



# Where Are They Now?

By Mike Cullity

**Over the last four decades, Ed Wolak '72, '74 has parlayed an entry-level job at Dunkin' Donuts into a small doughnut empire.**

The 59-year-old owner of more than 70 Dunkin' Donuts franchises in Maine, New Hampshire and upstate New York, Wolak started out sweeping floors at a Dunkin' Donuts store in Manchester, N.H., during high school. He paid his way through SNHU by baking for Dunkin' franchises in the area, earning an associate degree and then a bachelor's degree in business management.

To accommodate his baking job, Wolak often took night classes taught by CFOs of local companies, which gave him real-world business exposure, he said. Mindful of how that experience influenced his career, Wolak recently enlisted a group of SNHU students to conduct a marketing research project for his business.

On a chilly Friday last December, Wolak and his business partners listened to four student presentations intended to help them decide whether to introduce bread and rolls into several of Wolak's Dunkin' Donuts stores in the Syracuse, N.Y., area.

The 18 students who presented in the SNHU Dining Center were members of Dr. Eklou Amendah's marketing research classes. By spending the fall 2010 semester learning about bread, interviewing Dunkin' Donuts customers, compiling questionnaires and analyzing data, they sought to provide Wolak with market knowledge that would guide his decisions regarding the

potential new product launch.

The project arose from Wolak's desire to decrease down time at a Syracuse doughnut-baking facility he owns. The 20,000-square-foot plant is dark for about 15 hours a day, a significant lull that bread-baking could potentially help fill, Wolak said.

"I've always been interested in the bread business, and I thought that might be something that we could talk to Dunkin' Donuts about," he says.

In 2009 Wolak shared his thoughts with Don Brezinski, SNHU's vice president of Institutional Advancement, who suggested that SNHU marketing students might be able to help.

Amendah and his students became involved last fall. Their semester began with "bread lessons" from SNHU faculty Chef Vicki Connell. In October the four groups traveled to Syracuse to interview customers at four Dunkin' Donuts stores, a qualitative research exercise designed to identify customers' feelings about bread and the prospect of Dunkin' Donuts selling it.

From the customers' responses, the students compiled questionnaires that served as the basis for quantitative research. They received responses from about 400 customers of the Syracuse-area Dunkin' Donuts stores, analyzed the data, and offered Wolak recommendations about how best to introduce

bread and rolls into his stores.

The project exposed students to a real-world business situation and taught them how to solve a company's problem through research, Amendah said. And the students were grateful for the learning opportunity.

"It was so helpful to learning about market research," said Dana Bereza, a junior marketing major from Seymour, Conn. "If I just saw a slide show, it wouldn't mean as much as actually going through the process."

"I understand it, and I'll retain it much better," added Lauren Hawkins, a junior marketing major from North Conway, N.H. "The presentation made us understand it, because we had to tell it back to an audience."

Wolak emerged from the December presentations impressed with the students' work and armed with data he felt would help persuade Dunkin' Donuts senior management to support a bread-selling venture.

"They gave us some interesting insights," said Wolak, who lives in Scarborough, Maine, and oversees approximately 15 business and real-estate entities related to his Dunkin' Donuts franchises, which employ about 1,200 people. "I think that the scope of their work will result in a broader attempt at success."

## Where are you now?

Let us know: Email updates and Class Notes to [alumni@snhu.edu](mailto:alumni@snhu.edu) or visit [www.snhu.edu/alumni](http://www.snhu.edu/alumni) to update your profile.



Ed Wolak '72, '74 with Lauren Hawkins, a junior marketing major in SNHU's marketing research class, discussing one of the presentations created to help decide whether bread and rolls should be introduced into several of Wolak's Dunkin' Donuts stores in the Syracuse, N.Y., area.

