

# Samantha Rincione

## A Leader Promoting Food, Concept, and Technology

**F**ast-casual chain business is surely one of the most flourishing businesses. When it comes to fast-food, hamburgers and hot dogs are the most consumed food in U.S. Americans i.e. around 50 hot dogs consumed per person annually. Crave Hot Dogs & BBQ is on a mission to deliver a menu where there is something for everyone and they strive to deliver not just excellent food but also the fun experience every customer will remember. This fast-casual chain is unique and acclaimed as one of the *30 Most Reputable companies in the US*. Besides, Crave Franchising is amongst the 10 Hottest Franchises of 2020 in the US and was ranked in the Best Southern BBQ Franchise 2019.

**Samantha Rincione, Founder, CEO, and COO at Crave Franchising LLC**, oversees all the aspects of the business to ensure day to day operation. She adds, *“I oversee all day to day operations with my staff in ensuring the franchisees are running a proper operation, we are marketing properly, getting stores open on time and being supportive when we need to.”*

Samantha has been part of the franchising sector for more than a decade. Prior to Crave Franchising, she established a firm called Emerging Franchises that was aimed to develop and build franchise companies from the ground up and specialized in emerging brands. The company was responsible for creating franchise operations systems and growing brands from one and in some cases hundreds of units. Being a veteran in the industry, Samantha was recognized with *Women of Wonder and one of the top 50 female CEO's*.

With the advent of the COVID-19 outbreak, there was a major disruption in the daily operations. Samantha was

persistent despite the crisis and was determined to help her team members and franchisees.

In the recent chat with Samantha Rincione, she led us through the challenges of lockdown and how she and her team are striving to overcome it. Here are the snippets.

### *What distinguishes Crave Franchising LLC from the others?*

My partner and Co-founder, Sal Rincione, and I worked very hard to establish systems and relationships to drive success. We want to offer next-level support to our franchisees. We differ from other franchisees as we oversee SBA loans, and offer Real Estate Assistance, Marketing Assistance, Operational Assistance, Experienced Management, and Ongoing Training and support.

### *Did the pandemic affect your daily operations?*

Indeed, COVID-19 has greatly affected the restaurant industry. However, we of course always ran a clean operation but stepped up our game on sanitization procedures, etc. to create a secure environment for our customers as well as employees. As a leader, I have always been prepared with a plan B for any situation or scenario. Fortunately, when the pandemic hit, we were ready!

To counter the adverse effects, we already had a fully functional app in place for IOS as well as Android. Customers were able to download the app, order ahead, receive curbside delivery, order family meals, get delivery, accrue loyalty points, and earn free rewards.



**Founder, CEO, & COO  
Crave Franchising LLC**

### *So was remote working easy to adapt to?*

Remote working was not new for us. We already did work remotely as well as in the office so it did not affect us. There was not much in my opinion. However, the only change was that we couldn't travel and visit our franchisees often as we did previously. Nevertheless, we were always available on zoom and face time to support our team.

### *What were the additions or alterations to sustain the pandemic?*

We added self-order kiosks in locations so customers were able to place orders with little to no employee contact if they prefer. We also trained all of our franchisees on CDC and Crave guidelines to keep the staff and customers safe while dining in or taking out from our establishments. Besides, we also had a catering menu we tailored to fit the needs in each region as people needed family meals, party meals, meals for the office, etc. We did release our Food Truck model which allows franchisees to take the brand on the road and bring our product to customers too.

### *Can you tell us about the popular Self-Serve Beer wall offered by Crave?*

The Self-Serve Wall has been the distinguisher for us. We partnered with Pourmybeer to add a self-serve beer wall to

**“My goal was always to be a franchisor that cared about my franchisees, treated them like family, and helped them grow, learn, and become as successful as possible.”**

the BBQ restaurants. Customers can choose from 18-32 local crafts on tap and choose their local breweries. We usually let the customers vote on the favorites etc. The feature also proved beneficial in the COVID times as the wall allows the customers to come and enjoy self-serve local crafts on tap. This allows little to no employee interaction and they are able to properly socially distance.

### *How did economic disruption affect your company?*

Fortunately, this year we have sold more franchise units than last year which is pretty amazing during a pandemic. We are currently looking forward to opening the Store and are excited about the future. We also have added a food truck model that sold multiple of them in the past few months. We expect to open 100 units in the next 3 years and have at least 20-25 trucks on the road.

### *Looking at the current demographics, what are you anticipating for the future?*

We want to push our company to be the best it can be. Things will happen, whether it be a pandemic or something else. We need to be ready and prepared for any scenario. We will constantly innovate and find ways to drive our customer base and fans. Our product is unbelievably good and getting it to our customers when they want it was and always will be a top priority.

### *According to you, what does it take to be a successful entrepreneur?*

I believe that to be a successful entrepreneur you always have to be prepared, even when you don't know what you are preparing for. For instance, the current COVID-19 outbreak was unprecedented and a leader had to make immediate changes. I would advise the same to the aspiring entrepreneurs. You never know exactly for what situation will you require a plan B, but you have to be able to adapt, change, be innovative, and be able to work through any challenge. Personally I love a good challenge. **MR**