



OPEN TO CHANGE

By Peter Thor, BFC

There are really only two paths to choose in any business; the first being to stay doing exactly what you've been doing; and the other is to be constantly evolving and open to change. The strength of the first path focuses on what you do well. Sometimes called "core values" or "core competencies", they form the foundation of every company's culture and way of operating. In the restaurant and food business specifically, consistent delivery of your product is absolutely required for success. There are many alternative types of pizza and concepts for selling the food to consumers, but each unique business must consistently deliver on their "promise" to have long term customer appeal.

A problem is created, however, when one falls into the trap of "we've always done it that way" thinking, which blocks creative and innovative opportunities. Visits with many successful restaurateurs and growing chains reveal a common formula for success: to grow and thrive in this business requires innovation, perhaps better described as evolution. In the 1980's the Japanese word "Kaizen" (meaning good change) really defined the practice of continuous improvement which is almost universally employed by leading companies in many industries.

Extreme competition in the pizza industry does not leave much room for error as evidenced by the rise and fall of so many. As a result, we see too many operators who do not want to consider any change and whom are afraid not just of the unknown effects, but also of the time and effort required to make the change. While some new concepts have been introduced, most restaurants doing well are growing organically by continuous improvement and responding to what they perceive as their target customer wants. While online ordering and take-out efficiency may be important to those serving customers desiring speed over food quality, it clearly won't fit those innovating with freshness, natural ingredients, and custom-made pies. Most chains are investing heavily in online ordering and other digital efficiency applications. But others, particularly the independents and growing smaller

(continued on page 2)

DISTINGUISH YOUR FLAVOR FROM YOUR COMPETITION

By Peter Thor, BFC

In an increasingly competitive market, distinguishing your product has become vital to gain customer loyalty and build your business. Every operator works hard to develop the taste they intend to attach their name to, but if you're not in the kitchen are you always comfortable that's being achieved? One of the most often overlooked factors in doing so is ensuring you use high quality ingredients... specifically spices.

Spices drive the flavor of your products, whether adding to pre-made or an item you are making from scratch. Choosing to use a

(continued on page 3)

MARKET UPDATE

Dairy	PRICE	LAST MONTH	DIFF
Cheese Blocks	\$1.510	\$1.814	(\$0.304)

The USDA is calling for 2024 milk production to be up 1.0 percent (y/y). Historically, the cheese and butter markets don't usually decline until mid-May.

Beef	PRICE	LAST MONTH	DIFF
50% Trimmings	\$1.994	\$1.506	\$0.488

Year-to-date beef output is running 4.7 percent less than a year ago, which is a smaller deficit than the USDA's forecasted H1 2023 decline of 5.1 percent (y/y). Total beef supplies (minus exports) in 2024 are projected to be down 6.8 percent (y/y).

Poultry	PRICE	LAST MONTH	DIFF
Wings (Jumbo)	\$0.879	\$1.029	(\$0.150)

Per capita egg consumption for 2023 is estimated to be 2.2 percent stronger (y/y). Seasonality, chicken breast prices usually peak in late May and chicken tenders in mid-August, while wing prices bottom in May.

As of 5/19/23

OPEN TO CHANGE *(cont. from page 1)*

chains, are achieving excellent growth by focusing on the food, service, and engaging with their customers.

Key features of high performing, high growth pizza stores include:

- Mobile ordering and mobile payment apps
- Efficient home delivery options
- Customized fast casual
- Premium and innovative ingredients; new flavors
- Natural, fresh, and local sourced ingredients
- Local and community engagement
- Combining pizza with other popular trends

Independent pizzerias are often at the top of consumer's list of favorite local eateries. Independents cannot compete effectively in either "cheap pizza" or technology because they simply lack the scale to do so. But local independents have many options with which to develop strong local customers. Leveraging strengths such as local ownership and tailoring the menu and store to the local community are competitive advantages. Many menu and service options are simply not available to large chain franchisees.

Another local independent strength not often considered is the ability to make decisions quickly and locally. The ability to adapt to a new trend is important. So too is the ability to thoughtfully consider whether an idea fits with the culture and persona of the pizzeria. Better decision making at the local level and the ability to quickly react based on customer feedback is a wonderful advantage. Freshening the menu and involving customers via feedback are two terrific means of creating this all important competitive difference.

Buying local is a trend sure to gain importance within the independents. It not only provides unique menu and marketing options, but it engages with the local community and helps bring new and loyal customers. Consider that chains are essentially prevented from buying local because of their need for consistency in product throughout the country and also the scale on which they buy. As a result, only mass produced products available nationwide may be considered for ingredients. Of course this is another reason for operators to purchase from Bellissimo distributors and not chain restaurant depots or broadline distributors (which primarily sell the chains); otherwise, your ingredient products will be the same quality and you'll lose the ability to truly create a successful differentiation of your pizzeria.



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The advertisement features a large, appetizing pizza with melted cheese and toppings on the right side. On the left, there is a pile of shredded cheese. The background is a light, textured surface with fresh tomatoes and basil leaves in the top right corner.



**VERSATILE
FOR ANY MENU**

The advertisement shows a plate of food including two chicken sandwiches on buns with lettuce, a side of waffle fries, and a small cup of ketchup. A glass of water is visible on the right. The background is a dark wooden table.



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DISTINGUISH YOUR FLAVOR FROM YOUR COMPETITION *(cont. from page 1)*

Bellissimo high quality spice helps achieve that. Here's a few tips help select which quality of spices is right for you:

- **Using a high-quality spice** both in the kitchen and on the table is one way to ensure the flavor profile you intend to provide for your customer. Not only will your product become more consistent, but you'll reduce your costs by doing so. How? Higher quality spices have a higher volatile oil (V.O.) concentration, enabling you to use less and still get the same performance. A lower performing spice, with lower V.O. is often sold for a discounted price at depot stores but becomes more costly by using a larger quantity.
- **Decide on an accurate way to measure the ingredients.** Often words phrases like "a pinch of basil" or "dash of oregano" get echoed around the kitchen. If it's important for you to grow your business locations, you may look to have your recipe custom blended for the consistency you're looking for. Custom blended spices offer peace of mind when the staff is preparing food.
- **Check for freshness.** Higher quality spices often have a code on the bottle or label, establishing when they were processed. If a code isn't present, crush a small amount of the herb or spice in your hand. Spices with higher V.O content will have deep color and immediate aroma. Be sure to look for consistency in grinds of black pepper and garlic, often "fillers" can be added to this product giving a dust-like appearance.

By partnering with a Bellissimo distributor for all of your spice needs, you are guaranteeing the highest quality spices and ingredients sourced from around the globe, which in turn, provides you with the result you have been looking for.... your flavor, your distinction.

Contact your local Bellissimo distributor for a sample of Bellissimo Spices today.



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Open to Change
- Distinguish Your Flavor From Your Competition
- Market Report



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