



well with last-minute reminders. Pizza Guys, a 24-unit delivery-carryout chain based in Woodland, California, executes its campaign within two days of the event. Founder Shahpour Nejad says the company distributes coupons weekly in direct-mail publications like *Pennysaver* and *Advo*. But those tabloids are distributed on Wednesdays — too far in advance, he says. “By Sunday, everyone’s thrown them out or they’re lost.”

So the company makes an extra marketing effort that Friday and Saturday, distributing door hangers with specials — party packages of pizza, wings and drinks or coupons for two pizzas at one price.

Don’t let the football teams be the only winners, says Diane Chiasson, president of Chiasson Consultants in Toronto. Let customers win something also. Have them burst balloons or balls that contain coupons for free items or premiums at your place.

Prizes can be an extension of existing specials, a two-for-one price deal, or even a means of generating product trial. Wondering if customers will like that chicken-garlic pizza you’ve been working on? This is a great opportunity to try it out.

Test that dessert purchase you’ve been considering. A distributor or manufacturer may work with you to offer free samples of a new product on Super Sunday. Having a dessert available can also stimulate coffee or espresso sales.

Team Up for a Party

Work with another company to supply the elements of your store’s party:

▼ Offer a 15-exposure disposable camera for parties of eight or more who dine with you that day, suggests Chias-



Gridiron Gains

Super Bowl parties, promos and giveaways boost in-store sales

Who will be the Super Bowl winner this year? It should be you. Super Bowl pizza business may not be the godsend to Italian dinner houses that it is to delivery-carryout units, but sales can score a touchdown in both the United States and Canada, where TV viewership outranks that for Canada’s own football championship, the Grey Cup.

Clever marketing by you could send your sales figures into the end zone, and Super Bowl week is a good time, say foodservice consultants, to invigorate your customer base or even position a new product.

Get Them in the Door

Be sure your neighbors think of your store first, says Joseph K. Maragos, of Philadelphia-based JKM & Associates.

“I’ve seen pizza businesses doubled ... and tripled for a day on Super Bowl Sunday,” says Maragos. “Most of them just put out a flier and put something in the local paper. The important thing is to let people know you’re open for business, come on out and watch the Super Bowl here.”

But advertise only in a neighborhood medium, he adds. Unless your company is a chain, it’s not wise to blanket advertise, such as in a metro paper.

On the other hand, delivery does

son. Run a contest for the best photo taken during the party, and invite the winning group back for a free pizza party. For deliveries, include a 15-exposure disposable camera with bundled delivery orders of a certain minimum size.

"People are ordering all this food because there's a party. Why not help them make it one?" Chiasson says.

Work with the local one-hour photo developer to share or foot the wholesale cost of the cameras and a processing discount coupon. Drugstore chains are another source to tap; feature their offer prominently in your advance Super Bowl publicity.

▼ Bag a batch of prizes tailored to the game. Jerseys of the Super Bowl teams are perfect, suggests the Promo Network of Boalsburg, Pennsylvania. Promo Network (www.thepromonetnetwork.com) produces a monthly newsletter, \$99 annually, that carries an idea exchange for all seasons and sports. Among its favorites is the jersey drawing; a local sports store can donate them in exchange for cooperative advertising or dinner certificates. Use the jerseys as in-store decorations before your customer drawing.

Appliance stores can offer a lure as big as the Bowl with the promise of a television or recliner drawing at your restaurant during the game, Promo Network says. Again, co-op advertising is key.

▼ Offer premiums and low-cost commemoratives. Although the rights to use the Super Bowl logo are owned by the Miller Brewing Company and Anheuser-Busch, one of Coors' promotions is a printed glass recognizing Super Sunday. Clients buy it at a low cost that comes back on beer-and-glass sales with discounted refills, explains Tom Morgan, a sales manager with Jayhawk Distributing Co., Topeka, Kansas.

Jayhawk works with its customers and Coors to develop parties with premiums such as T-shirts and can cozies; it sets up point-of-purchase displays that have included life-size NFL player cutouts. His company will even set up games, such as a miniature football toss, for the prizes, Morgan says.

Other premiums from distributors

include inflatable armchairs and mugs. The brewers may field a contest like Miller did last year preceding the big day: It gave away 40 trips to Super Bowl XXXIII, says Jeff Waalkes, sales communications manager for Miller Brewing Co.

But premiums and promotions come through local distributors, who buy them from the brewer's designated manufacturer. Whether the distributor comps them or charges a fee generally depends on state liquor commission requirements, Waalkes emphasizes.

Does your distributor have a line on a former NFL player? A player's presence always brings people in the door, says Morgan.

Get Up Your Own Game

▼ SCA Promotions of Dallas, Texas, has made its name on "instant winner" jackpot promotions. Dine-in restaurants with TV sets can take a cue: Customers present during a big play, say when the opponent's quarterback gets sacked, win a free pizza, appetizer or sandwich coupon.

From the Promo Network's files: Hand each diner a card marked with a football play/team or player/play combination. When the team makes that play — or when the player makes the play written on his card — the holder wins.

▼ Quarterback Bingo substitutes football plays, TV commercials and your menu for the familiar numbers.



Make all the right moves this year by promoting a Super Bowl party in your stores.

Creative wizard Dan Williams of Sacramento, California, developed the game cards' squares using a database of NFL plays and TV commercials aired during the games. The cards include four squares customized to your establishment with menu specials, to be covered if the customer orders the item. Give winners distributor premiums, food coupons or drawing tickets. Quarterback Bingo also comes with a \$1,000 prize.

The average food and beverage sales increase during Quarterback Bingo is 56 percent, Williams claims. For information on it and other football games, call Image Engineering, (916) 387-1925, or e-mail imageengineering@cwix.com.

Game Day Strategy

Your pizza game plan may end at the kickoff of Super Bowl XXXIV. Or it may start after the final score. Successful pizza chains and independents offer a variety of sports promotion philosophies:

- ▼ Timing is everything. "We want to be the last name in front of people before Super Bowl starts," says Jay Allison, vice president of media relations for Pizza Hut.

The Dallas-based behemoth buys the TV time segment just before kickoff, when network advertising rates are lower. Then it double-teams potential buyers with a stylish campaign — Elvis in 1998, celebrities eating The Big New Yorker pizza in 1999 — and a single-product focus "at a price point that's very pleasing to the participants in this market," Allison adds.

Few pizza companies are in that league. But others can brand their names in the consumer's consciousness with a zoned coupon sheet or an advertisement that can be positioned next to Super Bowl stories in print media.

- ▼ Get a name dividend. Domino's has deftly ridden the jersey tails of the Super Bowl by tracking its pizza sales and publicizing the correlation between the climactic pro football matchup and its business.

Last year, it invited reporters and photographers to watch the frenzy of making, baking and delivering during Super Bowl hours. Cozette Phifer, public relations manager for the company, came up with the idea.

"I actually witnessed it myself one year and freaked," she recalls. "I thought the media might have the same reaction."

They did. Stories, columns and photos appeared in newspapers all over the country.

- ▼ Market all your best days. Good pizza chains take advantage of POS statistics to see what other events bring in more business, then market themselves accordingly.

"There are other days when the interest is higher," says Pizza Guys' Nejad. California has a large Hispanic population, and during the 1998 lightweight championship boxing match between Ricardo Lopez of Mexico City and Rosendo Alvarez of Managua, Nicaragua, orders went through the roof, he says. "If we did \$2,000 worth of business in a store, we did \$4,000 for this. It was double our usual for that day." ➤

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PHOTO BY ALLSPORT USA

Serious Stats for Super Sunday

- ▼ 133.4 million: The number of TV viewers for Super Bowl 1999.
- ▼ 931,798: The number of pizzas Domino's stores sold on Super Bowl Sunday in 1999.
- ▼ Between 50 and 75 percent: Growth in business Little Caesars units handle on Super Bowl Sundays.
- ▼ 1: The number of oven failures it takes to make your Super Bowl business a disaster. "You're foolish not to have a backup that day," warns restaurant consultant Maragos.

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