

**Pizza Hut Introduces "Life Unboxed EDU" Program To Provide Continuing Education Opportunities To Employees And Their Families**  
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PLANO, Texas, Dec. 16, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- Pizza Hut, the world's largest pizza company, announced today an education program in partnership with Excelsior College to provide continuing education opportunities to its employees and their immediate family members. The program, called Life Unboxed EDU, allows employees to apply their on-the-job management-level training courses as credits (up to 69 credit hours for Area Coaches and up to 53 credit hours for Restaurant General Managers) toward their chosen degree program at the distance learning institution.

"Pizza Hut is committed to providing our team members with opportunities to reach their highest potential, and this custom-designed program with Excelsior College is an exciting example of that," said David Gibbs, CEO, Pizza Hut. "The cost of going to college is a significant hurdle for many people who have a desire to continue their education, so we are taking away as much of that burden as possible through Life Unboxed EDU."

Excelsior College is a private, nonprofit, accredited distance learning institution offering degrees at the associate, bachelor's and graduate level, as well as certificates and non-credit professional development courses. Excelsior College was chosen as Pizza Hut's education partner for Life Unboxed EDU due to its ability to understand the needs of adult learners who are balancing education with careers, families and other responsibilities. In addition, the College commissioned its Center for the Assessment of Post-Traditional Instruction, Training and Learning (CAPITAL) to evaluate the Pizza Hut management-level training for college-level equivalency, ultimately mapping the awarded training credit into four business degree programs.

The Life Unboxed EDU program gives every Pizza Hut employee – equity or franchise, salaried or hourly – and their immediate family members a discount of 45 percent off undergraduate tuition at Excelsior College (15 percent for graduate programs). On top of that, Pizza Hut will pay up to \$5,250 per year in tuition, books and fees for each salaried, full-time corporate employee participating in the program. This direct-fund, upfront payment is not a reimbursement, allowing team members to start their ongoing education journeys immediately, no matter their financial status.

"To compete in today's global economy, employers need to invest in the education needs of their workforce, and Pizza Hut understands that," said John Ebersole, President, Excelsior College. "Excelsior has more than 40 years of experience serving working adults not dissimilar to those Pizza Hut employees; individuals who are trying to balance their educational pursuits with full-time careers and social and family responsibilities. We can help them navigate these obstacles and unlock their potential."

Currently, 65 Pizza Hut employees are enrolled in the pilot program, and over 100 more are in the application process. Excelsior offers more than 35 online degree programs, with most Pizza Hut employees in the program working towards a Bachelor of Professional Studies in Business and Management.

All Pizza Hut employees at Excelsior College can track their credits, review transcripts and review credit transfer guidelines. They also have access to admissions, financial aid, and academic advising to ensure they're on the right track for degree completion, as well as the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab, and a virtual library (a collaboration between Excelsior and the Sheridan Libraries of the Johns Hopkins University). Excelsior students also have access to free tutoring through Smarthinking, an online tutor service.

One such employee is Mamoud Bazian, a Pizza Hut Area Coach who's been with the company for 17 years and is working towards his Associate's in Business. With four children, one of Bazian's biggest motivations for starting the program was so his children could have the privilege of saying both parents graduated from college.

Bazian added, "The credit transfers offered were also one of the biggest motivators – almost like running a marathon, but starting at mile 13 instead of mile one. Knowing I wasn't starting at zero was satisfying."

"Empowering our employees to become their best selves through education is one of the greatest investments we can make as a company," said Amy Messersmith, chief people officer, Pizza Hut. "We

know that we'll see even more stories like Mamoud's as this program continues to roll out."

Earlier this year, Pizza Hut joined other leading companies in support of the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative, which has the goal of creating the nation's largest employer-led private sector coalition committed to creating pathways to employment for young people. Companies engaged in the coalition will help to launch careers for young people that are just entering the workforce, including internships, apprenticeships and on the job training, in addition to developing potential in youth that have some work experience but are looking to gain new skills that lead to a successful career. The participating companies are committed to diversity and equal employment opportunity, and the Opportunity Initiative does not prevent opportunities for older workers. Its purpose is to open up new opportunities that currently do not exist for some youth, including training and hiring 100,000 Americans between the ages of 16-24 who are out of school and not working by 2018.

"Pizza Hut is dedicated to helping people unlock life's potential," said Gibbs. "As the leader of the pizza category, it is our responsibility, and privilege, to help provide young people with the tools and know-how to not only get job-ready but pursue their biggest dreams."

More information about the Life Unboxed EDU program is available at [lifeunboxed.excelsior.edu](http://lifeunboxed.excelsior.edu).

### **About Pizza Hut**

Pizza Hut, a subsidiary of Yum! Brands, Inc. (NYSE: YUM), delivers more pizza, pasta and wings than any other restaurant in the world. The company began 57 years ago in Wichita, Kansas, when two brothers borrowed \$600 from their mom to start a pizzeria.

What started out small has become the biggest pizza company in the world and today operates more than 15,600 restaurants in more than 90 countries serving innovative pizzas, traditional favorites like the signature Pan Pizza, and much more. Pizza Hut also is the proprietor of the BOOK IT!® Program, which is a long-standing children's literacy program used in more than 630,000 classrooms nationwide. For more information, visit [www.pizzahut.com](http://www.pizzahut.com). Follow Pizza Hut on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/PizzaHut](http://www.facebook.com/PizzaHut)), Twitter ([www.twitter.com/pizzahut](http://www.twitter.com/pizzahut)) and Instagram ([www.instagram.com/pizzahut](http://www.instagram.com/pizzahut)).

### **About Excelsior College**

Excelsior College <http://www.excelsior.edu> is a regionally accredited, nonprofit distance learning institution that focuses on removing obstacles to the educational goals of adult learners. Founded in 1971 and located in Albany, NY, Excelsior is a proven leader in the assessment and validation of student knowledge. It offers more efficient and affordable access to degree completion through multiple avenues: its own online courses and college-level proficiency examinations, and the acceptance in transfer of credit from other colleges and universities as well as recognized corporate and military training programs. Excelsior College is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

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