

Pinkberry leading the new frozen yogurt fad

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Frozen Yogurt has always been everyone's favorite snack, right? Wrong. It is only recently that frozen yogurt regained its popularity with the public. This new fad, however, comes with a twist. Differentiating it from old fashion ice cream, the new frozen yogurt is all natural, only adding to its appeal. Yogurt chains, realizing this appeal, have been opening in locations across the nation. The most successful of these chains is the ever popular Pinkberry, which has taken advantage of the public's need to be healthy and hip at the same time. Although fads come and go, I believe that this trend is here to stay.

Yogurt Chains on the Rise

Due to this new frozen yogurt craze, numerous yogurt chains have been opening up. According to Rachel Kylo, vice president of marketing for St. Paul, Minn.-based Kemps LLC, frozen snacks are perfect for people that are in a hurry, such as students and people in the workplace. They taste great and are not as bad for you as other desserts, such as donuts and other pastries (Stagnito Publishing Company). Summing up the reason for this trend, the general public wants to treat themselves to the great taste of ice cream, without having to worry about the calories. The new frozen yogurt chains seem to have solved this problem, which is why they have been so successful.

The frozen dessert category is now a \$6. 3 billion industry, according to the foodservice consulting firm Technomic Inc. (Nation's Restaurant News). These types of figures have never been seen in the past, even though frozen yogurt has been around for a while. Pinkberry seems to be leading the

charge, but others have followed in their footsteps including: Yogurberry, Red Mango, and Snowberry. Although these competitors basically sell the same product, their success is nowhere near that of Pinkberry.

The Success of Pinkberry

It is no surprise that the most successful of these chains is Pinkberry. Opened by Shelly Hwang in the 1980s, Pinkberry is one of the fastest growing chains in recent history. Along with Young Lee, the two were able to turn Pinkberry into America's official guilty pleasure. Having done his research, Young states his objective of "creating an enjoyable experience for his customers. He compares this experience to shopping at a department store as opposed to a grocery store calling a trip to the groceries a chore while a trip to a department store is a luxury (Financial Times). This concept seems to have really hit home with the American public, apparent by their new found popularity.

Importance of this Trend

There are two major developments that are apparent in this frozen yogurt fad: eating healthy and being hip and trendy. It's obvious that Pinkberry, as well as other frozen yogurt chains, has taken full advantage of these recent developments.

Eating Healthy

Pinkberry is not the first restaurant to take advantage of this health craze. Subway, one of the biggest proponents of healthy eating, has created a whole campaign advocating a healthy diet. Using Jared as their
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spokesperson, Subway was able to become one of the biggest fast food chains today. Even other restaurants, usually not known for a healthy menu, jumped on this bandwagon. McDonalds for one, has added different kinds of salad to their menu. This fast food powerhouse has over 30 thousand locations worldwide and a net income over \$3.5 billion (Wikipedia), and even they saw the value of appealing to this new health trend. Pinkberry uses an all natural yogurt with toppings that include different berries and granola.

As you can see from the nutrition facts, the yogurt is fat-free, while having only 5 grams of sugar. Compared to its old-fashioned competitor, ice cream, Pinkberry is truly the new and improved alternative. Despite having an array of unhealthy toppings, including candy, cereal, and chocolate sweets, they do offer healthy alternatives such as fruit and granola. They leave it up to the customer to see how badly they wish to indulge.

Being Hip and Trendy

Along with Pinkberry, other restaurants have accommodated the public's need to be hip and trendy. Starbucks has made a name for itself being not only a place where people drink coffee, but also to hang out. Pinkberry took a similar approach, hiring a Hollywood designer, Yolanda Santosa, to create a stylish look for the restaurant. They even custom-made a song, "Sorry Ice Cream, I'm Going to Pinkberry", while playing hits by popular artists from the 80s as their background music (Financial Times). The clientele of Pinkberry definitely fits the look they are going for. With their products getting plugged in such shows as The Hills, Pinkberry has become the hot spot for celebrity

sightings. Hollywood stars, hip music, and a stylish ambiance are a big reason why Pinkberry is one of the most successful franchises today.

Recommendations

Pinkberry is a perfect example of how to take full advantage of certain trends. But we must realize that trends come and go. So in order to stay popular, you must follow the recipe that has worked so well for Pinkberry, as well as other chains like Starbucks. Here are some steps these chains have followed:

- * Recognize a trend
- * Take advantage of that trend
- * Set yourself apart from the competition
- * Keep things " fresh"

Recognizing the Trend

Seeking out a trend is easy. Different trends are all over the media, written about in magazines and newspapers, and on television and the radio.

Pinkberry was able to capitalize on the health trend. Nowadays, everybody seems to be health conscious, always counting calories and watching what they eat. Pinkberry gives people a sweet treat, without them feeling guilty about eating it. Finding a trend is simple. Being the first to take full advantage of that trend is another story.

Taking Advantage of that Trend

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Once you realize the trend, you must take advantage of it. It is not enough to pick out a trend. The key is to be the first to address it, or at least make it seem like you were the first. Pinkberry took full advantage of the health trend. Their yogurt has only 25 calories and that is their main marketing scheme. They realized that more and more people were eating healthy and that frozen yogurt seemed to have lost its popularity. This pushed them to open up a store that addressed both these facts. Pinkberry sells a new king of yogurt, an old-fashioned idea with a modern twist.

Setting Yourself Apart from the Competition

Being healthy isn't enough to be a successful business. Although there is a health trend, businesses must set themselves apart from the competition. Adhering to one trend just doesn't cut it in this very competitive world. Pinkberry was able to set themselves apart by creating a very hip and trendy atmosphere for their customers. Frozen yogurt has always been available in other fast food chains, such as McDonalds, but Pinkberry sells their image as well as their tasty yogurt.

Also, Pinkberry wanted to sell a product not readily available at other stores. Hwang states that she wanted to stay away from products that were offered at other locations and stores. Items such as gummy bears and soda are available at almost any convenience store, so there is nothing special about stores that sell them (Los Angeles Business Journal). This new frozen yogurt wasn't available at many stores, and offered a fresh taste as well as an enjoyable experience.

Keeping things " Fresh"

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Once you have established yourself as a successful business, you're going to want to stay a successful business. Keeping things fresh is a key step to increase or maintain the customer base. Boredom and redundancy are common pitfalls that a lot of new chains fall victim to. Malcolm Stago addresses this problem saying this frozen yogurt fad will soon fade due to their weak flavor profile and limited client base (Nation's Restaurant News). Pinkberry may be very popular now, but they must come up with new ideas like adding new flavors or new toppings. Anything that will keep their customers from getting bored will help.

Pinkberry, as well as other restaurants such as Starbucks, were able to follow this step by step process. They picked out a trend, and then fully capitalize on it. This recipe launched Pinkberry into the new Millennium.