



Pizzeria Operator Case Study:



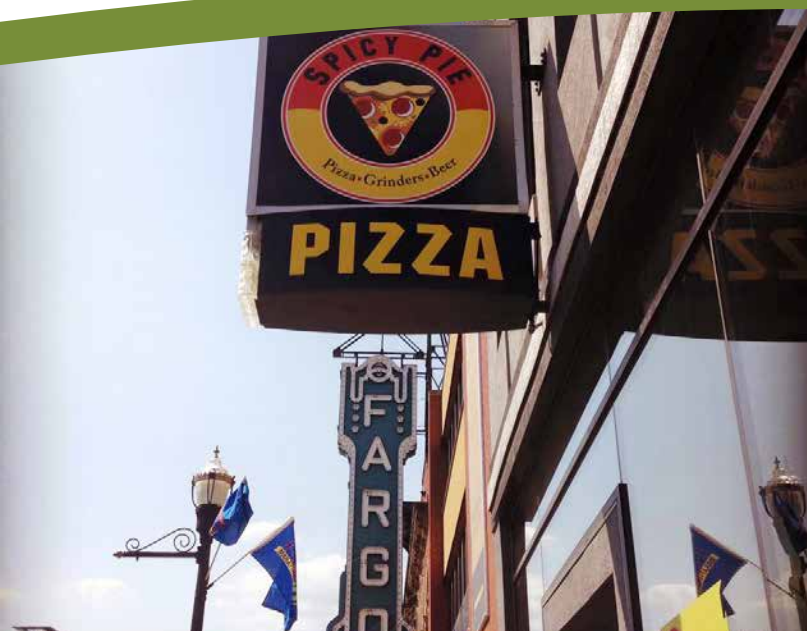
Spicy Pie

Custom Dough Balls and Training Solve a Growing Pizza Shop's Quality Issues

BACKGROUND

Spicy Pie got its start as a small pizza place in the heart of downtown Fargo, North Dakota. As the popularity of its New York style pizza with hand-tossed dough and fresh ingredients grew, so did the company.

The demand prompted the expansion to four locations throughout Fargo and surrounding cities. With the addition of each shop, Spicy Pie faced the challenge of maintaining consistency in the quality, flavor, and execution of their pizza dough. Customers noticed, and the company's management and owners knew they needed to do something so growth could continue.





CHALLENGE

Each of Spicy Pie's four locations made its own hand-tossed dough, and despite efforts to create uniformity from one operation to the next, the quality couldn't be replicated. In addition to varying weights and measurements, some of their scratch-made dough balls had inconsistent proofing and rising. In addition, some of the finished crusts were tough and chewy, and still others had poor browning and lacked flavor. The issues resulted in excessive waste system-wide.

Spicy Pie began exploring the option of using pre-made dough balls and whether it might help standardize their dough-making process. The owners, however, were concerned about a manufacturer replicating the flavor, texture and quality of their original recipe, but they knew something needed to be done to create consistency and quality across their locations.

SOLUTION

Spicy Pie reached out to Alive & Kickin' Pizza Crust to discuss their performance issues and to see if they could be addressed with either pre-made crusts or dough balls. The Dough Shop® experts at Alive & Kickin' quickly responded and arranged a visit to the restaurant headquarters in Fargo to see its operation.

The Dough Shop team from A&K conducted a thorough assessment of Spicy Pie:

- Reviewed the dough recipe
- Got hands-on in the kitchen alongside Spicy chefs to make their dough
- Observed how their team mixed, proofed and tossed their dough
- Oversaw the baking process
- Tasted the final product
- Gathered samples to bring back to A&K to ensure accuracy while formulating a custom dough ball recipe to match



Providing More than Product – Don't Forget the Process!

In addition to participating in the making of its dough, the Dough Shop team from A&K evaluated Spicy Pie's kitchen operating procedures. Their consultant discovered several revealing practices that impacted the quality of the final product and increased costs, including:

- Improper proofing and handling of dough
- Inconsistent temperatures in walk-in coolers
- Storage too close to cooler doors, allowing warm air to rush over dough balls
- Excessive labor and work compensation costs as a result of using high-risk dough mixers

Alive & Kickin' helped develop standard operating procedures and provided on-site training to kitchen staff who'd be handling the new frozen dough balls – proper storage, proofing, hand-tossing, and baking. This, in addition to the pre-made product itself, helped solve inconsistencies and improve customer satisfaction at each Spicy Pie location.

The food scientists back at Alive & Kickin' worked diligently to develop a custom formulation that would provide the same texture, quality and unique flavor profiles of the original Spicy Pie recipe. When the owners and management at Spicy Pie tested and tasted the results, they were thrilled with the consistency and flavor.

RESULTS

Alive & Kickin' supplied Spicy Pie with a premium quality product, helped develop SOPs and provided onsite training for its entire pizza-making staff and management, as well as dedicated ongoing support to ensure maintenance and the best results possible.

Since beginning its partnership, Spicy Pie has grown to seven locations throughout North Dakota with plans for continued expansion, and its customer satisfaction ratings improved significantly along with a 10-12% increase in sales.

Dough Shop by Alive & Kickin' Pizza Crust Partnership Results:



IN THE KITCHEN

- Convenience and easy preparation of frozen custom dough balls
- Reduced labor costs, allowing workers to perform other important duties
- Consistency across locations – uniform weight, shape, size of dough balls; consistent quality, flavor, and texture of finished crust
- Less mess and inventory – no heavy bags of flour, salt, sugar, yeast, etc.
- Less clutter and more available prep space
- Less waste and improved food costs



IN THE DINING ROOM

- Increased customer satisfaction and engagement
- Quick improvement in sales



IN THE OFFICE

- Continued education provided by Alive & Kickin' for new Spicy Pie employees
- Documentation of standard operating procedures
- Improved employee satisfaction and retention
- Increased profits
- Ability to focus on company growth and community involvement instead of dough dilemmas

Spicy Pie has been able to continue hand tossing each custom pizza dough ball to perfection, topping it with the finest ingredients to produce a made-to-order New York style pizza that can't be replicated in the Fargo area...but it can be replicated at each of its franchise locations thanks to the partnership with Alive & Kickin'!



CONCLUSION

Alive & Kickin's ability to offer convenience, consistent performance, cost savings and in-house training won over Spicy Pie, and its dedication to continuing education and customer satisfaction are what has helped establish their long-term alliance.

To learn how Alive & Kickin' Pizza Crust can help your operation achieve consistent results and fuel growth through [custom dough balls](#), reach out to one of our experts today for a [free consultation](#).

