I want my customers back. Not just some of them. All of them!

By Shawn R. Brunelle

At the writing of this article "Phase 3" of New and Inspired has just started. Although, it's too early to analyze the long term success and impact of this bold new direction, the empirical evidence is very promising indeed. Sales are up nearly across the board and people both in and out of Domino's Pizza are jazzed about our product and are talking about it with great enthusiasm. But that doesn't mean everyone is excited. You have undoubtedly received a Customer Care Center email along the following lines: "I used to order pizza from you every week, but I hate your new recipe. I will never order from you again." Now you no doubt went to great lengths to keep that customer satisfied, but what about any similar customers that simply didn't take the time to let you know that you lost their business? How do you find those customers? Finding them on your Pulse system is next to impossible which is why in July 2006 we invented the MVP Customer Utility. It very succinctly tells you, "Hey this really good customer stopped calling you. Do something about it!"

Customers will stop ordering from you for one of several reasons: They die, they move, they didn't like the price, they didn't like the product, you took too long or they were treated badly. Not much you can do about the first two, but with New and Inspired you may have a greater concern than usual that the reason they stopped calling you is they didn't like the product – more specifically the product change. So let's talk about first how to identify those customers and then some specific strategies to create a product that will not just satisfy their palette, but quite literally make them a customer for life. As mentioned, finding these customers is easily achieved using the MVP Utility from Wizardline Technologies which is provided to you absolutely FREE as a dues paying member of the DFA. If you have not signed up for our program, you should follow the web address provided at the end of this article. If you are not yet a DFA member, here is another reason to join. This article will not cover all the technical details of using the utility as much as give a broad overview of its function. Rest assured there is ample documentation and training available on the site.

Because so many of our customers have multiple phone numbers, it is imperative that the MVP Utility works based upon the customer's address and not their phone number. This is why the utility consolidates multiple phone numbers down to the actual address. So, when I tell you that Joe Pepperoni of 123 Main Street has stopped ordering from you, you can be rest assured that they simply didn't get a new cell phone number. By default, the utility will compare your customers' orders over two consecutive five week periods. After running the utility, you are presented with a list of customers whose ordering pattern has declined by four or more orders within the last five weeks. An example will help clarify what I'm talking about. At the end of this article is a simplified version of what you will be shown - there is much more information available to you including address, phone numbers and even specific order details if you want or need it.

These five customers exemplify the power of the utility. What we are looking at is how these five customers ordered 6-10 weeks ago, labeled Previous Period, and how they have ordered in the current 0-5 weeks, labeled Current Period. These are some drastic changes. Steph went from ordering 12 times in five weeks to not even calling us! These five customers alone are responsible for over $850 in lost sales. Think how powerful it is to have this information for each of your stores. The obvious question is, "Now that I have this list, what do I do with it?" Although many strategies may come to mind, our recommendation is to pick up that phone and call the customer. It doesn't need to be any more complicated then, "We miss you. What did we do wrong?" Regardless of what strategy you choose, do something!

Your solution to their disappearance will vary depending on the reason they give you. Many customers will have no idea what you are talking about. They consciously did not choose to stop calling you. It just happened. But trust me, the fact that their business matters to you enough to warrant a personal call, will get them to order from you again sooner and more frequently then they would have otherwise so it wasn't a wasted call. But what if the customer had a specific incident that triggered their departure? Most of the solutions will be obvious and easily handled using standard customer service techniques. But what about the customer who doesn't like the core product changes we have just made? How do you handle them? For this solution, we turn to our friend Brian Edler who graciously allowed us to include his brilliant Domino's Dream Pizza idea. He has been fine tuning the initiative for the last 2-3 years and has successfully used it on 30-40 customers. After designing their Domino's Dream Pizza, those customers have spent more money and ordered more frequently then ever before. Brian has a specifically worded letter/email he uses to introduce the concept to his customers which you can read by following the web link at the end of the article.

At its core, the program is about educating the customer about the different types and combinations of crust, sauce and cheese that are available. But the rollout of New and Improved posed a new set of challenges to this formula. Some of the complaints are the direct result of the changes we have made. What are some of the solutions to be offered in those instances? With New and Improved most complaints are about the butter and garlic seasoning on the crust. Naturally omitting this after-bake addition solves that issue. Does the customer think the new sauce is too spicy? Have them try a pizza with lighter sauce or even hearty marinara instead. What if they don't like the provolone flavor of our new cheese? Brian offers the suggestion of a lighter portion of our current cheese along with the Parmesan/Asiago blend to top out the weight. This combination kills any hint of provolone. However, the success of the program is not necessarily the specific pizza you end up creating for the customer. Brian says it's mostly about letting the customer know we can specially make a pizza just for them and going the extra mile will keep that customer.

Store	Name	Previous Period			Current Period			Difference	
		# Ord	Sales	Avg $	# Ord	Sales	Avg $	# Ord	Sales
3219	STEPH	12	281.02	23.42	0	0.00	0.00	-12	-281.02
3219	MOARATTY	14	198.18	14.16	5	70.49	14.10	-9	-127.69
3219	SAMUEL	9	161.84	17.98	1	15.98	15.98	-8	-145.86
3219	MICHELLE	8	227.16	28.40	1	50.95	50.95	-7	-176.21
3219	JEANNE	9	154.41	17.16	2	33.48	16.74	-7	-120.93

Brian interviews each customer to find out their likes and dislikes of just not Domino's but any pizza they have ever eaten. He then works with them to design their Domino's Dream Pizza. All the testing is no charge to the customer and until they have tried at least ten different combinations, he doesn't give up. Once the Dream Pizza is discovered it gets noted in Pulse and that becomes the customer's standard order. That customer is now a customer for life.

There appears to be no doubt that New and Improved has had a tremendous sales effect in the short term with its long term success to be determined in the months and years ahead. I'm not sure I know of anyone who would prefer to role things back to last summer. Having said that, we have undoubtedly left both a literal and figurative bad taste in the mouths of a handful of our long-time customers. Using both the power of the MVP Utility and Brian Edler's Domino's Dream Pizza concept, you are able to easily identify and save those customers.

There are many more details and concepts that could not make it into this article. To continue your education on this subject and to find out how Wizardline Technologies can help you increase sales and profits through technology, visit **http:/www.TheWizardline.com/DFA.**