

PIZZA WITH THE WORKS

As California Pizza Kitchen redefines the industry, it's the suppliers who need to deliver

By Rebecca Hansen



THE VENUE:

One of the fastest growing full-service, casual pizza chains in the country, focused on the entire customer experience – from the menu to the music.

THE CHALLENGE:

California Pizza Kitchen's loyal following grew up with the higher standard of sound from home stereos. For them, quality sound and music are not just expected, they are associated with good times.

THE SOLUTION:

Bose® 102® loudspeaker system.

THE RESULT:

Today, all CPK restaurants have Bose business music systems. "High quality sound is fundamental to our business."

– Richard Reinach, Director of Facilities
California Pizza Kitchen

Over the past decade, California Pizza Kitchen has grown from one restaurant in Beverly Hills to more than 80 locations from coast to coast. As one of the fastest growing full-service, casual chains in the country, CPK is an American success story most companies dream about. All this in a highly-saturated market not exactly void of pizza-specialty establishments. At CPK, they're attending to the entire customer experience – from the menu to the music – to stay ahead. And they're relying on suppliers to keep pace.

"CPK is selling an upbeat, comfortable experience," says Director of Facilities Richard Reinach. "Our pizzas and other menu items

are only a part of that experience. Decor, lighting, quality of service and quality of sound all contribute to a customer's enjoyment of our restaurants."

As a competitive advantage, premium audio creates synergy with the California-style fare and well-trained servers. It's no surprise then that the restaurant quickly replaced the car speakers that outfitted their first location. Today all their restaurants have Bose business music systems. "High quality sound is fundamental to our business," says Reinach.

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RICHARD REINACH, DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES
CALIFORNIA PIZZA KITCHEN

CPK Architect Doug Middleton agrees. "California Pizza Kitchen is about taking an established, durable idea and making it into something fresh and fun. Our menu is original, and I try to carry that over to the decor. My goal is to create a feeling that's contemporary and maybe a bit unexpected, but not trendy. What that means for sound is that we want to play a fun mix of music, including some unusual cuts, and we want it to be heard."

With a primary clientele of baby boomers and their families, CPK doesn't want to blast their sound system to the point where it interferes with comfort and conversation. On the other hand, they don't want it to serve as unidentifiable background noise, either. For California Pizza Kitchen's loyal following, quality sound and music are not just expected, they are associated with good times.

"CPK needed a sound system that would deliver a full range of frequencies clearly

and evenly throughout the restaurant,” says Todd Bermann of Tab Technical Services. “Since opening their second location, they have chosen Bose® 102® loudspeaker systems.” A Bose dealer, Bermann’s company in Thousand Oaks, CA, has installed all of CPK’s sound systems.

These Bose business music systems are unobtrusive. They’re flush-mounted into the ceiling so there is no interference with the restaurant’s engaging visuals. More importantly, they diffuse sound in a very wide pattern, similar to the way a stage light bathes a large area in soft, even illumination. “That’s ideal for a restaurant,” notes Bermann. “Patrons at one table shouldn’t be straining to hear the music, while those at the next table have to shout to make themselves heard. As closely as possible, everyone should be hearing – and enjoying – the same thing.”

But California Pizza Kitchen also needed a sound system supplier that could handle a multi-location national account. Bermann



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worked with the Professional Products division at Bose which had the infrastructure in place to deliver dependable products on time, according to CPK’s schedule – 80 restaurants, with construction underway for many new locations – and on budget, according to their business plan. Furthermore, Bose could provide any technical consultation needed on the multiple, and sometimes simultaneous,

installations occurring throughout the country.

The task was made even more formidable by the fact that each location has a different layout and decor. Contrast the black tile floors in Boston that have heavy use of glass and metallic finishes to the conservative brick and slate treatment in Alexandria, Virginia. These construction materials affect the dispersion of sound, as do ceiling height, restaurant size and floor plans, which also vary from one location to the next. It could have been an installer’s nightmare, but not for Bermann. “Bose loudspeakers gave me the flexibility to meet the design requirements of each location while delivering consistent quality of sound.”

Like the carefully chosen furnishings, the audio is ultimately there to enhance and set the mood. Engineered from the ground up for the hospitality and retail industries, Bose

business music systems deliver high-fidelity sound at all volume levels, even at the low levels common in restaurants. The speaker covers can be painted to match each restaurant’s color scheme.

“We try to not just go into a community,” says Middleton, “but to become part of it.”

That’s a lot of communities for California Pizza Kitchen, and a lot of restaurants depending on Bose sound systems. Reinach explains it’s important to maintain the CPK experience by paying attention to every detail, whether on the East Coast, West Coast or somewhere in between. “We want our customers to know that whenever they visit a California Pizza Kitchen, they can count on more than delicious food and superior service.” Because CPK can count on Bose, he adds, “They’ll also have great sound to listen to.”

To learn more about the impact that Bose