



Let's Talk Business - Feature Story and Case Study

Baking up profits in country Victoria

This month's Let's Talk Business segment features a reopened country town bakery that has reinvigorated community spirit and local business.

A bit of history

The Lancefield Bakery is located in a small township one-hour north of Melbourne having had several owners and family's operators since first opening in 1872.

The significant USSA (Unique Service and Sales Advantage) of this bakery and a key to longevity over decades of competitors is not obvious. What is inside the business premises is a unique baking oven, in fact, one of only six known bakeries in Victoria to have an operational scotch oven.

Most scotch ovens were built in Australia between 1860 and 1910 and designed as a kiln style oven made from local brick. The major benefit of a kiln brick oven is the retention of heat used to gain a consistent baking temperature and applied to the dough during the baking process. Ultimately, a texture and taste in baked goods unsurpassed by modern day baking techniques.

As the old saying goes; 'they aren't making them like they used to. With no other scotch oven bakeries within a hundred kilometres, Lancefield has an advantage that has helped sustain the local bakery for generations and will be a USSA in the future.

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Major account loss ends 130 year-old business

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Seizing a niche for bread products produced in scotch ovens, Melbourne's Ansett Airlines became a significant

corporate account by the late '90's requiring the bakery enter into seven day production runs to meet airline needs.

For the family who had owned the Lancefield Bakery, increased profits from serving Ansett over local needs became their primary business focus.

While profits increased with Ansett, local business accounts and retail trade declined.

When Ansett Airlines went into receivership in 2001, the owners were unprepared for the sharp decline of commercial trade. Without other major accounts or local trade, after 130 years, the Lancefield Bakery closed as a local business.



Terry & Tony Foster inside Lancefield Bakery scotch oven

Lancefield Bakery, Victoria - Feature Story

New owners rebuild quality, value and local pride

Lancefield brothers Terry and Tony Foster, one with corporate and operational expertise and the other, with a superb pastry chef reputation, banded together with the support of Terry's family to reopen the bakery.

After investing two months to remodel the old bakery and meet industry compliance and regulations, local staff were interviewed who understood the culture and community.

Trained in the time-honoured tradition of scotch oven baking methods and service to customers, the bakery front line staff has done an excellent job in building quality, value and local pride into their roles and the team.

To relaunch the bakery to the public, a clever marketing research and



Lavazza coffee, a variety of breads and cakes or simply, a wonderful tasting sandwich.

Regarding whole loaf breads, Terry says "we have three distinctive types of whole loaf breads for discerning tastes. In addition to light and dark rye, there is rye with Caraway Seeds.

The second type plain whole meal, a classic product and stable to any bakery.

Last, but not least are the multi-grains namely four grain, four seed, linseed

from their loyalty with large grocery store chains towards locally baked products produced from our bakery".

- Anticipating large product variety needs prior to holidays as well as special calendar days is smoother from having customers place advance orders prior to actual production times.
- Accurate accounting of left over product and lowering the waste factor in each production cycle.
- Working ahead of special events that often times see state and national business and sporting heroes travel plans bring them through Lancefield as part of their community out reach programs.
- Fundraising or charity events have travel teams that need to be fed. They are now bringing their 'entourage' to the bakery, which makes for great photo opportunities and a bit of celebrity fun as well.

The Fosters have yet to hit full stride and as they grow, we will bring more ideas to WFH readers in the future about the Lancefield Bakery.

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promotional campaign included product taste tests through sample giveaways and thousands of area flyers generating an excitement and anticipation level prior to reopening.

More good news came from area conference centres gaining new business bookings from Melbourne's corporate marketplace. Bread requirements by the centres brought new corporate account opportunities before doors reopened.

Product goes out the door

Operating within a close-knit community, the Foster brothers and family regenerated local trade and enthusiasm in firing up the old scotch oven and bakery.

Their location is a thriving meeting place for those who want to enjoy a

and country with our fruit bun a standout sweet white dough creation that is quickly gaining acclaim with our customers".

Recalibrated Business growth tips

Here are some of the things that have made a difference in reopening the bakery.

- An enthusiastic baking team and service attitude has seen local staff grow from three to nearly twenty.
- Operational excellence in the back room and tight baking team scheduling is ever present because production of goods is at night with daily product demands growing .

Terry says, "surveys have identified changes in customer buying habits



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Next Month's Case Study

We will feature a Australian Olympian from the Mexico and Munich Games era who has skilfully used his sporting success to massively rebuild an existing business while finding and training Australian swimming, polo and triathlon champions of the future.

About the Writer

A Certified Speaking Professional, Rob Salisbury served two years as President of the NSW National Speakers Association of Australia, leading the team that rebuilt NSW into the largest speakers chapter of 65 worldwide. Rob is a USA certified Tom Hopkins Sales

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