



# RUBIO'S COASTAL GRILL COOKS UP A BETTER ONBOARDING PROCESS

The growing fast-casual national restaurant chain streamlines the employee onboarding experience and says farewell to manual paper-based processes.

**INDUSTRY:** Restaurant

**STAFF COUNT:** 4,500+

**LOCATION:** Headquartered in California

**SOLUTION:** Dayforce HCM

## FOOD AND EXPERIENCE PEOPLE CRAVE

The Rubio's story first began in 1983, when Ralph Rubio, then a college student, headed down to Mexico to catch some surf and sun – and tasted the best fish taco he'd ever had. After tucking the recipe into his board shorts, he returned to California, and a few years later founded his first Rubio's, a walk-up stand located in the Mission Bay area of San Diego.

Ralph's fish taco was a hit, and word spread. Now, nearly 35 years later, Rubio's Coastal Grill operates over 200 restaurants coast to coast in the United States and employs more than 4,500 people.

According to Statista, there are nearly 700,000 restaurants operating in the U.S. With an abundance of dining out options, restaurants need to continually deliver over-the-top service, atmosphere and food to win over the hearts and bellies of consumers.

"Guests have so many different options when they go out to eat. We want to provide a high-value, great-tasting experience for them that they will crave, and want to come back for, many more times," says Angelica Gamble-Wong, Senior Vice President of HR for Rubio's Restaurants.

Rubio's differentiates its menu and brand by using quality ingredients. Salsas and guacamole are prepared in-house every day. Responsibly sourced seafood, all-natural chicken raised without antibiotics and all-natural steak are found across the menu. And the company shuns additives such as artificial colors and sweeteners, and MSG.



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Its other differentiating factor is its focus on customer service.

“We are nothing without our guests, so we work hard in delivering great customer service to each customer. It’s what’s important to us,” says Michelle Coombs, Senior Manager, Payroll/HRIS. “We’re all just regular people. Somebody that’s going to give a friendly smile to guests as they walk in the doors. We don’t expect our staff to be robotic, we just expect them to be who they are. I think that’s why Rubio’s has been so successful, because of who we truly are as a company and each individually.”

### PART-TIME EMPLOYEES MEAN FULL-TIME CHALLENGES

Like any fast-casual restaurant, Rubio’s is dependent on good, hardworking staff. It also heavily relies on student workers for its staffing needs. The turnover that comes with this type of employment scenario can be stressful.

“We hire quite a few people, but many of those people are really part-time. One of the great things in the restaurant industry is, we get to hire people into their first job. But later on, unfortunately, a lot of kids have to leave us when school starts up again,” explains Angelica.

Managing the staff onboarding process and a high rate of employee turnover using a paper-based system only increases the stress level.

“With 20 to 50 pieces of paper being used for each new hire, going from one person to another in order to be double checked, then over to corporate, time is used inefficiently. The paperwork burden is a real strain on our one administrative person, especially when things go missing after being passed down through a chain of staff to the final end point,” says Angelica.

“We were dealing with over 100,000 pieces of paper on an annual basis. There was so much time taken from the HR team to file all that away, find it, scan it, and make sure that it got placed in the proper file. So we began looking at how we could make things more efficient in our restaurants. We wanted to free up the managers’ time so that they can do

things other than the HR administrative stuff that has to get done.”

“I think anybody walking into the organization realized that paper was just not the way to go. It’s not efficient, and given our headcount and our rigorous turnover, it didn’t make sense to stay on paper,” explains Michelle.

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**“Without hesitation, I would recommend Ceridian and Dayforce to anyone because they deliver on everything that they promise.”**

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### MAKING A BIG CHANGE EASIER

Rubio’s realized that it needed to find a replacement for its inefficient paper-based process. As the head of HR, Angelica set a goal for the team to get Rubio’s to a place where it was no longer processing paper and where it was moving people through the system – and onboarding them – faster.

The Rubio’s HR team examined six HR systems, seeking the perfect fit for the organization’s requirements. In the end, it chose Dayforce HCM.

“The first reason that we selected Dayforce over some of the other systems that we looked at, was really the one platform. The fact that the other systems are really bolted together creates challenges,” says Angelica.

“The second reason was related to Dayforce’s ease of implementation. We consistently heard that the implementation hand off-between teams was seamless, and that the people at Ceridian were driven by a desire for you to succeed and to make things as easy as possible for their clients. We loved that.”

Ceridian, and Dayforce, lived up to their reputation. “I’ve been on many, many different systems, and by far, this system was the easiest to implement,” says Angelica. “We felt the most supported in implementing Dayforce. Without hesitation, I would recommend Ceridian and Dayforce to



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anyone because they deliver on everything that they promise.”

“Once we implemented Dayforce, what surprised us most was probably the speed of access to data. Everything is real-time. The reporting that comes out of it is much more robust than we expected, and the dashboards are really phenomenal and provide data to executives. Everyone on the team loves that they have all that information at their fingertips,” says Angelica. “What’s probably most notable in the system is there’s so much visibility to anything. We, in corporate, can go in and look at timesheets, we can look at schedules, we can look at forecasts, all in one system, and it’s just made things so much more efficient.”

### GOING MOBILE

Dayforce HCM’s self-service capabilities also made the system very attractive to the Rubio’s team. “We did not have a self-service option for our team members beforehand, and one of the things we try to be at Rubio’s is progressive,” says Angelica. “We really felt like we were lacking because our systems were not mobile-enabled. So the fact that Dayforce allowed us to become mobile-enabled was a big plus.”

While the thought of training 4,600 employees on how to use their mobile devices to access the Dayforce system sent shivers down her spine, Angelica was pleasantly surprised to learn how intuitive the system was. “It was just so amazing. We did no training on the mobile devices. The Dayforce mobile interface is so intuitive and people are so attuned to using their mobile devices now. It’s been fantastic and our team members just love it.”

### ALL THE INFORMATION IN ONE SYSTEM

“Since getting a new system, it’s nice to have everything all in one database. The schedules, the timesheets, the forecasting, everything is in one place. And it is easier to help them when we just have one point of reference,” says Elizabeth Navarro, HRIS analyst at Rubio’s.

“Dayforce’s ease of use was a nice surprise. In other systems it can be complicated to find what you’re looking for, and there’s only one way to do it. But with Dayforce, there’s multiple ways to access what you need. It’s really

up to you how you work, because everyone’s different. Dayforce allows you to find your own way to access what you need,” says Elizabeth.

“We strive to put the guests first. That means that I can’t have my managers at the store level focused on administrative tasks alone. The more that I can take off of the plate of my managers administratively, the more they can focus on the guests and the food, and making sure that the guest has that quality experience when they walk through the door,” says Michelle.

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**“Dayforce, I think, is the future. It’s allowing HR to move away from the old stereotypes to become a key part of driving the business forward.”**

– *Angelica Gamble-Wong, Rubio’s*

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Rubio’s restaurant manager Jaime Huizar has been able to cut his office time by 70% by using Dayforce. He uses the system to onboard new employees, track employee availability and manage their schedules. His staff also love the fact that Dayforce is available in Spanish, making it easier for some of them to understand, read and follow processes in their native language.

Free of the paper-based burden, Jaime feels he can do a better job. “It makes me feel smarter. I feel I’m making better business decisions to be able to serve our guests better. I can focus on things that really matter, like taking care of the guests, improving our service, and improving the efficiency in the dining room.”

### THE FUTURE OF HR

“Our HR team has come a very long way since back when I started,” says Angelica. “So much of my time previously had been spent trying to pull data together, to analyze trends, to get headcounts, turnover, churn, and candidate pool counts. And all that’s done now instantaneously in the Dayforce system.”



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## COOKS UP A BETTER ONBOARDING EXPERIENCE

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Across the Rubio's organization, from the head office to the restaurants, Dayforce has made a change in everyone's work day. It has made every aspect of staff management more efficient, faster and easier to understand.

"Dayforce has helped us be more progressive in offering tools for our Millennials. We have a mobile app, we have dashboards that are in the system that we can make available to our executive team so that they have the knowledge at their fingertips, and we no longer have to wait for this information to be created through a spreadsheet," says Michelle.

"Dayforce, I think, is the future," says Angelica. "It's allowing HR to move away from the old stereotypes to become a key part of driving the business forward."

### ABOUT CERIDIAN

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