

Case History No. 15

Pioneering the use of gas energy to heat water to sterilizing temperatures for dishmachines.



PowerMax™ Gas Booster Heaters Help The Old Spaghetti Factory's Dishmachines Sanitize Dishware, Save Energy

In the restaurant business, longevity is a treasured word. Success may be measured in single digit years, or maybe a decade. But for a restaurant concept to be successful for 40 years with 37 locations across the U.S. today requires smart thinking management that inspires a strong devotion to customer value. And that's precisely the foundation for the growth of The Dussin Group's The Old Spaghetti Factory. Guss Dussin opened his original restaurant in Portland, Oregon in January 1969 with first night sales of a meager \$171.80 and many in the restaurant business who knew Dussin thought that his philosophy of providing an enjoyable family dining experience for a reasonable sum was unworkable. They were proven wrong when full year 1969 sales reached almost \$400,000, and today the privately owned company has grown to over \$100,000,000 in annual sales with 37 units and 2 new restaurants under construction.

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According to Ric Holderbaum of The Dussin Group, The Old Spaghetti Factory's success is due in part to its focus on the value of the complete dinner concept – salad with hot baked bread, spaghetti entree, beverage and dessert for a menu price of about \$10.00. “Almost everything in the meal is made on-premise using only the freshest ingredients,” he says. “And we're especially proud to have been included in Parents Magazine's listing of 10 Best Family Restaurants in the United States.”

To ensure the efficiency of its operations, the company has solid cost controls in place that include the energy usage for its kitchens' high temperature, high volume dishwashers that operate practically all night, every night. “We're open 7 days a week, 362 days a year, with each location serving about 1000 customers a day,” says Holderbaum.

Proper sanitization of the dishware is accomplished with 180°F sanitizing rinse water supplied to the dishwashers by energy-efficient Vanguard PowerMax™ gas booster heaters



Ric Holderbaum, of The Dussin Group, says Vanguard's compact PowerMax™ 200 Gas Booster Heaters (shown under dish table) reliably provide the 180°F sterilizing rinse water for The Old Spaghetti Factory's dishmachines.

that can operate with commercial dishwashers of all sizes, says Steve Kujawa, president of Vanguard Technology Inc. He explains that Vanguard gas boosters are utilized in restaurants, hotels, schools and institutional operations, taking 120°F water and boosting it up to 180°F for the dishwasher's sanitizing rinse.

Kujawa continues, “At that high temperature, dishware is sanitized without the need for harsh and costly chemicals, prolonging dishwasher as well as china, silver and glassware

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The Old Spaghetti Factory

(continued from front)

life and producing a much cleaner result. The dishware also dries much faster. Dishwashers operating at lower temperatures typically leave a chemical residue on dishware and glasses resulting in a chlorine taste that compromises the enjoyment of the food and the dining experience.”

The Old Spaghetti Factory had used electric booster heaters in the past, but as electric rates increased over the years they became very expensive to operate. Also, the heating elements and contactors would burn out regularly, requiring constant repair.

In addition to its reputation for reliability, Kujawa notes that the energy savings of a Vanguard PowerMax™ gas booster as compared to an electric unit can be as much as 70%. “A restaurant’s bottom line is the happy recipient of such cost savings,” he adds.

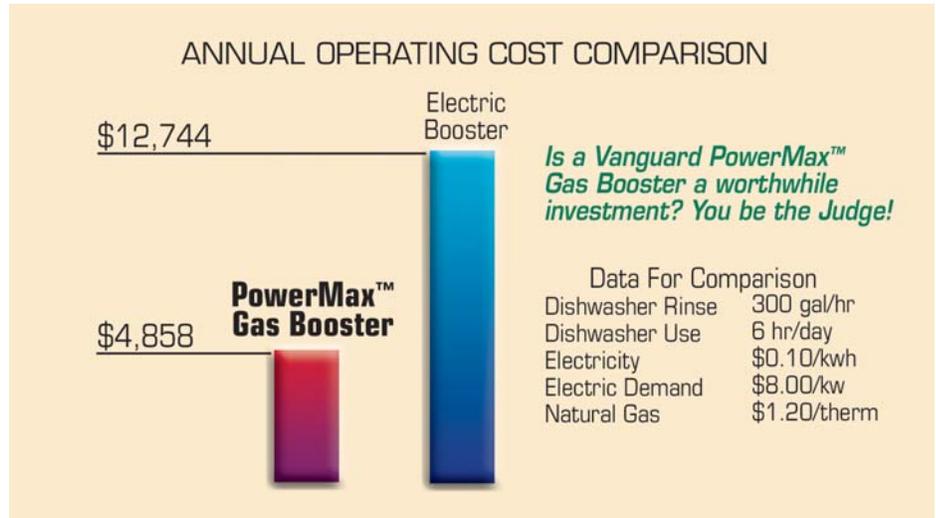
“Our first Vanguard gas booster heater was placed in our Charlotte restaurant in 1991,” says Holderbaum. “We now have 24 Vanguard PowerMax™ gas booster heaters in our locations and that speaks for reliability, especially since we demand a lot from our equipment. We just put them in and practically forget about them. We do have a preventative maintenance program in place to prevent breakdowns. However, if we do have any problems, Vanguard’s customer service has always been

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outstanding.” Holderbaum adds that after about 8 years of service units are sent to the factory for a complete rebuild and then returned to a new location to help eliminate potential disruptions in operations.

Entirely self-contained, Vanguard gas boosters install easily under the dish table. They have flexibility in venting – they can vent through the dishwasher ventilation system, eliminating the need for a separate roof penetration. “PowerMax™ units are exceptionally versatile,” says Holderbaum. “We’ve installed these units under the clean dish table next to the dishwasher and in some of the locations we can place the PowerMax™ in another room if it’s more convenient.”

Vanguard gas boosters are constructed with an all stainless steel welded frame, cabinet and tank and feature a patented water flow and temperature regulating heat transfer unit. A rugged, high efficiency infrared woven ceramic fabric burner with excellent thermal properties and resistance to mechanical impact permits lower combustion temperatures and reduced NOx emissions while operating at over 90% efficiency. Microprocessor controlled ignition and



The National Restaurant Association notes that water heating accounts for an average 18% of a restaurant’s annual energy costs. While utility prices may vary, gas is generally 50% to 70% less expensive than electricity.

temperature control and factory installed pressure relief and regulating valves assure accuracy and consistency. Front access for service and single point electric, water and gas connection provide for fast, easy installation and servicing. All PowerMax™ gas boosters are hand-built and fire-tested before shipment.

In addition to providing sanitizing water for the dishwasher, an available temperature control unit can be placed on PowerMax™ boosters to also produce all of the water heating needs for restaurant kitchens at lower temperatures. “Smaller restaurants and other commercial operations can benefit from this option,” says Kujawa.

For restaurants to flourish in today’s challenging environment, attention must be paid to all facets of the operation, including the less glamorous back of the house issues of which reliable equipment and energy costs are a major consideration. “Our return on investment with the PowerMax™ units is very impressive,” says Holderbaum. “We track all of our therm usage on a monthly basis so we know our utility costs and we see a dramatic decrease in energy cost each time we install a Vanguard PowerMax™ gas booster heater.”



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Vanguard Technology, Inc. also manufactures high-efficiency production water heaters.