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Queens bakery heats up plans to capitalize on demise of H&H Bagels

Davidovich Bakery retrains its workers as it competes for contracts previously held by its arch rival



JULIA XANTHOS/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Gene Davidovich (r) and Marc Fintz at Davidovich Bakery in Woodside, Queens.

A little baked goods factory in Woodside, Queens, wants to take a big bite out of the bagel biz.

You probably never heard of Davidovich Bakery, even though the 14-year-old company sells its chewy, kosher bagels in delis and gourmet shops throughout the city.

But lately the quiet bagel wholesaler, a division of Queens food distributor All Natural Products, has been boiling over with plans to capitalize on the demise of bagel titan H&H Bagels.

In recent days, Davidovich secured funds from the city to retrain its workers as it looks to compete for contracts previously held by its arch rival.

The city will give the bakery \$13,800 and Davidovich will kick in \$8,000 more. The idea is to upgrade its employees' skills so that it can obtain certain food and quality certifications required by bigger-name food retailers.

"Demand has increased," Marc Fintz, the company's director of business development, told the Daily News. "These training funds will allow us to keep up."

“We are looking to support small businesses that are growing,” Sara Schlossberg, executive director of training at the city’s Department of Small Business Services, said of the city’s decision to help Davidovich.

With requests coming in from accounts around the world - a Hong Kong food distributor recently asked the Queens bakery if it could make shellfish-flavored bagels - Davidovich expects to ramp up production from a current 25,000 bagels a day to double that number by next year.

Along the way, the company, which operates a modest 10,000 square-foot factory, is hoping to triple its employee ranks from its current 25 over the next few years. Sales this year are expected to rise 30%.

Davidovich, whose customers include Whole Foods and Manhattan gourmet grocery Barzini, has ambitions to open its own retail stores as well. On the menu: ten to twelve shops in the city, starting with a flagship in H&H territory - the Upper West Side.

“Our largest competitor has ceased to exist. People have looked to us as the heir apparent,” Fintz said. “Our goal is to

be the most respected bagel brand name in the world.”

Before being hired last year by All Natural Products’ owner, Gene Davidovich, Fintz served as H&H’s national business manager.

“That battlefield prepared me to be almost any place,” he said.

He’s wasted no time raising the bagel bakery’s profile.

Fintz recently took on the country’s biggest bagel retailer, Dunkin Donuts. He filed complaints with the Federal Trade Commission, the New York State Attorney General and the Better Business Bureau, alleging that Dunkin’ Donuts ads, which promote a new line of bagels as “artisan,” amount to false advertising.

“We are aware that Mr. Fintz of New York, the business development manager for a competitive bakery, has complained about our new Artisan Bagels,” Dunkin’ Brands spokeswoman Michelle King said in a statement.

“We believe the word ‘artisan,’ which has been used by numerous other retailers in the food and restaurant industry, is a common term used to describe quality food and authentic,

traditional ingredients and taste. We therefore believe it is a fair and appropriate word to describe the line of bagels featuring our new bagel recipe.”

But Dunkin Donuts' bagel manufacturing is very different from the work going on at Davidovich's Woodside bakery, where the bagels are hand-rolled and kettle boiled, Fintz said.

“Even though we are a growing business, we have adhered to traditional methods,” he said. “The methods we use are not industrial. We are very labor intensive and we intend to continue.”

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Business owners who would like to improve productivity and grow their business by investing in and training staff, can apply for training funds at nyc.gov/training.