

THE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT OF MOD PIZZA

By Max Gong

OVERVIEW OF PROJECT (1 OF 2)

1) Why did I choose this fast food chain?

I chose Mod Pizza in Louisville, Colorado because I used to work at a Mod Pizza in California, so I know the ins and outs of the store and how it operates. I worked at Mod Pizza during the summer of 2023 as well as the winter of 2023/2024. During my time working, they have updated several preparation methods, but since I've left it doesn't seem as though they've changed much.

2) What were my expectations?

I knew the business model of my own Mod Pizza fairly well and while I expected everything to be the same, I was definitely curious if there were anything different about this one compared to the one back in California. Regardless, I knew exactly how to order, what to order, where to ask for them. I did go with a friend it was interesting watching her order since she hasn't really gone before.

OVERVIEW OF PROJECT (2 OF 2)

3) What do they produce?

Mod Pizza's main product are their moddable pizzas. Customers can add whatever toppings they want, and they pay for the size, not for the amount of toppings. Mod Pizza also sells cheesy garlic breads, customizable salads, packaged hand sized cakes, as well as several beverages. All of these products are available for dine-in or take-out.

4) What task did I observe?

I observed the making of my own pizza as well as my friend's. I took pictures of the menu and the workstations as well as how information got passed along from employee to employee.

5) What is my role in this information system?

As a customer, I got to order food from the restaurant. While my friend got a set pizza from the menu with its ingredients pre-selected, I chose to make a build your pizza and verbally state the ingredients that I wanted on my pizza as the employee was going down the makeline with my pizza. Then at the end, I paid and asked for water cups and a few other things.

METHOD OF PROJECT

1) Date of Field Study and Pros and Cons.

I arrived at Mod Pizza at February 22nd, 2024 at 6:28 PM. I went with a friend who drove me, so the timing revolved around her rather than me choosing an optimal time. When I arrived, there were two people waiting in line, two people ordering their pizzas in the makeline, and three people following behind me and my friend. There were approximately eight people in the lobby eating or getting ready to leave. This was busier than I expected for a Thursday night, but I still moved through the line quickly. A con for this as a customer was that my order almost got messed up, but a pro as a student working on this project was that I got to see a flaw in their system when there was a small rush.

2) How did I observe?

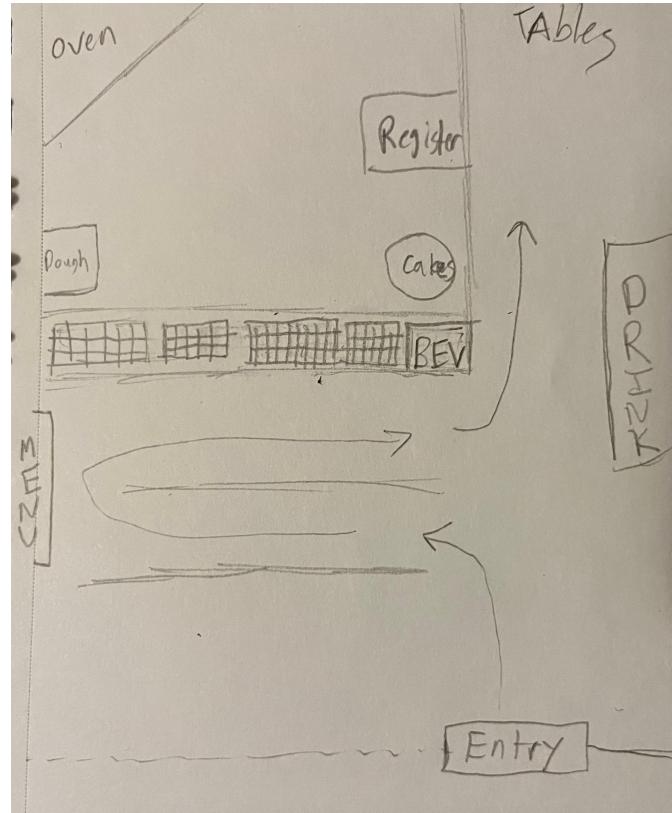
I visually observed how my pizza was being made, took several photos, and sketched out the layout of the establishment

3) What data did I collect

I collected photos and the tag that was used for my pizza. I also drew a map of the lobby and kitchen.

RESEARCH DATA SECTION

SPATIAL LAYOUT



WALL MENU

If you're facing forward in the line, you (along with several other customers) will see the giant menu hanging off the wall. It's filled with a ton of information and can honestly be quite overwhelming. There's a ton of text, but the first thing you'll want to read is the pizza sizes and costs which is located at the top right. However, your eye is drawn to the colorful pictures of pizzas that take up a large portion of the menu. Each pizza has a name which has thrown me off before. When my friend got her pizza, she told me she got the spicy buffalo chicken pizza and I had no idea what she was talking about even though I worked there and it took me a few seconds to realize that she meant the Calexico. Some of the pizzas, like the Lucy Sunshine, don't come with sauces and that's unexpected for a few customers since they assume all the pizzas have a sauce base. The sizes are also called "Mini", "Mod", and "Mega". I remember a lot of my customers asked for a reference for what a 6" and 11" pizza actually looked like in real life so sometimes those quantifiable numbers weren't actually helpful.



START OF MAKELINE

At the start of the makeline, we give them our order and they write it on a tag with a sharpie. (They put it under our pizza so it was greasy and dirty when I was able to take a picture of it) The tag includes our name, whether it's for here or to go, as well as checks for whether its a mini pizza, a cheesy garlic bread, a gluten friendly or a cauliflower crust, and/or if the cheese should be dairy free. In the notes section, the CX is short for Calexico and Buff stands for buffalo sauce. The checkmark next to gorg most likely means that the customer does want gorgonzola cheese since that's a common topping that's taken off of the Caspian and Calexico. While most of this is similar to the restaurant that I worked at, the checkmarked gorg and the buff are interesting additions that my general manager never informed us about. Another interesting thing about the tags are that they have the box next to their name which is supposed to say that the order is the first of two pizzas for the whole group ordering, but they neglect to fill that in since it's not that important. The # slot next to For Here/To Go is also empty since that system isn't really used.



Finishing sauces are also listed above even though you can ask for them at expo. It's kind of confusing with the sign that says "Finish It" even though you just started building your pizza.

MAKELINE

The makeline starts with the pizza dough placed onto a metal screen with the paper tag in between.

When I started working, there was only one makeline. That means that there was only one sauce bucket for marinara, one spot for the mozzarella cheese, etc. But now, there are two separate makelines, which allows customers to be helped faster. Additionally, when the rush starts, a second customer could instantly be assisted instead of waiting for the first customer to finish their order.

There's a stand here for dressings that you can mix into your salad.



OVEN

When our pizza is finished, it gets onto the rack in front of the oven, where it's chronologically ordered from oldest to newest, top to bottom. Whoever is manning the oven then takes the pizza on top and puts them in the oven. I know that the ovens can be different from establishment to establishment, but there's usually a spot where the oven is the hottest and the line of pizzas usually revolves around that hot spot.

When you put the pizza into the oven, you bring the paper ticket over to expo and put the metal screen into a bucket.



CHECKOUT

There's a place for beverages to be picked up if you don't want a fountain drink. Above that is a stack of the hand sized cakes that are wrapped in silver.

After that, you turn the corner and there's a single register with a scanner as well as a tip jar. I didn't notice it before, but it looks like the tip jar has a competition where you can choose Snickers or Twix.

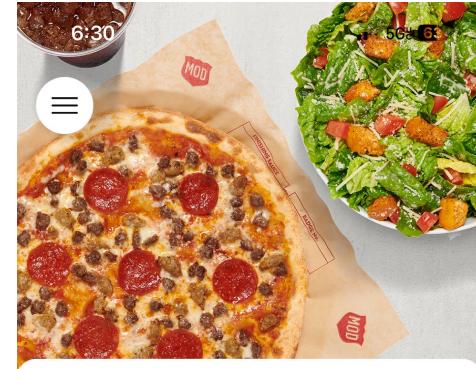
If you turn around from the register, you'll find the drink station with all of the fountain drinks.



THE PURCHASE & RECEIVING OF PIZZA

When I worked at Mod Pizza, I took receipts of customers that didn't want them and scanned them into my own account so that I could get free pizza even when I stopped working for them. In the photo on the right, I racked up 1334 points. A free pizza is worth 150 points so I scanned my code and used 300 points for me and my friend. A receipt wasn't given to me because of this.

When our names got called for our pizzas, our tickets got swapped and we almost had our finishing sauces mixed up. They thought that my pizza had the buffalo sauce and almost put it on, but he verbally checked with me which saved the pizza. I clarified that I wanted Mike's Hot Honey and that my friend wanted the hot buffalo sauce on her pizza.



Welcome
back, Ryan !

You have a total of 1334 points!

[View Rewards & Scan In-Store](#)

Recent Orders >

Rewards >

Inbox >

[Order Now](#)

ANALYSIS

SOCIAL SPACE

1) Who are the actors involved?

The customers, the person who takes the order and starts the pizza, the person who finishes the pizza, the cook at the oven, the cashier, the shift captain, the dishwasher, and the person running extra errands like taking out the trash, restocking beverages, filling sauce bottles, etc.

2) Division of Labor

The customer is influenced by the menu and signs that point out the sauces available. The line is defined by some wooden beams and intuitively leads the customer down to order and pay for their food.

The employees at the makeline have the responsibility to write down orders and put on toppings for the pizzas/salads.

The cook has to keep track of how long each pizza has been in the oven and cook them as efficiently as possible to keep up with the small rush.

The cashier has to ask what the customer ordered and charge them accordingly. This can include counting money, scanning items, etc.

The person working at expo has to cut the pizza and put on special sauces as well as hand out water cups and dipping sauces if requested. They also have to put the pizza in a box or plate depending on if its to go or not.

I didn't get to see exactly what the extra employees were doing, but I assume they were doing things like washing dishes and taking out trash. We saw one employee restocking the bottled beverages.

PHYSICAL SPACE

1) How is the space arranged to make this happen?

There are wooden beams that are arranged to physically block you from cutting, but also guide you towards the pizza in an organized manner. There's also a nice little space to the side where you can decide what you want before heading into the line.

2) How are people arranged in it?

The employees are arranged inside that small top left square that I drew in my map. They're typically in an L shape against the bottom and right sides of those squares.

3) How are artifacts arranged in it?

As mentioned before and as seen in the map, there is a huge menu hanging on the wall for everyone to read and observe. There are several other pieces of text that show sauces and dressings during the makeline to inform you of your options as you're making the pizza.

TEMPORAL SPACE

1) Does time or timing play a role?

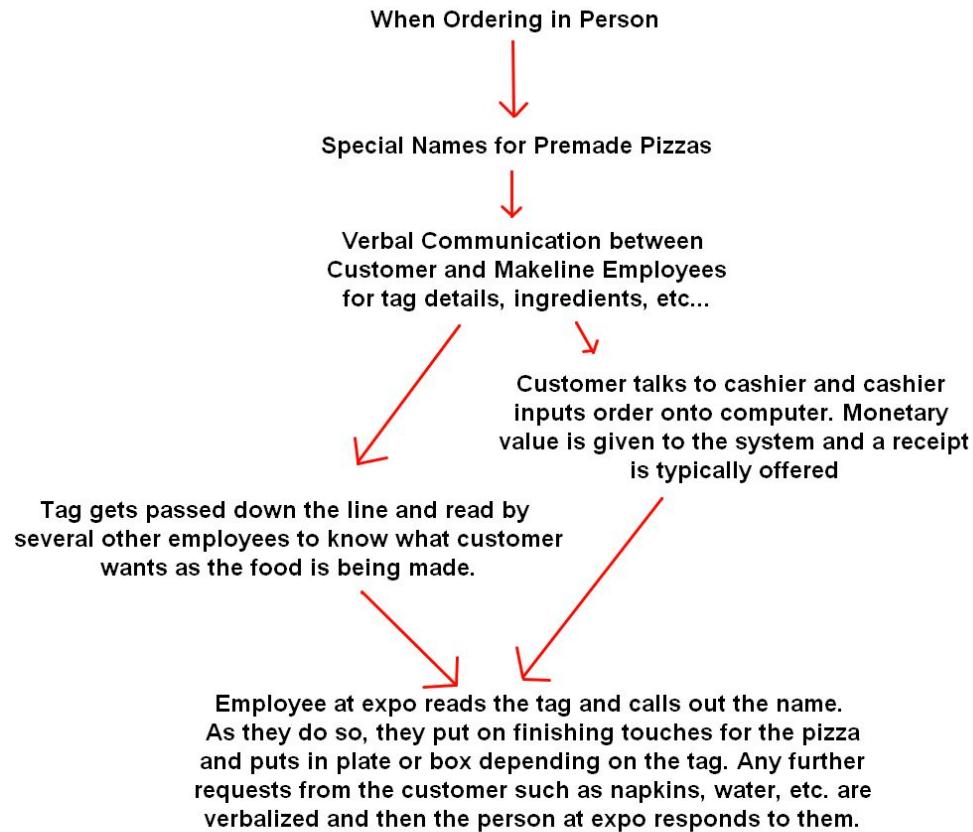
Everything is done in order. The menu is the first thing you come across so that you know what to order. The sauce is the first thing you put on the pizza, so it's the first thing in the makeline. Since there are two makelines, you can have two pizzas being made concurrently if you have a friend that uses the second makeline. The output of pizzas are also heavily influenced by the chronological order of when the customers get into line.

COORDINATION

1) How does coordination happen for the task to be completed?

The tag is definitely the primary source of communication between the employees. As mentioned previously, the tag has plenty of information including the pizza toppings, name, whether it's for here or to go, etc. There is some verbal communication to reinforce the information or to more quickly deliver the information, but the tag can get information from the very beginning of the makeline all the way to expo and not a word has to be said. Finally, the person at expo calls out the name for the pizza.

For the customers, verbal communication is the way that we inform the employees what we want. They note this and put it onto a tag or put the toppings on or push a button on the register for whatever method we want to pay in.



DERIVATION OF DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS OR PRINCIPLES

1) Recommendation

While it might take up a lot of space, there should be a life size version of the 11" and 6" pizzas on the wall so customers can easily tell how big those pizzas actually are.

2) Recommendation

I think the tags should be printed out or automated. It's much easier and faster to type a name and check off stuff on a computer than it is to open a sharpie and write down their name a bunch of notes.