

Subway Differentiates with Playfully Named 'Flatizza'

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NEW YORK (AP) — It's part flatbread, but also part pizza. So [Subway](#) [1] naturally called its latest offering the "Flatizza."

Since the pizza-like creation made its national debut last month, its inelegant combination name has provoked a good deal of snickering. As NPR put it in a satirical column, the name is "embarrassing to say when you have to order one." Others are simply stumped over how to pronounce it.

"It's flah-TEE-zah," explained Tony Pace, Subway's chief marketing officer, in a phone interview. Later in the conversation, he adopted a caricature of an Italian accent when saying it and punctuated the word by making a sound as if he were kissing his fingers.

"Mwah!"

As funny as the name may sound to some, it gives Subway a way to brand a product that might otherwise seem run-of-the-mill — and sear it into the memory of potential customers.

That's especially true considering flatbread pizzas have become so common, with chains such as California Pizza Kitchen and Olive Garden using them as a way to seem trendier.

"At the end of the day, a significant portion of marketing is about differentiation," Pace said.

It's not unusual for big companies to have their own lingos, of course. McDonald's, for instance, offers McNuggets, McWraps, McMuffins and the McRib. And Subway is no slacker in the Department of Made-Up Words; among its creations are "Footlong" and the "Sub-tember" and "Janu-ANY" promotions that run in September and January, respectively.

The Flatizza itself is the product of another of Subway's language mash-ups — its "Eatovation" system. Other names Subway said it considered for the flatbread-pizza include Flatini, Cristada and Crustini.

"We have a little fun with language," Pace noted. He said he championed "Flatizza" as the moniker because it makes the customer imagine someone with an Italian accent.

"Italian is a romance language. There's a certain lilt to the language, and Flatizza

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fits into that," he said.

So what exactly is a Flatizza? It's essentially a toasted pizza made with ingredients Subway already has in its stores, including a flatbread that's used for its breakfast sandwiches. The only extra item needed is the square boxes the Flatizzas come in.

Subway said the Flatizza will replace the round, personal pies offered at many of its 26,600 U.S. stores, but it's ultimately up to franchisees to decide whether they want to switch. Not all do — at least one store in New York City had signs promoting the round, personal pies on Friday.

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