



Bartleby's Seitan Stand
Quarterly Update
January 2019

Service Period: October - December 2018

SUMMARY

We've wrapped up our first calendar year in business! We fed so many smiling faces through the window of our big blue and orange truck, and our last quarter of 2018 brought us many accomplishments, despite mechanical issues with our truck and the crowd-dwindling colder temperatures. We've taken the truck off the road for the winter months, but turned our focus to several other major initiatives: the launch of our traveling cooking program, Bartleby's Seitan School; making party platters and other small catering orders available for pick-up at retail locations across the city; and establishing a weekly service schedule and events calendar that will allow us to connect with more customers in 2019.

OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During our third quarter in operation (October-December 2018), Bartleby's Seitan Stand accomplished the following:

Sales

In comparison to the previous quarter, the number of meals served was down by about half, just 1,850. As mentioned earlier, we took a hit because of far fewer service days on the road. Our average ticket price for the quarter increased from \$10.01 to \$10.54. This strong last quarter bumped the annual average ticket price to \$10.10. The most popular menu item is our sweet potato fries (because they are paired with so many other items), followed thereafter by our two Deluxe sandwiches (the Demon on the original patty and the Daredevil on our spicy patty).

Social Media, Website, and Publicity

Instagram continues to be our most lively platform, a space where we can regularly and quickly communicate with our followers and customers, answer questions, and share some laughs. We imagine this will remain true into the foreseeable future, since Bartleby's outreach on social media is so image-forward. Our gains across our platforms are as follows:

Instagram: 32% growth (1,689 to 2,233 followers)

Twitter: 23% growth (262 to 323 followers)

Facebook: 9% growth (846 to 926 followers)

Engagement levels with our newsletters continue to be high, as compared to industry averages. Over the last quarter of 2018, we had an average open rate of 53% (compared to restaurant industry averages of 20-26%) and an average click rate of 13% (compared to 1-3.5%).

Reviews & Recognition

Our customer reviews are growing in three online locations: Yelp, Google, and Happy Cow (a platform that lists vegetarian, vegan, and healthy food restaurants and providers). We have also discovered feedback on other community sites like Foursquare and Yahoo Local. Some fresh and friendly comments from our last quarter:

This place is a must!

(S.H., Liverpool)

Great food cooked by great people. Vegan/Vegetarians, this is the best sandwich you can get in the Boston area.

(Chris P., Charlestown)

This is it. Wherever they set up shop is where you want to be.

(Mike S., Somerville)

Love this food truck. The seitan nuggets are crispy, hot, and savory and the dipping sauces are excellent. The staff is always very nice and friendly. I also love that this is a woman-owned business. #GirlPower

(Steph L., Brighton)

The Daredevil's Deluxe could fool a meat eater into thinking they are eating a spicy fried chicken sandwich.

(Sara M., Boston)

Exciting vegan flavors and a to-die for pretzel bun.

(Yasemin, Cambridge)

General Business

Slowing down is hard. We feel a lot of momentum with our business, and see so many areas where we want to expand and improve, that it's a challenge to shut down our weekday street service for the winter months. However, we're determined to use this partial down-time to carefully map our goals for 2019 (see following section for details). We take a multi-faceted approach to customer satisfaction at Bartleby's: we want customers to enjoy our food and our service; we want them to recognize us as an important part of the Boston food scene and the plant-based community; we want them to engage with our brand and giggle along with our silly puns. We strove to make gains financially in 2018 while still adhering to the altruistic goals of our mission (being good to ourselves, the animals, and the planet). We cringed each time we had to cancel a service day, but were not indiscriminate in our decisions. We weighed the safety of our staff and customers, the cost of sales versus potential earnings, and the predicted response by our community. Saying "no" and "we're sorry" to our devils during our first year was scary and sometimes felt like those words threatened our potential for success. But we shouldn't have been surprised that being forthright and honest earned us vocal support and loyalty from our customers, and that response has spurred us to be bigger and better and more Bartleby-er in 2019.

OUR GOALS

Sales

We were delighted to hit our annual sales goal early in December 2018. Inclusive of our special event catering, we served over 10,000 meals in 2018, and want to increase the number by 50% for 2019.

Toward the end of 2018, we tested two instances of holiday catering. Leading up to Thanksgiving in November, and also during the cluster of December holidays, we offered customers batches of nuggets and bottles of our homemade sauce. Orders were available for pick-up at the truck during service hours, pick-up at the commissary during designated hours, or could be delivered to customers along Route 93 for a small additional fee. We received great feedback from devils who took Bartleby's home for the holidays, and got confirmation on what we had tested ourselves earlier: our nuggets reheat quickly and well, from either the fridge or the freezer. In 2019, we'll expand on the success of this catering option (a smaller format from the "welcome us and our giant truck to your party" option), and offer it for more holidays and seasons, as well as offering menu items beyond just nuggets.

Social Media, Website, and Publicity

Over the next calendar year, we aim to build to over 3,000 followers on Instagram, 500 followers on Twitter, and 1,250 followers on Facebook. We have scheduled one collaborative Instagram contest (where followers can interact and tag friends for a chance to win a Bartleby's gift card) and may host additional similar contests after reviewing engagement levels.

We have completed some modest experiments with advertising and "boosting" posts on our social media platforms and via our Yelp Business account. We are establishing a distinct advertising budget line for 2019 so that we can continue to run selective campaigns and promotions.

Menu

We created a few special and limited-time only meals during 2018, and they were strong in sales. Adding an item to our menu is a lot of work, but keeping the period of availability short makes the process manageable, and we believe our devils enjoy the novelty of these unique items. We have begun and will continue to brainstorm new menu items during the early months of 2019, and will be launching these special sandwiches and condiments over the course of the calendar year. We're looking forward to serving an oft-requested buffalo style sandwich, and a cozy and classic brunch combo of chicken-n-waffles (substituting chicken for our savory, crispy-fried seitan, of course).

General Business

The Food Revolution Commissary, our home for food prep and storage in Stoneham, MA, is under new ownership. The new owner, Lisa Farrell of Red Apple Lunch (which delivers healthy school lunches to homes in the Boston area), is upgrading equipment and installing a couple new appliances that will make the the baking of our seitan a little easier. We used roughly 1,000 pounds of vital wheat gluten flour during our first year of operation, so we gladly welcome any systems and technologies that will ease our prep work. Farrell also has plans to build out a retail section at the entrance side of the commissary, which would give Bartleby's the chance to sell some of its products (like nuggets and/or bottles of sauce) directly to customers during business hours.

We had some really great staff working on the truck in 2018, and are aiming to fill a few other key positions in the business during the start of 2019. An Operations Manager will coordinate staff schedules and the day-to-day logistics of getting our truck out on the road for service. A Prep Chef, stationed primarily at our commissary, will ensure our pantry is fully stocked and manage the bulk of the cutting, chopping, mixing, and storing of ingredients in the kitchen. We're also considering

installing another staff member who is licensed to drive the truck—having another person on call to operate our vehicle means we can still go out for service even if our primary driver, Stephanie, is sick or otherwise unavailable.

Shortly before the writing of this report, we announced the launch of Bartleby's Seitan School (BSS), a traveling cooking program for preparing and serving delicious seitan at home. Our fearless leader, Stephanie, will arrive to the kitchens of our customers with all the tools and ingredients needed to prepare, season, and cook our favorite meat-alternative. Following the initial and enthusiastic response to our announcement, we learned that many members of our community are interested in learning, but do not have an appropriate space of their own for hosting. We are touring and meeting with local kitchen spaces in the area to host BSS lessons in publically accessible locations.

We are planning to be back on the streets of Boston in early April, but are awaiting news about our applications to a few different sites—we will hear back in mid-February and early March. Bartleby's aims to have 3 or 4 regular weekday locations in 2019, and we have also begun to book private catering events (weddings, wedding showers, birthdays, etc.).

We've reported before that our dream is to open a brick-and-mortar location. We have explored a number of locations in Cambridge, Somerville, Boston, and the surrounds, but haven't yet found a space that fits both our storage and preparation needs. But we're not giving up hope! We know there's a place out there where we can hunker down, we just haven't found it yet.

CLOSING

In a brief blog post at the end of 2018, we outlined some of our goals for 2019 in the form of New Year's resolutions. We want to bring more seitan to more people this calendar year. We are putting schedules and new processes in place to allow us to feed more customers, and make our signature southern-fried seitan available at more locations and in more ways. We're so proud of what we were able to accomplish during our first year in operation, and will be riding that momentum forward into the next one.

Thanks for all your support for Bartleby's Seitan Stand. Keep following our growth and progress via social media and our newsletter, and we'll grab some gluten together soon.