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The Pizza Co looks to home delivery for growth

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By KWANCHAI RUNGFAAISARN
THE NATION
Published on April 12, 2011

The Pizza Company aims to grow its restaurant business by 8 per cent this year, driven by the expansion of home-delivery opportunities, especially in second-tier provinces.

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Yukonthorn Visetkosin, marketing director for local and international markets, yesterday said that off-premise sales, including home delivery and take-away, represented about 60 per cent of the company's business.

"We plan to increase the ratio of off-premise sales to 75 per cent in the next one or two years," she said, adding that the company saw strong potential for its home-delivery service, especially in second-tier areas.

"In major cities such as Bangkok, home-delivery service has contributed about 40 per cent of our overall sales. However, for some second-tier provinces such as those in the in the Northeast, only 20 to 25 per cent of sales are from home delivery," said Yukonthorn.

The Pizza Company operates 94 delivery and carry-out (delco) units and 117 pizza restaurants, 85 of which also provide home-delivery service.

"We have a 30-minute guarantee to deliver our pizza to the customer's home. The increase in our home-delivery opportunities will also depend on our ability to expand our delco and restaurant networks, especially in second-tier cities," she said.

The Pizza Company yesterday announced plans to invest more than Bt200 million in opening at least 12 restaurants this year - more than 90 per cent of which will also provide home-delivery service - as well as on the renovation of 20 outlets.

Seven of the new restaurants will be franchised branches, with the others company-owned.

The company opened three outlets in the first quarter at Central Chiang Rai, Pran Buri and Center One in Bangkok. Another nine restaurants will be added over the course of the year.

The Pizza Company expects its business to grow 8 per cent this year to sales of Bt4 billion. It posted 15-per-cent growth year on year in the first quarter.

The company is also moving forward with its mobile marketing strategy, becoming the first operator in the local food industry to attract customers who use smart phones.

Yukonthorn said the new strategy aimed to tap the 3.5 million users of smart phones in Thailand, namely users of BlackBerry, iPhone and Android devices

"The launch of The Pizza Company's mobile application will support our home-delivery channel, which is conducted via telephone and Web orders," she said.

The marketing director said home-delivery services contributed about 40 per cent of The Pizza Company's sales of Bt3.6 billion last year.

Adoption of mobile marketing is aimed at increasing pizza orders and boosting online business by 30 per cent this year.

"Today, the lifestyle of Thai people is changing. We conducted a customer survey and found most of them have two mobile phones. And many of them are addicted to smart phones. At the same time, pizza orders through call centres and other online channels are showing a significant rise. This means that customers prefer convenience," she said.

This has convinced the firm to introduce The Pizza Company Mobile Order Application for the iPhone, iPad, BlackBerry Bold 9700 and Android-based smart phones from this coming Friday.

She said the move reiterated its market leadership in the pizza business over the past 10 years. The strategy also reflects its slogan of "The Pizza Company, Always Leading and Innovative".

The company found that up to 80 per cent of the sales of some food operators in the United Kingdom and Australia were accounted for by website and mobile ordering.

The company started a trial for its ordering application last month to survey customer demand. Some Bt15 million will be spent to upgrade the system and promote the channel throughout the year.

"We hope our new service through The Pizza Company Mobile Order Application on

smart phones will provide an alternative for customers to order our pizzas more often. We expect this year's orders through mobile phones will rise to 30 per cent, up from 5 per cent last year," Yukonthorn said.

She added that The Pizza Company had almost 650,000 customers ordering pizza and other food via its 1122 call centre last month, compared to 550,000 in March last year. Moreover, the trend of ordering via The Pizza Company's website has risen to 20,000-30,000 orders per month since the site was improved. Prior to the enhancement, the company had orders of 2,000-3,000 a month.



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