

# Coming Through in a Pinch: A Panera Case Study



Panera began in 1980 as a single, 400-square-foot cookie store in Boston, Massachusetts, and is now a leading restaurant brand with more than 2,300 bakery-cafes in the United States and Canada, 140,000 associates, and annual systemwide sales in the billions. Their success has been fueled by one thing: their unending desire to bring to life fresh ideas about living and eating well.

Things can really heat up when a unique challenge meets a tight timeline. That's exactly what happened when Panera Bread approached Leiden with the buildout of their new location in the Mesa, Arizona, airport. But with the help of thoughtful, experienced project management and a trusted business partnership, the results came out baked to perfection.

## THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

Panera Bread is one of Leiden's longest-lasting customers. Recently, the restaurant chain was opening a new location in the Mesa Gateway Airport. While every project is unique, airport locations tend to be their own beast entirely. When a competing vendor fell through, Kind Hospitality, the location's franchisee, turned to Leiden with an urgent request.

“This kind of project would typically take 8-12 weeks,” said Mike Hopp, co-president of Leiden Company. “They needed the entire buildout done in about five weeks, including custom millwork. That’s really tight.”

But Mike and the team at Leiden made it happen. The secret: Leiden’s longstanding role as a trusted partner and consultant for Panera. Leiden is able to draw on years of experience and familiarity with Panera’s restaurants so that drafting and building for unique spaces goes flawlessly.

## AGILITY TAKES A VILLAGE

But the relationship between Panera and Leiden wasn’t the only one that made this project possible. It was only by shifting production capacity that this project could be done on time.

“When you come through for a customer so many times, they know you’re being honest if you call them up and say, ‘Hey, this emergency came up. Can we get you your stuff a little later?’” said Hopp. “If they can actually spare the time, our clients usually say, ‘Sure!’ because they know we’d do that same for them if it was their emergency. That’s a good partnership.”

Kind Hospitality was thrilled with their choice to partner with Leiden for this Panera location. Says Nava Singam of Kind:

**“ It is rare in today’s business environment, amidst this pandemic, to be able to call a vendor and have them deliver an entire millwork package within a three-week period. Leiden managed to do that for us when we needed it and managed to deliver the quality product on time for us to meet our construction schedule and open our Panera Bread Cafe at Mesa Gateway Airport, as promised to the Phoenix Mesa Gateway Airport. Thank you for everything you do! ”**

**— Nava Singam**

Leiden and Panera Bread continue to be valuable partners to one another, and if there are two times that we’ll always come running, it’s when we smell food, or there’s excitement to be built.

