



Company History

The Beginning

In 1982, Jim Disbrow and Scott Lowery had recently moved to Columbus, Ohio after living in Buffalo, New York and found themselves craving the authentic, Buffalo, New York-style chicken wings they'd grown to love. The problem was that they were nowhere to be found. The two friends decided to take matters into their own hands and created their own signature sauce recipe to satisfy their craving. Jim and Scott's signature wings began drumming up great demand and the pair opened up their first restaurant, "Buffalo Wild Wings & Weck" near the campus of The Ohio State University. (Weck refers to a type of sandwich roll that was originally used for the restaurant's sandwich offerings). The restaurant was a hit with college students and has since developed a fanatical following across the country.

Expanding the Brand

The concept quickly proved to be both well-loved by its guests and profitable for its founders, so they began to expand. Through a variety of franchise agreements, Disbrow and Lowery opened a number of Buffalo Wild Wings restaurants at a rapid pace at locations primarily on or near Midwest college campuses. Buffalo Wild Wings' focus on great wings, a wide variety of beer and plenty of sports on dozens of TVs resonated strongly with college students, and as these students graduated and moved on, so did the demand for the concept. Over the years, these alumni continue to return to their local Buffalo Wild Wings with their friends and families.

Sally Smith Takes the Helm

While the concept was able to grow to 35 locations in its first 12 years, the founders eventually encountered challenges faced by many entrepreneurs as they expand. In 1994, Sally Smith came on board as CFO and put in place the infrastructure needed to establish the Accounting, Human Resources, Finance and Marketing departments. In 1996, Smith was named CEO and began to tackle the more challenging task of broadening the appeal of the chain by revising the name, redesigning the buildings and evolving from a college bar to a sports bar and grill that would attract a wider audience.

Going Public and Becoming a Leading International Chain

In order to further support its growth, Smith led the company through a successful initial public offering in November 2003. The company has no debt, a healthy balance sheet and can self-finance its growth. In 2006, Buffalo Wild Wings launched its first national advertising campaign, having reached a size where a full national campaign would be cost-effective. In 2007, the company celebrated 25 successful years in business. The 25th anniversary was marked by the grand opening of a new flagship restaurant in Columbus, Ohio – just down the street from the original location opened by Jim and Scott 26 years ago. The company was recognized in *Forbes* magazine's list of the "200 Best Small Companies" in 2007 through 2011. Also in 2008, 2009 and 2011, *Fortune* magazine cited Buffalo Wild Wings in its list of "100 Fastest Growing Companies." Buffalo Wild Wings is committed to remaining a high-growth company well into the future and has set a goal of having 1,500 restaurants across North America in the next five to seven years, and expanding internationally. In 2011, Buffalo Wild Wings was welcomed by Canadians, and in 2012, the company announced expansion into the Middle East and Puerto Rico.

The Winged Buffalo Gets a Makeover

As the company entered its 30th year in 2012, the logo was refreshed, along with the restaurant design and commitment to the Guest experience. The new look has a bold, contemporary feel that more accurately reflects the brand, as it continues to expand internationally. Additionally, the words "Grill & Bar" were removed from the logo to reflect that Buffalo Wild Wings is much more than a grill and bar. It has become a gathering place and neighborhood destination for sports fans. The company also developed a new prototype restaurant design to emphasize the game as the focal point, creating a stadium-like atmosphere that brings together the essentials of a social and interactive gathering place for true sports fans.