

# CEO of Domino's stared bad pizza in the face



In late 2008, Domino's market share was plummeting. Instead of blaming collapsing sales on the nation's economic downturn, executives chose a surprising strategy: They admitted their main product—pizza—wasn't very good.

Patrick Doyle, president of Domino's USA operations at the time, realized that consumers perceived the pizza as inferior to competitors. He knew that the quality had to improve for sales to improve.

Domino's top brass decided to embrace the negative customer input. They listened to diners' complaints and set about to reboot their pizza by changing the recipe and production process.

For more than a year, the company experimented with new types of dough and other ingredients. They worked in secret, while keeping franchise owners happy by launching a successful line of sandwiches to attract the lunch crowd.

In December 2009, Domino's unveiled a revolutionary YouTube video.

It openly derided its old pizza and introduced a higher-quality product.

Doyle, who was promoted to CEO in 2010, went a step further as sales started to pick up. Publicly rejecting the industry practice of styled food photography that doctored the product, Doyle and his team launched a "Show Us Your Pizza" campaign.

Inviting customers to submit their own photos of Domino's pizzas—good or bad ones—proved ingenious. When someone sent a photo of a pizza stuck to the box, Doyle went on TV and apologized.

"They loved the fact that we were saying that sometimes it doesn't look the way it should," Doyle says. "We do mess up, and we apologize for that, and if we do, let us know and we'll fix it."

— Adapted from *Team Turnarounds*, Joe Frontiera and Daniel Leidl, Jossey-Bass.

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