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Finding a New Audience Through Old-Fashioned Values



Wi-Fi. Hi-def. Super-sized. 200GB. High protein. Low fat. With every brand getting upgraded to meet today's newfangled demands, you might think there would be no room in the market for good old-fashioned values. That's where you'd be mistaken. With so much hubris cluttering the shelves, a little bit of minimalism can offer weary customers a breath of fresh air.

Enter [Little Pepi's](#), the Hatfield, Pennsylvania-based company whose secret recipe is simplicity. Since 1963, they've been following the same ages-old recipe for their waffle cookies, keeping the ingredients as basic as when Italians whipped up the first batch somewhere around 700 B.C. Little has changed since then. Even back in the cookie's native Abruzzo region of Italy, where they are still enormously popular, [pizzelles](#) (the cookies have the same etymological origin as "pizza"; both words mean "round and flat") are still made from the same basic ingredients: flour, eggs, butter or vegetable oil, sugar, and a special flavoring, such as vanilla — almost the very same ingredients that Little Pepi's uses in its own pizzelles.

Simplicity never tasted so good. Just ask [Rachael Ray, who featured the cookies as her Snack of the Day](#) last October. Not long after the segment aired, Little Pepi's was gracing the shelves of Kmart. Quite a boon for a business that started in a basement.

There are many other reasons to admire Little Pepi's, such as the double-digit growth the business experienced each of the first four years after Stan Kourakos purchased the business from the original owners. Or the fact that Kourakos was smart enough to harness the power of the Internet to increase the company's sales base. (Little Pepi's pizzelles have quite the loyal following in Florida.) Or even that these cookies boast no trans fat. But for me it's the fact that they're also following that beloved business rule of "doing well by doing good."

For a small company, Little Pepi's is making a big difference for a certain segment of the population, namely the many individuals with disabilities it employs to make its prized pizzelles. This under-served segment of the working population has found a gracious employer with Little Pepi's, who has received two separate "Employer of the Year" awards for its community leadership. But the real reward the company is reaping is loyalty from the employees who will never forget who gave them a chance. In the end, it's just another way that Little Pepi's is embracing the simplicity of its business model, by acknowledging that even the most basic business decisions can make a huge impact.



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One Response to “Finding a New Audience Through Old-Fashioned Values”

1. *Carolyn Miller Says:*
[April 5th, 2010 at 7:39 pm](#)

Thank you for sharing Little Pepi’s story with us. I just finished Rubies in the Orchard and loved it. It prompted me to view your website, subscribe to the blog, and now I’m off to read the archives. Thank you for sharing your talent with us!

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