

Captain Tony's Pizza & Pasta Emporium

accommodating the every want and wish of the patron. As soon as the customer walks through the door, he or she is greeted by a friendly face. Employees help carry take-out orders to the car. And there are the occasional bonus surprises like free NFL cups for football fans.

The guarantee of customer satisfaction translates into the Captain Tony's promise as stated on the front of every menu: "If you are not

happy with our product for any reason, we will REFUND your money or replace the product." All the customer has to do is return half the item on the day purchased. This promise also extends to other circumstances. If you drop your order or cannot eat it for one reason or another, it's replaced—no problem.

"The best advertising is word of mouth," says Michael J. "Why mass market something if you don't have to?" According to the Martellas the franchise has developed a unique market-

ing strategy that nearly tripled the sales in Palmdale, California during an economically depressed period for that area. However, the details of the system remain privy to franchise insiders.

In characterizing the nature of their operations Michael J. says, "It's really a neighborhood type thing." Stores are run by neighborhood people for neighborhood people and, very importantly, the money stays in the community where it belongs. ➤

Equipment

Oven: Lincoln

Mixer: Hobart

Dough Prep Table: Beverage Air

Coolers: Beverage Air

Delivery Equipment

Car Top Signs: ICC Fabrication

Hot Bags: Hank Rivera & Associates

Food Distributors

Cheese and Meat: Leprino Foods

Sauce: Red Pack

Beverages: Coca-Cola



Pizza Maker of the Month

Captain Tony's Pizza, Inc. gives new meaning to the old-fashioned creed of quality, service and value. With 19 locations in four states and overseas in Great Britain, this dynamic little franchise has taken its concept of the neighborhood pizzeria to international levels. The goal is for each store to be a personable, neighborhood business—owned and operated by members of the community.

"You should never forget where you come from," says Michael J. Martella, president and C.E.O. His father, Antonio Martella, opened the first Captain Tony's Pizza and Pasta Emporium in 1972. It was a family business where ev-



Each Captain Tony's is owned and operated by a member of the community.

eryone pitched in to give a hand. Michael says he knew his dad's pizza was good. But he didn't realize just how good it was until he left the nest.

While attending college and pursuing a career as a stockbroker, Michael had the opportunity to journey across the country and sample a variety of pizzas. "I couldn't find anything as good as my father's," he explains. His cousin Michael H. Martella, an attorney, found the same to be true in his travels.

Realizing they had access to an exceptional product, Michael J. and Michael H. entered a business partnership in 1985 to expand Captain Tony's Pizza nationwide. They sought advice from franchise consultant Lou Gurnick who explained the best way to grow with little capital investment was by franchising.

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by Jeaneen Aldridge

In 1987 the team began selling franchises for Captain Tony's Pizza and Pasta Emporiums. Michael J. is quite open and upfront about his early franchising experience. "We started selling franchises quick and for a short period we were caught up in a chain mentality. But we grew up fast."

Growing up meant an expanded menu that offered more variety and

healthy portions at reasonable prices. "I don't believe people want it simple," explains Michael J. "They want freshness, quality and value." The franchise team strives to offer all this with a service-oriented approach that puts the customer first.

At Captain Tony's a large pizza still means a 16" pie topped off with 100% mozzarella cheese. And just in case a

large isn't big enough, the menu offers 18" by 26" sheet pizzas for parties and large gatherings. The pizza comes in three varieties: New York thin crust, Chicago style deep dish and stuffed between two crusts; plus wheat dough can be substituted for the regular crust upon request.

Gourmet specialties like garlic pizza, pesto pizza, barbecue chicken pizza and the Captain's Mexican Delight™ extend the horizon of tempting possibilities for the customer's dining choices. But the menu doesn't stop here. It offers calzones, salads, at least a dozen different types of subs, pasta entrees, four varieties of chicken wings, regular and cajun-style steak fries, hamburgers, roasted chicken dinners and hot sticks (strips of bread smothered in seasoning).

Why so much variety? Because, as

have a child who is allergic to cheese," Michael J. suggests as an example. "We'll make him a pizza that's half cheese and half no cheese—if that's the way he wants it!"

The Martellas also take a great deal of pride in the fact that nothing on their menu is fried and everything is prepared homemade fresh. Michael J. maintains that it's not all that difficult to offer an extensive assortment of freshly prepared menu items. It only requires a few basic ingredients and a little imagination.

As an added attraction all the Captain Tony's Pizza and Pasta Emporiums in the United States feature five or six flavors of Ben & Jerry's ice cream. "We wanted to offer a dessert item that was a little different from the standard fare,"

corn and tuna fish."

Great Britain now has Captain Tony's locations in London, York and Wallasey. Lou Gurnick helped with the overseas expansion by putting the Martellas in touch with interested parties in England. In June of 1988 they sold a master franchise for the United Kingdom to Alekhine, Ltd., a British-based corporation.

With the master franchise contract, a party (such as Alekhine, Ltd.) pays an upfront fee to cover the costs of training, etc. and agrees to represent the corporation in that area. "They are basically us," says Michael J. In return the holder of the master franchise receives 2/3 of the franchise fees and royalties generated within their region.

The franchise offers a number of different types of store plans, ranging from small take-out and delivery services to

Captain Tony's Pizza, Inc.

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2990 Culver Road

Rochester, New York 14622

Phone: (716) 467-2250/(800) 332-TONY

Year Founded: 1972

Number of Stores: 19

Trading Area: New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, California and Great Britain

Estimated Annual Sales: \$5.5 million

Labor Cost: 18%-25%

Food Cost: 30%-35%

Advertising Budget: 2%-5%

Average Dinner Check: \$8-\$14

Food Service: Varies according to location—take-out and delivery, self-service with limited seating, full-service dining with large capacity seating and catering

Number of Employees: 8-20 per take out and delivery unit and 30-60 for seated dining units

Menu: Pizza, pasta, subs, chicken wings, hamburgers, salads and party trays

Beverages: All locations serve Coca-Cola products; some offer beer and wine.

Owners: Michael J. Martella, President and C.E.O.

Michael H. Martella, Vice President

Michael J. explains, Captain Tony's wants to cultivate a clientele of loyal customers who dine out three or four times a week. "We're not trying to reach the one-time customer who makes purchases based on coupon deals," Michael J. says. Instead, Captain Tony's is going into the neighborhoods to recruit patrons by trying to give them what they want.

The franchise's trademark slogan "Any Way You Want It" speaks to this commitment. "Say a customer might

says Michael, "and this is a quality product made by an American company. It goes over great!"

The locations in Great Britain carry Häagen-Dazs ice cream. But other than the difference in ice creams Michael J. says they have literally been able to duplicate the menu in England by shipping seasonings overseas. He adds, though, that some of the pizza toppings vary according to British tastes. "London does pizzas topped with things like



large full-scale dining establishments. At \$9,500 the franchise fee is one of the lowest around. According to Michael J. the total investment for a take-out and delivery unit can be as low as \$60,000. Franchise contracts extend to twenty years, so the 4.5% royalty fee remains constant for that period.

Some franchisees also enter area representative agreements. Under this type of contract the store owner agrees to train new franchisees in their region in exchange for half the franchise fee and a portion of the royalties (usually about 1/3%). "Instead of giving the job to someone else we give it to our people. It's good for us and good for them," says Michael J.

"We have a basic and focused system," he adds. "We keep costs down by being efficient." While Michael J. goes

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out to get business, Michael H. makes sure the business gets done. As an attorney Michael H. (they often call him "Michael the Attorney" to differentiate the business partners) handles all the franchise compliance regulations and legal affairs.

Michael J. devotes most weekdays to corporate affairs. Mornings mean going over supply lists, dealing with new product operations and new franchises, attending operations appointments and European affairs. Afternoons bring prospect franchising and California matters. It's a jam-packed schedule accomplished with the "can do" attitude which runs through the franchise in general.

When they are not busy with franchise business the Martellas are actively involved in running their own Captain Tony's Pizza and Pasta Emporiums (each has his own store in the Rochester area). On weekends—starting Friday nights, Michael J. can be found in his store unit, handling the typical day-to-day routines. He's in the kitchen, at the counter, and through the dining area—meeting and talking to customers. Simply stated, his philosophy goes: "Be successful; work very hard and stay on top of it."

"Somewhere along the line, this country forgot about the service aspect," he says. At Captain Tony's there is a strong emphasis on keeping the service up and

