



sales catcher

Titus Bakery doubles business after painting a 3-D mural on the outside of its bakery.

BY JOHN UNREIN

For 32 years, Titus Bakery in Lebanon, IN, was known within their local community for producing fantastic donuts. Then they invested in something that bakers often overlook — the outside of the building. The end result far exceeded owner Terry Rake's highest expectations.

Earlier this year, Titus Bakery commissioned Blice Edwards Inc., an Indianapolis art and design studio, to paint a three-dimensional mural on several exterior walls of their bakery.

Prior to the work, the bakery, which opened its doors in 1980, simply had two outdoor signs on both sides of its large gray building. Rake wanted a new logo design and an artistic element on the outside of the building that would be dramatic enough to catch the attention of people driving by on the major highway in front of the store.

The mural took 14 days to complete and resulted in eye-catching imagery of donuts, pastries and even

Halloween cut-out cookies (a product they didn't yet sell). Now they do. And the bakery's overall sales are through the roof.

"For us, it's been a huge success," says Rake, who estimates that weekly sales have more than doubled since the project was completed in late May. "Before, people would just drive past our gray building with a wooden sign. Now more people stop and come inside. For anyone, I think it's really important to make your bakery look inviting and intriguing."

Plenty of credit goes to Blice Edwards, whose work blended the perfect mix of nostalgia and playfulness. After all, isn't a bakery a place to have fun?

It helps to have a creative talent like Chris Blice, an aspiring pastry chef himself, working on your project. As the co-founder, conceptual designer and project manager for Blice Edwards, he has helped create decorative masterpieces on buildings of such notable enterprises as Angie's List corporate headquarters

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Since 1993 The Bread Bakers Guild of America has dedicated itself to advancing the artisan baking profession.

The Guild is committed to -

- Providing educational resources to artisan bakers.
- Supporting and fostering the growth of the artisan baking community.
- Defining and upholding the highest professional standards.
- Celebrating the craft and the passion of the artisan baker.

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in Indianapolis and Butler University. Years ago, Blice went to pastry school and regards baking as his second love. "I once was going to open a bakery, but my art business is my first love," he says.

Not unlike a lot of small-town bakeries, Titus Bakery made a name for itself on the basis of its dedication to high-quality baked goods. But that alone can only take your business so far, especially in this day and age where so many food choices exist and consumer lifestyles are changing rapidly. Sometimes, all it takes is a little tweaking of your product mix, or freshening up the look of your store. But from a long-range standpoint, it's vital to ensure the image of your brand is where you want it to be.

Rake bought Titus Bakery from her father, William Titus, in December 2012 and soon recognized an urgent need to increase the visibility of their small bakery in Lebanon, which is located about 30 miles north of Indianapolis on Highway 32. She found Blice Edwards in hopes of doing a bakery makeover.

Blice and his creative team quickly went to work, starting with chalk to outline the graphic elements of assorted sweets that would be painted on the exterior walls. Using a painting style known as trompe l'oeil,

they employed a combination of light and shadows to create a three-dimensional effect that resulted in the donuts and cookies appearing to pop off the wall. Talk about inventive impulse merchandising.

"There were people who lived (in Lebanon) their whole lives who never knew the bakery was there," Blice says. "It was a cool project, and people were lined up out the door of the bakery afterward."

Blice says this project paid off, as well, for their art and design studio, increasing their exposure within the area. "It's on a major highway, so a lot of people see it," he says. "That job created new jobs for us."

Rake marvels at the three-dimensional impact of the mural and is very pleased with how their makeover turned out. Once known primarily for donuts, Titus Bakery has expanded its menu to feature four lunch sandwiches (with Boar's Head deli meats), cupcakes, cakes and even promotional gifts such as T-shirts and coffee mugs.

"It's been a great investment," she says. "Every single day, people are coming in to say they love the changes. People are taking pictures all the time, and it's really brought in more sales." [B](#)

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Terry Rake, owner of Titus Bakery



Advertisement

The Road From Garments To Bagels Paved With Success



Joe Puiia began his professional career when he joined father, Vito, in the garment industry. As the industry began to send work overseas, the two sought new business opportunities.

In February 1989, they opened J. P. Bagel Express in Hoboken, New Jersey, which was an immediate success. In June 1989, Joe's brother, Jerry opened a similar business called Bagel Stop in Vernon, Connecticut. In 1990, Joe moved to South Windsor, Connecticut, to join Jerry in opening a second Bagel Stop.

Today, Joe and Jerry own the Bagel Stop Production Company that supplies a variety of baked goods to Joe and Jerry's newer company, Between Rounds Cafés. Combining several marketing concepts, Between Rounds Cafés offer bagels, gourmet sandwiches, salads and gourmet coffee. Joe and Jerry have a total of six Between Rounds locations in two states, offer catering services for large events and are building a franchise business.

Joe recognizes that a business needs to change in order to grow. “If you are not competitive in a crowded market, you will lose customers to the next guy,” he said. “I believe our success comes from our ability to stay competitive, and the work ethic we learned from our father.”

Joe relies on **International® Bakers Services (IBS)** to stay competitive. “IBS is the most professional company in terms of meeting their customers' needs,” said Joe. “They also let their customers know they are appreciated.” For their famous bagels, Between Rounds uses Blueberry Flavor, Maple Flavor, Apple Cinnamon Flavor and seasonally, International's Pumpkin Pie Spice Blend.

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