

**NEW YORK INSTITUTE  
OF TECHNOLOGY**

School of Management

Riyaz Akhtar Experiential  
Education Program

# High School Students Business Competition 2022

*Where Careers Begin*

Case on

**Absolutely Mario Italian Restaurant**

**Farmingdale High School**

Farmingdale, NY

**Wantagh High School**

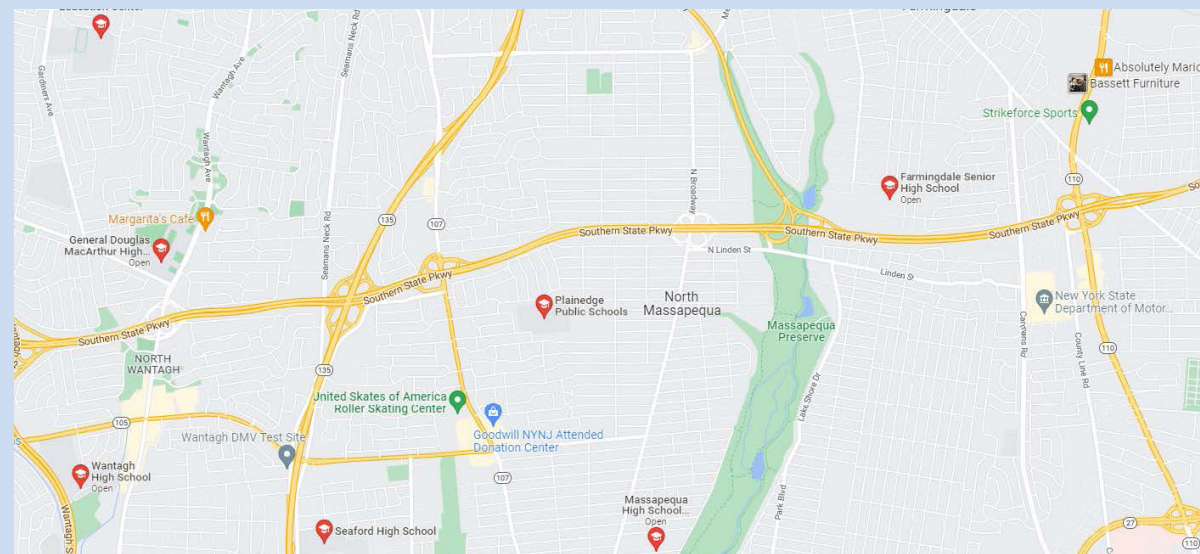
Wantagh, NY



[NYIT.EDU/MANAGEMENT/EXPERIENTIAL\\_EDUCATION](https://nyit.edu/management/experiential_education)

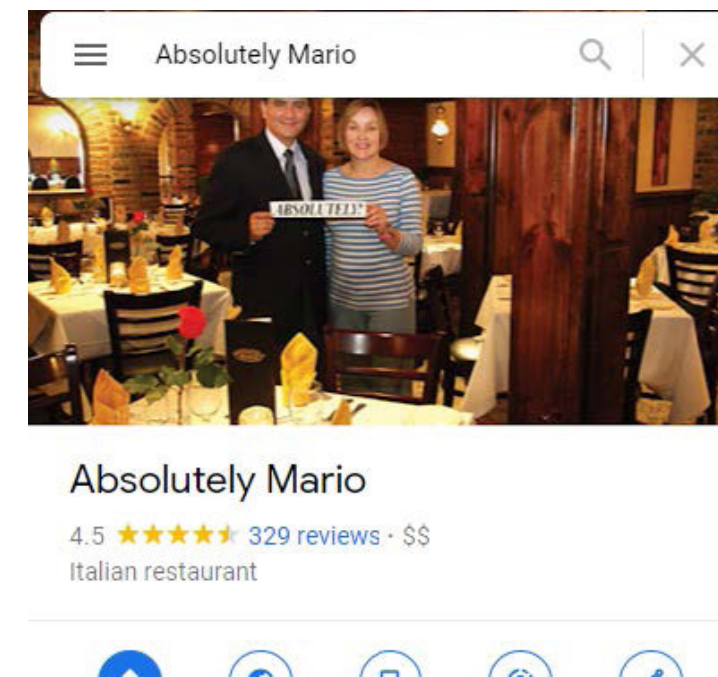
Do you guys love taking food in restaurant? Of course, you all do. Then, most of you will know about Absolutely Mario Italian Restaurant located in Farmingdale, NY. The owner of this restaurant, Mario Garcia, believes that each customer is part of Absolutely Mario family as he says 'absolutely' with a pleasing smile to anything customers request for.

Mario has worked at an Italian eating house for 18 years. During his work, he dreamt of starting his own restaurant that now becomes a reality in Farmingdale. The name of the restaurant has clarity as Mario learned that customers are always right and there is no way they can say "NO" to them. Thus, he always utters 'Absolutely' to any kind of demand made by customers. Absolutely Mario Italian Restaurant was started in the year 2005. Since then, it continuously serves about 400 customers per week. These customers are served by 10-12 part time and full-time employees. The location of this restaurant has been shown in the below Figure.



Location of Absolutely Mario Italian Restaurant

Though this restaurant is an Italian restaurant, it offers variety of international cuisines starting from lunch to dinner with dessert. Interestingly, it also offers kids-oriented food. This restaurant even serves gluten free food. Carrying 'Absolutely' brand, it provides takeout options based on customer request. Reservations for special events such as Graduations, Baby showers, Bridal showers, Communion, Christenings, Confirmations, Engagements, Weddings, Rehearsals, Anniversaries, Birthdays, Business meetings, are accepted well in advance. It is even open for casual dine-in. When there are customers in a place where tasting food, there should be feedback to continuously improve the food and service. Ratings shown in Google, 4.5 out of 5 mean a lot during this pandemic and competitive environment. (See the picture taken from Google Maps).





## Challenge 1

Currently this restaurant's primary customers are aged from 35 years and above. They are very loyal and prefer to dine-in at Absolutely Mario Italian Restaurant. The challenge is to cater to the needs of younger generation. The brand is now ready to reach out to new customers. Mario believes that his restaurant is the right place for even for the current generation, and he is excited to serve and fulfil their needs. As per Mario's experience, existing customers are so passionate to sit at their favorite table while they dine in at the restaurant. We also witnessed the same at the restaurant.

### Marketing Mix

Every organization has its own business model that revolves around 4P's which are the key elements of marketing:

P – Product

P – Price

P – Place

P – Promotion

Absolutely Mario Italian Restaurant also use various tools for 4Ps to achieve its marketing goals in their target Farmingdale and surrounding market.

### Product

The product in any restaurant is not only food offered but it is also about experience customers gain through the services offered by the restaurant (time taken to serve, way the staff approaches, the greeting style, quality, serving size, presentation, temperature of food, payment package in case of delivery, decor, music, lighting and more). It becomes very essential for Absolutely Mario Italian Restaurant to stand out unique from other restaurants by formulating and executing differential strategy (a long-term plan businesses develop by providing customers with unique, different, and distinct food items in the marketplace that their competitors feel it difficult to offer the same). Absolutely Mario Italian Restaurant just does not have one of the best quality of foods but has wide variety to select from the menu such as soups, pasta, salad, appetizers, entrees, grilled food, seafood, kids special food, variety of drinks, and desserts. The top most of these offerings is providing gluten free food items. The staff members treat each customer with absolute care and love as if they are part of their family.



Select foods offered to customers

## Challenge 2

Absolutely Mario Italian Restaurant is looking for increasing the breath of its food types. Student teams should recommend product ideas (menu items) that would attract the younger generation to Absolutely Mario Italian Restaurant. Students should keep in mind the location, the cuisine, and uniqueness of this restaurant.

### Price

Price of the food served is quite appropriate for the quality and serving size at this restaurant. Additional charges incurring from delivery partner are tried to be minimized by providing discounts to customers in the best possible way. The dinner menu categories and price details can be seen in the below picture (detailed pricing is available on the restaurants' website). Most of the customers are satisfied with the pricing and are ready to pay for the value they receive. Occasionally, there are pricing offers such as discounts, happy hours, Tuesday treat and others given by this restaurant. Generally, they provide some extra cheese, bread sticks without charging extra.

## Challenge 3

Each student team should recommend the best pricing strategy for the new product idea to be proposed to Absolutely Mario Italian Restaurant. Teams should keep in mind that the target is the younger customer segment.

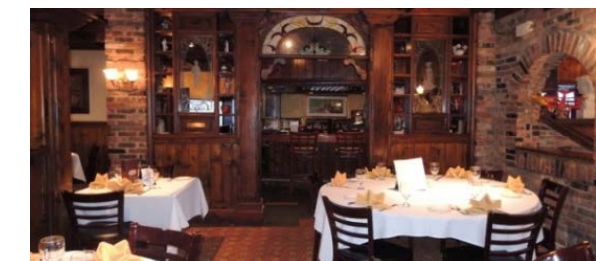
### Price

Absolutely Mario Italian Restaurant offers both dine-in and takeaway. It also delivers food through Grubhub, Uber Eats, Seamless, and Postmates. To ensure consistent experience in the delivered food, the restaurant adds extra care by assuring order is correct with additional cutlery and napkins. They even ensure that the delivery partner delivers orders at the earliest so that food temperature can be maintained. Whereas for customers who dine-in, it ensures customers feel their home experience with specific pre-decided location and table that remains constant. New customers can occupy according to their own choice from the available options. The interior of Absolutely Mario Italian Restaurant looks Italian home-style as it reminds people of that with some unique décor, brick walls, and cutlery.

It has a provision of parking close by the restaurant so that the customers do not have to walk more. The ambiance of the place becomes more attractive in the evening with bright and dim lights and music. The place is kept clean always with fresh table sets for each customer. Restaurant location is also well thought and customers can easily locate this restaurant on Google Maps.

| ABSOLUTELY MARIO DINNER MENU  |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>APETIZERS</b>  | <b>SOUPS</b>  | <b>WARM SPINACH SALAD</b>  |
| <b>FRID CALAMARI</b><br>served crispy with a spicy marinara sauce.<br>\$13.95                     | <b>SEAFOOD RISOTTO</b><br>Homemade creamy rich risotto with crab meat and salmon.<br>\$13.95  | With mushrooms & onions served with a classic bacon vinaigrette.<br>\$10.95  |
| <b>BAKED CLAMS OREGANATA</b><br>Little Neck clams, with seasoned bread crumbs.<br>\$13.95         | <b>PASTA E FAGGIOLI</b><br>Cannellini beans and short pasta, with touch of tomato.<br>\$8.95  | <b>PASTAS</b>  |
| <b>MICCZARELLA MARINICO</b><br>Fried mozzarella, white wine tomato sauce & capers.<br>\$12.95     | <b>TORTELLINI</b><br>Cheese tortellini in a homemade chicken broth.<br>\$8.95   | <b>RAVIOLI MARIUSCO</b><br>Cheese ravioli with shrimp in a pink sauce.<br>\$23.95  |
| <b>FRID ZUCCHINI</b><br>Fried fresh zucchini with marinara sauce.<br>\$10.95                      | <b>STRACCIATELLA</b><br>Egg drop soup with spinach.<br>\$8.95   | <b>CAPPELLINI GAMBERETTO</b><br>Angel hair pasta with chopped clams & shrimp in a light red sauce.<br>\$25.95                  |
| <b>PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND MUSSELS</b><br>Sautéed in garlic white wine or in a red sauce.<br>\$13.95 | <b>SALADS</b>   | <b>FARFALLE PRIMAVERA</b><br>Fresh vegetables sautéed in garlic & olive oil over locatse pasta.<br>\$20.95                     |
| <b>JARRAMP COCKTAIL</b><br>Kumiko shrimp served with classic cocktail sauce.<br>\$13.95           | <b>ARIGOLETTI SALAD</b><br>Mixed baby greens, radicchio, walnuts, dried cranberries, & parmesano cheese, raspberry dressing.<br>\$10.95 | <b>RIGATONI FORNO</b><br>Sautéed sausage, prosciutto, and onions in a pomodoro sauce, baked with melted mozzarella.<br>\$23.95 |
| <b>COLDO ANTIPASTO</b><br>Italian cold cuts, vegetables & cheese.<br>\$14.95                      | <b>HOUSE MIXED SALAD</b><br>Assorted fresh greens & vegetables in an Italian vinaigrette dressing.<br>\$8.95                            | <b>RIGATONI FIETTO</b><br>Fresh rigatoni with plum tomato & basil.<br>\$10.95  |
| <b>CLAMS IN THE HALF SHELL</b><br>Served raw with a classic cocktail sauce.<br>\$13.95            | <b>CAESAR SALAD</b><br>Romaine lettuce, croutons, shaved parmesan, Caesar dressing.<br>\$9.95   | <b>PENNE OLIVA</b><br>Sautéed with olive oil, capers, green and black olives, light tomato sauce.<br>\$20.95                   |
| <b>EGYPTIAN HOLLAND</b><br>Stuffed with ricotta and served with tomato sauce.<br>\$12.95          |   | <b>GINOCCHI PESTO</b><br>Green basil, cream sauce and pignoli nuts.<br>\$21.95   |

Dinner categories and pricing



Layout of the restaurant





## Challenge 4

Each student team should recommend innovative and creative ideas to improve the location that should attract maximum number of younger customers and existing loyal customers.

### Promotion

Absolutely Mario Italian Restaurant is known among its loyal customers. The strategy is to please the customers and make customers part of Absolutely Mario Italian Restaurant family. It takes tremendous efforts to promote its products and services through its website. Its presence in the social media is not significant enough to convey its products and services to their customers. Though they get new customers through word of mouth marketing and promoting its brand name and image.

## Challenge 5

Student teams should suggest a unique and practical promotional technique for Absolutely Mario Italian Restaurant to attract younger generation customers.



# NEW YORK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

School of Management

## Case Contributors

**Venugopal Prabhakar Gantasala**  
School of Management,  
New York Institute of Technology  
[gpradhak@nyit.edu](mailto:gpradhak@nyit.edu)

**Mario Garcia**  
Absolutely Mario Italian Restaurant  
[absolutelymario@gmail.com](mailto:absolutelymario@gmail.com)

**Ayushi Lakhani**  
School of Management,  
New York Institute of Technology  
[alakra07@nyit.edu](mailto:alakra07@nyit.edu)

