# Consumer Trends: Diners Search for More Pizza Variety

CHICAGO (PRNewswire) — Pizza consumption is high. In fact, consumers told Technomic they eat pizza about 3.4 times a month. In addition to traditional pizza formats, today's expanded retail options and the emergence of the trendy fast-casual pizza segment are giving consumers plenty of ways to satisfy their pizza cravings.

Yet consumers tell us they want to see even more variety on pizza menus. They're calling for more toppings and a wider assortment of offerings—such as pizza by the slice and portable pizza snacks they can eat on the go. Additionally, quality and freshness are factoring more strongly into today's pizza purchasing decisions.

"Consumers are setting new standards for the quality and variety they expect," said Darren Tristano, Executive Vice President of Technomic, Inc. "The fast-casual pizza segment is succeeding because it's matching customers' needs for quality, freshness and the ability to choose from among a broader selection of ingredients."

Tristano also says that for pizza operators to stay competitive and steal share, they'll have to strengthen the quality perception by promoting freshness and customization opportunities, while giving guests a more interesting range of toppings, crusts and other options that emphasize variety.

To help foodservice executives understand the latest behaviors, preferences and attitudes of consumers regarding pizza, Technomic has published an update of its Pizza Consumer Trend Report [1]. Interesting findings include:

- Fast casual is driving the evolution of the pizza landscape: 55 percent of consumers purchase fast-casual pizza at least once a month
- Diners want more variety: 74 percent, up from 70 percent in 2012, say that a wide variety of toppings is important in creating a good pizza
- Quality and freshness are crucial: 43 percent of consumers visit their preferred pizza concept because it uses fresh, high-quality ingredients; 84 percent say that fresh toppings are important

Technomic's Pizza Consumer Trend Report [2] provides comprehensive research on the latest menu and consumer trends for restaurant and retail pizza, organized into five sections:

Menu Insights—utilizes Technomic's exclusive MenuMonitor [3] data to reveal menu-development trends for pizza at Top 500 restaurant chains, as well as pizza chains in the limited-service segment.

Consumer Insights—analyzes consumer preferences and attitudes toward pizza, based on findings from a nationally representative survey of 1,500 U.S. consumers.

Competitive Insights—examines consumer perceptions of attributes important to the pizza category, including craveability, LTOs, value and takeout capabilities to name a few, at 10 leading limited-service pizza chains based on Technomic's Consumer Brand Metrics [4] (CBM) program.

Outlook: Trends to Watch—explores emerging menu, concept and consumer trends that are poised to impact how restaurant operators promote pizza in the future.

Profiles—appendices feature in-depth profiles for 10 trend-setting foodservice brands featuring menus and service formats that are positioned around pizza.

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