

HOW TO SELL MORE PIZZA AND MAXIMISE YOUR PROFITS DURING PEAK PERIODS

SF
STURDY
FOODS



HOW TO SELL MORE PIZZA AND MAXIMISE YOUR PROFITS DURING PEAK PERIODS

Pizza is and probably always will be one of the most popular menu items any food business can sell. Pizza is the most popular food eaten in restaurants in the UK and is unique in its popularity as well as its ability to be adapted to different tastes and diets. It also just happens to be one of the highest margin products you can sell.



So it would make sense to say you want to be able to serve as much of it as possible, right? One problem that can occur during busy periods is capacity constraints which can lead to slow service. If you have a peak period, say during high season or particularly busy weekend nights and a lot of diners order pizza at the same time, how can you get them all served quickly and efficiently and avoid upset customers?

Remember that speed of service is a huge factor in the overall customer satisfaction levels that your business needs to ensure repeat custom and good online reviews. The overall picture a customer paints of your business is based as much on speed and quality of service as anything else. Slow or inefficient service makes it far less likely that a customer will return, losing your business vital revenue and profit. The more quickly and efficiently you can make your pizza and get it served, the more profitable your business will be in the long run.

So how can you improve your system, serve more pizza and keep your customers coming back for more?

Here are some ideas about how to review your current kitchen system and where there may be room for improvement.

Cycle Time

Measure your 'cycle time' for making a pizza. Time this from the moment a chef starts to prepare the pizza to the moment it has been plated up ready to be served. How long is each pizza taking at each stage? Stretching the dough, putting on toppings and cooking? Are there any parts of this process that can be improved?

Some examples we have seen where improvements have been made include a chef using a ladle that was too small for the amount of sauce that was going on each pizza. He was having to put 2 ladle's worth of sauce on each pizza, wasting valuable time at busy periods. The solution? Buy a ladle that could fit the amount of sauce required for 1 pizza! Very obvious, but sometimes these things become normal and a fresh perspective can see inefficiencies that a chef hasn't even considered.

Another example was a restaurant where it was taking a chef nearly two minutes to roll out each pizza base using a rolling pin, which not only took too long but was reducing the quality of the dough by knocking all the air out of it. He was also operating the oven and when we timed the total cycle time from him receiving an order to putting on a plate, it was over seven minutes! Not a good start point for a busy service! By doing some training on how to hand stretch the dough more efficiently as well as increasing the temperature on the oven a little, we helped him get the cycle time down to 4.5 minutes. That's 35% quicker than previously. During busy periods this means an extra 35% of pizza can be made and sold, not to mention the increased benefits in customer satisfaction through improvements in speed of service.



Observing your chefs preparing and serving pizza is an essential start point to identifying areas for improvement in your system. You are looking for it to be a quick and efficient process that guarantees consistency for the customer. One further suggestion would be to ensure that cheese usage is tightly controlled by using a small cup that fits the correct amount of cheese inside it for the pizza. Allowing chefs to portion cheese by eye will lead to lost profit as well as inconsistency for your customers.

Remember. Aim to **WOW your customer, every time.** Successful restaurants always do this. And you can be one of them.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING CYCLE TIME

- ▶ If finding chefs skilled enough to stretch dough properly is an issue, consider a pizza press. These come in a variety of forms including hot and cold presses. Hot presses work by squeezing together 2 plates where you place a dough ball in-between which flattens the dough ball into a disc ready for topping. There can be a small reduction in quality, but other benefits can more than compensate for this including better consistency, less reliance on skilled labour and reducing your cycle time considerably. Remember speed and consistency are huge factors in customer satisfaction. At Sturdy Foods, our dough balls have been extensively tested with various pizza presses and are set up to give great results using a press.
- ▶ Using a part-baked pizza base at busy times. At Sturdy Foods, we have developed a part-baked sourdough pizza base designed to cook a perfect pizza in any pizza oven. The benefit here is that you eliminate any requirement for stretching out dough and you do not need any extra equipment. Your cycle time can be massively reduced using this option with a fully topped pizza able to be served within 3-4 minutes. You could even consider having these as a back up, either as a contingency in case your run out of dough or to bring in at peak periods when your capacity comes under pressure.
- ▶ Review your menu options. A large unwieldy menu can cause havoc at peak periods. If chefs have too many ingredients and toppings to deal with, it will slow down service, particularly if they are unable to be all kept within reach. Keep things as simple as you can. Overcomplex menus lead to slower service, higher stress in employees and lower overall customer satisfaction.



To find out how we could potentially help you attract more customers or for any other queries related to this guide, call us on 01765 641 200 or email info@sturdyfoods.co.uk