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## Nancy's Pizza Shrinks Food Cost with POS Controls

The Chicago-based pizza chain increases consistency, controls inventory and reduces food costs with SpeedLine POS system.

### The players

**SpeedLine Solutions Inc.**, established in 1990, delivers point-of-sale and enterprise management software for restaurant owners and multi-unit pizza, fast casual and quick-service chains. The company, based in Lynden, Wash., and Vancouver, British Columbia, serves restaurants and franchisors in five countries.

**Chicago Franchise Systems** operates nearly 40 Nancy's Pizza locations in Chicago, Indianapolis and Atlanta. Nancy's Pizza founder Rocco Palese is recognized as the inventor of stuffed pizza, a Chicago delicacy. The restaurants, named after Palese's wife, offer a full menu of thin-crust pizza, appetizers, sandwiches and salads. The company also operates 18 Al's Beef locations in Illinois, Georgia and Arizona. Al's menu includes Italian beef sandwiches along with Chicago-style hot dogs, Polish sausage and hand-cut French fries.

### The challenge

David Howey, president of Chicago Franchise Systems, a licensee since 1977, purchased the Nancy's Pizza name and

*When Nancy's Pizza went looking for a user-friendly replacement for its outdated point-of-sale system, it found a surprise benefit in SpeedLine's POS. Using the system's portion-control tools and inventory tracking capabilities, franchisees cut food cost by 4 percent to 6 percent, while also improving product consistency and freshness.*

development rights in 1990. At the time, Nancy's used a point-of-sale system that was well-regarded in the pizzeria industry.

Unfortunately, when the developer of that POS system was purchased by another company, the new owner decided to eliminate the system from its offerings. Howey and hundreds of other restaurant operators were left with a POS system that was headed for obsolescence.

"It had been several years, and I was looking for something that would make sense for us," Howey said. "I wanted something we could customize to work the way we wanted it to work."

### The solution

In 2007, at the International Pizza Expo in Las Vegas, Howey saw a demonstration of the SpeedLine POS system. He then spent a week at SpeedLine headquarters learning the system.

“The beauty of SpeedLine is that it is totally customizable, and you don’t have to be a techie to work it,” Howey said. “When you are dealing with a franchise system, the easier it is to use, the better. And yet, it is incredibly powerful.”

Howey was so impressed with the SpeedLine POS that the system now is a requirement for all new Nancy’s and Al’s Beef locations. Older restaurants also are switching to SpeedLine as their existing POS systems reach the end of their usefulness.

“There are a lot of POS systems out there, but many of them are just so tech-oriented, they are not logical, the way a regular person thinks,” Howey said.

“The way SpeedLine is set up, you can make it logical to fit your operation,” he said. “Everything you need to run a pizzeria is here. A lot of systems have similar tools, but having them is one thing, and being able to use them is another.”

### The results

Although Howey wasn’t trying to address a specific issue when he began rolling out SpeedLine in Nancy’s Pizza restaurants, he saw an immediate, measurable impact on food cost.

“We weren’t having serious problems, but the stores would have trouble consistently hitting the theoretical numbers,” he said.



*When Nancy's Pizza needed a new POS system, it turned to SpeedLine's easy-to-use technology.*

“The SpeedLine system prints portion weights on the tickets for each particular pizza, so it streamlines everything,” he said. “We follow exact specs, and depending on the store, we have improved food cost anywhere from 4 percent to 6 percent. SpeedLine has really helped us with consistency and making the process seamless.”

Once the restaurants became comfortable with the SpeedLine POS, Howey added SpeedLine Inventory to his arsenal.



*It takes more than delicious pizza to have a successful operation. Efficient technology that can cut food costs and accurately project expenses can help.*

SpeedLine Inventory compares the sales information from the POS with a restaurant's recipes to calculate theoretical usage, and creates reports to show where an operator may be losing money through waste, theft or mishandling. SpeedLine Inventory also can pinpoint areas where food costs are out of line with pricing.

All Nancy's and Al's Beef locations do an inventory every week using SpeedLine Inventory, Howey said. Not only does the system help spot cost problems, it ensures that restaurants are serving a consistently fresh product through effective inventory management.

"The hardest thing that any restaurant operator has to do is inventory," he said. "People just hate it. But the more they realize that everything in the cooler is the same as money in the drawer, the better they are at managing their inventory. SpeedLine Inventory is critical to helping us make that connection."

*About the sponsor: The leading provider of intelligent solutions for pizza point of sale, SpeedLine provides POS technology solutions for pizza and delivery, quick-service and multiconcept restaurant companies, helping restaurant operators and chains operate more efficiently and profitably. Based in Lynden, Wash., and Vancouver, British Columbia, SpeedLine serves restaurant companies in five countries.*