# Dick's Drive-In Restaurants streamlines expansion, supports new initiatives, and optimizes staffing with Smartsheet

Dick's Drive-In Restaurants is a Seattle, Washington-based chain of fast-food drive-in restaurants. Founded in Seattle's Wallingford neighborhood in 1954, Dick's now operates nine locations throughout the Greater Seattle area.

> "If we notice through data in Smartsheet that a certain location is under performing at all, we can quickly brainstorm ways to create marketing plans or promotions to encourage people to visit that store."

Chelsea Young, Project Manager
at Dick's Drive-In Restaurants

**Customer:**
Dick's Drive-In Restaurants

**Industry:**
Retail

**Organization Size:**
Medium (50 - 999 employees)

**Region:**
North America

**Website:**
ddir.com

Dick's Drive-In Restaurants has been a Seattle fast-food icon for nearly 70 years. The local chain, opened in 1954, is known for its fresh-never frozen burgers, hand-cut french fries, and hand-dipped, individually whipped milkshakes.

### Background
In recent years, Dick's has focused on regional expansion across the Greater Seattle area, opening a new location in Bellevue, Washington in late 2021 and the chain's ninth location in Federal Way, Washington in July 2023. To support that growth, Dick's uses Smartsheet to manage projects such as reporting sales data and checking food quantity and quality at each restaurant.

Prior to adopting Smartsheet, however, the chain relied on manual processes and spreadsheets to manage projects, which caused problems as the company expanded its staff to help support new restaurants. *"The Drive-In started as a very small business, with a small leadership team, and preferred to use pen and pencil and different project management tools for collecting sales data and tracking information,"* says Chelsea Young, project manager, Dick's Drive-In Restaurants. *"This way of communicating was error-prone, complicated, and sometimes inaccurate, and we didn't have a good way of giving leadership visibility into each store's performance."*

The company also needed to streamline project management so it could focus more on rolling out new customer-facing initiatives and managing staffing levels, both key in the competitive fast-food landscape. *"As we grew, we didn't want to feel the growing pains of a lack of communication and inefficient project management,"* says Young.

### Solution
Dick's now relies on Smartsheet to track the progress of new restaurants, giving leadership teams a central location to display construction progress as well as daily, weekly, or monthly sales data in dashboards. *"We use Smartsheet dashboards to compare sales data trends, which helps us see how specific locations are performing,"* Young says.

**Customer:**

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The company's store managers and business leaders use Smartsheet to provide updates on problematic equipment or other in-store issues. *"Our regional maintenance manager and direction of construction, along with store managers, can all use the same tool to update the company on their needs,"* says Young. *"Smartsheet is so simple to use, so inputting updates or building sales reports no longer needs to involve finding the right data from multiple sources and then copying and pasting it from spreadsheet to spreadsheet."*

Dick's has also streamlined its hiring process in Smartsheet, tracking how many employees are in the company overall while also monitoring new job applicants. Specifically, Dick's uses workflow automation in Smartsheet to automatically send emails to job applicants to invite them for in-person interviews or to request additional information.

The newest project Dick's Drive-In is exploring in Smartsheet is a large order system. This system will allow Dick's Drive-In customers to order burgers and shakes for their own events while keeping internal staff updated and in control of large orders. *"Staffing is critical when planning for and filling large orders to ensure we are still able to serve the customers at our window quickly and efficiently,"* Young says. *"The unique automations built within Smartsheet make this platform the perfect fit. With Smartsheet, we are able to communicate with customers as needed and track orders placed from the initial inquiry to completion. We are very excited to see how this system succeeds once it's released."*

## Business decisions based on centralized, updated store-level data

Dick's Drive-In now has one location for collecting and sharing sales and project information across the company. *"Smartsheet is a powerful tool that allows us to gather and share project and store data with anyone within the company,"* says Young. *"Because everyone has updated data in front of them, we're more aligned on projects*

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and new store opening status and we can make critical decisions to move the business forward." For example, the company can better track individual restaurant sales. *"If we notice through data in Smartsheet that a certain location is under performing at all, we can quickly brainstorm ways to create marketing plans or promotions to encourage people to visit that store."*

Using manager-provided data in Smartsheet, Dick's can also get an accurate view of how each restaurant is operating. *"Through feedback from store managers, we can discover if a store's efficiency is out of normal,"* Young says. *"This makes it easier for all of us to explore ways to correct issues."*

## Streamlined, simplified project management

In addition to using Smartsheet to manage food checks at each restaurant, Dick's uses the tool to manage internal projects including new store opening milestones. *"Smartsheet is so user-friendly and it makes it easy to set up auto-generated emails and update requests,"* says Young. *"It makes planning and follow-through seamless, because I have a system reminding me what to do and when to do it."*

Young and her team also save time by no longer relying on manual data-gathering processes. *"We used to combine data from multiple sources into one spreadsheet and spend a lot of time analyzing it all,"* she says. *"With Smartsheet, we can simply generate reports and dashboards on demand, which saves us hours of time every day."*

## An optimized hiring process

Dick's uses Smartsheet to optimize staffing for each restaurant, responding quickly to employee turnover and more accurately identifying hiring needs. *"We can clearly see if there are hiring needs based on the information we're getting from managers via Smartsheet,"* says Young. *"Then, if*

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Dick's also uses Smartsheet to collect customer feedback from the company's website each month. *"By looking at customer comments in Smartsheet, we can check our online reviews and ratings and watch for trends or compare feedback between stores,"* says Young. *"We can use that information to see if there are common complaints between locations or among multiple locations, and we can then promptly address those complaints."*

As the business keeps growing, Dick's will continue to identify areas that could benefit from Smartsheet. *"We will definitely keep expanding our use of Smartsheet,"* Young says. *"Now that we have so many processes integrated into this tool, it's become easier for us to see whether other procedures are clunky and need to be streamlined with Smartsheet."*

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