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Why Pizzerias Are Positioned to Win BIG At Catering

A Catering Institute Original Essay by Erle Dardick, *Founder and CEO, The Catering Institute™*

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In my opinion, the pizza segment of the restaurant industry has always been well poised to win BIG at catering and the off-premise sales growth opportunity.

> *"The challenge with catering lies in building an operational culture centered on growing occasion based sales."*

Because "pizza delivery" is so ingrained into the operating DNA of pizzeria operators they already understand the subtleties of successful product distribution when their products are going to be consumed outside the four walls of their restaurants.

For decades, these restaurant operators have achieved sales success in the off-premise space in regard to the delivery component of their businesses, and consumers already understand that the pizza segment in general are experts at delivery services.

So trust between consumer and their favorite pizzeria is already high. They know the food will arrive on time, every time!

Now that we have established that distribution is a key element towards success in building an off-premise service experience allow me to bring your attention to the opportunity at hand.

I believe that based on current consumer demand, the pizza segment is in a perfect position to help the restaurant industry define what the difference is between "catering services" and "takeout services". Both of these experiences can be available for "pickup" or "delivery".

One customer, selecting from two off premise service channels using very different buying decisions.

Your customers will buy for different reasons, depending on the need they are trying to fill.

Of course there are the surface items of differentiation that we can all see. Such as reformulating packaging and menu items. Sure there is the opportunity to focus on a subset of products for a catering program. Lasagna by the pan. Caesar salad by the bowl. Desserts by the tray. Cheese by the platter. And on and on we go.

Although product changes are a critical part of defining a proper differentiation of services, the real work that has to get done is the re-engineering of the pizzeria operators business processes including catering sales, catering order entry, catering manufacturing, catering distribution and catering technology systems. The entire conversation with the consumer is completely different when it comes to catering. It's just different. But not in a small way. In a BIG way!

Today, pizzerias have all the raw materials that they need to reformulate their product offerings. In addition, pizzerias have the "distribution trust" from the consumer. They know you will be on time, every time if your distribution engine is working well.

The challenge with catering lies in building an operational culture centered on growing occasion based sales.

Educating your customers on the different service channels and letting them know that you have alternative services to help feed them where they Live, Work and Play, will be the real work that pizzeria operators will have to face. It will require a deep

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commitment to internal training and a clear vision of differentiation and leadership.

> *"As pizzeria operators, you will need to take a stand and tailor your products and language around the consumer demand."*

Once the paradigm shift is made in the minds of pizzeria operators, catering will present the largest growth opportunity that the pizza segment may have seen in the last 30 years!

I've always maintained that through the establishment of a successful catering and off-premise business, restaurant operators have the chance to increase revenue by up to 20 percent. I believe there is even more potential for pizzeria operators, given their position in the marketplace. A focus on business-to-business relationships will boost their lunch business, and that will make better use of idle assets.

Now, I have to remember that I am writing this post for pizzeria experts. And so, I pose a question? When is pizza a "takeout" delivery and when is pizza a "catering" delivery? No doubt, there are gazillion ideas on this, but I believe that it's all about the buying decision of the consumer. That's where the differentiation is.

As pizzeria operators, you will need to take a stand and tailor your products and language around the consumer demand. For that, you will be rewarded BIG!

But remember, catering requires its own set of conversational ordering, invoicing, accounts The Get Catering and Grow Sales!™ System receivable and marketing initiatives that create the subtle nuances of running any business. Catering is a different business! If you give your customers another reason to buy, and tell the story of catering properly focused on a different demand, your customers will spend more money with you. Don't forget to train your people in the language of catering. In the end, they are on the front line and have to keep your customers happy! Invest in your catering program today and experience the power of this growth opportunity!

Let's talk catering.

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About The Catering Institute

The Catering Institute is a leading educator in takeout, delivery and catering, providing training, certification and consulting to restaurant operators and their teams.

The Catering Institute is a private, independent academic institution. Led by founder and CEO Erle Dardick, the faculty at the Catering Institute is passionate about helping brands excel at feeding their customers where they Live, Work & Play™.

Learn more:
www.cateringinstitute.com

About Erle Dardick

Erle Dardick is a restaurant catering veteran, business turn-around expert and author, best known for helping multi-unit restaurant executives create successful catering revenue channels. Erle founded both MonkeyMedia Software and The Catering Institute. He is also the Author of "Get Catering and Grow Sales! A Strategic Perspective for The Multi-Unit Restaurant Executive."

Get Catering and Grow Sales!™

A Strategic Perspective for the Multi-Unit Restaurant Executive

By **Erle Dardick**

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As Partners in Education, MonkeyMedia Software, PepsiCo Foodservice, and Catering Insights work with the Catering Institute, to help restaurant operators grow sales and increase profits by educating them to become experts at feeding their customers where They Live, Work and Play™.

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