Case Study

The Slice Pizzeria Serves Big Pies and Earns Bigger Sales with HungerRush® Online Ordering

Estel Powell and business partner Ashley Gilmer may be new restaurant owners, but they are quick learners when it comes to cultivating business success. Since taking over ownership of The Slice Pizzeria in late 2019, sales have grown by over 25%.

With no dine-in seating, The Slice Pizzeria caters to a delivery and take-out clientele. Boasting the largest pizza in town, a full 18-inches in diameter with a crust that weighs over two pounds, The Slice Pizzeria serves Hahira, GA and surrounding communities with great pizza made from fresh dough and cheese, marinara that is blended in-house, and toppings sourced from the local farmer's market.

Challenge

When Estel took over the pizzeria, he prioritized improvements he wanted to make. While sales had been lagging for some time, the brand was strong, and patrons loved the pizza. Estel decided not to make any menu changes, however he did set out to improve food quality and streamline operations.

Implementing a new POS system was on Estel's list of priorities. The legacy point-of-sale relied on a third-party online ordering system that was cumbersome and lacked flexibility. When a customer mistakenly entered a $500 tip on a check and Estel could not get the charge reversed until days later, he knew it was time to make a change.
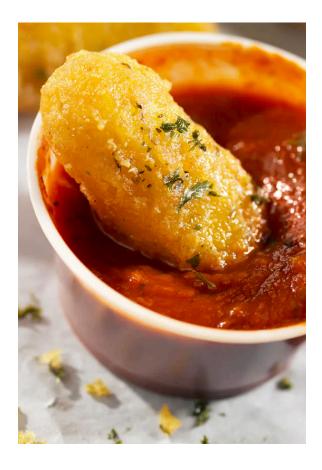
Customer
The Slice Pizzeria

Challenge
Grow sales through online ordering to reduce labor costs and improve profitability; improve delivery efficiency by leveraging technology

Solution
Implement the HungerRush POS system with HungerRush online ordering and delivery, utilizing the integrated Google Maps features to improve delivery speed and accuracy.

Estel was aware of POS systems from Toast and Speedline but was not aware of HungerRush until scrolling through posts in a discussion forum hosted by PMQ Pizza Magazine. After completing a system demo, Estel was impressed with the flexible purchasing options that included the integrated HungerRush online ordering and liked the monthly SaaS model. "The pricing was close among all three, but the financial opportunity with HungerRush was a lot more attractive. A competitor wanted me to pay 50% up front and for small restaurants like ours, that is not practical," says Estel.

The Results

Estel moved quickly to on-board the HungerRush system and set out to educate his customer base on the advantages of online ordering. "Our first week was a bit bumpy. We were training customers to use the online ordering features instead of calling in, but our phone lines were still backed up. It was not a good customer experience and we got some bad reviews about slow service," Estel remembers.

Once the staff at The Slice Pizzeria became fully trained on the new system, sales took off! "We planned on Monday through Wednesday nights to be our slow days, but it got pretty crazy. On some days, our sales increased more than 250%," adds Estel.

With 65% of revenue coming from delivery, Estel was eager to leverage more features in the HungerRush POS to improve efficiency. The staff at The Slice Pizzeria quickly learned to use HungerRush's Google Maps integration to coordinate deliveries during busy times.

With HungerRush's Google Maps integration The Slice Pizzeria can:

- Group deliveries in the same area to increase driver efficiency
- Boost delivery location accuracy
- Improve customer experience with faster delivery times
- Deliver a better product with fresher, hotter pizzas

Working in the pizzeria's command center, Estel busily facilitates and expedites deliveries as the orders roll in. "After highlighting four or five orders coming up, I pull up the Google Maps integration to see where the delivery locations are and assign drivers with deliveries," adds Estel. "It's like air traffic control with HungerRush!"

Unfortunately, first-time customer orders are sometimes slowed when addresses are entered incorrectly during the online ordering process. Estel has made it a priority to ensure that his drivers correct bad addresses by entering updates

into HungerRush's built-in CRM database. "We want to be sure that the next time a customer orders from us, we don't have any missteps in delivery," adds Estel. He also takes advantage of HungerRush's alternate address feature to gain efficiency. "Because we are in a small town, customers order when they are at family gatherings or other locations. We may have a customer that wants an order delivered to their relative's house or another location. We can store the various addresses in HungerRush to speed up ordering, and the POS lets us add specific delivery instructions into a "notes" section to supplement Google Maps information and further improve delivery accuracy.

The reporting and analytics provided by the HungerRush system has helped improve restaurant profitability. "The reporting dashboard is very helpful. I can monitor sales volume and labor percentage in real-time. Depending on traffic, I can reduce staffing levels to help keep labor costs optimal," says Estel.

Summary

With sales rapidly trending up, Estel's objective is to solve some budding logistical and operational challenges. A new industrial refrigerator is in the works to ensure that dough can be made in advance and prepped for forecasted busy nights.

The staff at The Slice Pizzeria is learning how to use the advanced features that the new POS system has to offer. According to Estel, "We are training the staff to push items with high markup to improve profitability. The HungerRush POS system help us do that with built in suggestive selling."

The Slice Pizzeria's goal is to move every customer to online ordering, and Estel is offering coupons as incentives. "Customers that are ordering online produce higher ticket sales, reduce order errors, free up my staff to do other tasks, and reduce overall costs," adds Estel.

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