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# Topping Off 2020 with Positive Vibes from the 'Good Pizza' Guy

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All those skeptics who say the world of business and finance is cut-throat and competitive need to meet Ben Berman – and bring your appetite.

The MBA student at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, has definitely got some business blood running through his veins. This year he worked as an intern and senior product manager for Amazon and before that, he worked for nearly four years as a business analyst and consultant with Deloitte Consulting.

But possibly none of those corporate experiences has topped Ben's latest LinkedIn entry – as the chief innovator and dough tosser behind Philadelphia's [Good Pizza](#).

Here's the story: When Ben came to Wharton in 2019 to get his Master's of Business Administration, the former traveling consultant who lived most days out of his suitcase started embracing his love of cooking, inviting friends over to his Center City Philadelphia apartment for homemade pizza.

Then, COVID hit – no more socializing.

But Ben found a way, continuing to perfect his pizzas, and lowering them down from his apartment window (with a pulley and 40 feet of string from Amazon) to his hungry friends waiting on the sidewalk below. His unique pizza delivery generated some buzz. Not long after, he began lowering free pizzas to select customers in exchange for donations to local charities. In order to be on the receiving end of a pie, you must win one of 20 spots in an Instagram lottery that Ben runs (with the help of Excel) a few times a month. So far, Good Pizza has raised some \$28,000 in donations through Instagram, "pizza drop" customers, and local businesses. Ben donates every penny, and pays for all the pizza ingredients out of his own pocket.

"I just wanted to make people smile during what is a pretty crappy year for a lot of people, and pizza was my way of doing that," says Ben, who has worked for non-profit organizations during college and after he graduated. "It has become a platform to give back to people who really need it this year. We've been giving a lot of money to organizations like Philabundance, which is fighting hunger relief in Philadelphia... There has never been a more important year for people who are able to try and support organizations like that."

"Pizza is my vehicle for doing good right now, and that's a lot of fun. But I also get to flex my business skills." — Ben Berman, Creator, Good Pizza

We checked in with Ben in late December to ask a few questions about his pizza-inspired philanthropy. Here's what we found out:

**Wharton Global Youth:** Your model for supporting local organizations is truly unique; how did you know this would work?

**Ben Berman:** I had no idea it would work. But, I knew the goal was worthwhile: to make people smile and raise money for good causes. From a business standpoint, I knew I had some things going for me: an innovative delivery system (we lower pizzas out of a second story window), scarcity (we only give away pizza on a lottery basis), and good pizza!

**Wharton Global Youth:** Do you have a story that captures the essence of this experience and motivates you to continue your pizza-making?

**Ben:** Two stories come to mind. The first is from last week, when Tobias Harris and Mattise Thybulle of the Philadelphia 76ers came over to try my pizza and make a \$5,000 matching donation to our cause. I had the chance to sit down with them (over pizza, of course) and talk about their charitable giving in the community and tell my story as well. The other story is really a series of moments: it's the people who stop on the street when they see me dropping a pizza out of the window and ask what's going on. Moments later, I get a notification on my phone: they've started to follow us and have made a donation to our cause. That's really incredible to me, and it makes me smile every single time.



**Wharton Global Youth:** What is the greatest lesson you've taken away from Good Pizza ?

**Ben:** I've gained a new optimism towards strangers' willingness to support a good cause. Over the last few weeks, I've been overwhelmed with incredibly kind, generous offers of support from folks I've never met and will likely never meet: donations to the cause, kind words of encouragement, even local restaurants offering me to let them use their ovens. I'm taking away new optimism towards community and partnerships.

**Wharton Global Youth:** What does making a social impact mean to you?

**Ben:** Social impact means finding a way to improve the lives of those around — those whom you know and don't know — no matter how small the impact. Good Pizza started as a way just to make people smile during a difficult year. But every day I wake up and try to grow that impact a little bit more. Even the smallest positive impact counts. It adds up. Find a way to make someone smile today — you'll feel better too, and the world will be better for it.

**Wharton Global Youth:** How can you be a shrewd and driven business person and still make a genuine and meaningful social impact? Do your qualities as a business person complement what you are doing with Good Pizza?

**Ben:** A lot of what I have learned in business actually lends itself really well to a social enterprise and the creation of social impact. For example, my strategy classes really focus on a simple question: how does a company create a competitive advantage? Well, swap out "competitive advantage" for impact here. What is the unique set of skills, platforms, interests, and engagements that I can bring to the table? For me, pizza is my vehicle for doing good right now, and that's a lot of fun. But I also get to flex my business skills as I work to develop a presence on social media, engage

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The online journal for students interested in finding out more about the world of  
with lawyers and potential investors and the press, ensure that I am keeping proper accounting for Good Pizza, and  
develop a strategy for supporting good causes. That whole process has been a lot of fun for me.

**Wharton Global Youth:** What is your favorite pizza topping?

**Ben:** I've been playing with a lot of fun toppings recently — soppressata and hot honey, pulled pork and mango, apple  
and bacon and red onion — but my favorite is a plain cheese pizza with a little bit of fresh basil.



Ben's favorite pie.