

Apizza Regionale Research Proposal

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PRL 315: Public Relations Research

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Stage 1:

Introduction

Nestled in the vibrant heart of Syracuse, Apizza Regionale stands as a testament to culinary excellence and authentic Italian flavors, guided by the vision of its seasoned owner, Paul Messina. With a rich background spanning over two decades across renowned hospitality hubs like New York City, The Hamptons, and Las Vegas, Messina has infused Apizza Regionale with an unmistakable "Italian sensibility and seasonality" (Messina, 2023), creating a dining experience that transcends the ordinary.

While Apizza Regionale continues to thrive as a beloved restaurant, an enticing opportunity awaits in the realm of private events. The city boasts a diverse array of event spaces catering to various occasions, prompting Apizza Regionale to explore the potential of enhancing its offerings. Recent data from OpenTable indicates a rising trend, with over 61% of respondents expressing their intention to host more than three events this year, and a significant 40% planning to host these events in restaurant settings (Gillespie, 2023). This trend provides a promising avenue for Apizza Regionale to expand its revenue streams through private events.

Private events offer not only a steady cash flow but also an opportunity to strengthen relationships in corporate settings (Allied Market Research, 2023). Apizza Regionale envisions its warm and inviting ambiance as an ideal backdrop for a range of gatherings, from corporate events to weddings, embracing the essential role that communal eating plays in human social interaction (Cassar, 2023). To explore this untapped potential, we are undertaking a comprehensive research initiative for Apizza Regionale, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods. The research questions delve into the interest of hosting events at Apizza Regionale, previous experiences with private events, preferred channels for discovering venues, and the crucial aspects influencing venue selection.

The quantitative section involves a structured survey distributed among Syracuse locals, seeking insights on demographics, experiences with Apizza Regionale, and attitudes toward hosting private events. Simultaneously, the qualitative facet encompasses interviews with a select group of locals, exploring the nuanced factors that influence the choice of a private event space. As we embark on this journey of exploration and innovation for our client, the ultimate goal is clear – to uncover the keys that will transform this authentic Italian gem into a premier event space cherished by the Syracuse community.

Background

Apizza Regionale is an authentic Italian restaurant in Syracuse begun by owner and operator, Paul Messina. Messina has over 20 years of experience in hospitality, ranging from New York City, The Hamptons, and Las Vegas, and now he brings his efforts to Central New York. Apizza Regionale offers a wide variety of pizzas, pasta, antipasti, drinks, and an authentic “Italian sensibility and seasonality” (Messina, 2023). Their target demographic is a person who loves great food and wants to be treated in a hospitable way. Although current operations at the restaurant are strong, there is an opportunity to understand how Apizza Regionale could push for local consumers to plan events at this space.

Among its many facets, the city has a dynamic array of event spaces that cater to various occasions, from corporate conferences to weddings and community celebrations. According to OpenTable, an online restaurant reservation service that allows users to discover and book tables at restaurants, More than 61% of respondents said they plan to host more than three events this year, and at least 40% of these will take place in restaurants (Gillespie, 2023). This leads to an opportunity for Apizza to enhance revenue through private events. Regular event bookings contribute to a more predictable cash flow, as these reservations are made months in advance, affording restaurants ample time for strategic planning. Corporate events and workplace gatherings play a crucial role in reinforcing relationships with current and potential clients and agencies (Allied Market Research, 2023). Using a space like Apizza Regionale could foster these relationships due to its warm and embracing environment. This also goes for events like weddings, showers, and other familial gatherings. Although there are many reasons one may host a private event, many believe that the most important aspect of a space is the amenities that the space offers. Amenities may include projectors, outdoor patios, gardens or any other aspects of the space (National Event Venue, 2020).

Offering private events options at Apizza could increase purchase intentions since local residents might be interested in Apizza’s space, pricing, location, and reliability. When we discuss the social aspect of this private events initiative, we can think anthropologically: “the act of sharing a meal with others is a fundamental aspect of human social interaction. Communal eating has played an important role in building relationships and creating community” (Cassar, 2023). In order to assess the increase in private events at Apizza Regionale, we ask the following research questions:

Would you be interested in hosting a private event at Apizza Regionale?

Have you hosted private events in other places in the past?

What channels or methods do you find most effective for discovering and selecting venues for private events? Select all that apply.

In your experience, what are the most important aspects that influence your decision when choosing an event space? Select all that apply.

Methods

Quantitative Method: Survey

Our quantitative research method will involve an anonymous survey of Syracuse locals. This survey will be collected on Qualtrics and contains 10 questions, including 3 demographic questions. To reach our target audience, we will send out a link to our survey in various relevant Facebook groups. This survey will help us gain a better understanding of our target audience and their current attitudes/experiences with Apizza Regionale and hosting private event spaces. We will be able to use this survey as a jumping off point for our interviews and recommendations.

Demographic Questions

1. Do you live in Syracuse? If not, where are you from?

Our target population is Syracuse residents so this question will help us narrow down responses based on location. The first question will be a multiple-choice yes/no question. However, if they are not from Syracuse, the second, open-ended part of the question will allow us to determine if their location is still relevant to the study. For example, neighboring cities to Syracuse are still relevant to our topic, but someone from New York City is not.

2. What generation do you belong to?

Different ages will respond better to different types of PR. This question will help us gain a better understanding of what outlets we should use to tailor our recommendations after they respond to the rest of the survey. The multiple-choice responses to this question include Baby Boomers (Born 1946-1964), Generation X (Born 1965-1979), Generation Y (Born 1980-1994), Generation Z (Born 1995-2009), and Generation Alpha (Born 2010-2024).

3. What is your ethnicity?

Again, different races will respond differently to different messages and cultural sensitivity is an important factor to keep in mind. This question will help us gain a better understanding of our audience while still keeping things anonymous.

Participants' History with Apizza Regionale

4. Have you ever been to Apizza Regionale? If so did you enjoy your dining experience at Apizza Regionale?

This question aims to create a baseline of the participants' previous experiences and perceptions of Apizza. A person with a bad experience may have different answers than someone who loved their experience. The first question will be a simple yes/no/maybe multiple-choice

question, and the second is a ranked multiple-choice question with the options “I absolutely hated it,” “It was okay,” “I neither loved nor hated it,” “I liked it,” “I absolutely loved it.”

5. How did you hear about Apizza Regionale?

What other previous media/outlets reached our audience? What is the most common method? This question will help us determine what methods are already effective in reaching our audience and provide us something to improve upon or build upon.

History and Interest in Hosting Private Events

6. Would you be interested in hosting a private event at Apizza Regionale?

This question will be placed before our other questions about private event spaces in order to have an unbiased response and gauge how our audience currently feels about Apizza as a private event space. It will also be a yes/no/maybe question.

7. Have you hosted private events in other places in the past? If so, what kind of event was it?

We will ask this yes/no/maybe question in order to gauge if their responses be affected by their previous event-hosting experiences and to determine how experienced they are in hosting private events. The second question will be multiple select and list a variety of options of potential events one can host in a rented private space.

Research Private Event Spaces

8. What channels or methods do you find most effective for discovering and selecting venues for private events?

This question will also be a multiple select of different potential sources people can research private event spaces. Similar to question 4, this will help us determine how and where participants already search and plan for private events in order to better shape our recommendations.

9. In your experience, what are the most important aspects that influence your decision when choosing an event space? Select all that apply.

This question will be a multiple select question again, listing options such as location, amenities, capacity, parking, layout, ambiance, accessibility, price, food, and beverages. This will help us understand which of these aspects we should focus on and promote when promoting Apizza Regionale as an ideal space to host private events.

10. If Apizza Regionale offered their restaurant as an event space, with non-alcoholic beverages included, how much would you anticipate paying for a 3-hour reservation? Please type an amount below.

Finally, Apizza Regionale's current price for a flat rental fee seems a little pricey, so we want to ask our audience what they think a good price would be for a place like Apizza. We will ask the question as a short answer, open-ended question. This will hopefully help our audience select an unbiased number.

Qualitative Method: Interviews

Our second method of research would be through an interview. We plan to select a few local individuals, about 3-4, all of which are not students at SU, and ask each individual to elaborate on their sentiments towards the criterion considered when selecting a private event space. We plan to navigate the duration of each interview by asking a series of questions regarding which factors of importance matter most when selecting a location. Our goal with interviewing locals is to gain a more nuanced understanding based on a more qualitative research approach.

Between these two research methods, our group feels confident that we will be able to gain both a larger and small scale perspective on how Apizza can most effectively bring attention to their private event offering service. Through methods of both qualitative and quantitative research, we plan to execute this goal in the most adequate way possible.

Stage 2

In Stage 2 of our research endeavor, we embark on a detailed exploration of the methodologies employed, the outcomes derived from data analysis, and an in-depth discussion of the implications of our findings. This stage meticulously unfolds in three key dimensions: describing the research methods, elucidating the results gleaned from the data, and engaging in a thoughtful discussion to derive nuanced insights and actionable recommendations.

Describe the Methods

Our survey methodology serves as the foundation for extracting meaningful insights. The intricacies of question selection, strategically designed to align with lessons learned in our research class, form the first layer of inquiry. We delve into demographic details, capturing participant origin, generational categorization, and ethnic identity. This serves as a crucial backdrop for the subsequent probing into experiences with Apizza Regionale, exploring visitation history, enjoyment levels, awareness channels, interest in hosting events, and factors influencing venue selection.

The strategic placement of questions, the thoughtful construction of response options, and the overall structure of the survey are paramount in ensuring the reliability and relevance of the collected data.

Explain Results of Data

Having gathered responses from 64 participants, we present a comprehensive overview of the survey's outcomes. This entails a breakdown of generational and ethnic distributions, residency patterns, and key survey highlights. We delve into participants' previous experiences with Apizza Regionale, including visitation rates and satisfaction levels. Awareness channels and interest in hosting private events are dissected, providing a nuanced understanding of community preferences.

Demographic distributions and responses to specific survey questions are presented with clarity, allowing readers to grasp the nuances of participant perspectives.

Discuss What the Data Means and Give Specific Recommendations

The discussion phase focuses on the results, delving into the nuanced interpretation of the data's implications. We contextualize the findings within the broader scope of our research objectives and offer insightful commentary on the significance of each trend or pattern identified. This phase serves as a platform for deriving actionable recommendations, utilizing the

data-driven insights to propose refinements and improvements for Apizza Regionale's private event offerings.

By engaging in this three-tiered approach—describing methods, explaining data results, and offering a thoughtful discussion—we aim to provide a holistic view of our research process in Stage 2, contributing valuable insights to enhance Apizza Regionale's positioning in the private events landscape.

When choosing questions to include in our survey, we kept in mind the lessons learned in class to guide us. First, we asked if the participants were from Syracuse, and if they were not, to write where they were from. Next, we asked demographic questions, which included the generation the participant was, including categories such as Baby Boomers (Born 1946-1964), Generation X (Born 1965-1979), Generation Y (Born 1980-1994), Generation Z (Born 1995-2009) and Generation Alpha (Born 2010-2024). After this, we asked about the ethnicity of our participants, including options such as white, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and lastly, we gave our participants an option to fill in the blank if they did not identify with one of these groups. These questions help researchers understand our audience better and how we can target them in the future.

After demographic questions, we began to ask participants questions about Apizza Regionale and their dining experiences in Syracuse. We asked our participants if they have ever been to Apizza Regionale, giving answers such as yes, no, and I'm not sure. We then asked our participants if they enjoyed their dining experience, giving answers such as: I absolutely hated it, it was okay, I neither loved nor hated it, I liked it, and finally, I absolutely loved it. To understand how participants heard about Apizza Regionale, we supplied answers like word-of-mouth, social media, advertisement, and left a space for them to fill in another answer. We then asked if the participant would host a private event there, giving answers such as yes, no, and maybe. We then asked if the participant has hosted private events in the past, and what types of events, giving answers such as bridal shower, baby shower, anniversary, holiday party, birthday, retirement celebration, and a blank space to fill in another answer.

To understand effective methods for discovering and selecting a venue, we gave options like personal research, personal experience, Facebook groups, social media platforms, and a blank space to fill in. Next, we asked, "In your experience, what are the most important aspects of the event space that influence your decision? (choose all that apply)". We gave our participants options such as location, amenities, capacity, parking, layout, ambiance and accessibility, as well as another fill in the blank option if the participant finds a different aspect of an event space more important. Lastly, we concluded the survey by asking if Apizza Regionale offered their restaurant as an event space, with non-alcoholic beverages included, how much would you anticipate paying for a 3-hour reservation?

We published these surveys in multiple Syracuse food Facebook groups, like “Where Syracuse Eats” with this introduction:

Hello! My name is ____! I am a student at Syracuse University's Newhouse School of Public Communications. As a part of my public relations research class, me and my classmates invite you to participate in this quick survey to help us better understand your experiences with hosting private events in restaurants. If you live in Syracuse or any surrounding areas, have or are interested in throwing private events, or have been to/heard of the restaurant Apizza Regionale, this survey is for you! It should take less than 5 minutes and your responses will be greatly appreciated. Have a great day!

Once participants clicked the link, we shared an introduction to the survey, explaining our intentions:

This survey is part of a research project created by a small group of Syracuse University students enrolled in PRL 315: Public Relations Research in the Newhouse School of Public Communications. We'd love to hear about your experiences hosting private events in order to better understand how Apizza Regionale can improve and better promote its private event space for customers. This will help us design a campaign to promote Apizza Regionale as an ideal place for hosting weekend private events. This 10 question survey should take less than 5 minutes and all recorded responses will be anonymous. Please type "Yes" in the space below to indicate you have read and understand this survey introduction.

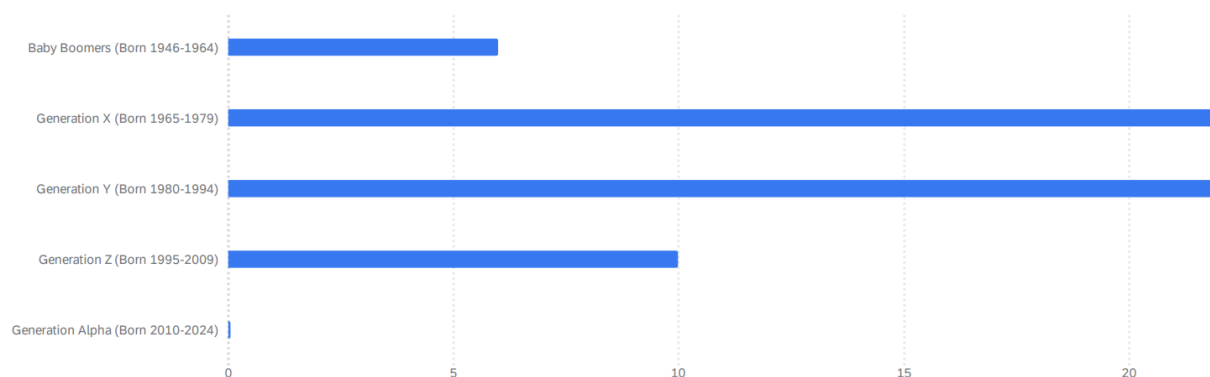
Breakdown of Data and Findings:

After reading through the data we obtained through this survey, here are our findings:

This survey received a total of 64 responses.

Demographics

What generation do you belong to? 60 ⓘ



Generations:

What generation do you belong to? 60 ⓘ

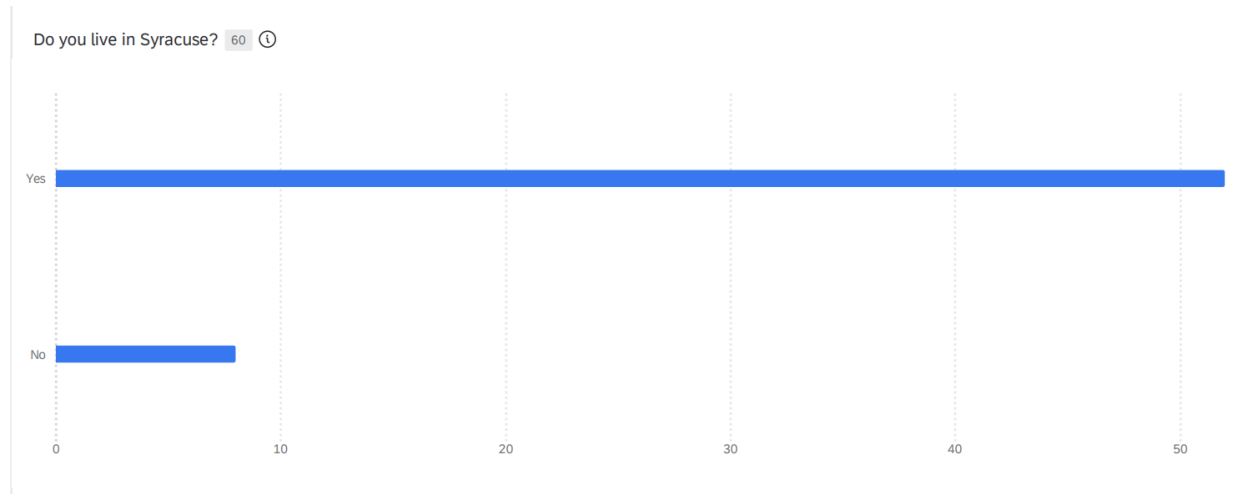
Question #2 - What generation do you belong to?	Percentage	Count
Baby Boomers (Born 1946-1964)	10%	6
Generation X (Born 1965-1979)	37%	22
Generation Y (Born 1980-1994)	37%	22
Generation Z (Born 1995-2009)	17%	10
Generation Alpha (Born 2010-2024)	0%	0

74% of respondents reported that they belong to Gen X and Gen Y with each group making up 37% of responses. This was followed by the 17% of Gen Z participants and 10% of Baby Boomers.

Ethnicity:

Out of 64 reponses, 60 reported identifying as white, 2 reported Hispanic, 1 reported Asian and 1 entered an open-ended response of “Palestinian.”

Residency:



Do you live in Syracuse? 60 ①

Question #1 - Do you live in Syracuse?	Percentage	Count
Yes	87%	52
No	13%	8

87% or 52 respondents reported living in Syracuse. Those who answered “no” entered open-ended responses of from neighboring areas like Cicero, Camillus, Cazenovia, Fayetteville, Liverpool, and Marcellus. So, even though not all participants were from Syracuse, they were all from close-by areas.

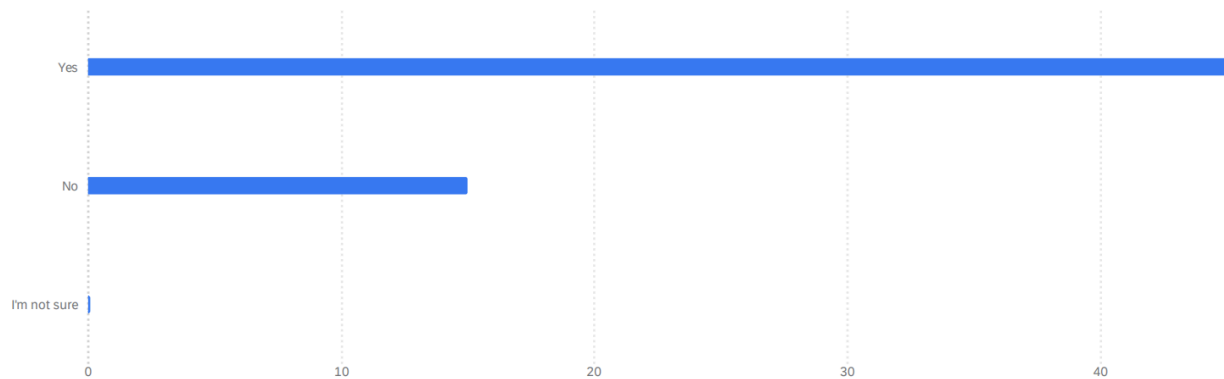
Participants' History with Apizza Regionale

Have you ever been to Apizza Regionale?

Have you ever been to Apizza Regionale? 60 ①

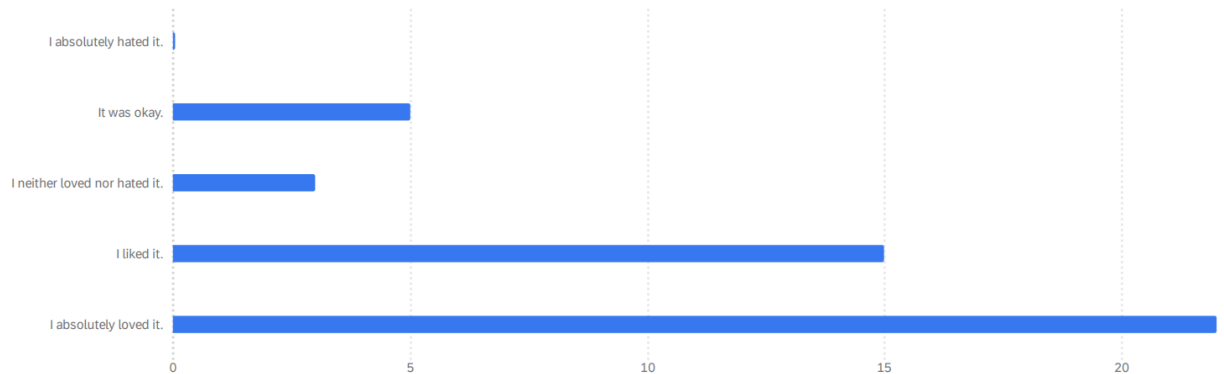
Question #4 - Have you ever been to Apizza Regionale?	Percentage	Count
Yes	75%	45
No	25%	15
I'm not sure	0%	0

Have you ever been to Apizza Regionale? 60 ⓘ



If so, did you enjoy your dining experience at Apizza Regionale?

If so, did you enjoy your dining experience at Apizza Regionale? 45 ⓘ



If so, did you enjoy your dining experience at Apizza Regionale? 45 ⓘ

Q22 - If so, did you enjoy your dining experience at Apizza Regionale?	Percentage	Count
I absolutely hated it.	0%	0
It was okay.	11%	5
I neither loved nor hated it.	7%	3
I liked it.	33%	15
I absolutely loved it.	49%	22

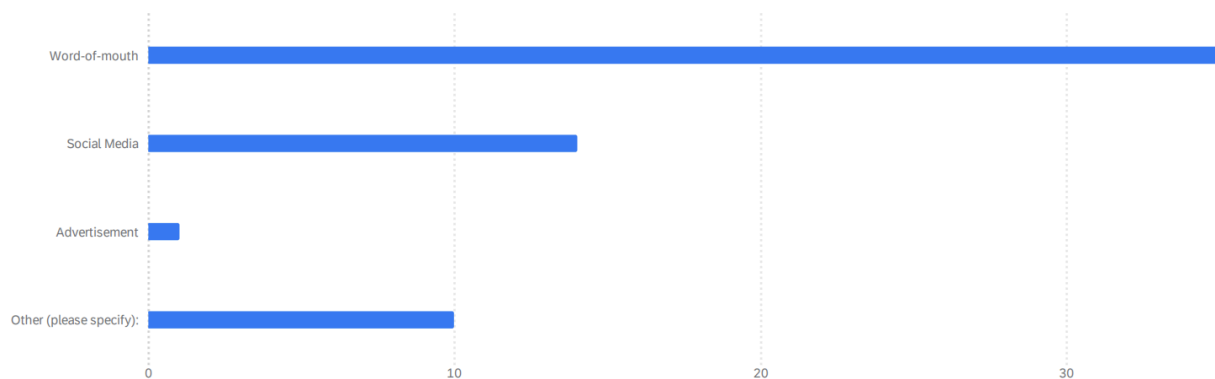
75% of participants have previously been to Apizza Regionale. Of the 45 “yes” replies, 49% of people reported absolutely loving their dining experience, 33% of participants reported that they liked it, 7% reported that they neither loved nor hated it, and 11% of participants reported that they thought it was okay. No one reported absolutely hating their experience. So, the majority of participants have a previous positive experience dining with Apizza Regionale.

How did you hear about Apizza Regionale?

How did you hear about Apizza Regionale? 60 ①

Question #5 - How did you hear about Apizza Regionale? - Selected Choice	Percentage	Count
Word-of-mouth	58%	35
Social Media	23%	14
Advertisement	2%	1
Other (please specify):	17%	10

How did you hear about Apizza Regionale? 60 ①

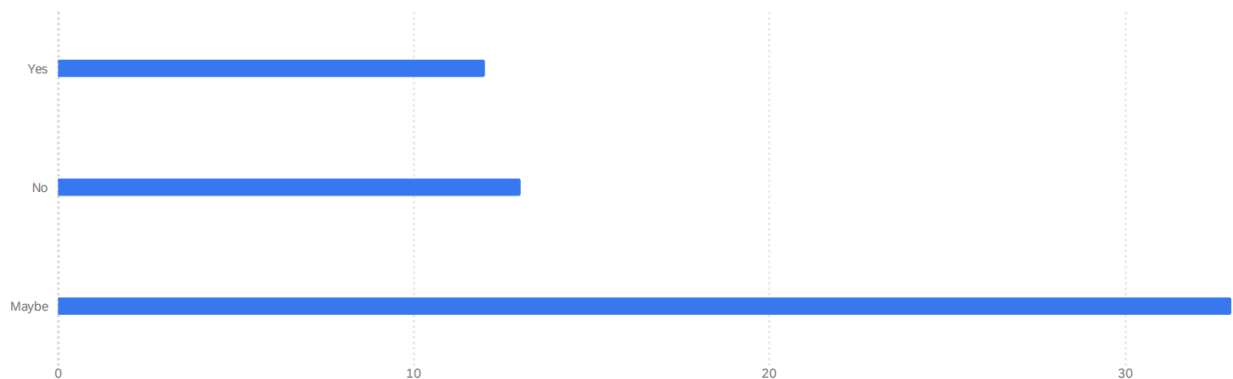


The landslide way that participants reported hearing about Apizza Regionale was through word-of-mouth, with 58% (35 people) of participants citing this method. Social media was the second most popular with 23% (14 people) of responses and Advertisement was the least used category with only 2% (one person) selecting this response. 17% of participants (10 people) selected “Other (please specify).” 3 of these open-ended responses included hearing about Apizza by driving past the restaurant. 2 clarified that they have not heard of it. One person was a former employee, one person replied “owned by dinosaur BBQ,” one person replied “Most likely the newspaper when they first opened several years ago,” and one person replied “where syracuse eats facebook group.”

History and Interest in Hosting Private Events

Would you be interested in hosting a private event at Apizza Regionale?

Would you be interested in hosting a private event at Apizza Regionale? 58 ⓘ



Would you be interested in hosting a private event at Apizza Regionale? 58 ⓘ

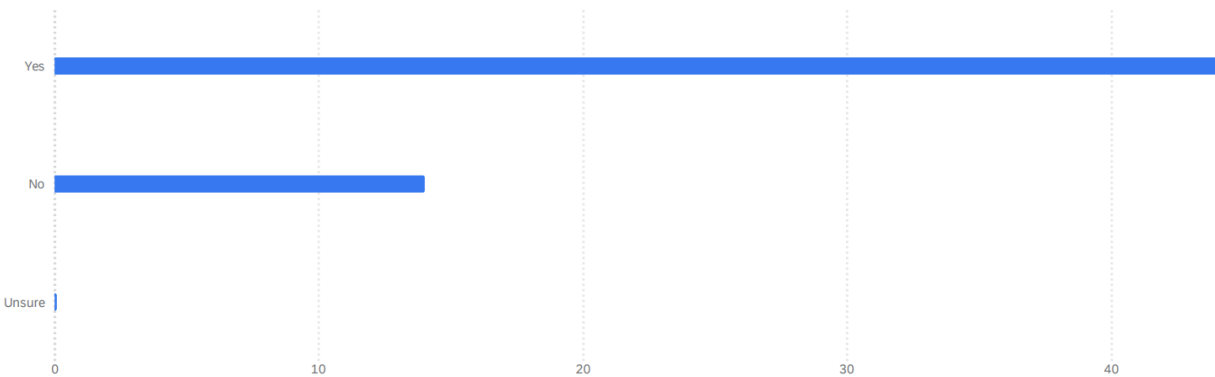
Question #6 - Would you be interested in hosting a private event at Apizza Regionale?	Percentage	Count
Yes	21%	12
No	22%	13
Maybe	57%	33

57% (33 people) majority of participants replied “maybe” when asked if they would be interested in hosting a private event at Apizza Regionale. 22% (13 people) replied “no,” and 21% (12 people) replied “yes.” This provides us with a good baseline of the respondents' current attitudes towards hosting at Apizza.

However, this question could have been improved on our part. There are many details one must consider when deciding a place to host a private event, which probably led many participants to reply with “maybe.” In a later question, this also poses a problem, where we did not supply the respondents with enough information to answer a question, which led to some skewed responses.

Have you hosted private events in other places in the past?

Have you hosted private events in other places in the past? 58 ⓘ

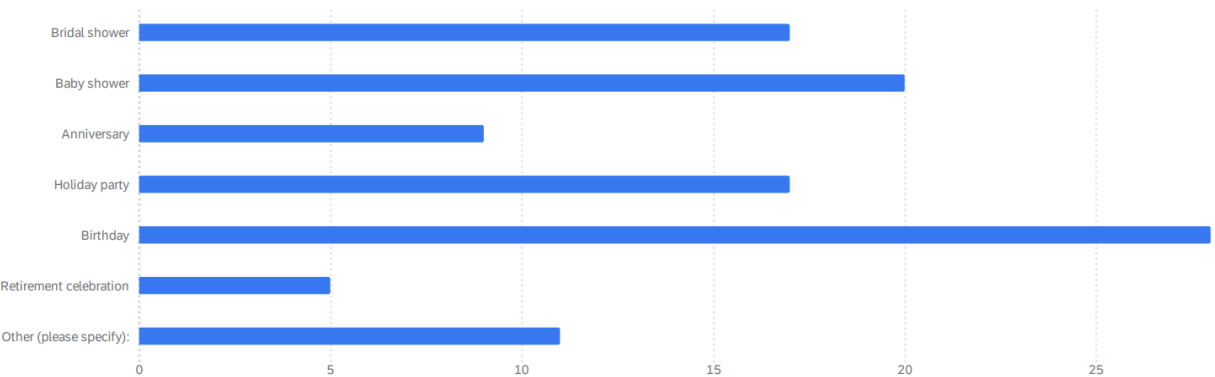


Have you hosted private events in other places in the past? 58 ⓘ

Question #7 - Have you hosted private events in other places in the past?	Percentage	Count
Yes	76%	44
No	24%	14
Unsure	0%	0

If so, what kind of event was it? Select all that apply.

If so, what kind of event was it? Select all that apply. 44 ⓘ



If so, what kind of event was it? Select all that apply. 44 ⓘ

Q30 - If so, what kind of event was it? Select all that apply. - Selected Choice	Percentage	Count
Bridal shower	39%	17
Baby shower	45%	20
Anniversary	20%	9
Holiday party	39%	17
Birthday	64%	28
Retirement celebration	11%	5
Other (please specify):	25%	11

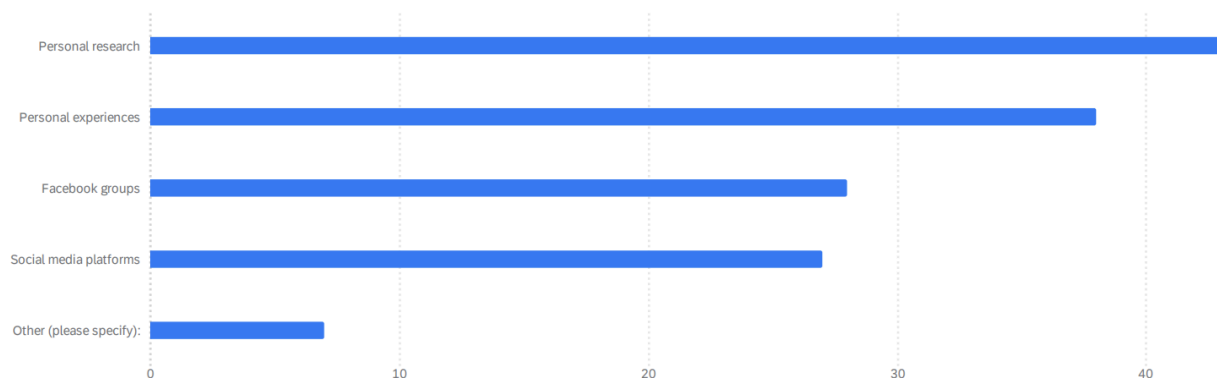
76% (44 people) reported hosting private events in other places in the past. Of those 44 replies, 64% (28 people) hosted birthday parties, 45% (20 people) hosted baby showers, bridal showers and holiday parties both have 39% (17 people) of replies, 20% (9 people) hosted anniversaries, and 11% (5 people) hosted retirement celebrations.

25% (11 people) entered an open-ended response. It is good that we added an open-ended “other” option since it this question did not include an exhaustive list of potential party types. Of the 11 open-ended replies, 4 reported hosting graduation parties, 1 reported a rehearsal dinner (presumably for a wedding), 1 reported a baptism, 1 reported a book club, 1 reported a work meeting, 1 reported a conference dinner, 1 reported a wedding, and 1 reported a fundraiser.

Research Private Event Spaces

What channels or methods do you find most effective for discovering and selecting venues for private events? Select all that apply.

What channels or methods do you find most effective for discovering and selecting venues for private events? Select all that apply. 56 ⓘ



What channels or methods do you find most effective for discovering and selecting venues for private events? Select all that apply. 56 ①

Question #8 - What channels or methods do you find most effective for discovering and selecting venues for private events? Select all that apply. - Selected Choice	Percentage	Count
Personal research	77%	43
Personal experiences	68%	38
Facebook groups	50%	28
Social media platforms	48%	27
Other (please specify):	13%	7

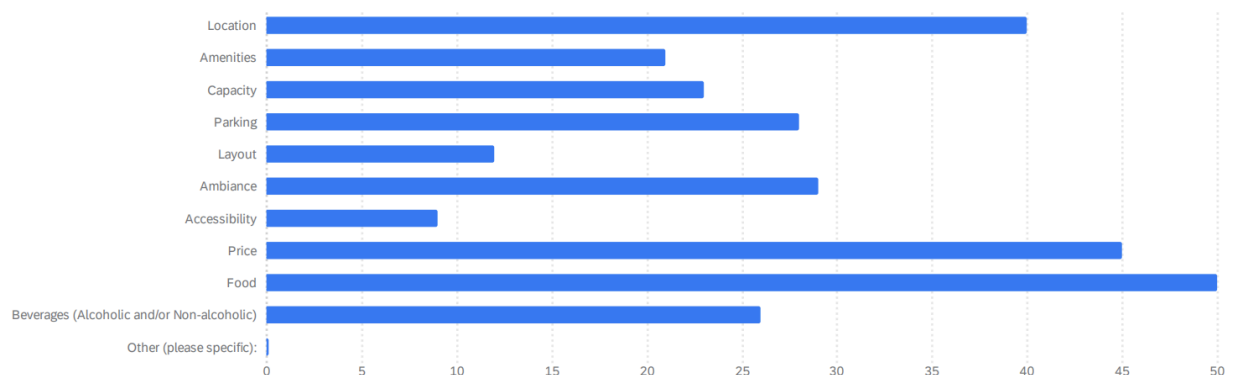
77% (43 people) reported personal research as their most used method of research, 68% (38 people) reported personal experiences, 50% (28 people) reported Facebook groups, 48% (27 people) reported social media platforms. Again, this list was non-exhaustive, so we added an “other (please specify)” option. 13% used this option. Of the 7 replies, 4 reported using word of mouth or recommendations from friends, 2 reported using Google, and 1 person reported “internet.”

In your experience, what are the most important aspects that influence your decision when choosing an event space? Select all that apply.

In your experience, what are the most important aspects that influence your decision when choosing an event space? Select all that apply. 55 ⓘ

Question #9 - In your experience, what are the most important aspects that influence your decision when choosing an event space? Select all that apply. - Selected Choice	Percentage	Count
Location	73%	40
Amenities	38%	21
Capacity	42%	23
Parking	51%	28
Layout	22%	12
Ambiance	53%	29
Accessibility	16%	9
Price	82%	45
Food	91%	50
Beverages (Alcoholic and/or Non-alcoholic)	47%	26
Other (please specific):	0%	0

In your experience, what are the most important aspects that influence your decision when choosing an event space? Select all that apply. 55 ⓘ



The top three most important aspects when selecting an event space include food, price, and location. An overwhelming majority of 91% (50 people) reported food. This was closely followed by price with 82% (45 people) selecting this option. Location closely followed with 73% (40 people) choosing this option.

The middle-range options included 53% (29 people) choosing ambiance, 51% (28 people) choosing parking, 47% (26 people) choosing beverages (Alcoholic and/or Non-alcoholic), 42% (23 people) choosing capacity, and 38% (21 people) choosing amenities.

The lowest-chosen options included 22% (12 people) choosing layout and 16% (9 people) choosing accessibility. No one used the open-ended option to add their own aspects that influence their decisions.

This question could have been improved by having participants rank how important each of these aspects is in their decision. This question only gave us an idea of how many people consider these features rather than how much they consider them.

If Apizza Regionale offered their restaurant as an event space, with non-alcoholic beverages included, how much would you anticipate paying for a 3-hour reservation? Please type an amount below.

This question was a short-answer-only question, with many citing a lack of information for a precise estimate. 14 people answered with variations of “I don’t know” or “It depends.” This question could have included more specifics as to what exactly they would be paying for if they hosted an event at Apizza in order to encourage better, more accurate answers. We could have also required respondents to reply with a numerical value.

2 people responded with a per-person rate, instead of a flat fee. These responses ranged from \$35-\$40 per person. Of the singular, numerical responses, answers ranged from \$100-\$3,000. 6 people responded with values over \$1,000. 16 people responded between \$500 and less than \$1,000. 9 people responded with between \$100 and less than \$500. The most-reported number was \$500, as written by 12 people, however, the average number of all the single numerical responses is \$710.

Describe the Method

Our choice of interviews as the qualitative method can best be validated by their ability to gauge personal sentiments and perspectives on any given scenario. The open-ended nature of interview questions allows us to explore motivations, preferences, and emotions in greater depth, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the customer’s perspective. Through interviews, we aimed to capture insights that go beyond the structured responses obtained from ‘yes or no’ questions, by interviewing area locals for their insights and opinions on booking private event spaces, specifically involving Apizza Regionale.

Explain the Results of Data

For our group’s qualitative research method, we opted for a set of interviews. We decided that the most effective approach in gathering detailed and nuanced responses from the perspective of local restaurant-goers, would be by individually interviewing them. Our group was able to round up three Syracuse-area locals who served as our interviewees, and gave their insight towards the series of questions asked. The questions asked mainly consisted of information about booking private event spaces, convenience purposes, and price estimates,

followed by a question specifically regarding Apizza Regionale, and how they should best promote their event space services. The result of these interviews went as followed:

The interviews shed light on various avenues individuals consider to while searching for private events venues, with a common denominator being a combination of online searches and word of mouth recommendations. Decision-making relies on crucial factors such as menu options, venue size, ambiance, and pricing. Email appears to be the preferred mode of communication for initial inquiries, emphasizing the importance of a responsive approach. Budget considerations vary, with a willingness to spend ranging from \$35-\$120 per person. Visual content, including images with text and videos with voiceovers, plays a significant role in generating initial excitement, followed by a preference for detailed information available on a webpage with FAQs. Notably, word of mouth remains a powerful influence, underlining the impact of positive experiences and referrals.

A key finding gathered from this series of interviews involves the emphasis on decision-making factors, including menu, venue size, ambiance, and pricing, underscore the importance of providing comprehensive information. The preference for email communication and willingness to spend varying amounts highlight the need for responsive and adaptable customer service. Visual content emerges as a powerful tool for capturing initial interest, with Instagram posts and videos ranking high in effectiveness. In conclusion, conducting these interviews allowed our team to gain a deeper understanding behind the criteria that each person produces in order to consider booking private venues spaces, specifically Apizza Regionale.

Final Conclusions

This survey provides valuable insights into the experiences and preferences of individuals who have considered or hosted private events at Apizza Regionale. The data can guide improvements in marketing strategies, event packages, and communication about the venue's offerings. Addressing the specific needs and expectations highlighted in the survey could enhance Apizza Regionale's appeal as an ideal venue for various private events.

Based on this survey, we can conclude that our target consumer is a white person from Syracuse who belongs to Gen X or Gen Z. They have previously been to Apizza Regionale after hearing about it by word-of-mouth and had a positive dining experience. They have hosted private events in other places in the past, including birthday parties, bridal showers, baby showers, and holiday parties, but are unsure if they would be interested in hosting one at Apizza. When researching where to host private events, they usually use personal research and personal

experiences and value the food, price, and location of the venue the most. They are willing to pay around \$710 for an event at Apizza Regionale.

Considering these results and some of the mistakes we made in our survey questions, we can come to a few conclusions. We now have a better understanding of our target audience and audience persona when coming up with a plan to help promote Apizza as an ideal spot to host a private event. However, when moving forward with our interviews, we should ask about some of the shortcomings of our survey, including a better estimate of how much a customer would pay to rent out Apizza for a private event. We should also ask about what specific kind of promotional and marketing methods would resonate with them the most in order to better understand what methods we should explore when creating a campaign.

Stage 3

Qualitative Method: Interviews

For our group's qualitative research method, we opted for a set of interviews. We decided that the most effective approach in gathering detailed and nuanced responses from the perspective of local restaurant-goers, would be by individually interviewing them. Our group was able to round up three Syracuse-area locals who served as our interviewees, and gave their insight towards the series of questions asked. The questions asked mainly consisted of information about booking private event spaces, convenience purposes, and price estimates, followed by a question specifically regarding Apizza Regionale, and how they should best promote their event space services. The result of these interviews went as followed:

The interviews shed light on various avenues individuals consider to while searching for private events venues, with a common denominator being a combination of online searches and word of mouth recommendations. Decision-making relies on crucial factors such as menu options, venue size, ambiance, and pricing. Email appears to be the preferred mode of communication for initial inquiries, emphasizing the importance of a responsive approach. Budget considerations vary, with a willingness to spend ranging from \$35-\$120 per person. Visual content, including images with text and videos with voiceovers, plays a significant role in generating initial excitement, followed by a preference for detailed information available on a webpage with FAQs. Notably, word of mouth remains a powerful influence, underlining the impact of positive experiences and referrals.

A key finding gathered from this series of interviews involves the emphasis on decision-making factors, including menu, venue size, ambiance, and pricing, underscore the importance of providing comprehensive information. The preference for email communication and willingness to spend varying amounts highlight the need for responsive and adaptable customer service. Visual content emerges as a powerful tool for capturing initial interest, with Instagram posts and videos ranking high in effectiveness. In conclusion, conducting these interviews allowed our team to gain a deeper understanding behind the criteria that each person produces in order to consider booking private venues spaces, specifically Apizza Regionale..

Quantitative Method: Survey

Our first method of research involved an anonymous survey. We wanted to reach a wide audience in the most efficient manner and gauge our target audience's current attitudes, behaviors, and preferences towards Apizza and hosting private events. Our survey consisted of both demographic and qualitative questions and aimed to quantify respondent's opinions and experiences.

Through this survey, we were able to understand that our target audience is a white person from Syracuse who belongs to Gen X or Gen Y. They have previously been to Apizza Regionale after hearing about it by word-of-mouth and had a positive dining experience. They have hosted private events in other places in the past, including birthday parties, bridal showers, baby showers, and holiday parties, but are unsure if they would be interested in hosting one at Apizza. When researching where to host private events, they usually use personal research and personal experiences and value the food, price, and location of the venue the most. They are willing to pay around \$710 for an event at Apizza Regionale.

While this survey had some shortcomings and mistakes it still helped set the stage for the interviews we later conducted. We were still able to analyze the collected data and use our findings to create recommendations from Apizza's private event space moving forward.

Key Points & Recommendations

Moving forward, based on both interviews conducted and answers from our survey, there are a few changes that we would recommend in order for our client to maximize private event hosting. For best results, we must target the audience that is most willing to book a private event space. Based on our survey, individuals from Generations X and Y are our target audience. When choosing individuals to interview, we spoke with people from these demographic groups to better understand opinions and collect more detailed information. The way in which customers of Apizza Regionale heard about the establishment is through word-of-mouth. Although there are no direct ways to improve engagement through this form, we can recommend to the client to maintain impeccable service and cuisine to their customers. This ensures that if word is spreading about the restaurant, only good information is shared. The second most popular way in which customers heard about the restaurant is through social media, which we can have a direct effect on.

First, we can continue to fine-tune Apizza's social media platforms by consistently posting and sharing with our audience. As discussed during the client meeting, the marketing team should share the pizzas that are added to the menu periodically. This not only invites new customers in, but incites returning customers to come back and try a new menu item. As we found through our research, Facebook groups allow for many people in Generation X and Y to research and find information about restaurants in their city. We used this platform to gather information in the form of the survey. By posting these surveys to the forums, we gathered insights into our customers. Not only did we benefit by collecting information and data, but we also learned about the use of social media for this group. Individuals use Facebook groups and

forums to connect and learn, so by using Facebook to our advantage, we can reach our target audience. The marketing team should share the content on both Instagram and Facebook. By staying active in these forums, we can understand complaints and try to fix them for our customers' satisfaction, as well as thank customers for their positive feedback.

Summary and Conclusion:

The research project aimed to explore the preferences and behaviors of potential customers in Syracuse regarding private event spaces, with a focus on Apizza Regionale. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods, utilizing interviews and surveys, respectively. The qualitative interviews involved engaging with three Syracuse-area locals to gather detailed insights into their thoughts on private event spaces, while the quantitative survey targeted a broader audience to identify trends and preferences.

Strengths and Limitations:

Strengths: Comprehensive Approach: The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods provided a holistic view of customer preferences.

Targeted Recommendations: The study yielded actionable recommendations tailored to Apizza Regionale's target audience and marketing channels.

Limitations: Sample Size: The study's reliance on a small number of interviews and survey respondents may limit the generalizability of the findings.

Regional Specificity: The focus on Syracuse-area locals may restrict the applicability of the results to a broader audience.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the mixed-methods approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the decision-making process for private event bookings at Apizza Regionale. The qualitative interviews offered in-depth insights, while the quantitative survey allowed for broader trends to emerge. The study recommended specific strategies for targeting the identified audience, refining marketing efforts, and maintaining the restaurant's reputation for excellent service and cuisine.

That being said, while the study offers valuable insights and recommendations, it is essential to consider the identified strengths and limitations when interpreting and applying the findings. The research serves as a foundation for informed decision-making in optimizing private event hosting at Apizza Regionale.

Interview:

While deciding which qualitative method to conduct for our project, it was evident that an interview was the option best-fit for our scenario. Our group decided to select four Syracuse-area locals, specifically non-students, to interview regarding their sentiments on event spaces in Syracuse. Through this series of interviews, we were able to gauge a realistic measurement of how locals may respond to Apizza Regionale offering a private event space. We learned that price, menu and size are the most important factors to consider, and specifically that a reasonable estimate per person would range anywhere from \$30-\$100.

Interview #1:

- If you or someone you know has hosted a private event, how did they hear about the space?
 - Normally I would look online to somewhere like Yelp, or through word of mouth.
- What specific information or content on a website or promotional materials has had the most influence on your private event decision-making process?
 - I would say that the most important factors would be the food served at the venue, the size, the appearance, and the price.
- Would you prefer direct communication (e.g. email, phone calls) from the restaurant when inquiring about private event options, or do you prefer to gather information independently from online sources?
 - I would most likely prefer a phone call.
- How much would you be willing to pay for such events?
 - It would probably vary depending on the space, but anywhere from \$50-\$100 seems like a reasonable amount.
- Describe your feelings about these three pieces of information and what would get you the most excited to book an event at Apizza: 1. (create an image with text in the caption), 2. (create a video with voiceover), 3. create a webpage with an FAQ section.)
 - I would most likely be most excited by the first, assuming you are referring to a post on instagram. I may not be as excited to watch a video with a voice over, but a webpage is good if I find that i'm interested and want to learn more.

Interview #2:

- If you or someone you know has hosted a private event, how did they hear about the space?
 - We've booked private events through both internet searches and word of mouth.
- What specific information or content on a website or promotional materials has had the most influence on your private event decision-making process?

- The info that has the most influence is the type/size of space available (indoor/outdoor), menu and price
- Would you prefer direct communication (e.g., email, phone calls) from the restaurant when inquiring about private event options, or do you prefer to gather information independently from online sources?
 - Email is our preferred method of communication with the venues
- How much would you be willing to pay for such events?
 - Price depends on what time of event (eg lunch meeting, business event, any type of reception....wedding, birthday, etc). I would say somewhere between \$35-\$60/person.

Interview #3:

- If you or someone you know has hosted a private event, how did they hear about the space?
 - Through word of mouth - either co-workers or family / friends
 - Followed by personal research - checking space in person and online reviews + ranking
- What specific information or content on a website or promotional materials has had the most influence on your private event decision-making process?
 - Factors most influential in my decision making process include, price (first), space, food, ambiance, type of event I am making the booking for (social/ work)
- Would you prefer direct communication (e.g., email, phone calls) from the restaurant when inquiring about private event options, or do you prefer to gather information independently from online sources?
 - I would prefer email initially, phone calls later in the process as I would want quick back and forths.
- How much would you be willing to pay for such events?
 - It would vary, but anywhere from \$80-\$120 seems like a something I would be willing to spend
- Describe your feelings about these three pieces of information and what would get you the most excited to book an event at Apizza: 1. (create an image with text in the caption), 2. (create a video with voiceover), 3. create a webpage with an FAQ section.)
 - I would probably rank the first and second option as my top preferences for initial attraction at least. Followed by the third, as that would be my personal research to make sure I am making the right decision if I decide to book. The first two are

very visual and would determine if I am interested to begin with. If my interest is piqued, only then I would seek the information on the webpage.