



STANISLAUS
FOOD PRODUCTS
 P.O. Box 3951
 Modesto, CA 95352
 (800) 328-8667



PRSR STD
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 PERMIT 10
 MODESTO, CA

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

© 2022

STANISLAUS FOOD PRODUCTS ©



NOVEMBER 2022 P.O. Box 3951, MODESTO, CALIFORNIA 95352 (800) 328-8667

Sharing Success: Thoughts from Tom Cortopassi



In Gratitude

As the holidays approach, I have spent some time counting our family's blessings: continued good health, the success of each of our children in pursuing their individual dreams, and the ongoing success of our Independent restaurateur customers.

We especially feel blessed for the life of Dino and the example that he set for so many of us. Part of what made Dino so extraordinary was that, in addition to being a visionary thinker, he enjoyed teaching those insights to others, including our restaurateur customers.

For example, because he strongly believed in helping Independent restaurateurs further improve their business skills, he created La Trattoria back in 1990. He felt a special connection to restaurateurs because the restaurant industry is where someone with a good idea and a strong work ethic can still afford to pursue the American dream.

Especially from his roots as a "scratch start" farmer, Dino knew from experience that doing business is rarely trouble free.

One reason for Dino's continuing business success was that he **always viewed every challenge as an opportunity, rather than a problem.** In fact, one of his favorite sayings was "*Opportunity often arrives cleverly disguised as an unsolvable problem.*"

Throughout his own career, Dino demonstrated how disruptive challenges present opportunities for businesses to further stand out from their competition. As he described it, "*Zig while everyone else zags.*"

Here is an example from his early farming career long before he bought Stanislaus. Back in the 1960s, California agriculture largely depended on hand labor to harvest nearly every crop in the state. But in 1960, the federal government announced that it would soon end its guest worker program with Mexico.

As a young tomato grower not yet thirty years old, Dino saw the looming shortage of ag labor as "an unsolvable problem" with devastating consequences for farmers. Labor costs would soon be driven sky high. Meanwhile, it would be hard for farmers to find enough workers to harvest their perishable crops.

While most farmers took a "wait and see" approach, Dino "*zigged while others zagged*" by becoming an early adopter of mechanical tomato harvesting technology.

So back while they were still experimental, Dino bought one of the first three harvesters available in 1963. Dino reasoned that if he could make the new technology work,

he could dependably keep supplying tomatoes to local canneries when others couldn't, earning premium prices. It wasn't easy, but Dino stuck to his guns to make the new technology work.

Based on that early success, Dino "doubled down" over the next four years. He reinvested all his tomato profits into more mechanical harvesters and rented as much farmland as he could find. By 1968, when the rest of the tomato growers finally adopted mechanical harvesting, Dino had grown his farming business 5 times over!

This and other farming innovations eventually gave Dino the resources and confidence to buy Stanislaus in 1978.

Dino's "treating challenges like opportunities" will work for any business in any industry because most companies react to adversity by becoming **overly defensive.** They leave the field open to others willing to play **offense.**

Just think about your own experience as a consumer in recent years, interacting with large, cost-oriented retailers. They faced the same business challenges, from cost inflation to labor shortages, that you have. But many responded **defensively** by cutting corners on quality, reducing portion sizes, reducing hiring standards, running short staffed, insufficiently training new hires, becoming less dependable/accountable, etc., etc. The result? From the consumer's viewpoint, doing business with them has become less satisfactory over time.

That is precisely why "problems" represent business opportunities. The greater the gaps in service and product quality that competitors create, the bigger the opportunity it gives other businesses to "go on the offensive" by **further enhancing** quality and service, thereby delighting customers.

We miss Dino every day and are especially grateful for the many valuable insights that he shared over the years and his encouragement to never stop improving. On behalf of everyone at Stanislaus and Corto, we hope you enjoy your families during the holidays!

Until next time,
 Ciao!

Tom Cortopassi

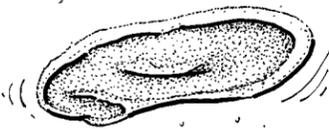
Tom Cortopassi, President and Co-Owner



BUSINESS BUILDERS: CLIENTELE CULTIVATION

Saturday Fun!

In her pizzeria, Zasa, owner Tara Hattan works to attract more young families by appealing to their youngest members. For example, she offers Saturday morning dough throwing classes for kids and their families, ending in a tasty pizza lunch! The reasonably priced family outing also gives Tara time to make friends with the parents as well, making them feel especially comfortable returning to her place. A Win-Win!



Tara Hattan, Owner
 Zasa Pizza
 Tulsa, OK

Thanking Naysayers

Pizzeria owner Freddo Santos credits his current double-digit growth in "pies out the door" to his high online Google reviews. Freddo influences his positive ratings by attracting service-oriented customer types.

How? By responding positively to every "less than positive" online review. Sometimes he offers to personally deliver replacement food or recommends other area restaurants closer to the customer's stated preference. But he **always** thanks them for trying his place!



Always thanking negative reviewers may seem counterintuitive. But the service-minded first-timers Freddo wants to attract don't just pick new restaurants based on their Google

ratings. They often also review actual customer comments, good and bad. And seeing how Freddo responds promptly to the occasional poor review, no matter how unfair, demonstrates to these future customers that he cares about satisfying even the challenging folks. The bonus is that when they actually try his place, many of these service-minded newcomers end up adding their own **positive** reviews!



Freddo Santos, Owner
 Square Pizza Company
 San Diego, CA

Share your proven business-building tips and **if we publish your idea, we'll send you \$100!** Your tip can deal with any aspect of your business as long as it has added to your success. While we would like to give you credit, we will respect your wishes to remain anonymous if you prefer.

IDEA EXCHANGE FOR INDEPENDENT RESTAURATEURS

SUCCESS STORY:

MANGIA E BEVI, OCEANSIDE, CA

During Covid closures, the Trupiano family sustained their contemporary Italian ristorante by providing wholesome, customer-funded meals to those in need. Today, their dining room is back in full swing, delighting regulars with hand-crafted pasta entrees and Neapolitan pizzas, authentically prepared as they are in Italy.

To stand out from the crowd, Tore Trupiano chose not to offer Italian-American dishes widely available elsewhere. While this sometimes surprises newcomers, it also delights his regulars. Instead, his quarterly **one-page** menu offers a short-list of seasonal regional Italian dishes, plus a few house favorites.

Limiting his menu to ten pasta entrees allows Tore's chef to get really good at coaxing unique flavors from a handful of seasonal recipes. It also ensures that "limited edition" ingredients are promptly used, ensuring optimal freshness. For menu appeal, Tore seeks uniquely flavorful dishes which also satisfy a range of customer dietary preferences. For example, his *panelle* Sicilian fried chickpea fritters are not just especially tasty antipasti, they also delight vegetarians.

Reworking his menu quarterly gives Tore many advantages. It allows him to highlight seasonal produce at its peak, like hearty pumpkin and squash recipes this fall.

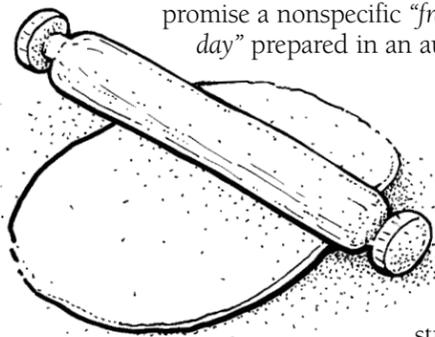
It also encourages Tore to reevaluate the sales and profit performance of every dish quarterly.

To do this, Tore reviews the previous quarter's sales counts by item provided by his POS. Slower, lower margin items are weeded out to make room for newcomers. New items are added and attractively described. Then all menu prices are adjusted to match rising business costs. Finally, the new menu pages are laser printed in-house and slipped into vinyl covers, keeping the process cost-effective, quick, and easy.

To visually emphasize his ristorante's attention to detail, Tore doesn't just **mention** using house-made pasta in his menu. Instead, he puts his pasta maker in full view of dining guests, busily hand rolling, cutting, and shaping various specialty noodles, throughout their entire meal.

Located near the coast, Tore's restaurant also specializes in ultra-fresh seafood. But supply-chain issues have kept his vendor from dependably delivering specific species. So rather than forcing servers to periodically apologize "We are currently out of Branzino," his seafood offerings now promise a nonspecific "freshest catch of the day" prepared in an authentic style.

By specializing in authentic, ultra-fresh offerings and warm, personalized service, business remains strong for the Trupiano Family! Bravo!



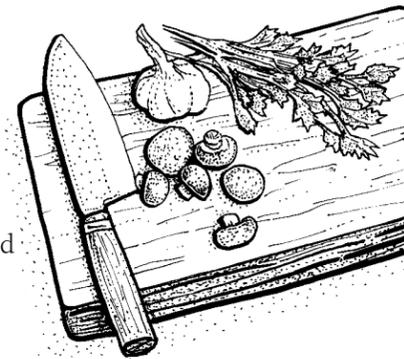
LA VERA CUCINA:

POLLO DI STEFANO

At *Nonno's Italian Restaurant* in Altamonte Springs, Florida, locals enjoy a variety of Sicilian seafood specialties lovingly prepared by the LaCommare Family. Across multiple generations, a customer favorite has long been *Pollo di Stefano*. The dish was developed by owner Leonardo LaCommare's father Stefano, who came over from Sicily as a young man. Whenever Leonardo prepares it, the aroma of freshly sauteing garlic, chicken, and fragrant sherry fondly reminds Leonardo of learning to cook by his father Stefano's side!

Ingredients:

- Flour for coating chicken
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 5 ounces raw chicken tenders
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon fresh ground garlic
- 2 tablespoons sherry wine
- 5 ounces Italian link sausage, cooked and sliced
- 6 Kalamata olives, pitted & halved
- 2 cups button mushrooms, sliced
- 2 Pepperoncini
- 1 Lemon half
- ¼ cup chicken broth
- Salt to taste
- Fresh Italian parsley to taste



Instructions:

Salt, pepper, and lightly flour chicken on all sides. Melt butter over medium flame. Add chicken to sear on all sides. Add garlic and stir through. When garlic is translucent (2-3 minutes), add sherry to deglaze pan. Reduce heat to low, add sausage, olives, button mushrooms, and pepperoncini. Add chicken broth; squeeze lemon over mixture. Simmer over low heat 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until mushrooms reduce and sauce thickens in pan. Add salt and parsley to taste.

Remove from heat, plate, and serve immediately. Best enjoyed after a hearty "primo" of pasta!

About La Farina

Today, many Italian doughs and pastas feature finely milled "00" farina (flour). But the cucina rustica of Italy's contadini was based on homegrown flour. As a boy, restaurateur Paul Cataldo fondly remembers helping his Calabrian grandparents harvest their wheat. Before switching to a mechanical thresher in the 1980s, Paul's grandfather laid out rows of dry, harvested wheat sheaves on packed soil. A team of cows was led over the sheaves to break the seeds from the stalks. Then an olive wood pitchfork tossed the stalks into the air to winnow seeds from chaff. The empty stalks were stacked for hay and the seeds were scooped up and carted to the local mill for grinding into their next year's flour!



KEY IDEAS:

EARNING STAFF LOYALTY

During the pandemic, Dave Kuban challenged the odds by launching *D&C's Hometown Deli*. Located 5 minutes from his original pizzeria, the two businesses compete in different dayparts. The neighborhood deli is busiest during breakfast and lunch, while the pizzeria is busiest during dinnertime.



While Dave had no deli experience, he applied the same business model which successfully built his pizzeria. He instituted online ordering, took credit cards, and used frequent social media posts to introduce his existing clientele to this second venture. To stand out from the crowd, he featured ultra-premium brands of cured meats and cheeses and freshly baked Italian bread from NY's Arthur Avenue.

The backbone of Dave's success is his closeknit staff. Even during the pandemic, his employee retention remained high as a result of his making their working together feel meaningful and appreciated.

Before owning his own business, Dave burned out, endlessly working six days a week for others. To keep his team fresh, Dave only schedules them five days a week with either Saturday or Sunday off. In addition to above average pay and dependably full-time hours, Dave also demonstrates his ongoing appreciation by treating his team to post-lunch-rush sushi every Friday. On Valentine's and Mother's Day, the restaurant buys employees large bouquets of flowers to take home to their loved ones. On their birthdays, teammates enjoy a bakery cake decorated with their name!

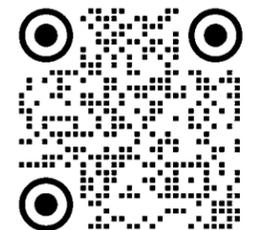
This level of personal attention has kept Dave's employee retention high, even during the pandemic. Building a strong sense of "family" within his crew also makes it easier to make new hires feel they belong as well! As a result, staffing the second business was relatively painless because it allowed him to promote longtime team members and then fill in with new hires.

Dave Kuban, Owner
D&C's Hometown Deli
Norwalk, CT



LA TRATTORIA®

"Scan to Follow Us on Social"



If we publish your idea, we'll send you \$100!

La Trattoria's proven ideas come from successful Independent restaurateurs like you. What are you doing differently in your business (besides making great food) that adds to your success?! If we publish your idea, we'll send \$100 to say "Grazie!" Call me, La Trattoria Editor Steve Rouse, at (800) 328-8667!



Visit Our Business-Building Library Online!

Visit our *Restaurateur Only* website for information about our company and products, family recipes, plus **multiple issues of La Trattoria!**



www.stanislaus.com

BUONA SALUTE È LA VERA RICCHEZZA ■ AMICI E VINI SONO MEGLIO VECCHIE

AMICIZIE E MACCHERONI, SONO MEGLIO CALDI ■ NULLA SI FA SENZA VOLONTÀ!