Chick-Fil-A wins Everyday Excellence Award

Chick-Fil-A is a brand synonymous with customer service, and it is constantly referenced by other businesses as “the one to emulate.” Their founder, S. Truett Cathy, once said, “We should be about more than just selling chicken. We should be a part of our customers’ lives and the communities in which we serve.” How appropriate that quote is for our very own Chick-Fil-A located here in Ruston, Louisiana.

While this restaurant has had many individual customer service- and community-oriented success stories since opening its doors, one story in particular has given them the bragging rights for the Everyday Excellence Award.

In December 2018, Doug Gibbons (Senior Director of Operations of Chick-Fil-A Ruston) was contacted with a special request from the marching band of Clemson University. The marching band, which consists of a group of approximately 400 members, was driving through Ruston en route to the Cotton Bowl in Dallas, Texas, and they were looking for convenient dining options that would keep them on-track with their traveling agenda and would allow for easy-access with parking. Gibbons immediately assured the group that he could help them with their requests, and he never considered “no” for an answer --- even though the logistics would not be easy to plan. After much deliberation --- it was ultimately decided that the Chick-Fil-A crew would plan to cook breakfast for 400 people, and they would ultimately drive all of the food to the Choudrant Rest Stop at Exit 93. The only thing that Clemson University’s marching band needed to do was to call Gibbons when they were 45 minutes away from the agreed-upon meeting place.

On the morning of the “Clemson tailgate” at Exit 93, Gibbons and his crew arrived at the restaurant at 2:30am, and they began to quality control batches of food in preparation for the big moment. The quality control basically ensured that the team would know exactly how to cook food, pack food, and move food --- all while keeping the quality of the food at its best. It was a true collaboration of a team, who was fiercely focused on “wow-ing” one of its biggest customers + food orders to-date.

Once Gibbons received the phone call that the buses were 45-minutes away, the crew burst into action --- all while servicing its normal clients as well. The food was cooked; the bags were packed; and eventually, Gibbons and his team drove their truck (in very rainy conditions, mind you) from Ruston to Choudrant. At the rest stop --- Gibbons created a cover that shielded the students from the rain, and everyone got to enjoy their breakfast at the recently renovated rest stop. Undoubtedly, the band was more than thankful for the service, and they likely walked away with an incredible impression of Ruston, LA as a result of the service received.

“In hindsight, it would have been very easy for the Chick-Fil-A team to decline the request from the Clemson Band; however, they regarded their order as an opportunity instead of a challenge,” says Marisol O’Neal, Vice Chair of Community Development. “It makes me so proud to see their hard work and passion for service noticed by the community, and it is ***our pleasure*** to recognize them as the Ruston-Lincoln Chamber of Commerce Everday Excellence Award.” The Chamber recently recognized Gibbons at the “Celebrating Milestones” event --- hosted by the Chamber and Ruston Brick; they look forward to hosting a second presentation on-site at Chick-Fil-A, where the entire team can enjoy treats from Uptown Downtown as well as an official presentation by Chamber Staff and Board.

Interested in nominating a person or business for the next Everyday Excellence Award? You can submit nominations to Ivana Flowers via e-mail at iflowers@rustonlincoln.org or via phone at 318.255.2031. The next award will be announced in June 2019.