



Pizzeria Operator Case Study

SPICY PIE





Custom Dough Balls and Training Solve a Growing Pizza Shop's Quality Issues

THE **Skinny**

- Multiple locations meant consistency challenges
- Assessment by The Dough Shop® experts at Alive & Kickin'
- Formulate a custom dough ball recipe
- Onsite training unites all locations
- Increased sales and customer satisfaction



THE

Background

Spicy Pie got its start as a small pizza place in the heart of downtown Fargo, North Dakota. As the popularity of its New York style pizza with hand-tossed dough and fresh ingredients grew, so did the company.

The demand prompted the expansion to four locations throughout Fargo and surrounding cities. With the addition of each shop, Spicy Pie faced the challenge of maintaining consistency in the quality, flavor, and execution of their pizza dough. Customers noticed, and the company's management and owners knew they needed to do something so growth could continue.



THE

Challenges

Each of Spicy Pie's four locations made its own scratch-made, hand-tossed dough. Despite efforts to create uniformity among operations, the quality couldn't be replicated, which resulted in excessive waste system-wide, along with:

- Varying weights and measurements
- Inconsistent proofing and rising
- Finished crusts were tough and chewy
- Some crusts had poor browning and lacked flavor

Spicy Pie wondered if using pre-made dough balls would help standardize the dough-making process. Although ownership was concerned about a manufacturer replicating the flavor, texture, and quality of the original recipe, they knew something needed to be done to create consistency and quality across locations.

THE **Solution**

Spicy Pie reached out to Alive & Kickin' Pizza Crust. Experts at the Dough Shop® quickly arranged a visit to the restaurant headquarters in Fargo to:

- Review the dough recipe
- Work alongside Spicy Pie chefs to make the dough
- Observe how their team mixed, proofed, and tossed dough
- Oversee the baking process
- Taste the final product
- Gather samples to bring back to A&K



The food scientists at Alive & Kickin' worked diligently to develop a custom formulation that would provide the same texture, quality and unique flavor profiles of the original Spicy Pie recipe. When the owners and management at Spicy Pie tested and tasted the results, they were thrilled with the consistency and flavor.

Providing More than Product — Don't Forget the Process!

In addition to participating in the making of its dough, the Dough Shop® team from A&K evaluated Spicy Pie's kitchen operating procedures. Their consultant discovered several revealing practices that impacted the quality of the final product and increased costs, including:

- Improper proofing and handling of dough
- Inconsistent temperatures in walk-in coolers
- Storage too close to cooler doors, allowing warm air to rush over dough balls
- Excessive labor and work compensation costs as a result of using high-risk dough mixers

Alive & Kickin' helped develop standard operating procedures and provided onsite training to kitchen staff who'd be handling the new frozen dough balls — proper storage, proofing, hand-tossing, and baking. This, in addition to the pre-made product itself, helped solve inconsistencies and improve customer satisfaction at each Spicy Pie location.

THE Results



IN THE KITCHEN

- Convenience and easy preparation of custom pre-made dough balls
- Consistency across locations — dough ball weight, shape, size; finished crust quality, flavor, texture
- Reduced labor costs, allowing workers to perform other important duties
- Less clutter and more available prep space
- Less mess and inventory — no heavy bags of flour, salt, sugar, yeast, etc.
- Less waste and improved food costs



IN THE DINING ROOM

- Increased customer satisfaction and engagement
- Quick improvement in sales



IN THE OFFICE

- Increased profits
- Continued education provided by Alive & Kickin' for new Spicy Pie employees
- Documentation of standard operating procedures
- Ability to focus on company growth and community involvement
- Improved employee satisfaction and retention

Since beginning its partnership with Alive & Kickin', Spicy Pie has grown to **seven locations** throughout North Dakota with plans for continued expansion, and its customer satisfaction ratings improved significantly along with a **10-12% increase in sales**.



THE **Conclusion**

Alive & Kickin's ability to offer convenience, consistent performance, cost saving and in-house training won over Spicy Pie, and dedication to continuing education and customer satisfaction has helped establish their long-term alliance.

To learn how Alive & Kickin' Pizza Crust can help your operation achieve consistent results and fuel growth through [custom dough balls](#), reach out to one of our experts today for a [free consultation](#).

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