

New Construction, Account Open + Close

Case Study

Panda Express Builds 100+ Restaurants, Hits Target Opening Dates with Help of Utility Connection Services

Client

Founded in 1983, Panda Express is the largest family-owned quick-serve Chinese restaurant chain in America. Over the past four decades, the company has grown from a single restaurant in a California mall to a \$5.3 billion-dollar stir-fry empire with more than 2,300 locations across the U.S.

Challenge

As part of its commitment to long-term growth, Panda Express was building 100+ freestanding restaurants. In new construction, contractors bring electricity, water, and gas to the site's property line. Responsibility for connecting utilities from the street to the building belongs to the company's corporate office. Lingering supply chain issues, along with a lack of communication between contractors, utility providers, local municipalities, and Panda Express, threatened to delay restaurant openings. The company did not have the internal resources nor expertise to manage this time-consuming challenge and every day a store opening is delayed it results in missed revenue of \$3,500 on average. That adds up really quickly across a portfolio.



"Your ability to coordinate efforts between utility vendors and our General Contractors enabled us to streamline service installations and made it much easier to deliver our projects to our Operations Team."

Hakim A. Yala

RD - Construction

Panda Restaurant Group, Inc.

Solution

The client engaged SIB's team of utility experts from Cost Control Associates to enhance efficiency, minimize on-site disruptions, and ensure the timely completion of the connection process. Our utility [account open + close services](#) included:

Early Site Assessment and Planning

We conducted a thorough site assessment to understand the construction infrastructure and services each restaurant needed. This process involved:

- A review of utility maps, site inspections, and necessary permits.
- Coordination between architects, engineers, contractors, utility providers, and our client.
- Advance prep work for planning connections effectively, particularly when supply chain shortages could pose delays.

Effective Project Management, Communication, and Documentation

Communication is the lifeblood of any successful utility connection project. With more than 100 stores in the pipeline, the initial challenge was to develop a way for Panda Express to monitor all aspects of utility connection planning and progress.

To achieve this goal, we created a daily report that included notes, contact and utility information, site photographs, permits, and inspection updates for each location. This online forum for communication, along with regular meetings and updates, ensured issues could be addressed promptly.

Results

Panda Express opened more than 100 new freestanding restaurants on schedule without friction and costly delays that can surround the utility connection process. Additionally, they now have an effective online project management system for facilitating communication and proactive problem solving.

Hundreds more openings are scheduled through 2025. And we will continue to work with their utility vendors to ensure Panda has the services they need to keep the woks hot and their customers happy.



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About Cost Control Associates

Cost Control Associates, an SIB company, is the unbiased energy and utility advisor that business trust to procure, optimize, and manage best-in-class energy programs from end-to-end. We manage your data, price, and demand to reduce risk, prevent service disruptions, capture energy savings opportunity, and advance sustainability goals.

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