

STANDOUT STORES

It was passion that led to Ron Rye taking over the **Stevi B's Pizza** restaurant in Bartlett, Tennessee, but it's good business sense that's likely to keep him in business. The operator of three TCBY locations took over Stevi B's Pizza in mid-February, having witnessed first-hand the disappointment of local kids when the store was in danger of closing.

What improvements have you made to Stevi B's?

We have increased the full-service aspect, offering to refill beverages whenever possible and taking requested pizzas to tables unasked. We also clear off dirty plates, if possible, while customers are still dining. We underpromise and overdeliver because it's not something people come in expecting to see.



Is the food still the same as before?

We have extended the salad buffet, and now some people are eating more salad than pizza. Salad is a higher food cost than pizza but in this economic time, you've got to get the customer in, and there's still some profit. I'd rather have 15 cents than no cents. Salad is better than nothing.

How is running a pizza restaurant different from a TCBY?

We have a lot more square footage to clean up and a lot more employees. The customer-service aspect is also much more intense with Stevi B's. We experience a niche dessert market with TCBY, but with Stevi B's, customers are spending more time in the restaurant.