

# CASE STUDY: New York Pizza



## BUSINESS PROFILE

**Name:** New York Pizza  
**Business Type:** Fast Casual  
**Location:** Palo Alto, CA  
**On-site dining:** 18 seats  
**Take-out:** Yes  
**Ware washing:** No  
**Employees:** 17

**New York Pizza** is a chain restaurant that serves pizza, salads, and side dishes like fries and chicken wings located in the Downtown Palo Alto Business District. There are 18 seats for dine-in customers and about 60% of their business is to-go. Customers order and pick up food at the front register. Other disposable items such as napkins, water cups, utensils, and straws are available at a self serve station. Customers are responsible for busing their own tables and sorting disposable food ware items into the landfill, compost, and recycle receptacles.

## Packaging Practices prior to Rethink Disposable:

- ➔ Pizza was served on paper plates with a sheet of food liner on a reusable plastic food tray
- ➔ Side dishes were served in disposable foil food trays for dine-in customers
- ➔ Plastic water cups and plastic utensils were used for dine-in and were readily available at the self-serve station

## Recommendations Implemented:

- ➔ Replaced paper plates and reduced food liner by serving slices directly on metal pizza trays
- ➔ Replaced foil trays for side dishes with reusable baskets
- ➔ Replaced plastic utensils and disposable plastic water cups with silverware and reusable cups for dine-in
- ➔ Eliminated disposable straws
- ➔ Installed a bus tub for collecting reusables

As a result of implementing **ReThink Disposable's** recommendations, New York Pizza reduced their use of targeted disposable foodware items by an average of **61%** and is **preventing the use of 135,354 disposable items and 2,955 pounds of waste annually, while earning an ongoing cost savings each year of \$3,043** from the avoided foodware purchases. The owner purchased all the reusable foodware needed to implement the program for only \$170.



A few operational changes were made to support the use of these reusable items. Two bus tubs were added next to the self-serve station and the waste bins to collect the reusable foodware for washing. Staff time and labor cost was not impacted by the changing operation. Pizza delivery drivers would spend time between deliveries emptying bus tubs and washing items used on site. These changes were easily made and the owner reported that the business has not had any issue keeping up with dishwashing needs and he has only seen positive results from his participation in **ReThink Disposable** certification.



**Irvin Mendoza, Owner:** "I think this is a good thing. Customers were actually complaining about the plastic utensils. Now we actually get good feedback that people like the changes. I've been telling the other New York Pizza locations, like in San Mateo, and they are interested in doing the same so now I'm helping others too."

## Results:

Recommendation	Product Replaced or Minimized	% Disposable Reduction	Payback Period (months)	Annual Packaging Reduction (# of pieces)	Annual Savings (after payback period)	Annual Waste Reduction (lbs.)
Implement metal pizza trays for dine-in	9" Paper plates	33%	0.9	60,833	\$1,091.96	2129
Implement reusable plastic cups for dine-in	9 oz Plastic Cold Cups	50%	0.9	7,604	\$268.34	137
Implement reusable silverware	Plastic Forks	67%	0.5	24,333	\$548.72	304
Implement reusable silverware	Plastic Knives	50%	4.1	6,083	\$137.18	76
Remove disposable straws from the self serve station	7" Paper Wrapped Plastic Straws	100%	0	12,167	\$290.78	11
Implement reusable baskets for dine-in	Rectangular Foil Tray	50%	0	6,083	\$523.17	170
Reduce paper food liner	Waxed Wrapping Paper Food Liner	75%	0	18,250	\$183.23	128
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>135,354</b>	<b>\$3,043.37</b>	<b>2,955 lbs.</b>

## THE BOTTOM LINE

- \$3,043 in annual net cost savings
- 135,354 disposable items reduced per year
- 2,955 pounds of annual waste reduction
- No impact to labor costs
- Received positive feedback from customers
- ReThink Disposable will use these case study results to engage other franchise owners in the New York Pizza restaurant chain to reduce disposable packaging and save money



ReThink Disposable is a Clean Water Fund program conducted in partnership with local businesses and government agencies. Generous support for the program is provided by a changing list of public and private funders. To learn more about the program, its partners, and funders, visit: [www.rethinkdisposable.org](http://www.rethinkdisposable.org).



Recycling & Waste Reduction Commission  
of Santa Clara County



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