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Whitbread tests joint Costa and Pizza Hut outlets

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Whitbread is trialling combined Pizza Hut and Costa Coffee outlets at two sites in London, selling each other's products side by side.

The outlets are at the O2 leisure complex in Finchley Road, north-west London, and at Cambridge Circus in the West End.

Pizza Hut has added Costa Coffee's drinks to its menu and has segregated coffee bar areas for those who do not want to sit in the restaurant.

A Pizza Hut spokesman said: "Costa Coffee is a prominent brand with customers in these locations.

"Working together represents an opportunity for both brands to maximise the use of their assets because Costa Coffee is often busiest at times when Pizza Hut is less busy and vice versa."

He said early signs were encouraging but the company had still to decide whether more such joint outlets would be created in the future.

Jeffrey Young, managing director of market research firm Allegra Strategies, said: "Where people feel they can go into the separate sections without a problem, that's fine, but not if you have a situation where the Costa is at the back and you have to walk through Pizza Hut to have a coffee."

by Andrew Don

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