

# TOP 100

MOVERS & SHAKERS

2026

PRESENTED BY

 **HungerRush**<sup>TM</sup>





# TOP 100

MOVERS & SHAKERS

2026



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The 2026 Pizza Marketplace Top 100 Movers & Shakers.  
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The pizza industry in 2026 is no longer just about who has the fastest delivery driver; it's about who has the sharpest tech stack and the most authentic crust. As we look at the latest class of Pizza Marketplace's Top 100 Movers & Shakers, it's clear that the brands leading the pack are those successfully navigating a "new normal" where convenience and quality are non-negotiable.

This resilience is fueled by an almost universal love for the pie: roughly 86% of Americans ate pizza or flatbread in 2025, and the craving is particularly intense among Gen Z, where 40% consume pizza at least once per week, according to the American Bakers Association.

While the largest chains continue to battle for digital supremacy, 2026 has been dubbed the "era of the independent" by industry analysts. Independent pizzerias now comprise roughly 45% to 60% of the total market, with orders for indie shops seeing a 20% year-over-year increase as consumers shift away from "mass-produced" options in favor of regional styles like Detroit, Tavern-cut, and sourdough crusts (Slice).

This year's Top 100 honors those who have mastered the "rare beast" of combining high-volume operations with artisanal quality. Whether it's an independent shop utilizing AI to streamline inventory or a regional chain perfecting the 18-minute carryout window, these Movers & Shakers are the ones defining the future of the American slice.

We congratulate the class of 2026 on their mastery of craft and excellence.

Mandy Wolf Detwiler  
Editor, Pizza Marketplace



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## #1 Cicis Pizza

Cicis Pizza proved in 2025 that a legacy buffet concept can lead the modern market by blending high-tech innovation with its signature value. The brand's most significant milestone was the launch of Cicis Rewards™, its first national loyalty program. The initiative saw immediate success, surpassing 500,000 signups in its first month and catapulting the Cicis app to the No. 1 spot in the Food & Drink category on the Apple App Store.



The chain also modernized its physical footprint with a refreshed interior prototype. These "parlor-style" layouts emphasize family entertainment, often expanding game rooms from 400 to over 3,000 square feet. This evolution, alongside nostalgic menu innovations like the "Mac & CaseOh" collaboration with popular Twitch streamers, fueled consistent year-over-year system-wide sales growth throughout the year.



Franchisee confidence in the "Buffet King" remains exceptionally high. Cicis opened eight new restaurants in 2025 and closed the year with more than 14 signed agreements in the development pipeline. By marrying digital engagement with a disciplined growth strategy, Cicis has solidified its relevance in a competitive category, proving that its 40-year commitment to consistency and guest connection is more effective than ever.

## #2 Marco's Pizza

While many legacy brands are content with status quo, Marco's Pizza spent 2025 redefining modern success through aggressive international expansion and bold culinary disruption. The brand, which now boasts more than 1,200 global locations, earned the No. 2 spot on Newsweek's list of America's Best Pizza Chains, a testament to its unwavering commitment to quality and consistency.



Growth remained a primary narrative as Marco's celebrated a decade of dominance in Puerto Rico and accelerated development in Mexico. This momentum was supported by a revamped executive suite, including the strategic appointments of Chief Marketing Officer Steve Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer Bill Schaffler, and VP of Franchise Growth Brad Smith.



On the menu, Marco's broke category norms by integrating spice directly into its cheese blend for the reintroduced Fiery Flavors lineup. The brand further solidified its "flavor-forward" reputation by making Mike's Hot Honey a permanent staple, headlined by the Hot Honey Pepperoni Magnifico. By pairing sophisticated leadership with high-heat innovation, Marco's continues to set a premium standard in a crowded marketplace.

## #3 Hungry Howie's

Hungry Howie's is proving that 50 years of heritage is the perfect foundation for modern, flavor-forward reinvention. In 2025, the originator of Flavored Crust® officially cemented its category dominance by launching the inaugural National Flavored Crust Day on Aug. 14, debuting the limited-time Sweet Heat Bacon crust to massive fan engagement.

The brand further expanded its culinary reach with the national launch of Detroit-Style Pizza, a "sauce-on-top" tribute to its Michigan roots. This bold move was complemented by the growth of its "Secret Menu," featuring cult favorites like the Hangry Howie and Pickle Bacon Ranch, which give loyalists exclusive reasons to return.

Beyond the oven, Hungry Howie's sustained its momentum through disciplined franchise growth, opening eight new restaurants and signing 10 development agreements across Texas, Indiana, and Michigan. The year also marked the 17th anniversary of its "Love, Hope & Pizza" campaign, which continued its multi-million dollar support for breast cancer awareness. By pairing nostalgic favorites with aggressive innovation, Hungry Howie's remains a standout leader in the competitive pizza landscape.



## #4 Blaze Pizza

Blaze Pizza ignited a new era of fast-casual dominance in 2025 by marrying its "Fast Fire'd" speed with a sophisticated, digital-first growth strategy. A primary highlight was the brand's strategic shift toward a stronger franchise model, marked by the transition of 11 California locations to its largest franchisee, SoCal Blazers. This move underpinned a massive 25-unit development agreement in Southern California, ensuring the brand's footprint remains hot in its home territory.

Innovation extended to the digital kitchen, where Blaze partnered with Eulerity to provide franchisees with AI-driven marketing automation. This tech forward-push, combined with being named one of Yelp's "Most Loved Brands" of 2025, fueled nationwide momentum.

Culinary creativity remained a core pillar as Blaze introduced the "Protein-zza," catering to health-conscious diners following GLP-1 regimens. With industry veteran John Owen appointed as CEO to lead a global expansion, Blaze is effectively leveraging operational discipline and personalized guest experiences to redefine what it means to be a leader in the premium pizza category.



## #5 Slice House by Tony Gemignani

Slice House by Tony Gemignani turned 2025 into a master class in scaling artisanal quality without losing its "Respect the Craft" soul. The year's crowning achievement was the October grand opening at Universal CityWalk Hollywood, where 13-time World Pizza Champion Tony Gemignani debuted the exclusive "Hot Mario" pizza alongside Access Daily host Mario Lopez. This high-profile launch anchored a massive year of expansion that saw 11 new openings, marking the brand's first-ever entries into Tennessee, Colorado, and Idaho.

Beyond physical growth, Slice House revolutionized its digital guest experience by launching its inaugural mobile app and a revamped loyalty platform. Under the leadership of CTO David Denton and VP Tom Leeper, these initiatives helped the brand manage a burgeoning pipeline that has now reached 145 units nationwide. By combining four distinct pizza styles with modern operational efficiency, Slice House has solidified its status as the premier fast-casual choice for pizza purists, proving that world-class craftsmanship can indeed be franchised at scale.



## #6 Mountain Mike's Pizza

Mountain Mike's Pizza reached new heights in 2025, transforming from a regional favorite into a national powerhouse while surpassing the 300-unit milestone. The chain fueled its ascent with record-breaking growth, entering new markets like Virginia, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. This expansion was bolstered by the promotion of Steven Adyani to Chief Operations Officer and the signing of development deals that put the brand on track for 400 locations by 2026.

Marketing brilliance also defined the year, as the brand's iconic heart-shaped pizzas drove a 35% year-over-year sales spike on Valentine's Day. Digital engagement skyrocketed, with loyalty sales up over 150% thanks to fan-friendly activations like the "When the 49ers Win, You Win" promotion. Community remained a core pillar through the "Pizza 4 a Purpose" wildfire relief campaign and local youth sports sponsorships. By blending legendary crispy, curly pepperoni with cutting-edge digital growth, Mountain Mike's proved in 2025 that its family-style DNA is a winning formula across the coast.



## #7 Dodo Pizza

Dodo Pizza redefined global scaling in 2025, proving that a digital-first approach can turn a legacy product into a high-tech powerhouse. As one of the world's 10 largest pizza chains, Dodo Brands reported more than \$1.8 billion in revenue and 23% year-over-year growth. The brand significantly broadened its footprint by launching operations in Qatar, Mongolia, Montenegro, and Spain, while securing master franchise agreements to enter Mexico, Morocco, Iraq, and Hungary.

The company's "radical transparency" remains its greatest differentiator; Dodo openly publishes real-time sales data for every unit on its website via direct APIs, fostering unprecedented trust with its partners. This transparency is fueled by Dodo IS, a proprietary cloud platform that streamlines operations across more than 1,500 units in 26 countries. By combining this tech-forward infrastructure with localized menu hits—like plantain-topped pizzas in Nigeria—Dodo Pizza has solidified its status as a leader of the next generation of globally scalable QSR brands.



## #8 Chuck E. Cheese

Chuck E. Cheese transformed from a nostalgic icon into a diversified entertainment powerhouse in 2025, proving that the "Birthday Capital of the World" can still surprise. The brand's most ambitious leap was the November debut of Adventure World in Arlington, Texas—a 12,000-square-foot indoor playground dedicated to active play. This pilot marks a strategic pivot beyond traditional arcades, with more locations slated for 2026.

Simultaneously, the company launched Chuck's Arcade, a sophisticated gaming concept targeting malls and resorts. With 13 locations now operating, including a flagship at Brea Mall featuring a massive claw machine collection, the brand is successfully capturing multi-generational gamers.

Global expansion also hit a high note with new openings in Australia, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras, alongside fresh development deals in the U.K. and Turkey. Having donated over \$27 million to local schools, Chuck E. Cheese continues to pair its nearly 600 global centers with a deep commitment to community, ensuring its place in the cultural zeitgeist remains secure.



## #9 Bellissimo Pizza

Bellissimo Pizza is proving that the next generation of global pizza giants can emerge from anywhere, even far beyond traditional Western hubs. In 2025, Uzbekistan's top-ranking chain transitioned from a single-market leader to a regional powerhouse by launching its first international locations in Kazakhstan. This expansion included a high-profile entry into Almaty, where Bellissimo strategically took over six locations previously owned by a competitor, and a successful debut in Astana's "Zeleny Kvartal" district.

The brand's success is anchored in "radical transparency" and a digital-first strategy inspired by U.S. delivery leaders. In 2025, Bellissimo's commitment to innovation was recognized at the TAF International Advertising Festival, where it was named an industry leader following a major "Reason to Smile" rebranding. With a clear roadmap to 1,000 restaurants by 2031, the company is shifting toward a franchise-led model to unite Central Asian markets. By combining high-quality local ingredients with world-class IT infrastructure, Bellissimo Pizza is effectively reshaping the global pizza landscape one "smile" at a time.



## #10 Azzip Pizza

Azzip Pizza bucked fast-casual headwinds in 2025, delivering a remarkable 7.1% same-store sales growth by blending quirky culinary experimentation with sophisticated digital tools. The Indiana-based chain, which grew to 13 company-owned locations this year with new openings in West Lafayette and Terre Haute, fueled its momentum through the national rollout of its "Creator Rewards" program. Developed in partnership with the tech firm Hang, the platform utilizes mystery boxes and exclusive prizes to drive record-breaking guest frequency.

Menu innovation remains Azzip's calling card, headlined by the legendary "March Crabness" Crab Rangoon pizza, which consistently claims nearly 30% of sales during its run. This year, the brand also debuted the "Shell Yeah!" Lobster Roll pizza, a premium offering that drew a 10% attachment rate in its first month. Internally, the company achieved an elite eNPS of 52.9% by using the Connectteam platform to empower store leaders. By prioritizing employee communication and "flavor-first" agility, Azzip has solidified its reputation as one of the Midwest's most disciplined and creative pizza concepts.



# Top 75 Brands

## 11. &pizza

&pizza kicked the status quo to the curb in 2025, launching a franchise program to enter Orlando, Atlanta, and Raleigh. The brand capped its electric year by acquiring Tijuana Flats and forming Latitude Food Group, a new holding company designed to scale its culture-focused mission across the fast-casual landscape.



## 12. Pizza Nova

Pizza Nova continues its 60-year legacy by prioritizing community and innovation. The brand expanded its Southern Ontario footprint in 2025 with a fifth Hamilton location, as well as modernizing operations and integrating advanced digital ordering to streamline the guest experience.



## 13. MOTO Pizza

Breaking the mold in 2025, MOTO redefined scale by bringing its "odd" Detroit-style pies to high-volume stadiums and new markets like San Diego. Through a key Sodexo Live! partnership and pioneering end-to-end robotics, they proved that high-tech



automation can elevate, rather than replace, human hospitality.

## 14. Via 313

Elevating Detroit-style pizza in 2025, Via 313 secured a \$32.5 million investment to double its footprint. Voted USA Today's #1 Gluten-Free Pizza, the brand pairs inclusive innovation with heartfelt community giving.



## 15. Caliente Pizza & Draft House

Pittsburgh's Caliente Pizza & Draft House dominated 2025, expanding its real estate portfolio to eight figures by acquiring two more buildings.



The independent brand also raised \$13,000 via its charitable "Wolfley 73" pizza.

## 16. Billy Bricks

Chicago's Billy Bricks celebrated 20 years in 2025 by scaling to 15 units, including new mobile trucks and "Moo Joe's" parlors. The wood-fired pioneer continues to dominate through its versatile 2026 Billy Bricks Operating System.



## 17. Sal's Pizza

Leading New England's pizza scene, Sal's Pizza surged to 170 units in 2025 under second-generation leader Sal Lupoli Jr.



The brand remains the only private firm in all five major local stadiums, now adding a signature mascot.



## 18. Rotolo's

Celebrating 30 years in 2025, Louisiana-based Rotolo's accelerated its "Craft & Crust" expansion with six new multi-state locations. The brand leveraged AI site-selection tools and launched its "Class of 1996" nostalgia campaign to drive sustainable growth.



## 19. Pizza Inn

Evolving its legacy with modern flair, Pizza Inn achieved its fastest growth in 18 years during 2025. The brand expanded into Egypt and launched the "ridiculously" successful Peeps Pizzert, proving its buffet-style value remains timeless.



## 20. Happy Joe's Pizza & Ice Cream

Mixing nostalgia with high-tech upgrades, Happy Joe's Pizza & Ice Cream surged in 2025 by launching a food truck fleet and entering the Middle East. The brand also secured a 15-unit deal across the Midwest.



# Top 75 Brands

## 21. Mellow Mushroom

Blending its 50-year heritage with high-tech flair, Mellow Mushroom debuted a futuristic Grant Park model in 2025 featuring kiosk ordering and digital prep predictors. The brand also unveiled a vibrant, art-filled flagship in Decatur, Georgia.



## 22. Grimaldi's Pizzeria

Fusing Brooklyn tradition with digital transformation, Grimaldi's Pizzeria saw app orders surge 24% in 2025 following a high-tech mobile launch. The brand also expanded in Dubai while redesigned upscale menus drove a 30% spike in seasonal sales.



## 23. BoomBozz Pizza & Watch Bar

Revolutionizing the casual dining scene, Louisville-founded BoomBozz Pizza & Watch Bar excelled in 2025 by fully integrating its award-winning craft pizza roots with high-energy "watch bar" social spaces, featuring bold new Calabrian chili honey profiles.



## 24. Donatos Pizza

Redefining high-tech hospitality, Donatos Pizza debuted its first fully autonomous robotic restaurant at Columbus International Airport in 2025. The "Edge to Edge" pioneer also expanded its Red Robin partnership and launched a permanent creamy parmesan sauce.



## 25. Happy's Pizza

Championing its Detroit roots, Happy's Pizza surged in 2025 by opening five new locations and acquiring Fat Boy's Pizza. The brand remains a community pillar, fueled by 15 additional units committed for its 2026 expansion.



## 26. Pizza Guys



Celebrating 40 years of service, Pizza Guys hit a 100-unit milestone in 2025 by debuting in Texas and Nevada. The chain also soared to second on Yelp's list of beloved pizza brands and launched a garlic-Parmesan stuffed crust.

## 27. Old Scratch Pizza

Championing "Midwesternly Neapolitan" flair, Old Scratch Pizza announced a major 2025 expansion into Columbus. The "Pizza Company of the Year" also hit a \$345,000 milestone



through its "Cones for a Cause" initiative, benefiting Dayton area nonprofits.

## 28. Anthony's Pizza & Pasta

Reimagining a Colorado classic, Anthony's Pizza & Pasta dominated 2025 by modernizing its menu and digital storytelling. The legacy brand fueled sustainable growth



through strategic community partnerships and a disciplined, "proactive-not-reactive" approach to operational excellence.

## 29. Crust Pizza Co.

Redefining the neighborhood experience, Crust Pizza Co. hit a 25-unit milestone in 2025 by dominating the Texas and Louisiana markets. The brand thrived through disciplined operational fundamentals, industry-leading staff support, and a community-first growth strategy.



## 30. Parlour Pizza + Pints

Elevating the social dining experience, Parlour Pizza + Pints flourished in 2025 by expanding its footprint across the Ohio Valley. The brand combined premium craft beer pairings with innovative "Parlour Style" pizzas, solidifying its reputation as a premier neighborhood hub.



# Top 75 Brands

## 31. Pizza My Heart

Defying industry trends for 45 years, the family-owned Pizza My Heart reached 30 locations in 2025. The surf-themed



independent powerhouse grew further by entering Fremont and Modesto while maintaining its strictly non-franchised, internal-promotion-only career model.

## 32. Giordano's

Marking 50 years of deep-dish excellence, Giordano's redefined its legacy in 2025 under new CEO Nick Scarpino. The Chicago icon launched "Chi-Town Flavors" collaborations, introduced tavern-style crust, and prepared for its high-profile Washington, D.C. debut.



## 33. Dewey's Pizza

Setting a new pace for neighborhood hospitality, Dewey's Pizza flourished in 2025 by launching its first carryout-only model and a proprietary digital ordering platform. The Midwest favorite also expanded its seasonal culinary lineup and strategic footprint.



## 34. Emmy Squared Pizza

Refining "Detroit style, Brooklyn soul," Emmy Squared Pizza soared in 2025 with 12.6% revenue growth and a 57% lunch surge. The brand elevated fast-casual dining through a sophisticated cocktail program and high-profile Dos Hombres mezcal collaborations.



## 35. Mister O1 Extraordinary Pizza

Fusing Italian artistry with rapid expansion, Mister O1 Extraordinary Pizza was named America's top independent pizzeria for 2025. The Michelin-recommended brand grew to 25+ units, debuting in North Carolina while maintaining its signature 72-hour proofed dough.



## 36. Vocelli Pizza

Ending 2025 with record EBITDA, Vocelli Pizza is accelerating its national footprint. The brand recently launched an intuitive, rewards-focused app and is debuting three new locations in early 2026, including a pioneering Halal-menu store in Houston.



## 37. Oggi's Sports | Brewhouse | Pizza



Redefining the casual dining experience, Oggi's Sports | Brewhouse | Pizza celebrated its 34th year in 2025 with original founders returning to lead its Mission Viejo site. The brand remains a Southern California staple, blending award-winning microbrews with fan-centric sports environments.



## 38. Minsky's Pizza

Celebrating 50 years in 2026, Minsky's Pizza remains the "Home of Kansas City Style." In 2025, the innovator raised \$75,000 for Operation Breakthrough through its "Tranquilo" pizza collaboration with Chiefs linebacker Drue Tranquill.



## 39. Toarmina's

Leading with its "Big 24" signature, Toarmina's Pizza dominated the Michigan market in 2025 by scaling its unique ghost kitchen model.



The independent powerhouse expanded its Lansing footprint while integrating six virtual brands into its traditional operations.

# Top 75 Brands

## 40. Fresh Brothers

Entering its boldest chapter yet, Fresh Brothers Pizza leveraged its 2025 acquisition by Craveworthy Brands



to launch a nationwide franchise offensive. The California staple continues to dominate with its signature "Midwest-style" pies and inclusive, plant-based menu.

## 41. Leona's Pizza

Celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2025, the historic Leona's Pizzeria & Restaurant is undergoing a strategic rebirth. Under CEO Billy Marino, the Chicago icon introduced northern Illinois' first pizza drive-thru and modernized its delivery-first model.



## 42. Mythical Pizza

Redefining the independent pizzeria, Mythical Pizza shined in 2025 as a certified "Most Loved Workplace." The brand combined scratch-made quality with deep community



roots, funding local youth sports and nonprofits while maintaining elite operational consistency.

## 43. PIZZA KARMA

Scaling its unique tandoor-fired concept, PIZZA KARMA thrived in 2025 by expanding in Minneapolis' Dinkytown and optimizing its fleet of food trucks. The Twin Cities standout successfully leveraged "CEO Now" strategic training to fuel disciplined, community-focused growth.



## 44. TailGate Brewery

Fiercely independent and Tennessee-fastest-growing, TailGate Brewery excelled in 2025 by doubling production capacity and celebrating its 10th anniversary. The "Top Workplace" continues to dominate the regional market with scratch-made Detroit-style pizzas and award-winning craft lagers.



## 45. Valentina's Pizzeria & Wine Bar by Joe Carlucci

Mastering the art of the pie, World Pizza Champion Joe Carlucci led Valentina's to new heights in 2025. The Madison destination pairs elite, house-made dough craftsmanship with a sophisticated, award-winning cocktail program and a refined wine bar experience.



## 46. Shakey's Pizza Parlor

Reimagining its 70-year legacy, Shakey's Pizza Parlor energized 2025 by unveiling a flagship

Culver City redesign.

The "People's Pizza Parlor" transformation features a new logo, 1980s nostalgia-driven decor, and the return of iconic mascot Mojo the Dog.



## 47. Piesanos

Sparking a new era, Piesanos Stone Fired Pizza opened its 15th Florida location in 2025, debuting a high-efficiency prototype. The brand also partnered with the Orlando Valkyries and expanded its "Pi Day."



## 48. Bright Penny Brewing

Fusing small-batch craft with culinary innovation, Bright Penny Brewing Co. excelled in 2025 by expanding its North Carolina footprint with new outposts. The brand thrives on Neapolitan-style pizzas, award-winning brews, and a community-first, family-friendly culture.



## 49. Coals Artisan Pizza

Pioneering Kentucky's coal-fired movement, Coals Artisan Pizza thrived in 2025 by pairing its signature three-day cold-fermented dough with local sourcing. The "American

# Top 75 Brands

Neapolitan" specialist continues to define Louisville's craft scene across three high-traffic neighborhood locations.



## 50. Timber Pizza Company

Championing "wood-fired good vibes," Timber Pizza Co. accelerated its Southeast expansion in 2025 by opening six franchise locations across the Carolinas and Maryland. The D.C.-born brand is now targeting Virginia for its next major regional chapter.



## 51. Old Town Pizza

Shining with a "Good as Gold" mindset, Old Town Pizza thrived in 2025 by breaking ground on a massive \$8 million historic post office renovation in Roseville. The California staple prioritized community-focused fundraising and internal leadership development.



## 52. Prime Pizza

Bringing authentic New York slices to Southern California, Prime Pizza accelerated its expansion in 2025 by debuting in Orange County. The brand fueled its growth through high-profile collaborations with Earl Sweatshirt and Bludso's BBQ.



## 53. Cape Cod Cafe

Pioneering the iconic South Shore bar pizza since 1939, Cape Cod Café achieved its largest national milestone in 2025. The family-owned staple expanded its signature frozen line to 400 Target stores, bringing its "laced" edges nationwide.



## 54. Dedham House of Pizza

Achieving its strongest sales year yet, Dedham House of Pizza excelled in 2025 by modernizing its independent model. The Philotimo Food Group staple boosted digital orders to 68% and restructured operations with robust internal leadership systems.



## 55. Blue Moon Pizza

Transitioning from local favorite to national contender, Blue Moon Pizza revitalized its brand



in 2025 under new leadership. The Atlanta-based pioneer optimized its "hybrid" crust, implemented data-driven loyalty tools, and finalized its 2026 franchising launch strategy.

## 56. Much Ado About Pizza

Blending theatrical flair with sourdough mastery, Much Ado About Pizza excelled in 2025 through its "Shakespeare Shares" fundraisers. The California-based, family-run powerhouse combined elite competition success with daily "Pizza Ambushes" to honor local community heroes.



## 57. The Wooden Peel

Doubling its footprint in 2025, The Wooden Peel transformed its physical space and beverage program to meet growing local demand. The community hub quadrupled its beer taps and introduced family-friendly karaoke and rotating "Pizza of the Month" specials.



## 58. Amici

Georgia-based Amici is leveraging traditional family recipes and modern innovation to fuel its growth. The brand pairs consistent pizza quality with genuine hospitality, positioning itself as an emerging leader in the regional pizza industry.



# Top 75 Brands

## 59. Paisans Pizza

Redefining community service, Paisans Pizza launched the "Paisano's With a Purpose" foundation in 2025, providing 50,000 annual meals to underserved areas. The family-owned brand also debuted a modernized flagship location, blending its 40-year legacy with contemporary dining.



## 60. Carmine's Pie House

Generating \$2.7 million from a former gas station, Carmine's Pie House mastered 2025 by balancing its eclectic "dive" charm with high-volume digital efficiency. The Jacksonville staple excels in both New York and Chicago styles.



## 61. We The Pizza

Building on its D.C. heritage, We The Pizza entered a pivotal growth phase in 2025 by launching its national franchising program. The chef-driven brand continues to pair artisanal pies with major community-focused relief efforts.



## 62. Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana

Celebrating its centennial, Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana dominated 2025 by expanding to 17 locations and launching the Gary Bimonte Internship Program. The New Haven legend combined coal-fired tradition with "Good Neighbor Nights" to support local nonprofits.



## 63. Hangar 54 Pizza

Fueling life in motion, Hangar 54 Pizza soared in 2025 by achieving 57% unit growth over three years. The adventure-themed brand expanded to 152 locations, leveraging a turn-key model and 1,000 corporate training sessions to ensure high-performance execution.



## 64. Scratch Pies

Bringing gourmet mobility to Monmouth County, Scratch Pies elevated 2025 by expanding its custom catering fleet. The artisanal team combined handcrafted dough with a state-of-the-art mobile oven, delivering tailored, high-performance pizza experiences to private celebrations and local corporate gatherings.



## 65. Pizza Factory

Embracing a bold new chapter, Pizza Factory shined in 2025 following its acquisition by Wonder Franchises and the appointment of CEO Lisa Roscoe. The legacy brand accelerated growth with aggressive franchising incentives and several high-impact community-driven reopenings.



## 66. Incredible Food and Fun

Celebrating its 25th anniversary, Incredible Food and Fun surged through 2025 with a transformative rebrand. The family entertainment leader modernized its flagship Springfield location, introduced "Rusty the Cool Cat," and raised thousands for Make-A-Wish and Folds of Honor.



## 67. Brenz Pizza Co

Winning "Best Pizza in the Midwest" in 2025, Brenz Pizza Co. energized its expansion with



a new flagship in Columbus' Graceland. The family-owned brand also launched a major NIL partnership to fuel UNC football athletes.

## 68. Pizzawala's

Spicing up the global pizza landscape, Pizzawala's dominated 2025 by doubling its



# Top 75 Brands



footprint across India and the United States. The fusion pioneer successfully launched full-service brewing concepts and a high-profile expansion into the Las Vegas market.

## 69. Riko's Pizza

Elevating the tavern-style "bar pie," Riko's Pizza accelerated its East Coast expansion in 2025 under new CEO Carl Bachmann. The brand achieved 16.5% same-store sales growth while launching bold winter specials and new markets in New York.



## 70. Saroki's Crispy Chicken & Pizza

Redefining roadside dining, Saroki's Crispy Chicken & Pizza surged in 2025 by scaling to 23 locations and surpassing \$20 million in revenue. The Michigan-based innovator successfully simplified its menu to focus on high-speed, brick-oven New York-style excellence.



## 71. Rosso Pomodoro Pizza

Redefining global Neapolitan standards, Rosso Pomodoro surged in 2025 by launching its U.S. franchising initiative alongside a "Discovery Day" program. The Naples-born brand successfully debuted standalone Denver flagships while maintaining its iconic 12-market Eataly partnership.



## 72. Wingman Pizza

Navigating the industry with aviation-inspired precision, Wingman Pizza soared in 2025 by achieving 38% unit growth. The PFSbrands powerhouse successfully expanded into the Midwest, debuting high-performance, turnkey kitchen remodels focused on rapid, pilot-tested execution.



## 73. Uncle Rico's Pizza

New York's Uncle Rico's Pizza recently opened its second location following a 7% annual sales boost. The five-time Daily Gazette award winner attributes growth to increased social media engagement, higher employee wages, and improved delivery logistics.



## 74. Mazala Pizza

Pioneering Indian-style "pijja," Mazala Pizza surged in 2025 by modernizing fusion dining through AI-powered menus and self-ordering kiosks. The brand successfully expanded into new states, blending traditional spices with high-tech operations and a nationwide franchising push.



## 75. Neds Pizza

Proving that five decades of tradition can fuel modern momentum, Ned's Pizza excelled in 2025 by modernizing its classic Milwaukee footprint. The legacy brand boosted efficiency through digital ordering upgrades while maintaining its "old-school" community charm.



# Top 25 Executives



## **Domenic Primucci**, President, Pizza Nova

Domenic Primucci, president of Pizza Nova, continues to elevate the family-owned franchise through a blend of culinary innovation and community-driven leadership. Since joining the company at age 14, Primucci has championed high-quality ingredients and a "Puro Promise" of authenticity. In 2025, his impact was recognized with the King Charles III Coronation Medal and induction into the Ontario Hospitality Institute Hall of Fame. Under his guidance, the 26th annual "That's Amore Pizza for Kids" campaign raised a record \$231,045 for Variety Ontario, solidifying Pizza Nova's status as a top-tier Canadian franchise and a pillar of community support.



## **Antonio Barron**, VP Operations, Purchasing & Games, CEC Entertainment

Antonio Barron, vice president of purchasing and games for CEC Entertainment, is a key architect of the gaming and supply chain strategies for Chuck E. Cheese and Peter Piper Pizza. Since his 2024 promotion, Barron has spearheaded the brand's "active-play" installations and innovative gaming models to accelerate revenue and operational efficiency. In 2025, his leadership was instrumental as the company launched the CEC Media Network and expanded its footprint through strategic partnerships, ensuring CEC remains the global leader in family entertainment.



## **Jane Grote Abell**, Chief Purpose Officer, Donatos Pizza

Jane Grote Abell, executive chairwoman and chief purpose officer of Donatos Pizza, continues to champion "agape capitalism" and people-first leadership. Since leading the 2003 buyback from McDonald's, Abell has expanded the brand to 387 locations across 23 states, achieving a \$250 million valuation. In 2025, her commitment to innovation and community reached new heights; she was inducted into the C200 women's leadership network and oversaw the launch of Donatos' first fully autonomous, robotic-operated restaurant at John Glenn Columbus International Airport.



## **Tony Gemignani**, Founder, Slice House by Tony Gemignani

Tony Gemignani, a 13-time World Pizza Champion, continues to redefine the industry by blending culinary mastery with aggressive brand scaling. In 2025, Gemignani oversaw a landmark expansion for Slice House, opening 11 new locations, including high-profile debuts at Universal CityWalk and entries into Tennessee, Colorado, and Idaho. By awarding his 150th franchise unit, he has solidified Slice House as a dominant national powerhouse. Gemignani's hands-on leadership in training and operational innovation ensures that every location maintains his signature artisan quality at a global scale.

# Top 25 Executives



## **Carl Comeaux, CEO, Crust Pizza Co.**

Carl Comeaux, CEO of Crust Pizza Co., has transformed the Texas-based brand into a premier franchise with over 36 locations and a \$1.65 million AUV. In 2025, Comeaux's strategic vision earned the company a debut spot on the Entrepreneur Franchise 500. He spearheaded a proprietary technology stack, launched a multi-unit leadership program, and surpassed a \$100,000 fundraising milestone for St. Jude. Through innovative design and robust franchisee support, Comeaux is steering the brand toward its goal of 250 Southeast U.S. locations.



## **Mike Burns, CEO, &pizza**

Mike Burns, CEO of &pizza and Latitude Food Group, is a high-impact executive renowned for revitalizing brands through operational discipline and cultural authenticity. In 2025, Burns spearheaded a transformative "volume play" strategy, slashing menu prices to enhance guest value and reclaiming the brand's edgy, counterculture roots. He successfully launched &pizza's national franchising program and orchestrated the landmark acquisition of Tijuana Flats. By streamlining technology and building high-performing teams, Burns has positioned &pizza for aggressive growth toward a 300-unit goal.



## **Whitney Cartmill, Director of Customer Experience, Cicis Pizza**

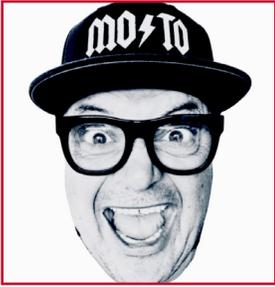
Whitney Cartmill, director of customer experience at Cicis Pizza, is a driving force behind the brand's digital transformation and guest engagement strategies. With over 18 years of expertise, Cartmill spearheaded the 2025 launch of "Cicis Rewards™," the company's first-ever loyalty program, which debuted during its 40th anniversary. By leveraging data-driven insights and personalized CRM strategies, she has successfully modernized the buffet experience, blending nostalgic value with seamless digital convenience to foster meaningful, long-term connections with millions of guests nationwide.



## **Scott Goldberg, Co-founder, Fresh Brothers Pizza**

Scott Goldberg, co-founder and executive chef of Fresh Brothers Pizza, is a pioneer of the "California-style" Chicago tavern pizza. Following the brand's 2024 acquisition by Craveworthy Brands, Goldberg's 2025 leadership focused on scaling the 25-unit chain for national franchising. Known for his "uncompromising" culinary rigor, he continues to oversee innovation, including the successful 2025 launch of Detroit-style and heart-shaped offerings. Goldberg's tenure, stretching back to 1985, remains defined by a commitment to fresh, inclusive ingredients and deep-rooted community stewardship.

# Top 25 Executives



## Lee Kindell, Founder, MOTO

Lee Kindell, founder of MOTO, is redefining hospitality by blending "odd pizza" with cutting-edge technology. In 2025, Kindell accelerated his vision for a fully autonomous robotic restaurant, developing end-to-end automation from dough preparation to drone delivery. Under his leadership, the Seattle-born brand expanded into California with high-profile openings in San Diego and partnerships at the BNP Paribas Open. By pairing AI-driven systems with a "kindness-first" culture, Kindell continues to scale his viral, Filipino-influenced Detroit-style concept into a global movement.



## Tony Libardi, President and CEO, Marco's Pizza

Tony Libardi, president and CEO of Marco's Pizza, continues to spearhead the brand's rapid ascent as a top-five national powerhouse. In 2025, Libardi oversaw a major international expansion into Mexico and Latin America, powered by a new global technology partnership with NCR Voyix. Under his "people-first" leadership, Marco's surpassed 1,200 locations while earning a spot on Newsweek's "America's Best Customer Service" list. By prioritizing operational excellence and digital modernization, Libardi has solidified Marco's as a leader in convenience, consistency, and premium value.



## Farrukh Abdullaev, CEO, Bellissimo Pizza

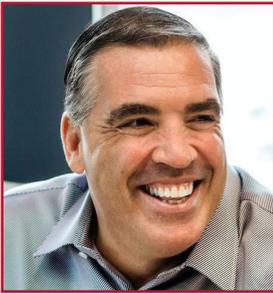
Farrukh Abdullaev, founder and CEO of Bellissimo Pizza, has transformed the brand into Uzbekistan's dominant pizza chain and a rising international player. In 2025, Abdullaev successfully launched the company's first foreign location in Astana, Kazakhstan, marking a major milestone in his goal of 200 regional pizzerias by 2028. Following a 2024 global rebranding centered on a "smile" visual identity, Abdullaev continues to prioritize customer loyalty and technological integration, solidifying Bellissimo's position as a leader in Central Asian fast-casual dining.



## Jeff Rinke, VP of Marketing & Product Development, Hungry Howie's

Jeff Rinke, vice president of marketing and product development at Hungry Howie's, continues to steer the brand's "flavor-forward" evolution through strategic menu innovation. In 2025, Rinke spearheaded the national rollout of the chain's first-ever Detroit-style pizza and launched the inaugural National Flavored Crust Day. His leadership in developing bold limited-time offerings, such as everything bagel and "sweet heat" bacon crusts, has driven record engagement. By balancing culinary creativity with operational simplicity, Rinke ensures Hungry Howie's remains a dominant leader in the competitive pizza landscape.

# Top 25 Executives



## **Salvatore Lupoli Jr.,** Growth & Strategy Manager, Sal's Pizza

Salvatore Lupoli Jr., representing the second generation of Sal's Pizza, has revitalized the iconic New England brand through a focus on operational excellence and "real value." In 2025, he spearheaded the launch of a modernized digital platform, featuring a new website and mobile app, alongside the introduction of an official brand mascot. A former professional athlete, Lupoli Jr. emphasizes consistency and quality over aggressive discounting. His leadership also extends to community impact, notably through his "Forever Pizza" initiative, which brings fresh meals and companionship to local senior centers.



## **Brandon Solano,** CEO, RAVE Restaurant Group

Brandon Solano, CEO of RAVE Restaurant Group, has revitalized Pizza Inn through a high-impact "Mission 2030" strategy. In 2025, Solano orchestrated the brand's fastest expansion in 18 years, highlighted by a triple-store launch in just three weeks. By introducing the viral "All You Can \$8" buffet promotion and house-made ranch dressing, he achieved 23 consecutive quarters of profitability. A veteran of Domino's and Wendy's, Solano's focus on modernizing unit economics and franchisee profitability has successfully repositioned "America's Hometown Pizza Place" for sustained global growth.



## **Nick Bogacz,** President, Caliente Pizza & Draft House

Nick Bogacz, founder and president of Caliente Pizza & Draft House, has cemented his brand as a Pittsburgh powerhouse through strategic expansion and community commitment. In 2025, Bogacz scaled Caliente's presence to eight regional locations and 27 venue stalls, including a high-profile appearance at the U.S. Open in Oakmont that generated \$1 million in weekly sales. Beyond operations, Bogacz grew the company's real estate portfolio to an eight-figure valuation and launched the "Wolfley 73" pizza, donating 75% of sales to combat local homelessness.



## **Zak Fishman,** CEO, Prime Pizza

Zak Fishman, co-founder of Prime Pizza, demonstrated remarkable resilience in 2025 by guiding his brand through the devastating Eaton Fire. Despite losing his own home to the blaze, Fishman kept his Altadena location operational as a vital community hub, raising funds for displaced staff and organizing dinners for over 600 residents. Under his leadership, Prime Pizza maintained positive sales growth and secured a strategic partnership with CapitalSpring. Now poised for expansion, Fishman plans to open six new locations across Southern California in 2026.

# Top 25 Executives



## **Wesley Keegan**, Founder & Owner, TailGate Brewery

Wesley Keegan, founder of TailGate Brewery, has redefined the taproom experience by treating scratch-made pizza as a core pillar of his business. In 2025, Keegan led a solo presentation at the Craft Brewers Conference, sharing his expertise on scaling sustainability and intentional growth. Under his leadership, Tennessee's fastest-growing brewery expanded its "people-first" culture, providing 100% company-paid health insurance for all staff. By blending innovative Detroit-style pizza with award-winning craft beverages, Keegan has built a stable, community-focused hospitality powerhouse.



## **Garrett Brizendine**, President & CEO, Anthony's Pizza & Pasta

Garrett Brizendine, CEO of EPIQ Ventures and Anthony's Pizza & Pasta, has modernized the 40-year-old Colorado staple through disciplined growth and operational excellence. In 2025, Brizendine expanded the brand's footprint to 20 locations, including a high-profile partnership at Red Rocks Amphitheatre and new outposts in Fort Collins. By consolidating technology systems and prioritizing margin improvement, he has strengthened unit-level profitability. His leadership balances brand consistency with local accountability, reinforcing Anthony's as a community anchor dedicated to long-term stability and inclusive, values-driven service.



## **Joe Carlucci**, Owner, Valentina's Pizzeria & Wine Bar

Joe Carlucci, founder of Valentina's Pizzeria & Wine Bar, has solidified his status as a premier pizza executive by blending elite craftsmanship with scaling success. A multi-time World Pizza Champion, Carlucci was named the 2025 Pizza Maker of the Year at the International Pizza Expo. Under his leadership, Valentina's transitioned into a high-volume flagship in Madison, Alabama, earning acclaim for its innovative wine program and award-winning pies. By prioritizing leadership development and operational systems, Carlucci has elevated the independent pizzeria model into a nationally recognized brand.



## **Chris Brady**, Co-founder & President, Timber Pizza Company

Chris Brady, co-founder and president of Timber Pizza Co., has masterfully transitioned a beloved D.C. mobile wood-fired concept into a rapidly scaling franchise. In 2025, Brady steered the brand's entry into pivotal new markets, including its first South Carolina location in Charleston and successful expansions across North Carolina's Triangle region. Under his leadership, the "Timber Fam" grew to nine locations while maintaining its neighborhood-first identity. By prioritizing intentional partnerships and operational consistency, Brady has positioned Timber Pizza for a strategic push to 50 locations across the Southeast.

## **Pete Fejzuloski, CEO, Pisan's Pizza**

Pete Fejzuloski, owner of Pisan's Pizzeria & Bar, continues to shape the Chicago pizza landscape through a legacy of family-led innovation and community roots. Since expanding his father's 1985 Cicero storefront into a multi-location powerhouse, Fejzuloski has prioritized "industrial-chic" dining experiences and customer loyalty. In 2025, he focused on mentoring his sons to lead the brand's next chapter while maintaining rigorous quality standards. His leadership remains defined by a unique blend of high-end automotive design and a steadfast, "people-first" hospitality culture.



## **Ric Gruber, CEO, Billy Bricks**

Ric Gruber, CEO of Billy Bricks, has transformed a 20-year family legacy into a resilient, multi-channel restaurant group. In 2025, Gruber marked the brand's 20th anniversary by expanding to nine units and launching the first brick-and-mortar location for sister brand Moo Joe's Ice Cream. A prominent industry voice with a rapidly growing LinkedIn following, he recently introduced the 2026 Billy Bricks Operating System. By integrating EOS and specialized technology, Gruber ensures operational excellence across his suburban pizzerias, mobile fleet, and wholesale divisions.



## **Estella Ferrera, President/CEO, Oggi's Sports | Brewhouse | Pizza**

Estella Ferrera, vice president of Oggi's Sports|Brewhouse|Pizza, is steering the 30-year-old family brand through a period of strategic refinement and operational strength. In 2025, Ferrera pivoted from aggressive expansion to a "people-first" focus, working directly with franchisees to bolster individual unit performance. Her family recently reacquired two franchise locations, with the first site achieving a 13.2% annual sales increase under their leadership. By balancing modernized technology with a deep commitment to community, Ferrera has solidified Oggi's as a resilient, award-winning hospitality leader.

## **Sonny Asker, COO, Happy's Pizza**

Sonny Asker, chief operating officer of Happy's Pizza, is a driving force behind the brand's modern evolution and operational excellence. In 2025, Asker spearheaded the launch of "Happy's Pizza 3.0," a digital-first initiative featuring a modernized web experience and advanced POS integration across 60 locations. His strategic leadership also guided the acquisition of Fat Boy's Pizza and the ongoing expansion of the Savvy Sliders sister brand. By balancing tech-forward infrastructure with a "neighborhood-first" philosophy, Asker has positioned Happy's for record-breaking growth in 2026.



## **Gregg Johnson, Founder & CEO, Minsky's Pizza**

Gregg Johnson, founder of Minsky's Pizza, has spent nearly 50 years defining "Kansas City Style" pizza through a relentless commitment to gourmet quality. In 2025, Johnson's leadership was further cemented as Minsky's earned top honors from six local publications, including being voted "Best Pizza" and "Best Lunch Deal" by the Kansas City Star. Beyond the kitchen, Johnson's 2025 community initiatives reached new heights, notably raising \$75,000 for Operation Breakthrough through a high-profile collaboration with Chiefs linebacker Drue Tranquill.