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## PIZZA OPERATORS ARE MAKING DOUGH GROW

Competition within the Pizza Industry is fierce! The number of dollars that the customers, in your market area, are going to spend is limited. To grow your business, you are going to have to take customers away from your competition. That's where a sound marketing plan comes in.

"After all these years, it's nice to reinvigorate your love for your business," says John McNulty, Shakey's Pizza licensee. McNulty's family has owned and operated the El Monte, California Shakey's Pizza restaurant since 1964. "I purchased the restaurant from my father in 1989. Until five months ago, our marketing efforts were limited. In recent years, advertising rates have dramatically increased. We haven't been able to keep up, and our marketing dollars have been buying fewer ads. We also focused on the local schools, which has been a combination community service and marketing campaign. Mostly our efforts focused on rewarding students for things like reading, attendance and citizenship," adds McNulty.

But all that has changed, "Our first marketing campaign using the restaurant marketing software began soon after Thanksgiving, and the results were overwhelming. I was stunned! It far exceeded my expectations," says McNulty. McNulty offered a "Photo with Santa Party." School children were invited to participate in a coloring contest and to stop by the restaurant for a free photo with Santa. Winners of the contest were to get a super-sized Christmas stocking packed full of fun toys. Other prizes such as DVDs and a DVD player were also given.

"We wanted to create an event that would bring customers into the restaurant with the hopes to establish goodwill in our community and to obtain marketing contact information from those who participated. From that event alone, we were able to enter 500 families into our database. The goal is to discover who our top 500 to 1,000 guests are so that we can target market to them. This has opened up a whole new avenue for me."

Customers from the "Photo with Santa Party" were encouraged to join the restaurant's VIP program. The incentives for joining included certificates for a free pizza and other VIP benefits. From the data gathered for the VIP program, McNulty now has developed a Birthday and Anniversary Program.

"This has also opened our eyes to the tremendous potential of business to business marketing. Now I have hired a woman to handle our neighborhood business marketing. She is making contacts with local businesses and opening the doors for potential catering, morning meetings, business luncheons and delivery opportunities. By marketing to businesses, we have already hooked up with a huge car dealership and are delivering food once or twice a week for luncheon parties and meetings. We can already see that there is a lot of potential," says McNulty.

McNulty continues, "The restaurant marketing software is easy to use: I have really enjoyed the restaurant marketing manuals that come with the software. They have hundreds of great "tried and true" marketing ideas. I've also appreciated the individual coaching sessions, which we do over the phone every week. We have lots on the horizon such as our Uniform Day. For that, we've invited recruiters from all the armed services as well as the local fire and police departments. They will each set up recruiting stations in our parking lot. We're advertising through the local high schools. It feels good to be a part of the community, and we know that it will come back to help our business grow."

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