

**K**ami Bachir, owner of Straw Hat Pizza in Watsonville, grew up within the restaurant industry. Although she had learned the ins and outs of restaurants while working with her father, owning her own restaurant never crossed her mind. She did have dreams to be an entrepreneur though. Being a business owner was her ambition, so she went to school to achieve her goal. As time passed, she got married and continued to work, but pizza was still not on her radar. From all her past experience, Kami had made a lot of connections in the restaurant circuit and one day that paid off. An opportunity fell into her lap.



In 2016, an associate of Kami's, who also happened to own a Straw Hat Pizza location, mentioned that he was going to sell his business. The wheels started turning in Kami's head and she decided to discuss it with her husband. After some consideration, they decided to take the plunge and get into the pizza business. Soon they were the new owners of Straw Hat Pizza, Watsonville. This changed Kami's world. She found out quickly that you really need to love what you do. Being an owner requires you to have a passion for your company and put in 100% or it will fail. Luckily, she had background experience and fell in love with her new job. She learned that you must be alert, be available and have a strong leadership team under you, that you can trust. She enjoys being her own boss and setting her own standards for her company.

Being an owner, Kami has become a jack of all trades. Along with overseeing and supervising her crew, she's also had to learn all about the accounting side of this career. She is on site a lot of the time, working the main table and assisting with customer service. The Watsonville location is known for being very family friendly, holding parties and events for large groups. This is their main source of income. Unfortunately, the Covid19 pandemic has impacted Kami's Straw Hat Pizza immensely. Without the ability to have people dine indoors, their sales have gone down by 50%. Kami is hoping that within the next few months, things will start to get back to normal. Until then, she is staying strong for her staff and holding out for brighter days.

If Kami was to give advice to other business owners, the first thing she would do is recommend reading the book, Restaurants for Dummies. She says, it may sound silly, but she got so many great tips and ideas from that book, especially for people new to owning their own restaurant. She also suggests that if you are looking to own a restaurant, start out with a franchise. This allows you to have support from the company headquarters and there are many things to utilize that have already been established. In the next 5-10 years, Kami hopes to open other Straw Hat locations and continue on the pizza path.

*THANKS*

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