



"Cereal is the only item people have every single day without question. You wouldn't have a burger every day," says Bacher (left, with Roth).

Snap, Crackle, Cash

David Roth and Rick Bacher create cafes that sell breakfast cereal—with candy on top, if you please

Like bartenders at a neighborhood dive, the servers at Matt Kronwald's regular breakfast place know his usual: a mix of Frosted Flakes, Froot Loops and Lucky Charms marshmallows. "I like it diabetic, straight up," says the 21-year-old business major at Arizona State University in Tempe. "To me cereal is a food group."

To David Roth and Rick Bacher, it's a potential gold mine. Just over a year

ago they opened Cereality, a kitchen-style cafe that specializes in cereal, on the campus of Arizona State. For \$2.95, customers can fill a 32-oz. container with two scoops of cereal (from oatmeal to Cap'n Crunch) and one topping (bananas to Pop Rocks) chosen from more than 30 varieties of each served by pajama-wearing staff called cereologists. Dentists and moms may cringe, but business has boomed for Roth, 42,

and Bacher, 36, selling favorites like Banana Brown Betty, a mix of oatmeal, banana syrup and molasses sugar with streusel and bananas. The store turned a profit just two months after opening in August 2003, and a second, much bigger Cereality will open in Philadelphia after Thanksgiving. "The idea," says Roth, "is to become the Starbucks of cereal."

A former marketing consultant who grew up in Westbury, N.Y., Roth had the idea for the store four years ago after meeting an executive who kept Cocoa Puffs hidden in his briefcase. He enlisted his friend Bacher, a graphic designer from Toronto, and after some early skepticism, they eventually found investors. Now, says Roth, briefcase man and all the other "closeted cereal eaters can come out and enjoy themselves." ●