

Research Project

Desiree' Doss

Hayven Stein

Jordan Alejandro

Italian Fast Food Restaurant!

Problem Statement

Our study aims to investigate a novel and stimulating idea: a quick-service Italian restaurant that serves delicious food and gets its ingredients from neighborhood community gardens. The purpose of this initiative is to reshape the fast food industry by demonstrating that offering healthy, locally sourced Italian food at a reasonable price is not only feasible but profitable in a time when convenience frequently takes precedence over quality and fast food usually implies unhealthy choices. The first step in bringing about a positive change in the fast-food industry, supporting local communities, encouraging sustainable culinary practices, and encouraging healthy living is this research project. It emphasizes providing access to healthful, reasonably priced, and delectable food. In the pages that follow, we will delve into the many facets of this ambitious project, exposing the opportunities, challenges, and strategies to pave the way for a website and prototype that will bring this vision to life.

Imagine a society where fast food is not associated with unhealthy, high-fat options. That's precisely what our Italian eatery aims to offer. Making delicious Italian food fast and with a healthy twist is our specialty. Our best-kept secret? Your meal will not only taste great but also benefit our neighborhood because we get all of our ingredients straight from the local community garden.

We are trying to address the problem of fast food restaurants being so commonplace and how often they serve unhealthy food that exacerbates conditions like obesity and heart disease. People are looking for healthier solutions more and more these days, even though it can be challenging to find something that is both useful and healthy. To make matters worse, it's hard to find fast food restaurants that offer fresh, locally sourced food.

Market Analysis

Our target market consists of people who care about their health and want to make healthier decisions without sacrificing convenience or flavor. This group includes those who value their health, time-constrained professionals in need of quick and filling meals, families looking for affordable, delicious, healthful options for the entire family, and individuals who take pleasure in promoting local food systems.

Our Italian fast-food restaurant will be a trailblazer in the food industry as customers search for less expensive and healthier substitutes for conventional fast food. Our menu will feature delectable and healthful Italian dishes that are prepared using fresh, regional ingredients. Additionally, we'll be dedicated to giving our patrons a convenient and reasonably priced dining experience.

We think there is room for our fast-food Italian restaurant to have a positive influence on both the community and the food industry. By offering our clients scrumptious and nutritious food options, we can contribute to a decrease in the occurrence of obesity and other chronic illnesses. We can lessen our influence on the environment and help local farmers and

businesses by sourcing our ingredients locally. Additionally, by generating employment and offering a satisfying dining experience, we can support the thriving of our neighborhood.

Financial Projections

Because our idea is cutting edge and not a single product or small business we must begin with some startup funding. Some revenue streams for our early-stage venture would include crowdfunding whether that would come from a GoFundMe, a donation-based crowdfunding, or events that would help get the word spread. An angel investor and institutional funding would be ideal as well considering there is so much required to begin our startup.

Because we are at the earliest stage of a startup there is no specific financial projection of revenue income, but there are implications to boost sales by having rewards systems and loyalty programs via mobile applications. According to Food Business News, McDonald's digital sales made up more than 30% of system-wide sales, totaling in over \$2 billion in sales first quarter alone! Another fast food chain whose reward programs on mobile applications help increase sales is Whataburger. Franchise Times Top 400, has recently ranked Whataburger 34 out of 400 based on system-wide sales, recognizing them as one of the top franchise fast food chains in the U.S. It could be that Whataburger's rewards program helps increase sales as every \$1 spent gets you 10 reward points where you can redeem for free food.

Diversity and Global Implications

When considering global implications and diversity with our start-up we like to gain a sense of inspiration from McDonald's innovativeness solely because McDonalds' is considered the most valuable fast food brand with an estimated brand value of 196.5 billion. So, McDonald's has over 36,000 restaurants worldwide, and more than half of their restaurants are outside of America. With that being said diverse and global populations are and can be a really

important aspect of their business and for ours as well. Because our business idea is a solution to quick, easy, and inexpensive Italian food, our goal is to allow customers of all ages, backgrounds, and countries to enjoy tasty food so conveniently.

Competition

When completing my research the only fast-food Italian food restaurant with a drive-thru was Fazoli's. They have 211 stores in 26 different states. Fazoli's was on a slow decline since 1999, having been sold twice since then, but because of the limited options during the pandemic sales have skyrocketed. The former CEO Carl Howard attributes their success to the recent remodeling and their new conversion agreements. But even with this information, it has been seen in San Marcos and Austin as well as some other cities that some of their locations are closing. From my research, I have determined what caused the fall of Fazoli's was the cost-cutting caused by bad management, but what allowed for their comeback was the low costs, especially during the pandemic, and the complete remodel. I also attribute their menu and lack of competition to their success.

While most other "fast food" Italian restaurants are sit-ins and lack drive-thrus, Fazoli's offers both opportunities. They also cut out the pizza chain competition by switching their menu to solely pasta and sandwiches in the early 2000s. This limited their competition to only sit-in "fast food" Italian-American restaurants, if the restaurant had continued to do what they were doing in the mid-1990s when their sales increased by over \$300,000 then they would still be a thriving business. The problem was the constant change in management and the cost-cutting. They got rid of their famous "breadstick ladies", switched to plastic tableware, had varying menus and the overall food quality dwindled. This contributed to a loss in customers and an overall decline in success leading to a slow descent to almost bankruptcy.

Potential Solutions

The solution that we are proposing is another fast food chain restaurant that serves Italian American food specializing in foods other than pizza while also adding fresh in grown herbs and spices. The resources needed would be a simple restaurant situated within a densely populated area (preferably an urban environment or a college town), food providers and transportation, a well-devised menu for fast but fresh food, a section of the restaurant closed off but available for view where trained employees would cultivate herb plants to add to the food and a well-functioning drive-thru. A good marketing team would allow us to reach our audience through promotion and make the restaurant seen throughout the community. Staying open late and/or 24/7 would also increase our customer count, especially in a college town like San Marcos.

Another solution that could work is a restaurant that serves Italian-American food specializing in foods other than pizza but also specializing in fast curbside, take out, and delivery. While most Italian-American restaurants have curbside, take out and delivery it is not the way that you are supposed to eat the food. The packaging can be bland and the food doesn't sit well in the containers whereas this new restaurant would make that a priority as inside seating would be limited. For example, Sonic but Italian-American food instead of American. The resources needed for this would be a simple restaurant situated within a densely populated area (preferably an urban environment or a college town), food providers and transportation, a well-devised menu for fast but fresh food, a section of the restaurant closed off but available for view where trained employees would cultivate herb plants to add to the food and a well functioning curbside, take-out, and delivery service.

Marketing Strategies

As has been mentioned throughout, McDonald's is an inspiration to how big we plan our franchise to become. When researching how much revenue McDonald's brings in, we took into consideration how marketing has helped them. From the famous golden arches on buildings, their silly clown mascot, and children's grounds, we decided that there were a few marketing strategies we can utilize to grow our business. Our restaurant will be known as the only flavorful fast-food Italian eats! With that being said Italian culture would play a large part of marketing, whether that would be food-related mascots or slogans with Italian implications. Have Italian customs, lifestyle, and traditions as part of marketing for mobile applications, commercials, and restaurants.

Limitations and Challenges

Some limitations that we might face because of human error are customer service issues, and the inability to grow fresh herbs in-house. While you can train your employees to provide the highest quality service there will still be situations where that service fails. Ways that we could work through this challenge is re-training employees every few months to keep them aware of the protocols and de-escalation skills. Another challenge we might face is an inability to grow herbs in-house. Growing plants and herbs can be difficult, especially in a fast-paced environment. That is why growing herbs in-house can be a real challenge. Some employees might not be able to properly cultivate the herbs to produce the highest quality. A way that we could work through this challenge is to specialize our managers and supervisors in plant care and make sure that they are the only employees able to interact with the herbs.

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