Client: Blaze Pizza


*Note: a lot of people have reported that they find these instructions to be too lengthy, and I agree, it is a lot of information! But, this program is so very important to our client. In order to help, we have included some “cliff notes” below that may help you with the most important aspects of the visit. NOTE: these “cliff notes” do not include every aspect of the shop, and you are still responsible for reading the entire guidelines for important details. But, these notes break down the most important aspects of the shop in a (hopefully) simplified way. In other words, these are the deal breakers. Most of the shops that are declined are because one of the steps below are not followed:

1. Order only one pizza (no high-rise, no gluten-free, no extra crispy, no more than 8 toppings excluding sauce, cheese and finishes). Other items may be ordered when offered or after you reach the register but only ONE pizza.

2. Capture 5 timings, but the last 3 are the most critical (time first ingredient goes on your pizza, time you finish paying at the cashier, time your name is called to pick up your pizza). Do not guess or estimate on those 3 ... EVER.

3. Remember as many names as you can of staff members, but for those you can’t remember, get a description.

4. Stay near the expo station so you don’t miss hearing your name called. WATCH what is happening to your pizza!

5. Take pictures! Don’t touch that pizza before you take the top photo!!

6. Stay at the location for 15 minutes (minimum) after you receive your pizza to give them ample time to check on you and other guests.

7. If you are assigned a “garlic/dough knots” time slot, you MUST order the knots in addition to your pizza! You MUST photograph the knots before touching them! Knots come in orders of 2 ($1.95) or 4 ($2.95). Your reimbursement includes an additional amount to cover the purchase of at least 2 knots.

8. If you are assigned an ONLINE ORDER assignment, you MUST arrive AT THE quoted ready time to evaluate the timing. You MAY NOT arrive late! If you arrive early, you must wait outside or go to the restroom and complete that part of your evaluation before approaching the counter to pick up your order. If you approach the counter early, they won’t box up your order properly, and we won’t be able to evaluate that part of the shop for the client, making it unusable. Also, there is no need to interact with a staff member if your order is ready on time (unless you are in Canada, as they currently do not accept online payments). For locations other than Canada, you just go up to the counter, look for your order and pick it up and take it to your table. You MUST dine at the location once you pick up your order!

END CLIFF NOTES 😊

You MUST order one pizza and one pizza only! You may order any additional items (salads, desserts, drinks) but NO additional pizzas. You may only submit one receipt. If a guest accompanies you and wants to order their own pizza, they must go through the line separately from you and pay for their own meal for which they will not be reimbursed.
Please review ALL example photos at the end of these guidelines for assistance in scoring various questions on the report (pizza quality and photos, salad photos, garlic knot quality photos, menu holders, identification of ‘dough’ maker, example of staff half-aprons, example of name tags pinned to hats, example of branded straw, etc.)

**Client Objective:** To ensure franchise locations nationwide are following company/brand procedures and following the Blaze Pizza quality guidelines. The emphasis is on consistency of the pizzas across locations; for this reason, you are required to submit digital photos of both the entire pizza and part of the underside of the pizza (see below for example photos). Timeliness of service is the other key focus; in order for them to be able to measure timeliness across locations, you may only order ONE pizza and capture the necessary times listed on the questionnaire. If the three bolded statements below aren’t followed, we won’t be able to accept your shop, and you will not be reimbursed. Please do not come back to us and request payment if your shop is declined for one of these reasons, as we can not pay you if our client does not pay us. Please pay close attention to this entire document so your shop is a rousing success!

* You may only order ONE PIZZA. (If it sounds like we keep repeating this, it is because it is THAT important.)

*You must take digital pictures of your pizza. It must be of the WHOLE pizza, including the entire outer edge (crust). If any part of the pizza isn’t in the photo, we won’t be able to accept it. See details and photo examples further below in these Guidelines.

*You must take the timings that are requested in the shop report, and they must be accurate to within a few seconds. This is SO important with Blaze because the employees’ compensation is tied to this! You MUST NOT guess and you must NOT round to minutes! You must also KEEP your timings for up to 3 months in case we need to verify them if the client contests the shop. If you mess up on the timings or are unsure about something, please let us know in the Shopper Amnesty. This is critical to the success of the program. There are several APPS for your phone that can assist you in recording accurate timings including ShopIt, Mystery Shopwatch and GeoVerify. It may also be helpful to audio record your visit where allowable. You may also have other functions built into your phone that may assist in capturing accurate times. You MUST capture and accurately report the following (the last 3 are the most important to be 100% accurate to within seconds):

1. Time you entered the line.

2. Time your reached the order taker.

3. EXACT time the first ingredient was placed on your pizza dough (this is usually sauce but sometimes cheese).

4. EXACT time you completed paying the cashier for your order.

5. EXACT time your name was called to pick up your pizza.

You MUST stay close to the pick-up counter so you are certain to hear your name called when your pizza is ready. Do not go to the bathroom, to get your drink (unless it is next to the expo area) or go find a table. STAY near the expo area! You should watch to see if there were delays before your pizza went into the oven or after it came out before your name was called.

The client will often verify the timings via video surveillance, and if they are not accurate, your shop will be declined.

If there are delays in the process at any point, please put the reasons for those delays and the events surrounding them in your report (i.e. “There were 15 people ahead of me, and I waited for 2 minutes at the meat station while John finished up with the guest ahead of me,” or, “The guest ahead of me had a problem with their credit card, so I had to wait an additional 2 minutes, 5 seconds before I could pay the cashier for my order,” or “My pizza sat on a table for 3 minutes before it went into the oven,” or “I saw my pizza come out of the oven, but it sat at the expo station for 1 minute, 25 seconds before the employee sliced it and called my name.” These are just some examples of what might cause delays. It is important that you are observant through the entire ordering, building and cooking process.)
Here is a cute little diagram one of our editors created to help with the time line.

![Diagram]

Report each timing in HH:MM:SS format. Calculate length of time between each time point. For example, if you got in line at 11:30:00 AM and reached the order taker at 11:33:30, the time should be 3 minutes 30 seconds.

*You may not wear earbuds or headphones of any kind while present on your shop.

**Important Notes:**

*Shop Acceptance:* All guidelines must be followed, or you may not be reimbursed for your shop. If you did not follow a guideline, please contact us and explain the circumstances (do not provide false info).

*Deadline:* Your report must be submitted online within 12 hours after your shop/visit ends.

*Date/Time/Location:* You must make sure you visit the correct location on the correct day and at the right meal time (lunch, dinner, etc.). Shops should start within the time range given. You must visit on one of the **DATES** listed in your assignment email. Please pay attention to this!

*Client Website:* Visit the client’s website, [www.blazepizza.com](http://www.blazepizza.com), to familiarize yourself with the establishment AND to verify the hours the location you are visiting is open. You must always verify the location is open for business before arriving for your shop.

*Event Notes:* Check any notes listed under ‘Event Notes.’ These are special instructions for your shop. They will override any information contained in these guidelines, so you must follow them. Failure to comply with any items listed under ‘Event Notes’ will result in the shop not being accepted.

*Questionnaire:* View the questionnaire before beginning your shop so you will know which observations you must make in order to complete the questionnaire in its entirety. You are required to answer all questions on the form.

**You may not view the shop guidelines or view or fill out the shop questionnaire while in any public areas in the location that you are shopping (within a restroom stall is okay). Additionally, you may not view the guidelines or view or complete the questionnaire on a cell phone, tablet or computer inside the location. The client reserves the right to review your shop visit on video, and if you are seen viewing the shop questionnaire, guidelines or other shop documents, you will not be reimbursed. We do, however, encourage you to text yourself to remember names/descriptions or salient details if needed. Just be brief and discreet. If you need to take notes or refer to your shop details, please do so discreetly and in the privacy of the restroom or elsewhere out of public view.

*Video Surveillance:* Every location has video surveillance, enabling the staff/client to review actual times of arrival, departure, items being served and other events that occur during your visit. Therefore, it is VERY important when filling out your report that accurate information is provided. If you are unsure about something, do not guess. Please explain you are unsure and why.
**Number of People:** You may dine alone (shopper must be 18 or older) or with a guest. However, even if you dine with a guest, you may only order one pizza. You may order any additional salads, desserts or drinks, but you will only be reimbursed up the maximum amount listed, and you may ONLY ORDER ONE PIZZA. Up to ONE well-behaved child may accompany an adult.

**Payment Method:** You should pay with a credit or debit card so it is natural to ask for a receipt. However, if you MUST pay by cash, you MUST ask for a receipt. Receipts are not automatically provided at Blaze. *For Online Ordering shops, you may not be provided a receipt at the store. However, you will always receive an online confirmation. You MUST print out and upload your emailed order confirmation/receipt, as well as your regular store receipt (if provided). You should screen shot your web confirmation in case you do not receive an emailed confirmation.

**Pre Visit Call:** You should call the location before your visit to confirm the location is open and to ask for directions, if needed. You should not report on the phone call in the questionnaire. If you are unable to get a staff member on the phone during business hours after 3 attempts, please contact info@a-closer-look.com for instructions. If you do not reach someone on the phone, choose to visit anyway, and the location is closed for ANY reason, you will not be compensated for your time/travel.

**Where to Dine:** You must eat at the location (inside or outside - if available) and you cannot do take-out/to-go orders. Orders that are not placed at the beginning of your visit will be considered take-out/to-go orders and will not be reimbursed. If you choose to eat outside, you MUST still remain inside near the oven/expo station until your pizza is ready; otherwise, you may not hear your name called, and the timing will be inaccurate, which will invalidate your shop. **You must remain at the location for a minimum of 15 minutes AFTER you receive your pizza in order to make the required observations regarding staff checking on you and other guests at tables around you.**

**Mobile App:** You are welcome to use the Blaze mobile app/loyalty program to earn flames, pay for your meal or redeem rewards, if desired. However, if redeeming a reward for a pizza, it must be your ONLY pizza, as we can never accept a shop with more than one pizza ordered. If you choose to use the mobile app, you must have it open and be LOGGED IN already when you reach the cashier; otherwise, it will add additional time that may cause the location to be penalized. If you choose to use the mobile app, please report on this process in the Guest Service section of the report. There are several questions regarding the mobile app. Again, this is optional.

**Online Ordering:** If you are assigned an Online Ordering shop, you must place your order online via the mobile app OR Blaze’s website at http://www.blazepizza.com/ and then proceed to the location. If, for some reason, the online ordering (website) is not working, please try the APP (or if the APP is not working, please try the website). It would be very rare for both the APP and the website to be down for any given location, but it has happened on occasion. You MUST try a minimum of 3 different times, at least 15 minutes apart, using both the website and the app and documenting each failed attempt before contacting ACL for approval to do another type of shop. If approved, you MUST submit a screen shot from your final attempt showing the online system is not up/working for your assigned location. You may NOT proceed with your shop if you can’t place your order online/on the APP and if your scheduler does not approve an alternate shop type.

**Be aware if you use the Blaze APP, you may not receive a printable confirmation! In this case, you MUST screen shot your confirmation so the client can see the promised “ready” time in order to know if your pizza was ready on time. There are NO exceptions to this! You must have a printed confirmation or a screen shot, or we can not accept your Online Order shop. You will pay for your order online (except in Canada) and proceed to the posted pick-up area for your order. There is no need to interact with a staff member when picking up your order (unless the order is not ready – then you may act like a normal guest and inquire about it). If a staff member initiates an interaction, that is also fine. You MUST dine AT THE LOCATION. To order using the website, click on Order Online at the top right corner of the web page and proceed to follow the prompts. Be sure you enter the proper zip code for the location you are assigned, as your report will not be accepted and you will not be reimbursed if you order from or proceed to a different location. You MUST arrive to enjoy your pizza by the time quoted online in order to properly evaluate the location on the time standard. Allow plenty of time to account for traffic, accidents, or not being able to find a parking place! There will be questions on the shop questionnaire asking if your order was ready by the time quoted. You MAY NOT approach the counter earlier than your quoted time! If you do this, they have no reason to box up your order, and we can not evaluate if it was properly boxed and presented per the client’s standards. You may wait outside in your car, or you may go in and make restroom observations in
advance, but you may not approach the line or let anyone know you are there to pick up an order before the quoted time! If ordering online, you still must only order ONE pizza. You are welcome to order a salad, dough knots, dessert and/or a drink, as well, as desired, but you must order them online with your pizza. You will pay for your order via the website. You MUST take the required photos of your pizza and completed/ready order presentation (exactly as it was placed on the shelf by the staff member).

You MUST print out and upload your emailed order confirmation/receipt/screen shot.

If you do NOT receive an online confirmation with a promised ready time, do NOT proceed to the store, as this usually means they did not receive your order. If a confirmation is not attached to your shop, we will assume you did not receive one, and your shop will not be accepted.

*What to Order (check your assigned meal type):

LUNCH or DINNER:

Required:
Beverage of your choice**
1 Pizza ONLY (regardless of number of guests)
   – NO GLUTEN FREE CRUST! NO HIGH RISE CRUST! No ‘extra crispy’ or ‘well done’ pizzas! (All of these options affect cook times and will invalidate your shop.)

Dough knots, salads, desserts and additional drinks may be ordered as desired but are not required (UNLESS you are assigned a “garlic knots” time slot, then you must order those knots).

**Except for online orders, please start by ordering one pizza only. After you have given the associate time to offer additional items, you may then order garlic/dough knots, a salad or dessert and drink. Dough knots should be offered at the order station. However, salads can be offered anywhere. Do NOT order your salad before giving every staff member (including the cashier) an opportunity to offer one. ANY employee can offer the salad, not only the order taker. You may not order more than one pizza. If your receipt shows more than one pizza, we can not accept your report. There are no exceptions! The single pizza is imperative for the timing to be correct.

*You must review the available toppings either online before your go or on a menu when you arrive BEFORE you get in line so you have a general idea of what you would like to order. You should not be indecisive when going through the line, as this will affect the timing and reflect negatively on our client. You must not order excessive toppings or request multiple mixed sauces or multiple special requests (one special request is fine), as this will add additional time to the pizza build and not reflect an average customer visit. This can not only take a lot of extra time but also can affect the quality of the pizza, especially the crust consistency. You may not order more than 8 toppings excluding sauce, cheese and finishes.

*Photos: For both regular AND Online Ordering shops, this shop requires that you discreetly take the following photos: 1 picture of YOUR pizza (UNEATEN and UNDISTURBED), from above or at a VERY slight angle so the entire pizza is captured AND 1 picture of a portion of the bottom of the pizza. The top photo must be complete so the client can see the ENTIRE crust all the way around the pizza. For the underside photo, please gently lift the pizza and discreetly photograph the bottom of one piece. Do not flip the pizza over, as this will alert staff that you are a shopper. The top photo MUST be taken inside the restaurant prior to eating. If you are more comfortable saving a portion of pizza and taking the bottom crust photo in your vehicle or at home after leaving, you may do so, but ONLY the bottom photo.

Also, if you order a salad, you MUST include a photo of the salad. Please see the example below this paragraph (or at the top of the next page) for the correct angle of the salad photo. If you order dough knots or dessert, it is helpful to photograph those, as well, if able (garlic knot photo required for mandatory “garlic knots” time slot).

*If you first receive an incorrect pizza and have to correct your order, please make sure you include photographs of the CORRECTED pizza. The client needs to see the final product you received. You may, if desired, also include photos of the incorrect pizza, though not required. This is only if you receive the incorrect pizza (meaning you did not receive the pizza you built/ordered).

*Additional photo and information for “garlic knots” time slots: If you are assigned a “garlic knots” shop type, you are required to order AND photograph the garlic knots. You must rate the garlic knots based on the photographs included later in these guidelines.
*Additional photo for “online ordering” time slots*: If you are assigned an “online ordering” shop type, you are required to photograph the complete, unopened, packaged order EXACTLY as you pick it up from the pick-up area. Do not remove any bags, condiments or boxes that are on top of your pizza box. **You must not even move the placement of the rubber band on the box, as it is important the client can see the package is prepared to Blaze’s exact standards.** You must answer the question about proper packaging based on the information available in the question provided on the questionnaire. You MUST include the photograph so the client can see the presentation! Please wait to take the photo until you arrive at your table. Do not take it at the counter.

Please note it is not at all unusual for guests to photograph their food at Blaze, and this will not identify you as a shopper unless you look over your shoulder and appear to be concerned about someone noticing you taking pictures. While you should not flaunt it, you also should not look like you are trying to hide it. You should not carry your pizza into the restroom to take photos! **DO NOT USE A FLASH unless it is very dark and the quality of the photo would otherwise be too poor to see the color of the crust or the various toppings on the pizza.** We recommend a cell phone camera IF you have an up to date cell phone that is capable of taking clear/sharp pictures (3 megapixel minimum). If your phone does not have this capability, a digital camera is acceptable. All photos MUST be in focus and close enough to clearly identify the subject; otherwise, the client will not accept them and may forfeit part of your reimbursement. **Following the salad photo below are good examples of TOP and BOTTOM pizza photos.** Notice the photos are clear, the top view shows the entire pizza, including the crust, and the bottom view is gently lifted rather than flipped over.

Example of salad photo:
*Timings*: Timings are very important to the client. See your questionnaire. You will be asked for several exact “clock” times (the time you got in line, the time you reached the order taker, the time the FIRST INGREDIENT was placed on your pizza, the time you completed payment, and the time you were called for your pizza) as well as the corresponding elapsed minutes and seconds between those times. **DO NOT GUESS!**

*Names and employee descriptions*: Please note all employees, except managers, should wear nametags somewhere on their hats (see photo below). Managers may wear nametags on their sleeves. You must try to capture the name of each employee with whom you interact. However, if they are not wearing a name tag or if you interact with so many employees that it is difficult to recall all names, please give a full description instead. **You MUST indicate in your report which employee(s) were not wearing name tags!** This is very important to the client.

*Line Employees*: There is a question on the form that asks for the number of staff members working the line preparing pizzas. The person preparing the dough is NOT included in the count. See below for an example of a line – the four employees in the front are preparing pizza. The female staff member in the back (wearing glasses) is preparing the dough. There is another staff member in the back, as well; it looks like he might be doing dishes or prepping boxes. He is also not on the line.
*Aprons: Blaze employees wear “half aprons” from the waist down. Be sure you are observing these and not expecting to see full aprons. Some shoppers have been reporting staff members not wearing aprons because they are expecting something other than what is described and shown. See photo below later in these guidelines.

*Menu holders: There is a question on the form about whether or not paper menus were available near the beginning of the line queue. You must look around! They are usually either on the railing at the beginning of the line queue when you first enter or on the wall near the entrance. If you report no paper menus are available, you must report where you saw an empty menu holder (a photo would also be welcome, though not required).

*Pizza Quality: Please note some shoppers have been marking off for quality because the edges of the pizza are a little black. Some black around the outermost edges is fine and meets quality standards. However, if much of the pizza is burnt, or if there is one large dent or multiple smaller dents in the outer crust, or if there are pools of grease sitting on the pizza, it does not meet quality standards. At the very end of this document are some photos of pizzas that meet quality standards and some that do not.

*Noise Level: There is a question in the report about the noise level in the restaurant. When answering this question, please take into consideration the type of restaurant you are visiting. This is not usually the type of restaurant where you take a book and quietly read. Their atmosphere can often be loud, but it should not be so loud that you can not hear what the employees are saying to you as you go through the ordering line, nor should you have to yell to converse with your guest (if applicable).

*Restroom: Check the restroom for cleanliness/supplies. Female shoppers/guests should check the ladies’ room only, while male shoppers/guests should check the men’s room only. Do NOT visit the restroom while waiting for your pizza to be cooked or you will not be able to make the appropriate observations at the oven/expo area.
*Reimbursement*: The reimbursement is only for food and beverage purchases. All reimbursements will be processed in USD. Canadian reimbursement totals will be converted to USD before reimbursements are processed. If you are comped (given an item or items for free), you MUST provide commentary about the item(s) and the reason in your report. Also, unless ALL food and beverage items are comped, you should NOT click the 'Check here if this entire receipt was comped' box when entering your receipt info. All other expenses (parking, valet, etc.) will not be reimbursed unless otherwise indicated in the Event Notes.

*Your Report*: Please tell the story of your visit. We are looking for a lot of commentary in every section. There should be details to support your 'yes' answers, as well as a comment to explain every 'no' answer, every 'n/a' answer and every lowered rating. Please check out the Get Started/Help tab to view the sample shops (a great shop and what not to do).

*Questions From Our Staff*: For up to 3 days after submission of your report, you must check your e-mail and/or the 'Home' section of the website to see if additional information is needed. A reply back to the editor is required within 24 hours.

*Coupons/Gift Certificates*: You are not permitted to use a coupon, Groupon, Living Social, Scout Mob etc. during this shop. You are welcome to use "free pizza cards" including those provided in the annual holiday hot pack; however, THESE FREE PIZZA CARDS HAVE NO CASH VALUE AND ARE NOT REIMBURSABLE. If you use one of these, you will only be reimbursed for your salad/drinks/desserts. Gift certificates are permissible.

*Survey/Comment Cards*: Occasionally, a survey/comment card will be provided on your table, with your final bill or mailed/e-mailed to you a few days after your visit. Do not complete it.

*Social Media/online reviews*: Unless we expressly authorize otherwise, you may NOT post any reviews about your experience online or publicly in any manner. Doing so will result in non-reimbursement and immediate disqualification of future assignments.

*Receipts*: Receipts are required for all of your purchases on your shop. Because this client does not automatically provide receipts, you must pay with a credit or debit card, as it is much more common to ask for a receipt in a credit/debit transaction, and you are less likely to be identified as a shopper. You must get the itemized and credit card receipts, if applicable. These will help you when filling out your report (item names, server name, etc.). Be sure to correctly enter the amount from your receipt(s) into our system when you submit your report. If you have more than one receipt, please include each receipt number separated by commas in the Check # field and combine totals together and insert final total in the Amount field. Improper receipt entry can result in non-reimbursement of that amount. *For Online Ordering shops, you may not be provided a receipt at the store. Therefore, be sure to print out your emailed order confirmation/receipt. You MUST print out and upload your emailed order confirmation/receipt, as well as your regular store receipt (if provided).

*Receipt Upload*: A scanned or digital image of your receipt(s) is REQUIRED to be attached to your report in the receipt area. You should upload the receipt(s) onto your computer before completing your report. Only uploaded receipts that are attached to reports will be accepted. If you do not have a scanner, take a digital photo of your receipt(s) and email it to your computer to upload to your report. Make sure the image is large enough to read, clear and legible. If your name appears on your receipt, simply mark over it with a black pen/marker prior to scanning/uploading. We cannot accept thumbnail images or PDF files. Do not accept this assignment if you are unable to attach a digital image of your receipt to your report.

**Example photos!**

**Acceptable Pizzas:**

Round; acceptable small charred spots on crust, otherwise golden brown; ½” visible crust; evenly distributed toppings:
Acceptable Bottom Color (minor charring OK):
Unacceptable Pizzas:

Not round (big divot in crust):

Edges too burnt:
Burn bubbles/severe charring on bottom crust:

Problems with dough/garlic knots:
OPEN knots (not round/closed enough). The knot on the left is perfect, but the knot on the right is too open:

Small knots (note the knots in this photo are also borderline too light):

Burnt knots:

The last possible issue is light-colored knots (note this one is a little more difficult to rate. You are looking for white knots, not lightly browned. If in doubt, please do not mark down, and we will decide by viewing your photo.

Blaze branded straw:
Example of menu holder attached to railing at the beginning of the ordering line:

Example of Blaze “half” aprons on staff: