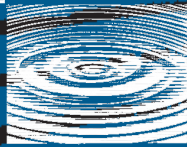


KING-CASEY



## KING-CASEY INSIGHTS

Lessons from Best-Practice Strategies

Client: Noodles & Company



### CLIENT CASE STUDY

# MENU ENGINEERING AND A COMMUNICATIONS BREAKTHROUGH IMPROVES SALES AND PROFITS

Consumer Insights, an Improved Way of Ordering and New Menu Items  
Lead to a Superior Customer Experience

## KING-CASEY INSIGHTS

These client case studies are intended to provide valuable insights regarding best-practices and innovative solutions that have been successfully implemented by restaurant and foodservice brands.

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## OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

Noodles & Company began in 1995 with a simple concept—serve fresh food fast. Today, there are 460 Noodles fast-casual restaurants in the United States serving a wide variety of international and American noodle dishes, pasta offerings, as well as soups and salads.

Noodles approached King-Casey with the goal of optimizing menu and communications strategies in order to improve sales, margin and the customer experience. Specific business objectives to achieve the previously mentioned included:

- Increasing average check through focus on attachment, upsell and high margin items.
- Making ordering faster and easier through less customization.
- Simplifying menu communications.



**PICK YOUR SIZE**  
REG \$6.25 SM \$5.00  
*Without Meat or Tofu*

**CHOOSE YOUR MEAT OR TOFU**

GRILLED CHICKEN BREAST 150 CAL **REG \$8.75**  
OVER-BROASTED MEATBALLS 190 CAL **SM \$7.50**  
SEASONED TOFU 210 CAL

PARMESAN-CRUSTED CHICKEN BREAST 190 CAL **REG \$9.00**  
NATURALLY RAISED PORK 190 CAL **SM \$7.75**  
MARINATED STEAK 120 CAL

**REG \$9.50**  
SAUTEED SHRIMP 70 CAL **SM \$8.25**

**EXTRAS**  
ADD BACON TO ANY DISH **+\$1.00**  
Substitute Gluten-Free sm +1.00 reg +1.50  
Pasta 140-180 CAL  
Extra Veggie +.75  
Before placing your order, please inform your ambassador if you have any special food allergies.

**MEDITERRANEAN ASIA AMERICAS**

**PENNE ROSA** 360 • 720 CAL  
TOP WITH PARMESAN-CRUSTED CHICKEN

**JAPANESE PAN NOODLES** 330 • 650 CAL  
TOP WITH STEAK

**SPICY CHIPOTLE ADOBO WITH PORK** 580 • 990 CAL

**PESTO CAVATAPPI** 380 • 750 CAL  
TOP WITH PORK

**PAD THAI** 620 • 1240 CAL  
TOP WITH SHRIMP

**SPAGHETTI & MEATBALLS** 670 • 980 CAL

**ALFREDO MONTAMORE\*** 800 • 1410 CAL  
TOP WITH GRILLED CHICKEN

**THAI GREEN CURRY WITH SHRIMP** 460 • 840 CAL

**STEAK STROGANOFF** 610 • 1100 CAL

**PASTA FRESCA** 440 • 880 CAL  
TOP WITH GRILLED CHICKEN

**SPICY KOREAN BEEF NOODLES** 560 • 1000 CAL

**BUTTERED NOODLES** 380 • 760 CAL  
TOP WITH MEATBALLS

**WISCONSIN MAC & CHEESE** 490 • 980 CAL  
TOP WITH MEATBALLS  
SM \$15.00 REG \$9.25

**ZUCCHINI TRUFFLE MAC** 270 • 540 CAL  
SM \$5.75 REG 7.00

**BUFFALO CHICKEN MAC** 650 • 1100 CAL  
SM \$7.75 REG \$9.25

**BBQ PORK MAC** 690 • 1210 CAL  
SM \$7.75 REG \$9.25

**TRY ZUCCHINI NOODLES**

SPICY LOW CALORIE (<1500) GLUTEN

**WORLD FAMOUS MACS**

**WISCONSIN MAC & CHEESE** 490 • 980 CAL  
TOP WITH MEATBALLS  
SM \$15.00 REG \$9.25

**ZUCCHINI TRUFFLE MAC** 270 • 540 CAL  
SM \$5.75 REG 7.00

**BUFFALO CHICKEN MAC** 650 • 1100 CAL  
SM \$7.75 REG \$9.25

**BBQ PORK MAC** 690 • 1210 CAL  
SM \$7.75 REG \$9.25

**TRY ZUCCHINI NOODLES**

**SALADS**  
REG \$8.75 SM \$7.50

**THE MED SALAD WITH CHICKEN** 390 • 250 CAL

**CHICKEN VERACRUZ SALAD** 650 • 380 CAL

**GRILLED CHICKEN CAESAR** 410 • 280 CAL

**WISCONSIN MAC & CHEESE** 270 CAL

**TOMATO BASIL BISQUE** 140 CAL

**THAI CHICKEN** 120 CAL

**CHICKEN NOODLE** 120 CAL

**TOSSED GREEN** 30-110 CAL

**CAESAR SALAD** 80 CAL

**SOUPS**  
REG \$6.00 SM \$4.75

**THAI CHICKEN** 370 • 250 CAL

**TOMATO BASIL BISQUE** 430 • 290 CAL

**CHICKEN NOODLE** 360 • 190 CAL

**SHAREABLES**  
REG \$5.00 SM \$3.00

**POTSTICKERS** 380 • 220 CAL  
6 or 3

**KOREAN BBQ MEATBALLS** 870 • 430 CAL  
10 or 5

**CHEESY GARLIC BREAD** 700 • 350 CAL  
6 or 3

**KIDS MENU \$5.25**

**CHOOSE AN ENTRÉE**  
Wisconsin Mac & Cheese 490 CAL  
Grilled Chicken Breast with Marinara 130 CAL  
Buttered Noodles 380 CAL  
Spaghetti & Meatballs 450 CAL

**CHOOSE TWO SIDES**  
Broccoli 15 CAL  
Applesauce 70 CAL  
Pineapple 45 CAL  
Kids Crispy 130 CAL

**CHOOSE A DRINK**  
Kids Fountain Drink 0-180 CAL  
Organic Lowfat Milk 110-150 CAL  
Organic Juice 40 CAL

1,200 to 1,400 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice for children ages 4-8 years, but calorie needs vary.

**DRINKS**  
Fountain Drink Reg 0 - 300 CAL 2.00  
Lg 0 - 450 CAL 2.30  
Fresh-Brewed Iced Tea Reg 0 - 120 CAL 2.00  
Lg 0 - 180 CAL 2.30

**TWO FLAVORS ONE GREAT CATCH**

**PENNE ROSA WITH SHRIMP** 420 CAL \$7.75 780 CAL \$9.00

**ZUCCHINI SHRIMP SCAMPI** 340 CAL \$7.75 490 CAL \$9.00

**ZUCCHINI SPICY PEANUT SAUTE WITH GRILLED STEAK** 380 CAL \$7.75 510 CAL \$9.00

# THE PROCESS

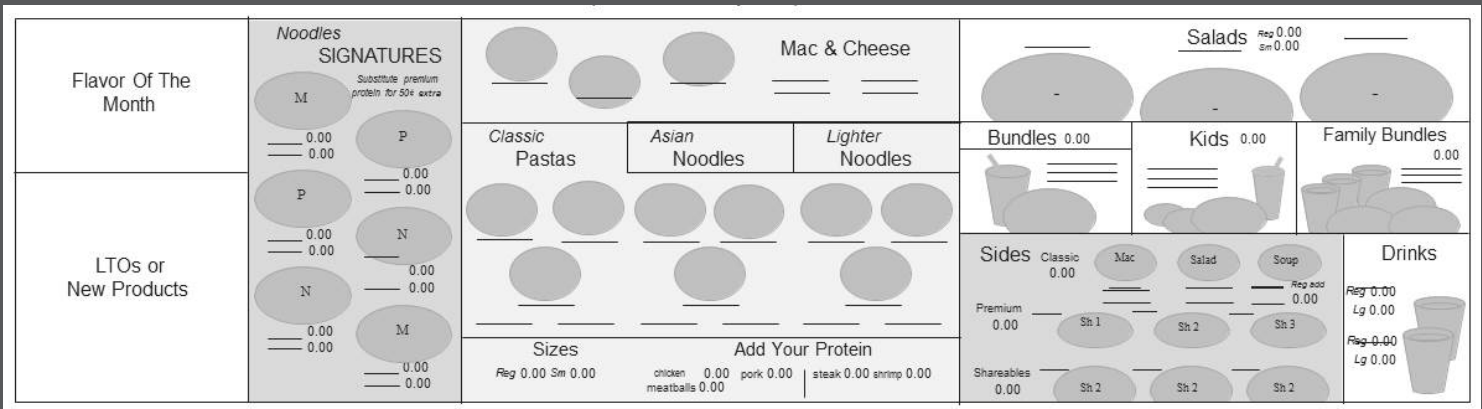
## THE PROCESS STARTED WITH A BRAND USAGE ASSESSMENT

Quantitative Research helped develop effective alternatives to the current strategy by understanding consumer usage and attitude perceptions toward the menu

Research was conducted among 600+ customers to help the project team understand consumers attitudes and behavior regarding the current menu and ordering process. Research confirmed that the current menu required customers to customize 90% of their meal, e.g., pick a noodle category, select a size, add a protein, plus optional substitutions and add-ons. The process was deemed confusing and cumbersome, and often resulted in unhappy customers when they saw costs add up at checkout.

## NEXT CAME STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The project team conducted a menu segmentation process which included identifying new opportunities for categorizing the brand's key food platforms.



### *New Optimized Menu Strategy and Schematic*

**Guided by the insights and enhanced segmentation opportunities, King-Casey developed the optimized organization, space allocation and placement of menu items on the menuboard**

King-Casey worked hand-in-hand with Noodles to review their previous menu strategy, and develop a new menu strategy that identified how each menu category and menu item will contribute to achieving Noodles' desired business objectives.

From this, several new black & white menu schematics were created to illustrate the organization, layout, product placement, space allocation and key menu communications. Each of these schematic alternatives provided "templates" for how Noodles' optimized Menu Communications should be organized.

Selected schematics were then developed into color renderings illustrating what the new menuboard would look like. There's just enough detail in these color renderings (visuals, graphics, copy, branding, colors) to conduct quantitative consumer research that quickly and objectively assesses the validity of the new menu communications strategies, and identify which strategy has the greatest business potential.

**OPTIMIZED MENU STRATEGIES AND ARCHITECTURE WERE DEVELOPED TO ILLUSTRATE ALTERNATIVE MENUBOARD DESIGNS**

## Light and Lovable

**Zucchini Garlic & Wine Sauce with Balsamic Chicken**  
Zucchini = Zoodles + Spaghetti  
Reg \$11.00 670 Cal

**Zucchini & Asparagus with Lemon Sauce**  
Reg \$8.25 Sm \$7.00  
500 · 250 Cal



## Signature Flavors

**Penne Rosa with Parmesan-Crusted Chicken**  
Reg \$9.00  
910 Cal

**The Med Salad with Chicken**  
Reg \$9.25  
390 Cal

**Pesto Cavatappi with Grilled Chicken**  
Reg \$9.25  
880 Cal

**Buffalo Chicken Mac**  
Reg \$9.25  
1100 Cal

**Japanese Pan Noodles with Marinated Steak**  
Reg \$9.50  
760 Cal



## Classic Noodles

**Penne Rosa**  
Reg \$6.25 Sm \$5.00  
720 · 360 Cal

**Buttered Noodles**  
Reg \$6.25 Sm \$5.00  
760 · 380 Cal

**Steak Stroganoff**  
Reg \$9.75 Sm \$8.50  
1150 · 640 Cal

**Spaghetti & Meatballs**  
Reg \$9.00 Sm \$7.75  
980 · 670 Cal

**Alfredo MontAmoré<sup>®</sup> with Parmesan-Crusted Chicken**  
Reg \$9.25 Sm \$8.00  
1410 · 800 Cal

**Pesto Cavatappi**  
Reg \$6.50 Sm \$5.25  
730 · 370 Cal



## Zoodles and Other Noodles

**Zucchini & Asparagus with Lemon Sauce**  
Reg \$8.25 Sm \$7.00  
500 · 250 Cal

**Zucchini Garlic & Wine Sauce with Balsamic Chicken**  
Zucchini = Zoodles + Spaghetti  
Reg \$11.00  
670 Cal

**Zucchini Pesto with Grilled Chicken**  
Reg \$10.25 Sm \$9.00  
480 · 310 Cal

**Whole Wheat Fresca**  
Reg \$6.75 Sm \$5.50  
770 · 380 Cal

**Gluten-Friendly Pipette Rosa with Grilled Chicken**  
Reg \$10.00 Sm \$8.75  
830 · 550 Cal

  
Add or substitute Zoodles to any dish +\$1.00



## Explore Bold Flavor

**Gluten-Friendly Pipette Mac**  
Reg \$7.50 Sm \$6.00  
850 · 420 Cal



## Add or Substitute

### Noodles

**Any Noodle**  
230-590 Cal

**Zucchini Noodles**  
+\$1.00 30 · 60 Cal

**Gluten-Friendly**

### Meat or Tofu +\$2.75

**Grilled Chicken**  
150 Cal

**Parmesan-Crusted Chicken**  
190 Cal

**Oven-Roasted Meatballs**  
360 Cal

**Seasoned Tofu**  
210 Cal

**Naturally Raised Pork**

## World

**Wisconsin Mac & Cheese**  
Reg \$6.50 Sm \$5.25  
980 · 490 Cal

**Gluten-Friendly Pipette Mac**  
Reg \$6.50 Sm \$5.25  
850 · 420 Cal

**Zucchini Truffle**  
Reg \$8.25 Sm \$7.00  
510 · 260 Cal

## Asian

**Japanese Pan Noodles**  
Reg \$6.25 Sm \$5.00  
630 · 320 Cal

**Spicy Peanut Sauce**  
Reg \$6.75 Sm \$5.50  
830 · 420 Cal

**Pad Thai**  
Reg \$6.50 Sm \$5.25  
1040 · 520 Cal

### Premium +\$

**Marinated Steak**  
120 Cal

**Sautéed Shrimp**  
70 Cal

# VALIDATING THE STRATEGIES

**CONSUMER VALIDATION OF THE STRATEGIES WAS FOLLOWED BY IN-STORE TESTING TO IDENTIFY THE MOST EFFECTIVE STRATEGIC APPROACH**

The alternative menu communications strategies were consumer-validated using quantitative, online research among 400+ consumers. From this research, final refinements were made and three recommended strategies plus the current board were then put into different test store groups.

All three test groups experienced a lift in per-person average check and profits. One of the three strategies was recommended to be rolled out system-wide starting in May 2019.

## Famous Macs

5.00  
5.00  
Mac 6.75

**Buffalo Chicken Mac**   
Reg \$9.25 Sm \$7.75  
1100 · 650 Cal

**BBQ Pork Mac**   
Reg \$9.50 Sm \$8.00  
1210 · 690 Cal



## Noodles

5.00  
uté 5.50  
5.25

**Spicy Korean Beef Noodles**   
Reg \$9.50 Sm \$8.25  
1000 · 560 Cal



3.25

Spicy  
 Gluten-Friendly  
*Made without gluten-containing ingredients but potential for cross-contact exists.*  
 Vegetarian  
*Excludes meat & fish.*

**Vegetarian? Allergies?**  
Ask us for our Nutrition and Allergen Guide.  
2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice, but calorie needs vary. Additional nutrition information available upon request.

## Salads



**The Med Salad with Chicken**   
Reg \$9.25 Sm \$8.00  
390 · 250 Cal

**Chicken Veracruz Salad**   
Reg \$9.25 Sm \$8.00  
650 · 380 Cal

**Grilled Chicken Caesar**  
Reg \$9.00 Sm \$7.75  
420 · 270 Cal

## Make It a Meal

**Add a Side & Reg Drink**  
\$3.25  
30-570 Cal



## Drinks

**Fountain Drink**  
Reg \$2.25 0-300 Cal  
Lg \$2.50 0-450 Cal

**Fresh-Brewed Iced Tea**  
Reg \$2.25 0-120 Cal  
Lg \$2.50 0-180 Cal



## Sides +\$1.75

**Wisconsin Mac & Cheese** 270 Cal  
**Tossed Green Salad** 30-110 Cal  
**Caesar Salad** 80 Cal  
**Tomato Basil Bisque** 140 Cal  
**Thai Chicken Soup** 120 Cal  
**Chicken Noodle Soup** 120 Cal



## Soups

**Reg \$6.00 Sm \$5.00**

**Thai Chicken**   
370 · 250 Cal

**Tomato Basil Bisque**   
430 · 290 Cal

**Chicken Noodle**  
360 · 190 Cal



## Shareables

**Reg \$5.00**  
**Just For You**  
**Sm \$3.00**



**Potstickers**  
[6] 380 [3] 220 Cal

**Cheesy Garlic Bread**   
[6] 700 [3] 350 Cal

**Korean BBQ Meatballs**   
[6] 700 [3] 350 Cal

Menuboard "After"

# THE RESULTS

- New menu (with individually priced items) and menu communications provides customers more clarity around the ordering process and their guest check.
- New menu additions, Signature Flavors and Make It a Meal offering, have high customer appeal which positively impact average check and margin.
- Combining consumer attitudes and usage insights with data-science purchase behavior resulted in a "win-win" for Noodles and its customers.

# KING-CASEY IS THE FIRM THAT THE WORLD'S LEADING RESTAURANT AND FOODSERVICE BRANDS COME TO WHEN THEY WANT RESULTS

King-Casey, founded in 1953, provides practical, analytics-driven insights and research-validated solutions for restaurant and foodservice brands. We are renowned as the leader in providing comprehensive, turn-key Menu Optimization Services that increase Sales and Profitability.

Our team of industry professionals provides a suite of totally integrated menu optimization services. Collectively, our services provide advanced solutions that enable our clients to unlock the full potential of their menu communications, and achieve significant, measurable business results. No other firm provides such comprehensive menu optimization analytics and solutions.

## Our Suite of Services Include

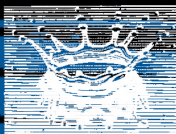
- Consumer insights analytics
- Attitude and usage research
- TURF analysis
- PMIX analysis
- Menu performance analytics
- Menu Operations analysis
- Menu engineering
- Menu strategy
- Menu communications analytics
- Path-to-purchase communications analytics
- Total Store Communications

## The Benefits Are Immediate and Meaningful

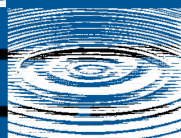
- Increased sales and profitability
- Improved customer experience (P2P)
- Totally integrated solutions
- No loss or dilution of insights and data due to their transfer from one consulting resource to the next
- Cost and timing savings resulting from combining the full suite of services under one umbrella

## Want to Know More?

Please call Tom Cook, Principal, King-Casey at (203) 571-1776. Or e-mail Tom at: [tcook@king-casey.com](mailto:tcook@king-casey.com). Take the first step in optimizing your menu and increasing your business performance.



KING·CASEY



25 Sylvan Road South, Suite H, Westport, CT 06880  
Tel: +1 (203) 571-1776