

## **(IJ-08) The Pizza Organization (TPO)**

Decision-Based, Analytical Case

*Gabriela Delgado Almada*

MBA Student (Graduating May 2023)

*Dr. J. Rob Handley*

Assistant Professor of Leadership and Management, Alliant International University

### **ABSTRACT**

This case study goes into detail about Andrea's experience with IPC company, a restaurant/entertainment business who hired her as a sales associate. Andrea really enjoyed the training days and thought it was very thorough and well explained, but when it came to practice what she was taught, she realized that the type of business conducted during the week did not prepare her for what the weekend challenges were going to be, and brought this up to her management team. The trainer was not appreciative of Andrea criticizing her training methods. However, the trainer did agree to let Andrea shadow her on the weekend shift. It was by analysis and observation that Andrea realized what the training was omitting and what needed to be implemented.

### **CASE STUDY – IPC TRAINING**

When Andrea first started to work for Incredible Pizza Company, she did not have any work, sales, or marketing experience. Her dream was to put herself through college by having a part-time job, as she still lived with her parents. IPC was the first company to give her this opportunity. Andrea had dealt with kids before, as she had volunteered at elementary schools to help with talent shows and had tutored kids in math while she was finishing high school. Fresh out of college, she got a job, thanks to her experience with kids. Little did she know, she was going to be engaged and sell towards adults with kids. This sales associate job was not related to her experience with children.

IPC had a big operation that included dining rooms, buffet, arcade, and parties happening simultaneously throughout the day. Training was done during the week so that Andrea could learn

the operation at a smaller scale and understand the workflow of the operation. Eventually, Andrea had to be thrown into the real challenge on her own; to work on the weekends. While the company dealt with about 2,500 guests on each day of the weekend, weekdays varied more around 300 guests a day, Monday thru Thursday. The weekdays were days that Andrea shadowed her team lead and learned the basics of being a cashier, the membership, and the business. She came into a big surprise on her first weekend day Saturday, during her 12:00 to 8:30pm shift. She saw the lines to get in were out the door. The floors were getting messy because of the amount of traffic, people on the party entrance were coming in with parties of 60-100 people for big reservations, buffet attendants were running around, and arcade attendants were trying to keep up to the customer's needs. Andrea was startled. This was her first day not shadowing her trainer and getting a cash register of her own. This customer pool was not the one she trained with. These people were out on the weekend with big families. They had been waiting in line at least 30 minutes with kids full of energy and excitement. Also, there were not as many weekend coupons or specials to offer when they walked in. People getting to the register did not seem to want to engage in conversation with Andrea. They wanted to pay for their entrance, then rush and move along. She felt exhausted at the end of the day. She was not confident anymore and did not reach her upselling quotas.

With a business-like IPC, within the Entertainment/Restaurant industry, it is expected that weekends and Holidays are the busiest days. One may think that because of this same reason, weekends should not be used for training, especially for new and inexperienced employees like Andrea. She had a different experience on the first day performing her job on her own; completely different to the days she shadowed or was shadowed to learn how the business worked. Andrea needed to be prepared by her trainers and superiors for all kinds of scenarios. She needed to have the preparation necessary to serve the purpose of a sales associate; not just stand there and charge the fee to come in. However, to not upset the customers anymore, nor keep them waiting, Andrea did as a parking garage cashier would do; charge a person and move them along.

IPC seems to believe that training during the most hectic is not effective. The company standards and beliefs are that a person must learn to do things while it is slow and not complicated to learn the true basics. The training is reserved for days where the amount of guest flow is reduced, there are minimal issues, and where the time can be invested for a trainer to shadow new employees and

experience the usual transaction flow. The idea, like when practicing a dance, is that Andrea will learn step-by-step in a slow, no pressure environment, so that when the show begins, she can perform naturally and without hesitation. However, when Andrea expressed her concerns and insecurities to her trainer the next day, the trainer was quick to let the manager know that Andrea was not ready. The manager did however show true concern and asked why; and the sales associate trainer responded, “the weekend flow overwhelmed her, she seem to me like she was ready on our last training on Wednesday, but she claims she would like some more shadowing to be done today.” Being a Sunday, the manager was a little hesitant to waste an extra pair of hands to just “continue to observe and train,” but his trainer did claim that there was a difference between the flow of Wednesdays and weekend days; so, he accepted Andrea’s request.

Andrea was set with the trainer on a Sunday, and the trainer let her know “I cannot go slow, so pay attention.” Andrea now felt both anxious and positively challenged. “I can help the next guest!” The trainer yells as she calls the next person in line because there are multiple cashier stations moving the operation along. Andrea notices a different script, more target focused, rather than engaging, but still friendly. The cashier avoids small talk, moves the conversation along in a fast but engaging way. The cashier focuses the upselling on families with kids or large groups, which there is plenty coming through during the weekend. For single couples or senior guests, she mentions only the benefits of the membership that include a birthday buffet and 5% back in points and excludes explaining the play card specials. Instead, she just asks, “will you be playing today?” Most guests said no. She greets and thanks them for the wait. Instead of asking why they are here today, or how many people are in your group; the trainer counts the group present as they approach and greets them with a “Welcome to IPC, thank you for the wait, 2 adults and 3 kids?” She makes assumptions on what can be perceived already. No transaction takes more than 2 minutes, and the trainer seems to have full control of the flow of the transaction. This was not the way Andrea was trained. Andrea thought she was always supposed to engage the customer and mention all the specials and benefits of becoming a member. However, the trainer is efficient, courteous, quick, and still manages to make her upsells. Andrea started to see that training is just basics and she needed to adjust her own pitches depending on the type of people and type of day. She now had in her mind “should I bring this issue up to management or should I continue to analyze and test my own theories.” She had consequences to consider. If she did not bring it up to management, she

might not be able to verify her theory, and if she was right, then maybe her bringing the issue up would make it better for future hires and trainers. Or she could keep it to herself, not seem ungrateful for the training, and not bother management or the trainers anymore. She could just work on her reputation and on bettering her work performance and be an efficient employee. What should Andrea do?

## **TEACHING NOTE: TEAM MORALE AND PERSPECTIVES**

### **ABSTRACT**

The management team in Incredible Pizza Co. decided to promote their best sales associate from part-time to full-time as a reward for her high performance. The rest of the team now resents her because they believe her to be favored by the managers. The following teaching note attempts to capture what management could have done better and what must be done moving forward for the team to continue to work together and not institute grievances among coworkers.

### **SYNOPSIS**

The membership best-selling cashier got promoted to full time employee, which caused some resentment and jealousy among her peers, who claimed that the promotion was due to favoritism, and not because of achieved goals. Some peers were supporting, but a few are not so convinced and blame their low scores for sales on the low number of hours they get.

**Keywords:** Jealousy, communication, transparency, sales scores.

**Suggested audience:** Sales associates, managers, supervisors, HR

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Managers will make sure to stop rumors and clarify the reasoning behind the promotion.
- Managers need to encourage the team and be clear about possible rewards from the beginning.

- Sales associates need team building exercises and clarity that the ratings are based on ratios to number of transactions, not related to hours worked.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- Why do certain associates correlate their peers' success as favoritism?
- How did the managers fail to make the process more transparent? Would having the process as a competition for a full-time position motivate the others with low sales?
- How will morale and team spirit be kept amongst the sales associates?
- How can training be improved so that everybody feels appropriately incorporated; whether it is to the team or to the workflow?

### **PEDAGOGY (TEACHING TIPS)**

In TeachThought.com - “We grow teachers,” Terry Heick talks about The Gradual Release of Responsibility Model In 6 Simple Words: “Show me, help me, let me” explaining how it is a teacher’s, or an employer’s responsibility to teach the tasks, but also to slowly make it the student’s or employee’s responsibility. The objective of this method is autonomy and efficiency. It is to be achieved by the person learning the skill, and eventually making them responsible for the understanding and performing of its own. How is this related to the sales associates?

1. Show me: Have all the sales associates been given the same amount of time for training and attention to development as the one getting the most hours?
2. Help me: Practice with the cashiers, role play, give them key points, do it for them, with them, in front of them, introduce them slowly to it.
3. Let me: Allow them to do it on their own and give them key observations and constructive criticism to improve on the spot, or after their individual try. Also, allow

them to see that the cashier that sells two memberships in a four-hour shift, has the same score as the full time selling four in his/her shift.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTED ANSWERS**

- Why do certain associates correlate their peers' success as favoritism?
  - As the hours given to a cashier and sales scores are correlated, the cashiers selling more and spending more time at work, make it seem like they spend more time closer to management.
- How did the managers fail to make the process more transparent? Would having the process as a competition for a full-time position motivate the others with low sales?
  - Managers may be focused on praising and rewarding their good assets and promoting healthy competition. They fail to be fair if they were not transparent about what was at stake from the beginning.
- How will morale and team spirit be kept amongst the sales associates?
  - Constant proof that it is all based on a transaction to membership ratio, not correlated to the hours worked. Constructive criticism and attention are necessary for the ones that need it most.
- How can training be improved so that everybody feels appropriately incorporated; whether it is to the team or to the workflow?
  - Managers being too focused on the basic understanding of what the membership benefits are and not how the idea translates to the team, need to incorporate their

vision into the training. Cashier's different scenarios and perspectives of these should be taken into consideration when implementing training.

## **EPILOGUE**

At work, and as managers, you might not feel the need to explain your decisions to your employees, especially the ones that do not perform as well. But it is your job, and in this case, it was Incredible Pizzas Co. managers' task, to give everybody equal attention, opportunity, and full transparency to what is expected of them. There will be a training session for everyone to be aligned and work as a team.

## **REFERENCES**

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