

# Foodservice equipment & supplies.

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2007

**DSR** <sup>(26)</sup>  
of the **Year**

Patrick Bailey, F.G. Schaefer Co.

**T**he foodservice E&S industry may use the term “dealer sales rep” to quickly describe someone like Patrick Bailey. But in reality, that label just doesn’t do justice to describe Bailey’s capabilities and accomplishments. Pick any other word — designer, creator, engineer, planner, thinker, fixer, or better yet, consultant, teacher, mentor — and you’ve just described *FE&S* 2007 DSR of the Year.

At six feet-three inches, slim, sharply dressed, and carrying 40 years of experience under his belt, Bailey could potentially intimidate. But that’s hardly the case, and actually, a pretty silly thought. With client relationships that span 20, 30, even 40 years, Bailey is not only highly-sought after and respected among the operator community for his extreme passion for his work, and his intelligence, dedication and loyalty, he’s also viewed by his clients as a true, long-term partner and a friend who cares more than anything about their best interests.

“The No. 1 thing Pat thinks about is taking care of the customer,” says Lindon Kelley, regional director of Frisch’s Big Boy stores in Cincinnati, a client for 30 years. “If we’re not happy, he’s not happy.”

Kelley says all this after spending the first 10 minutes of a meeting busting Bailey’s chops and vice versa. That’s the thing about Bailey. He’s got dry wit with a tinge of silliness up his sleeve that’ll crack you up. In fact, all of the client visits on the day *FE&S* spent tagging along with him started off that way. With literally each and every customer, it was as if one was witnessing a couple of old friends interact.

Of course, after some initial banter, it’s down to business, and Bailey’s intent listening, note-taking, suggesting, thinking and problem-solving begins. Back at the office, things aren’t much different.

By Amelia Levin, Associate Editor



Bailey in front of a newly built Frisch’s Big Boy restaurant in Cincinnati.

# 2007 DSR



Lindon Kelley (right), regional director for Frisch’s Big Boy, and long-time colleague of Bailey’s, examines countertop samples and drawings inside one of the restaurants.

Photos by Peter Renerts

## Go West, Young Man

A relaxed and family-like yet highly professional atmosphere permeates the office at F.G. Schaefer Co. in Cincinnati, where five of the company’s team members have stuck around for 18, 21, 25, 30, 40 years — not your average five- or 10-year turnover you might find at larger organizations. All jokes aside, the nearly 50-year-old company has been progressing at a solid and steady speed with a \$1.6 million sales growth from 2005 to 2006. This year, *FE&S* ranked F.G. Schaefer Co. among the top 100 nationwide dealers with the highest sales (see April 2007, Distribution Giants, p. 34). Last year, Bailey raked in roughly \$4 million of the company’s total sales volume.

He says he couldn’t have done it without the dedicated support of his colleagues. In fact, Bailey says, F.G. Schaefer’s growth and success result from a strong team effort, not just from one person. Gesturing to others in the office, he says, “These are the people who do all the work. Without them we’d be nowhere.”

F.G. Schaefer conducts mainly design/build and remodel projects with some replacement sales for both multi-unit operators as well as many upscale, independent restaurants in the area. Many operators come to the dealership with a “clean slate,” says Chip Glaescher, president of the company. Bailey says this is especially the case among the upscale independents because such projects require significant design and architectural work. They have become a growing part of their business as Bailey’s long-time customers branch out on their own and keep coming back.

With a relatively small staff, every person is considered a department head, Glaescher says. Bailey, Glaescher and Gary Buechel act as the sales team. Yet the staff essentially all support each other — Bailey works closely every day with Clay Schirmer, F.G. Schaefer’s premier designer who’s been around just about as long as him. Margie Otting came to the company 18 years ago and has been considered the “jack of all trades” among her colleagues and clients.

“We have an open dialogue here,” Glaescher says. “Every morning we discuss projects we are working on and serve as a sounding board for each other. When a customer calls in here, it is like they are calling to talk to a friend. We are really like extended family to them and we bend over backward to help. We worry about fixing the problem first, and then figure out how to pay for it later.”

Glaescher says the length of stay of F.G. Schaefer employees is a testimony to what makes the company special. “We can react very quickly to the customer as a result,” he says. “There’s not a lot of bureaucratic red tape to get in the way. We run a service business, so we know we need to go that extra mile.”

Schirmer says he hasn’t stuck around for 30 years for nothing. “I’ve had opportunities to work with larger companies and thought about it, but I got out of the deal. I like the intimacy involved in working with a smaller company,” he says.

Bailey also can’t talk about F.G. Schaefer without mentioning his two first mentors: Charlie Glaescher, who in 1958 took over the once-soda fountain equipment dealer founded in 1929 by Frank Schaefer, and Dick Trauth. “Charlie was a wonderful mentor to me, almost like a second father,” Bailey says. “He let me make mistakes at his expense. Somewhere in the back of his head he must have known I would learn best that way. I will forever have an indescribable fondness and love for Charlie and his wife Lois.

“Dick was also a good mentor to me,” Bailey continues. “He settled me

## Patrick Bailey, Vice President, F.G. Schaefer Co., Cincinnati of the Year

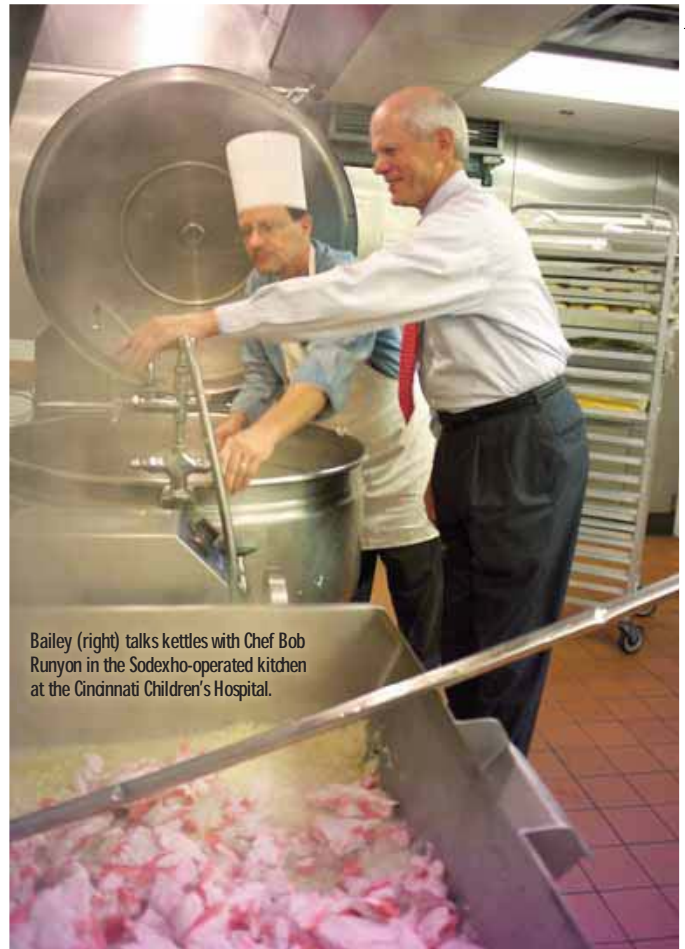
down and guided me. When I came here, I didn’t know anything. We were the youngest dealer in town and I was the youngest kid in town. Charlie, Dick and I grew the dealership together.”

That was in 1967 when, after studying architecture in college, he hitched a ride with a friend to Cincinnati. A West Virginia native, the move was a big change, Bailey says. Maybe it’s the love he developed for Skyline’s five-way chili, or perhaps for the Bengals and Reds. But Bailey says the “stars just seemed to align” the day he met Charlie Glaescher. “It got in my blood and I hung around there.”

### Dealer-Designer

The “it” part of that understatement refers not to selling equipment, which would be a grossly inadequate way to describe Bailey. Instead, it refers to Bailey’s knack for designing kitchens and dining rooms, and making them work, all the while focusing on aesthetics.

“I have an engineering mind,” Bailey says. “Yet my business is in foodservice and design, so I help bridge the gap between the architect and the restaurant operator. I talk the language of the architect and I talk the language of the operator. My



Bailey (right) talks kettles with Chef Bob Runyon in the Sodexo-operated kitchen at the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital.



Brad Bodley (right), one of the managers at a Graeter’s in Amelia, Ohio, talks with Bailey about supplies used in creating this popular sundae item.

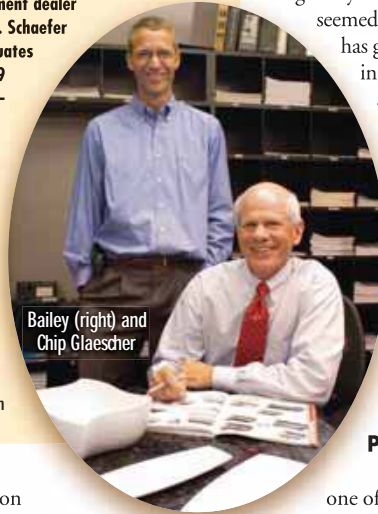


The team at F.G. Schaefer Co.

**DESIGN CAPSULE: F.G. Schaefer Co. Cincinnati**

In 1929, Frank Schaefer founded F.G. Schaefer Co., a soda fountain equipment dealer for drug stores. Charlie Glaescher took his first job as an installer for F.G. Schaefer and in 1958, purchased the business. In 1986, Glaescher's son Chip graduates from college and joins the family business. Charlie Glaescher retires almost 19 years later and in 1998, passes away. Soon after, his son purchases the businesses. The dealership has no cash and carry or show room, but it does have a small warehouse with some short-term inventory. The company conducts mainly design/build and remodel projects with some replacement sales, and serves multi-unit operators as well as upscale, independent restaurants.

- **Founded:** Frank Schaefer, 1929
- **Bought:** Charlie Glaescher, 1958
- **Project Focus:** Design/build, remodel, some replacements
- **Buying Group:** EDI
- **President:** Chip Glaescher
- **Vice President:** Patrick Bailey
- **Designer:** Clay Schirmer
- **Sales Rep:** Gary Buechel
- **Office Manager:** Margie Otting
- **Assistant:** Diane Nutini
- **Installers:** Adam Auer, Kent Goldsberry
- **Warehouse Supervisor:** Wayne Edison



Bailey (right) and Chip Glaescher

clients tell me I'm like an arbitrator for both."

Bailey's trademark philosophy, at least with new construction projects is to design from the "inside out." It's important to build a functional inside first, and then build a cool structure to encompass it, not the other way around," he says. "Design for function first, then make it look attractive. Good food and service combined with good design, efficient flow, aesthetics and an eye on the dollars — you should have all those things for a successful operation."

For design/build projects, which constitute a significant portion of F.G. Schaefer's business, Bailey first meets with the operator/owner to understand the concept and discuss goals. Then he creates a rough sketch of the layout, and brings that over to Schirmer to work with him on perfecting the official design. At that point, Bailey often hires an artist to create a full color rendering of the design, which he'll present to the customer and work with them on any tinkering that needs to be done. In truth, it's not all that simple. "There's a lot of back and forth," Bailey says. This is when Bailey's problem-solving skills shine. He's also been known to act as a problem-solver while "cleaning up" restaurants or even in the simplest job of ordering an oven.

"People often come to me with what they think are solutions to their problems without first telling me the problem," Bailey says. "An operator might say to me they need one piece, but really they need something totally different. We need to all agree what the problem is, before we start looking for a solution."

A good example of this relates to Bailey's work with a popular, family-owned restaurant in the area. "Generation after generation, the kitchen had been band-aided and band-aided," Bailey says. "They came to me saying,

'We need an oven, we need a fryer, etc.' But really, we needed to get to the core issues in order to understand what it was they needed to do, while trying not to offend. It might have been hard for them to stand back from the situation because they live in it every day." After the dust settled, F.G. Schaefer helped the business go through a major expansion and total renovation of both the kitchen and dining areas.

Bailey strives to look at the "big picture" with each and every project, even down to each and every order. Rob Hall, a second-generation franchisee for two LaRosa's Pizzeria stores in the Cincinnati area, agrees.

"I was just a young whippersnapper when I met Pat in the mid-'80s," Hall says. "I would ask for an oven, or say, this is what I want." At that point, Hall says, Bailey would launch into a complex discussion, asking the operator about his plans for the oven, and about his goals for the store. Rolling his eyes in a joking manner, Hall says Bailey's questions seemed tedious at the time. But over the years, Hall

has greatly appreciated this kind of service. "What's interesting is he makes me try and think before I spend money," he says. "Pat wants me to look at the bigger picture, to see what kind of impact buying just one piece of equipment will have on the operation as a whole."

Chip Glaescher agrees that it is this type of service-oriented, customer focus upon which Bailey has built a successful client base. "I think clients see him, not as a salesperson, but as a consultant," Glaescher says. "Pat really gets into the nuts and bolts of their business and turns it upside down to find out where the problems are."

**Partnering for the Long Haul**

At 100-plus units, Frisch's Big Boy represents one of Bailey's larger, long-time clients, alongside Sodexo, LaRosa's, Cedar Fair Amusement Parks, and Graeter's, another Cincinnati mainstay known for its hand-packed, super-premium ice cream. While the majority of Bailey's clients operate in the Cincinnati area, his work requires some travel, especially when Sodexo's involved. "I put about 30,000 to 40,000 miles on my car a year, and I get on an airplane two or three times a month," he says.

At the moment, Bailey's working with Sodexo on numerous construction projects across the country stretching from Houston to Florida, Indianapolis to the Carolinas. Perhaps the term "working" in this sense is another understatement. Partner might be a better way to describe the relationship Bailey has with Eric Loyall, a district manager in the leisure division of Sodexo. Bailey essentially serves as a "consultant" to Loyall, accompanying him on sales calls and pitching new accounts to customers. Both say they work as a team when designing an operation, reviewing drawings, visiting the site, and figuring out logistics. While reviewing drawings during a meeting at the Cincinnati Museum Center, this becomes clear by the way each remains completely quiet while the other person talks, by the way their comments seem to be exactly on the same page, and by the way they remain so casual, so comfortable, yet so on target in their discussion.

Afterward, Loyall points out the \$2 million foodservice project at the museum that he and Bailey completed a couple years prior. This project features a kiosk snack/coffee station and partially self-serve food bar. A converted train station, the front entrance and main hall of the museum feature gorgeous wall murals and architecture. The duo strived to create something as equally aesthetically enticing, while staying within the client's



Bailey (left) chows down on LaRosa's pizza with franchisee Tom Fucito, a customer and friend for 25 years.

budget. This meant, Loyall says, backing off certain equipment and features in order to afford the \$15,000 for a beautiful, European-made, all-glass, display case with an open-front and drop-in countertop function. Art-deco display holders featuring the specials of the day continue the '40s-era, but modern look.

"We eat with our eyes," Bailey says. "You want a foodservice operation to look good, but you also need to spend money in the back of the house to make sure it can handle volume."

Stewart Smetts, real estate developer, former LaRosa's officer, and owner of various LaRosa's franchises is another long-time colleague and friend of Bailey's. Smetts is working with Bailey on a totally new concept and calls the F.G. Schaefer vice president's style "completely old school," in a good way, of course. "Bailey has a professional approach. He brings a different level of understanding to whole projects and keeps his clients out of trouble. He informs them where to spend money, and where to save. That's a professional — someone you trust. Others look at things from the top down, or as if they're filling a quota. Pat's view is, 'If I build their business, I'll build mine.'"

Bailey would agree. "People seem to like me because I live each project as if it were my own," he says. "I spend my customer's money as if it were my own. People appreciate that."

At Kings Island, an amusement park featuring various chain and independent foodservice operations, and another long-time customer of Bailey's, Foodservice Director David Zellner says he definitely appreciates Bailey's approach. "He doesn't just try to sell me on something. He tries to understand what I need to do. I wouldn't call him a salesperson. He offers guided meaning from initial ideas, and helps us find better ways of doing something," Zellner says.

### A Business of Service

During many client visits, Bailey enters through the back door, stopping to talk to technicians, servers, cooks, and just about anyone until he gets to the upper management. "The best way to find out what's really going on in a company is to always walk through the back door and talk to people," he says.

Upon walking through the back of the Frisch's headquarters, Bailey pauses outside to say hello to a couple of Frisch's installation technicians sitting in their vans. Walking in the back, he chats briefly with more service managers and others huddled in an office. Their eyes light up and the jokes start flying.

Upstairs, Bailey meets with John Hunter, a 30-year colleague, and director of construction for Frisch's. There's talk of golf outings and poor handicaps. Sarcasm abounds. Then it's down to business. Once starting as a service technician, Hunter is now a head honcho (Bailey's observation) at Frisch's

and seems to share Bailey's sense of service. "We are open 365 days of the year. Last night we did a remodel on one of our out-of-town units, and he pulled it off, starting at closing and completed it prior to opening for business the next day. We had no loss in sales."

That sort of highly service-oriented business mirrors Bailey's dedication to serving his customers. "We expect service now, not tomorrow," Hunter says.

Kelley reiterates these comments back at a Big Boy on Central Parkway. "Service is the most important thing to us," he says. "Pat's been instrumental about that. He makes us feel like we're the No. 1 client, even though we know we're not. Other companies make us feel like we're second-best. A lot of times they'll just tell me about the warranty and give me a number to call."

### A True Techie

Communication is key when it comes to service, Bailey says. Even as Kelley expresses his thoughts, Bailey steps aside to take a phone call from another client. "Pat is always readily available. We always know if we call, we can get him on the phone, or if we leave a voicemail, he'll always quickly return our calls."

Cell phone, voicemail, e-mail — these are the tools Bailey uses to remain accessible to his clients. He says he has wholeheartedly embraced these technologies. While on the road, Bailey makes phone calls using his cool new toy — a hands-free speaker function that broadcasts the conversation throughout the car.

He's rarely without his trusty laptop computer, which he uses to pull up electronic drawings and renderings as well as photos for clients during meetings. "If you can quickly show a client a photograph or a drawing using a certain type of equipment you're describing, people love that."

"Technology is a wonderful thing," he adds. "I've thought to myself, there's no way in the world I'm going to get through the rest of my career without embracing it." That's also led to his taking a number of computer classes. "I've become kind of a nerd." Computer technology, he says, acts as a tool in his industry. "It's like a hammer is to a carpenter."

### Family Comes First

The fact that Bailey and his wife, Peg, just celebrated their 35-year wedding anniversary is no small testament to the notion that Bailey's a true family man at heart. En route to a client visit, Bailey exclaims with joy after his son David calls to tell him he got high marks in his college math class. "If you put your mind to it, you can do anything, I've always said that," Bailey says over the phone. "I'm proud of you, son." Later, Bailey talks about his daughter, Andrea Johnson, 28, who married three years ago and just had a baby boy, William Patrick. There's a profound excitement in his voice as he says she will be dropping off his seven-month-old grandchild with her husband, Jake, that weekend to stay with him and Peg for five days.

This father-like attitude has translated to Bailey's colleagues. Chuck Perkins, a Chick-fil-A franchisee in Cincinnati and a long-time colleague of Bailey's while at Kings Island, views Bailey as a true mentor. "Pat's done a lot of personal mentoring to me," Perkins says with a wide smile. "I came from Virginia to Cincinnati in my early 20s. If I needed any personal guidance, Pat was the one I'd call."

At the moment, Bailey loves his work and plans on continuing it for the foreseeable future. Whether it's a hankering for Skyline or some raspberry chocolate chip ice cream from Graeter's, staying fit through tennis and golf, or helping operators build upon their dreams, Bailey seems to incarnate Cincinnati both in spirit and in business. "When I stop having fun, I'll quit," he says. "Until then, we help folks sell food, tell jokes, play golf and have fun."

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