

TOP 2011 Movers & Shakers 100

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A Look Beyond



In 2010, I was given the opportunity to attend the Firehouse Subs annual franchise conference, also known as the Firehouse Subs Family Reunion. It was my first time attending such an event, and the experience yielded several opportunities for me. For two days I spoke to members of the company's franchise community and saw firsthand the Firehouse commitment to its business partners in the system. I was impressed not only by the company's ability to decrease food costs and increase average unit volumes, but also by its emphasis on bringing franchisees and their families together to better understand company operations.

For six years we have gone through the rigorous top 100 selection process and have paid homage to some of the best and brightest chains in the industry. That legacy continues this year.

Our top 10 fast casual brands used the economic recession as an opportunity rather than an obstacle and used creativity and innovation to move their brands and the segment forward.

While it wasn't easy narrowing down the field of some 600-plus restaurant brands, it was the goal of this year's panel to gather and

rank the chains that best reflected the fast casual segment's phenomenal growth. It's been said that this category of restaurants stands in a class by itself and holds a strong position in an industry that, like much of the country, has been hindered by unemployment and lagging sales.

This year's Top 100 was determined by a panel that ranked each brand according to a scale of one to 100. The rankings were averaged based on total overall scores. Our top brand, Firehouse Subs, was the only concept on the list that received a top recommendation from all of our panel members, a further testament of the chain's far-reaching success. We'd like to thank our panelists, Linda Duke, Darren Tristano and Kathleen Wood, for their time, energy and input.

We've gathered what we believe to be the strongest fast casual segment players and take pride in the fact that these chains represent the best of the best.

— Valerie Killifer

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**TOP
100**

tossed

| garden fresh salads, crepe wraps + sandwiches |



46. Tossed

Fort Lauderdale, Fla. / No. of units: 6

For Tossed, a brand specializing in fresh gourmet salads, crepe wraps and sandwiches, one of its biggest innovations has been the introduction of a smaller kiosk model that allows the concept to fit into a whole new set of in-line locations, such as malls and food courts, as well as in open-air settings. In addition to the development of the kiosks, Tossed also named Jason Chodash, founder of Tossed Franchised Corp. and the company's current executive vice president, as its president. The title was previously held by Eric Schmitt, the chain's current chief executive. Chodash originally hired Schmitt to grow the business outside of its New York City origins, and today the brand has a presence in the Northeast, East Central and Southeastern United States. The company also plans to open its first international unit in British Columbia in 2011.
