

## Guzman y Gomez

GYG, a Mexican fast food chain, started in Australia by two native New Yorkers. GYG currently operates over 140 restaurants across Australia, Singapore, and Japan.

### THE SITUATION

With strong growth across Australasia, GYG decided to launch the business in the United States and chose the city of Naperville, Illinois for their first location.

With no construction expertise in the United States, GYG wanted to find partners to help them meet the tight budget and timelines for their first U.S. project. Through their civil engineer, GYG was referred to Thorndale Construction Services, Inc. to be considered to act as their general contractor.

Alan Horsman, President of Thorndale, provided insight and guidance on the project to Robert Hazan, GYG's Co-Founder and Executive Director. Mr. Hazan had temporarily moved to the United States to launch the Naperville restaurant and to find additional locations in the Chicago area. Once the bids for the project were received, Thorndale was appointed as the general contractor for the job.

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## OUR SOLUTION

The Naperville project had to start quickly to meet GYG's opening schedule. Without a complete set of construction drawings, Mr. Hazan decided he needed to select a general contractor based on site cost only. Timing pressures continued to build with winter (and winter conditions costs) approaching. This forced the project to proceed with only foundation permits, in the hope there would be no issue with subsequent permits from the city.

Once the drawings were completed, the actual cost of the project far exceeded the initial budget. That said, GYG required a cost-cutting exercise to proceed with the project. Thorndale provided value engineering options that reduced the project cost by 10%.

The opening of the first U.S. location was mainly supported (and celebrated) by a team of 22 GYG employees that were flown in from Australia—including board members and key executives. Travel and opening celebration plans were made well in advance, which meant the GYG opening date was set two months out and could not move. Unfortunately, Chicago's winter weather kicked in early and resulted in weeks of delay due to a rainy and cold November and December of 2019. When GYG asked for help to expedite the schedule, Thorndale outlined ways to cut time from the project and made a commitment to meet the original handover date. Thorndale succeeded and the GYG flagship restaurant opened on schedule.

*GYG is currently working with TCS on their second site in Illinois.*

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