaurants for sale and no buyers. Franchisees cannot produce a P&L worth showing to a buyer. Unless they change their leadership tactics and care for franchisee bottom lines, it's highly likely the brand won't exist at some finite point in the future. They seem very greedy by creating profit centers around every dollar required of franchisees.
- All I'll say is I took one generation to start it, one generation to grow and enjoy it and the current generation is destroying it. That old saying holds true to the T with these kids. They are clueless, living in some kind of fantasy dream world. Using honest hard working folks to fund their frivolous ideas. Destroying families in their wake. They were given a great opportunity to grow a Brand with their name on it, we have wonderful food just lousy leadership.
- They may want to I just don't think they are up to the task

## Open Comments

- All I'll say is I took one generation to start it, one generation to grow and enjoy it and the current generation is destroying it. That old saying holds true to the T with these kids. They are clueless, living in some kind of fantasy dream world. Using honest hard working folks to fund their frivolous ideas. Destroying families in their wake. They were given a great opportunity to grow a Brand with their name on it, we have wonderful food just lousy leadership.
- DBRI needs to operate within a budget of their royalties and not rely on profit centers. Profit centers that impact the owners are restricting owners from running their restaurant like they should
- Franchise business has to be a win win situation. This can be a great brand and I will do all I can to make it happen here and even grow. That is what I want for our group and the brand but we have to have a partnership. Right now I don't feel that. We work hard for this brand.
- The goal seems to be to create profit centers at every turn. Who cares about store sales and franchisee profitability?
- Laura wont respond to emails when questioning the problems I was currently having. Roland Dickey told me every lie in the book to get me to sign up.

# DBRI Leadership

Roland Dickey Jr and Laura Rea Dickey



## Open Comments

- We opened our first two locations prior to the buyout of the rest of the Dickey family. Those were the best sales years that we have experienced. The rapid and multiple changes that occurred after the buyout have been the downfall of the brand. There seems to be not enough testing and research prior to releasing new initiatives. For example the menu flip that happened, that totally revamped the menu and got rid of meat plates, etc. That was what killed so many locations. It was very difficult to come back from the damage that caused. I feel that it could have all been avoided if they had done enough research and testing up front. Also, when testing comes back with the answer they are not wanting, don't push forward with the initiative anyway. Listen to the research and to the voice of the owners. Just like home delivery. When the testing numbers were not favorable or profitable, this was pushed out at a National Level with great acceleration and intimidation thrown towards the franchisees. Intimidation and bullying is not the way to cultivate a thriving franchisor and franchisee relationship.
- I feel that they only care about the bottom dollar. if they did care they would be out east helping us. in my state of pa in one years time we have lost 5 stores. with more saying they will close soon if things don't get better.

## Open Comments

- I believe a healthy system is one that existing owners are wanting to grow and add additional stores. Not by basically being a Ponzi Scheme. The Churn and Burn model these 2 have provided is shameful and I believe Mr. Dickey Sr. and the original founder would be very saddened by how money hungry they have become. This Franchise has so much potential however if you look at how fast they are closing that should tell you something.
- Arrogant. Misaligned priorities. Not open to feedback. Selfish. Lost touch with franchisees and the operators. They don't care what franchisees think.
- Either Roland and Laura are truly unethical people or they are blind to the way their organization is being run. Either way we no longer want to be associated with Leaders that have a such bad reputation within corporate and franchisees. Even if half the stories are true. Where there is smoke there is fire.
- I think they don't need us to tell them as Dickey's brand is suffering and needs desperate change.
- leadership needs to change
- Nothing positive to share for this section.

# DBRI Leadership

Roland Dickey Jr and Laura Rea Dickey



## Open Comments

- If you want a laundry list of UNETHICAL things that Dickeys has done to me, let me know. First, the GC "they recommended" left without paying his subs. I got the total down to \$8k and ask them to split it with me. They wouldn't, I paid the subs off because I have to live in Delaware, and these subs are my neighbors. Also, the OLO system wasn't paying me for 18 months!!!! I finally did an audit of my deposits and told them about it and was prepared to go to a lawyer to bring a suit. They paid me \$82,075 in back dues (no interest). Where was that money going for 18 months? Why didn't they catch it (I couldn't even go in and change the bank info, it was greyed out and only corporate could add it....and, it was supposed to be done before we opened). Every software "solution" they roll out is flawed and broken. They sent a team out to "sell" 3rd party delivery or in store delivery, and the analysis they did was totally flawed (didn't include the increase in insurance, the addition manpower (they actually said it wouldn't take any more labor bc you would just use someone who was in the store....I got news for you, if someone is on the clock and in the store, if they are working, they wouldn't be in the store and on the clock!!!). (Con't)

## Open Comments

- (Con't) Anyway, I could list all the things they didn't include (including the risk of injury/liability), but the main point is it is clear. For them, they only care about "sales" increasing. That is how they make their money. In fact, they couldn't care less if we sell a sandwich for less than a dollar, as long as our sales increases, they get more money. The problem is the owners have to be concerned with "profit" and our margins are miniscule. So, if we have to pay a 3rd party 30% to deliver our product, we are not going to make any money. Dickeys doesn't understand this, and will call and call and call and a call, and say you need to sign up for 3rd party delivery or on site delivery. They don't understand (or care about) "our" business model. Only theirs.
- I actually enjoy conversations with Laura Rea and she seems to get it and shows concern for a brighter future as a brand. But the reality of RDJ still remains. He is very tone deaf to the health of the brand and what we are going through. He's faded out of the picture from what I've noticed but I know he's still behind the scenes not caring about OUR success. For the sake of our business, I really do hope I'm wrong.
- Anything I type here will probably just be anger, so I don't think it will be productive, but wow what idiots.
- I am sure they have the desire... but not the ability...

# DBRI Leadership

## Roland Dickey Jr and Laura Rea Dickey

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### Open Comments

- Over the next 5 years? No way. I'm afraid Dickey's will be completely bankrupt in the next year or two. There are more closures and than store opens and it seems like Roland and Laura do not care at all about the well being of current franchisees as long as they still find new idiots to keep opening more locations. This is proven by the churning of locations and also by Roland trying to force owners to sign over their rights and also by suing owners who have no choice but to close because they are gouging money. Help your current franchisees, stop reinventing the wheel, stop focusing on opening locations in other countries and stop spending countless hours and dollars on creating your own tech when there are already great choices out on the market for us to just purchases which have already been tested.
- Based on prior actions it does not seem DBRI leaders have skills to take to next level. They are most concerned about DBRI, which is short term, rather than really building strong stores, which is to their best long term benefit.
- IMO they only have one thing in mind...making more money for their personal bank account, whatever the cost to the O/O.
- Incompetent

### Open Comments

- The message being sent to franchisees is simply that the leadership of DBRI does not have a path or vision for this franchise to be successful. Why are we focused on technology when daily operations and sales are so weak? Why does DBRI have such a high turnover of its corporate staff? Why do we not have a concerted effort that will truly reduce food cost? Why are so many stores closing? Why are we continually churning stores that have failed multiple times in the same location? Why does our marketing efforts seem to be in such disarray? If these questions were answered by Leadership then a dialogue could begin to turn this franchise into a success.
- It is no secret that Dickey's, like any other franchise, is solely concerned with opening new stores, collecting fees, and increasing their margins on the food/supplies that are sold to the stores. Dickey's, just like any other franchise, is concerned with quality and brand image only to the point to ensure that they can open more stores and will be able to collect fees. Their priority is not on store profitability. The only support from any field support is limited to cutting employee hours back to the point where all good employees will quit and find jobs with more hours and to hand out flyers. Not that helpful.

# DBRI Leadership

## Roland Dickey Jr and Laura Rea Dickey



### Open Comments

- As long as they're in charge, we will see more stores close. Our best hope is to sell to a more reputable group.
- I feel it's about their profit and not brand growth or store profits.
- The changes instituted by DBRI, Roland Dickey Jr. and Laura Rea Dickey in 2016 had caused great problems for owners. They should recognize the fact that the changes "bombed" and that owners should be heard and COMPENSATED for their losses. The owners should be compensated to the sum of money that the Dickey family spent on the so-called study authorized by them in 2016. The so-called study was the basis for the changes that brought the loss in business for scores of owner operators. They should also start listening to the owner operators as we are the ones in the trenches daily and have a better feel for what works and what does not.
- adios!
- I think they have forgotten that the success of the individual stores is the only way the corporation can be successful.
- I do not have a clear opinion on the matter.

### Open Comments

- They do not care about the franchisee. All they care about is there pockets. Our location has been struggling for two years now. I sold one location back in March 2019 and they still haven't transferred the store over to the new owners. I called and email and never get a response. I wish I had a time machine so I can go back in time and wished I never bought into Dickey's.
- RDJ and Laura are a modern day Bonnie and Clyde. Robbing everyone along the way and running the brand with reckless abandon. Grab as much money as you can now because they realize the brand is sinking fast. Their "us" versus "them" culture is why we receive less than appropriate support.
- I believe there are people near the top that want to help Franchisees succeed. However, it has become clear that they cannot make any decisions that do not directly reflect the bottom line of Laura and Roland. I have zero confidence in Laura or Roland to improve this brand moving forward. They don't understand our success will lead to their success.
- LRD is not qualified to be CEO. Has no ability to provide leadership and connect with customers, vendors, or O/O. Brand will continue in dysfunctional state under this leadership team and ownership structure.

# DBRI Leadership

Roland Dickey Jr and Laura Rea Dickey



## Open Comments

- See previous comments. Roland Jr. needs to come out from behind the curtain and have constructive discussions with the franchisee's.
- There is a lot of turnover at the upper levels of the company and the revolving door of franchise directors is bad for morale. Occasionally, Dickey's gets something right (i.e. i thought the double dip and cobbler were a good idea. We were told ahead of time. The products are good. And it was a sustained LTO that we could push and grow sales through) but then they follow it up with something terrible (i.e. the stacker sandwich with the pulled pork, slaw and waffle fries. it was put right on top of the other new sandwich. We were not given good warning of it coming out. I don't even have French fries as my restaurant was built without a fryer).
- My answers may have been different if exec team would have answered the questions given by the poa. They stated to our faces in Vegas they would give us answers and never did. There is no transparency which leads me to believe there is dishonesty.
- Praying they sell to a corporation that knows what they are doing

## Open Comments

- I think the focus of leadership currently is to sign up a franchisee and extract every penny out of them they can. That is why we are paying more for goods through the Dickey's system than we can get on the open market. I believe they are more worried on a kickback from a vendor than getting me the best service or piece of equipment to operate my store. I believe the reason owners were forced to put soft serv ice cream to give to customers for free was because RDJ got a kickback from the sale of all those machines. Plus all the cones and ice cream mix that got pumped through Wycliff Douglas because of that. I also believe that is the reason that the unreliable new pellet smoker some of the stores were made to purchase are sitting in the stores now. Those are just two examples and I could write much more but you get the idea. I want them to get richer from their brand but they need to change their vision of how to get there. They need to for the first time focus on keeping more money in my pocket so I can grow and expand my empire and in return I can put the brand in new markets by opening more stores and they will get even richer from the royalties than the kickbacks from forcing us into bad purchases. Thanks, Eric Evans
- Family run business that only cares about their well being. Terrible partners

# DBRI Leadership

## Roland Dickey Jr and Laura Rea Dickey

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### Open Comments

- They are inept jokes and do not have anything other than the Dickey pocketbook in mind.
- The leadership of dickey's appear to be a bunch of scammers, employing harassment tactics to scare small operators into submission. their attitude towards franchisees, even in person, appear to says "you are a bunch of stupid trash"
- LRD and RDJ may have the desire to improve the brand but they clearly lack the ability to do so.
- I hope they have the desire. Right now from my perspective (and maybe I'm wrong), they appear to be just milking the brand for every penny possible at the sorrow of their franchisee's. I don't think current leadership knows who their customer is and how to drive them to the store. I hope this is taken as constructive and that is how I mean it. This isn't an attack on LRD or RDJ.
- They are in way over there heads.
- I feel like they only care about their pockets no one else.
- I guess my 4 percent marketing fees are going to Rolands new yacht.

### Open Comments

- All will be lost personally for me yet invaluable lessons gained. The price has been high. I cannot wait to be as far away from this system as possible. Why would RJD and LRD not sell, go live the life of luxury, and give the company and it franchisees a chance at survival. The willingness of RJD to take down so many because of his pride is unimaginable.
- I have been at this for almost 2 years and I still don't have a phone list of contacts at corporate for issues I experience. I have called countless people for countless reasons and have finally given up. Every time I have reached out it goes into a void, so I have tried to figure things out on my own. It is very clear that there is no real interest in a collaborative relationship, no interest in reducing costs and no interest in the success of the franchisee. I have found a couple people that appear engaged, but the people at the top have lost touch with what is happening at the franchisee level.
- I hope the brand goes public or gets sold.
- They need to step away. End of story.
- I believe that Laura Rea Dickey & Roland Dickey Jr. want the brand to succeed.



# DBRI Leadership

## Roland Dickey Jr and Laura Rea Dickey



### Open Comments

- System needs a change and someone who really has leadership and growth down to a science. Time for change!
- LD came to visit she heard our complaints and acted genuine but I am sure she probably could care less.
- I believe that they have the ability, but need to listen to franchisees and remove incompetent employees.
- I have great response from Roland Dickey Jr. and Laura Rea Dickey so I think we all need to work together to share the wealth and build the brand!
- Anyone need a drink?
- Leadership needs to make changes but these should be well thought out and implemented with notice and maybe regionally to ascertain effect before going national.
- The lack of support when buying my recent franchise is alarming to me. I would have expected there to be a team or at least 1 person who would support me after the purchase to get things up and running. Its been past frustrating. It has resulted in lost sales for both of us, stress and unhappy customers.

### Open Comments

- \$7,101.69 that was owed to me came up missing hasn't been found Dickey's said they would pay amount owed haven't received amount. When I was considering buying Dickey's they told me I could use Dickey's yellow van for catering never received title or keys later found out from previous owner the van was towed in doesn't run used only as billboard no keys title. Dickey's store was roach infested leaking drain pipes. air conditioning went out main Dining Room. information about replacing card reader server having to be replaced was never provided when I was buying Dickey's. When I was buying Dickey's previous owner damaged Dickey's brand buying SAMS Club food I heard starting November last year and started closing for Dinner I'm suffering the repercussions from this action. I paid \$60,000 for Dickey's they only offered \$15,000 to buy it back. There's more to much to list I feel deceived.
- Roland Dickey Jr. seems to be running the business into the ground. Things have gotten a lot worse over the 5 years I have been doing this. With cogs so high and marketing funds but not seeing any marketing in my area I struggle to make ends meet. there is a reason so many locations have went out of business and are for sale(my 4 locations included).



# DBRI Leadership

Roland Dickey Jr and Laura Rea Dickey



## Open Comments

- I believe Roland Dickey Jr. and Laura Rea Dickey got themselves into a big commitment when they purchased the business from their family and are increasing revenue by exploiting franchisees in order to payoff their loan. That is the biggest issue that is driving the dissatisfaction among franchisees. They need to re-evaluate their expectations for revenue and profitability and not try to squeeze out their personal profits out of the franchisees which will eventually be the ultimate losers in this game.
- You guys need to resign, you have murdered the legacy of your father. Because of your leadership you have one of the weakest franchises in America. Mall Kiosk franchises, have better numbers than Dickey's.

## Open Comments

- The founders of DBRI understand Family Values and hard work and investment. This new leadership is all about building an empire at the O/O's expense. If you fail, you fail and we'll sue you for breach of your franchise agreement. The brand is failing because the number one marketing strategy "word of mouth" is gone! We, O/O's are not promoting the franchise for future investors. I've been approached three times from local realtors to expand the brand into their town, with a lot of great incentives, but I just don't have the good feeling about the future of this brand. Also, I'm not able to make enough profit from this store to convince a loan officer to invest in another restaurant.
- They should concentrate on working with franchisees to deliver a franchising system that supports franchisees and elevates the revenue/profits for both the corporation and operators. Transparency and ethical selection of preferred/mandatory vendors are necessary to restore franchisee confidence and attract and retain talented people to the brand. Brand stability must be achieved.

# DBRI Leadership

Roland Dickey Jr and Laura Rea Dickey



## Open Comments

- DBRI has created a fear based culture that permeates both the corporation and the franchisee system. We have been told by VP's to not text each other and admonished at times for talking to one another. I don't believe that DBRI has basic respect for the franchisees. We had a meeting in Vegas in which 50% of the system showed up to express their pain and dissatisfaction. We broke off into small groups and Laura wasn't leading my group, but she was observing. One franchisee pleaded that he was going to have to close all of his stores, as he pleaded and shared his pain, I watched Laura (about 5 feet from me) look up from her phone and listen. When he finished, she went back to looking at her phone, she didn't respond or bat an eye. It's this type of apathy that makes this leadership downright scary. We haven't had our questions answered since Vegas, nor has there been change. (Con't)

## Open Comments

- (Con't) If you look at our track record these past 3 years of declining sales, rising F&P and turnover, no CEO or VP would still have their job, yet Laura, Roland and Jeff still remain in power making decisions and guarding the gate. DBRI's success is determined by the franchisee system, and DBRI will not be successful unless the franchisee system is successful. They will not be able to sue their way out of this mess, or grow their way to success with the current operational systems in place. Restaurants will continue to close, and franchisees will continue to look for ways out of this brand and will give their investments away in order to avoid punitive damages by this Franchisor. I'm not sure what Roland and Laura's end game is....but they aren't on the path of having a successful and healthy brand that will last for years. The time is dwindling in order to outpace this mess....and my question to Leadership is....how will they choose to respond?