



Pizza Hut

Life Outside the Box:

How Pizza Hut Delivers Innovative Customer Experience by Harnessing the Power of Employee Stories



Pushing the Boundaries of Flavor and Innovation

Pizza Hut has always been innovative. It delivered the first pizza to the White House and another to outer space. It created the original Stuffed Crust Pizza (the current iteration—Grilled Cheese Stuffed Crust—features cheddar and mozzarella cheeses, and a buttery glaze). Pizza Hut's app, the first from the quick-service industry to let users place delivery orders, earned a coveted cameo in an early iPhone commercial. This is not a company for people who want to simply blend in.

Pizza Hut began in 1958 when two brothers borrowed \$600 from their mom to open a pizza parlor in Wichita, Kansas—now it delivers more pizza, pasta, and wings than any other restaurant in the world. The company believes eating pizza should be an experience and that pizza night is not just another Wednesday evening. And it all starts with its 300,000 team members who are in it for more than a paycheck; they're fully-invested members of the tightly-knit Pizza Hut family.

Much More Than a New Logo

When Pizza Hut decided to undergo its biggest brand overhaul in its 56-year history, it wanted to ensure it did not overlook the things its customers and employees love most about the brand. It wanted to let the world know it would stay true to its core values of flavor, quality, and friendly service while being responsive to the public's desire for a more organic, personalized, and outside-the-box experience.

This rebrand would be more than a new logo.

This monumental undertaking included a reevaluation of the company's Employee Value Proposition: the characteristics, culture, and benefits of working for an organization. But Pizza Hut didn't have a good pulse on what employees liked and didn't like about working for the company—information that would be paramount in shaping any changes. It needed to know what inspired employees to not only work at Pizza Hut, but also deliver an experience worthy of the brand's rich and innovative history.

A Powerful Notion

Pizza Hut knew it had to make its employees part of the process. It had to unlock the potential of their stories—a very human, employee-centric approach. So it embarked on an employee exploration journey with InMoment's Employee Engagement program that culminated in the collection of feedback from 40,000 team members across the U.S. The process was designed to be fun, quick, and allowed employees to share the experiences they've had while working at Pizza Hut. Using a combination of structured and open-ended questions, Pizza Hut got to the heart of a powerful notion that all companies want to know: *What do you love about working here and what can we do to make it better?*

By involving its employees, Pizza Hut reinforced that it cares about its team members and values their opinions. It found that when given a genuine opportunity to speak freely about their work experience, employees provide the input needed to drive a company forward.

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Amy Messersmith, Chief People Officer *Pizza Hut*

Becoming Your Best

One specific open-ended comment—*Tell us a story about a great moment you've had working at Pizza Hut*—elicited responses that averaged an impressive 50-60 words, and were rich in detail. InMoment helped Pizza Hut get beyond the metrics by leveraging industry-tuned text analytics on this and other feedback to unbox some unexpected results.

By running text analytics on 40,000 responses using the InMoment platform, Pizza Hut found that its employees were the most satisfied when the workplace felt like a “family atmosphere” where everyone works and solves problems together (as opposed to being held to a rigid set of rules). “The InMoment-generated themes from the responses led us to identify *Become Your Best*, *Make Friends*, and *Have Fun* as three key things that will happen when working at the Hut,” says Kara Berry, Director of Global Communications & Engagement. “We validated those elements with additional surveys from various markets across the world where these same three themes rose to the top.”

The insights also suggested that employees saw this as not just a job, but as an opportunity to be part of a team and grow as individuals. In fact, many employee stories focused on the experience of going above and beyond for a customer rather than personal recognition. This showed that employees were already buying into the company’s mission; the company saw this as an opportunity to reinforce its employee culture and continue investing in Team Pizza Hut.

Pizza Hut used this knowledge to inform the internal rebrand: *Life Unboxed*. This global people platform provides its 300,000 team members with programs, benefits, and other opportunities to grow inside and outside the workplace. “The beauty of *Life Unboxed* is that it may have a slightly different meaning to each person, but the amazing thing is whatever strikes you and connects with you about *Life Unboxed* also reflects the essence of our brand,” says Barry.

Since the launch of *Life Unboxed*, Pizza Hut has decreased turnover, improved retention, and created more positive experiences for employees. Now its business is supported by enthusiastic, thriving team members. “We are happy to have InMoment as our partner in our quest to understand and take action on engagement levels of our employees,” says Amy Messersmith, Chief People Officer. “Insights developed by them have been extremely helpful to us in understanding what our employees feel so we can respond to their needs.”

Life Unboxed has given a name and structure to a Pizza Hut culture that in many ways already existed. “It’s hard to put into words what I think about *Life Unboxed*,” says Christophe Poirier, Chief Marketing and Innovation Officer. “It’s really a way of life now more than anything else. It’s about doing the right thing, believing in people. Helping each other out. It’s about family, follow-through, and inspiration. You can’t find that anywhere else.”

And what company, or employee, wouldn’t want that?