



Forbes

With EazyO, Resort Guests Order Food Delivery To Beach Chair

Necessity may get top billing as the mother of invention, but frustration does a fine job as well.

That was the case for financial services industry veteran Brett Benza, who founded his first standalone entrepreneurial venture, the EazyO beach food-ordering app, after age 50.

Irrked by the challenges of ordering food from beach or poolside at sprawling hotels, Benza developed the idea for a mobile app with geolocation that enables guests at participating resorts to tap their smartphones to order and pay for hotel or concession delivery to their beach chairs.

Those trying to relax in the sun can avoid chasing down servers, waiting for a menu or a check, standing in line at a snack stand, or wondering how long it will take the waiter to find them.

“I decided there just had to be a better way to do this,” said founder and CEO Benza, who started developing the idea nearly three years ago.

“We are an ordering platform that enables these large venues that serve large geographic areas to be more productive, and for the guests to have a better and easier time ordering,” he said.

So far, his Miami Beach company works with a dozen resorts, including the Fontainebleau Miami Beach, and several public beaches, enabling delivery of food and beverages and, in some cases, gift-shop items like sun screen, hats and games. EazyO also supports room service at a large condo building with a grocery store on premises.

The company expects to serve 25 venues by the end of this year and 50 by the end of 2019.

“I’ve never worked so hard for so little money and been so happy in my life,” Benza, who played professional baseball before embarking on a long Wall Street career, said in an interview.

EazyO has raised more than \$1 million from outside investors, and Boucher Brothers, a growing hospitality management company specializing in pool, beach, food and water sports services at resorts, condos and public beaches, owns a piece of the business, serving as a strategic partner involved in daily operations. Benza is the majority owner.

The app is in service at vacation spots in Florida and Montauk, N.Y., and EazyO is working on projects in California and Las Vegas, Benza said. Ninety percent of those who have downloaded the app use it, and more than half of customers have ordered multiple times, he said.

EazyO’s revenue model varies by venue, using a percentage of sales, a convenience fee or a complete site licensing fee, depending on the property. A large hotel might pay a monthly subscription fee, with the guest paying a small convenience fee, to use the app for any combination of beach, pool, room service and in-house shopping channel.

“In three to five years the entire business model for these large pools and beaches is going to change,” Benza said, adding that even high-end, Five Diamond hotels will need what he called a technology overlay to their human capital offering, “because guests are demanding options, and they want to know they can order whatever they want.”

In addition to the founder, EazyO’s team of eight includes a lead developer and an operational deployments expert, among others. EazyO is selling its ability to disrupt an old model rather than its technology, Benza said.

While running any startup is challenging, Benza said he appreciates “the creativity aspect and the ability to work whenever you want, wherever you want.”

Being an older entrepreneur has proven helpful, he said.

“You can’t teach experience, and I think when I sit down with partners, I think the maturity and the breadth of that experience comes out. So I actually think I’m more capable of telling the story than maybe someone that doesn’t have that life experience or that business experience, and I see that as a huge benefit,” Benza said.

“Most of the people that are making these decisions are my age,” he added. “I think it helps when they realize that this person has equal amount of business experience that they do, and they’re telling a story that makes sense.”

Benza sees himself involved with EazyO for the next five to 10 years. “And after that,” he said, “who knows.”

This is one in a series of stories on later-in-life entrepreneurs.