

Can IHOP's burger scheme really spark a sales revival?

By Lisa Fickenscher

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IHOP is hoping burgers will make its bottom line sizzle.

The pancake chain, struggling to turn around 10 straight quarters of declining customer traffic, on Monday said it would add a handful of burgers to its menu in hopes of energizing its non-breakfast hours.

It's not the first time the 60-year-old chain has tried to expand beyond breakfast — without much success.

The flapjack factory launched an advertising campaign Monday touting a \$6.99 burger special with unlimited fries and a drink.

The belt-busting additions to the menu

include Cowboy BBQ, which comes with onion rings, bacon and American cheese, and Jalapeno Kick, including sauteed jalapenos, serrano peppers, hickory-smoked bacon, pepper jack cheese and mayo.

But a spot check of the 15 Big Apple IHOPs revealed management has a tough marketing road ahead.

"IHOP just can't get out from under its own success as a breakfast place," said restaurant consultant Arlene Spiegel.

In the 1980s, IHOP's advertising slogans were "Man does not live by pancakes alone" and "Good things cooking at breakfast, lunch and dinner." ■