

# Opes Acquisition names Julio Ramirez CEO of fast-casual BurgerFi

***Longtime Burger King exec, consultant makes move to growing burger chain***

Julio Ramirez is the new CEO of BurgerFi, according to an announcement from Opes Acquisition Corp., the restaurant chain's owner. As a nearly-thirty-year restaurant industry veteran with deep QSR and franchising experience, he will take the fast casual through its next chapter of growth, suggested Ophir Sternberg, chairman & chief executive of OPES Acquisition Corp.

He added, "There is a strong market and a captive audience for fast-casual experiences. Development strategies and tactics will be key, and BurgerFi has a scalable model to grow exponentially into more locations through top institutional developers, unique growth vehicles like ghost kitchens and working with successful multi-brand operators."

Most recently, Ramirez founded and led JEM Global, a firm set up to support the growth of limited-service brands in franchising and development. On retainer with Dunkin' Brands, he helped develop the strategy to enter Brazil. Consulting for Buffalo Wild Wings & Rings, Ramirez helped map out expansion into Mexico.

At Burger King, Ramirez held the roles of president of Latin America/Mexico/Caribbean division, senior executive of Franchise Operations and Development in North America, and EVP and chief operations officer. His work was instrumental in expanding the concept to Latin America in 10 countries. In the US in the 2000s, he supported 1,100 franchisees.

Ramirez earned his M.B.A. from the University of Georgia. At the Wharton School of Business, he completed the Advanced Management Program.