

The Challenge of Attracting Tomorrow's Leaders to the Foodservice Industry

Foodservice Institute of America (FIA) White Paper

Based on

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Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management**

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On December 5, 2007, the Foodservice Institute of America (FIA) held a one-day conference at the University of Houston's Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management. Attendance by representatives of equipment companies, suppliers, manufacturers, software professionals, and foodservice managers at both the corporate and operational levels allowed for thorough exploration of topics related to attracting human resource talent to the foodservice industry. The session started with a panel discussion that engaged many audience members in a fruitful discussion that resulted in the production of much insightful information. After the panel discussion ended, the audience members were divided into groups to examine and summarize proposed solutions to the food industry's most pressing problems. Finally, the future of FIA was discussed, as well as ways to improve its brand and identity.

Panel Discussion

Ken Wasco of Gordon Food Services, a frequent guest lecturer at universities on topics related to foodservice and human resource management, moderated the panel discussion. Mr. Wasco has served as a consultant to the foodservice industry on issues relating to consumer behavior, customer service, multigenerational workforce trends, and effective communication. Mr. Wasco is also the author of *Live Like You Mean It*, which was published in the fall of 2006.

The panel included Steven Bergman, founder and principal of CEC Culinary Consulting, LLC in Houston, Texas; John Bowen, dean of the UH Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management; Joleen Flory, president and CEO of the Elliot Leadership Institute, a not-for-profit organization; and John Nackley, Jr., manager of Marketing for MLB Advertising in Wilkes-Barre, PA. A brief biography of the panel members can be found at the end of the report. The topics covered by the panel included the need for talent, employee retention, and the reputation of the foodservice industry

Need for Talent

The panel members all emphasized that the future of foodservice lies in the people who will provide leadership for the industry and those who will work for these leaders. A recurring concern that arose during the panel discussion was that the human resource pipeline is not full because of a shortage of qualified employees to fill open entry-level and mid-management

positions. The foodservice industry must find new sources of employees as well as new ways of recruiting and attracting employees from existing sources. However, recruiting from new sources may bring in employees unfamiliar with the industry, thus creating a need to invest more resources in training and development. Joleen Flory remarked that finding good talent has been a problem for her organization, and she sees the current employment situation as a “job seekers market.” Because employees have more leverage than they had in the past, organizations must identify creative ways of recruiting and retaining them. There are additional resources with further information on human resource management.^{1,2,3}

Employee Retention

Training and development programs that help employees advance within the organization aid in the retention of key employees. The foodservice industry has long had a reputation as an industry with a disproportionately high rate of employee turnover. One participant cited the statistic that 60% of restaurant and food preparation employees leave the industry within the first 2 years of employment. During the panel discussion, one participant stated that there has been a 185% turnover rate in retail food outlets over the past 5 years. This problem seems to be exacerbated by the employee demographic born between 1965 and 1982 (members of Generation X), who tend to be impatient and want to progress through training programs rapidly. If they perceive that they are not progressing according to their capabilities, these employees will leave. This creates the need more flexible training programs that meet both the needs of the organization and members of Generation X.

Another reason for the high rate of employee turnover is employee life-stage changes. Although single employees may enjoy the fast-paced life of full-service restaurant management, working weekends and evenings may become less attractive as they marry and have families. Those employees ready to leave the restaurant industry could be prime candidates for other positions, and as such, the foodservice industry needs to develop ways of retaining these employees in the industry rather than see them exit to other industries.

According to the audience members, if employees successfully perform during their first 2 years at a new position, they are more likely to remain in the position. An FIA survey found that 67.9% of foodservice and hospitality employees have been working in these industries for over 20 years.⁴ This survey also found that 46.3% of employees consider the most appealing aspects of the industry are its dynamism and constantly changing nature.⁵ Other appealing aspects of the industry were found to be the provision of opportunities for growth, the challenging nature of the industry, and the ability to use one’s creativity.⁶

¹ Boudeau, John W. & Ramstad, Peter M. *Beyond HR. The New Science of Human Capital*, 2007. This book explains that employees are as vital a resource as machinery and real estate demands.

² Carrig, Ken and Wright, Patrick M., “Building Profit Through Building People,” *Society for Human Resource Management*, 2006.

³ Dayton Fandray, “Human Capital. Customers Count. And so do the employees who serve them,” *Continental.com/magazine*, July 2007.

⁴ Foodservice Institute of America. *FIA Industry Survey Results*. www.fia-us.org

⁵ Id.

⁶ Id.

A 2004 study by the USA Restaurant Industry predicted that recruiting and retaining employees would be the biggest challenge faced by restaurant operators in the future.⁷ As the report found that “the median annual turnover rate of restaurant servers in America is 117%,”⁸ a figure that other studies have found to be 300%, attracting and retaining employees clearly is and will remain a key concern of the foodservice industry.

The foodservice sector is not the only industry that has faced employment concerns. The industry can learn from other industries that have developed innovative solutions when facing similar challenges in attracting and developing top employee talent. Two experts suggested the following:

1. Commit to recruiting a small group of top-tier college graduates on a regular basis.
2. Create robust and consistent competency and career development models across the business.
3. Conduct regular succession planning and performance/potential reviews of the next 50 senior leaders and the most recent 50 entry-level college graduates.
4. Infuse the organization with a few high-performing specialists in areas such as supply-chain management, information technology, sales and marketing, innovation, and development.⁹

Reputation of the Foodservice Industry

Foodservice industry employees are known to be poorly paid and forced to work long hours at difficult jobs that require little skill. The irony of the situation is that many retail foodservice organizations are offering better opportunities with reasonable hours and better-than-average pay than comparable organizations. For example, Dr. John Bowen mentioned that Red Lobster Restaurants offer opportunities whereby management trainees can become general managers within 5 to 6 years and eventually earn a salary of six figures per year.

The panel members were nearly unanimous in their agreement that the image of the industry is inaccurate, negatively skewed, and often propagated by industry professionals themselves. In a 2004 *Restaurants USA* article, Wildes stated that there is a perception “on a psychological level [that] the job image in the restaurant industry suffers from a ‘servitude’ perception” whereby industry employees merely serve others.¹⁰ Dr. Bowen mentioned that parents of potential students of the College of Hotel and Restaurant Management often have to be “sold” on the merits and potential of the industry; they want their sons or daughters to be attorneys or accountants, not foodservice managers. Parents and outsiders often do not recognize the true breadth of the industry and the opportunities it provides. The industry’s poor

⁷ Wildes, Vivienne J., “Stigma in food service work: How it affects restaurant server’s intention to stay in the business or recommend a job to another,” *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2005.

⁸ Id.

⁹ Jay Millen and Ronald Wintzeus, “Research Indicates Best Practices for Attracting, Managing Industry Talent” *Pulp and Paper*, June 2007

¹⁰ Wildes, Vivienne J. “Stigma in food service work: How it affects restaurant server’s intention to stay in the business or recommend a job to another,” *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2005.

employment reputation is not limited to retail food outlets. The panelists who are employees of manufacturing firms indicated that they are having trouble attracting engineers, as the foodservice industry is not perceived to be an exciting industry with career opportunities for this profession. Several mentioned that they have experienced difficulty attracting talent when competing against more recognized companies, such as Boeing and Lockheed Martin.

The panelists and audience agreed that the foodservice industry has created a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby its worst characteristics are constantly discussed and its negative reputation conveyed to outsiders. Several participants stated that one result is that outsiders become aware of the seemingly negative aspects of foodservice jobs but fail to learn of the benefits of working in the industry; the benefits provided by the foodservice industry, such as job security and flexible and accommodating work schedules, often go unnoticed.

However, this vicious cycle can be broken with the help of FIA and its members. Both need to communicate the reality and breadth of the industry and the opportunities that exist for those who are employed in one of the nation's largest industries. In addition to word-of-mouth advertising, several attendees suggested producing case studies that illustrate those FIA members who are using best practices for the benefit of their employees and the foodservice industry in general. Distributing these accounts of best practices among FIA members could help revive the industry's negative image.

First Afternoon Session: Group Discussions

The first afternoon session was facilitated by Rudy Miick, President of Miick & Associates. The audience was divided into seven groups to further discuss the themes that had been presented and analyzed during the morning session. The purpose was to provide each group with the latitude to think creatively and identify solutions to the issues that had arisen during the morning session. After much brainstorming, the groups identified potential solutions that encompassed the following seven themes:

1. Identify current image problems and solutions.
2. Provide more training and internships.
3. Recruit from various disciplines within the foodservice industry.
4. Develop ways of overcoming public relations challenges.
5. Identify ways of recruiting employees from other industries.
6. Determine how to market to and manage employees from different generations.
7. Explain why synergy is so important now and what can it do for FIA.

Team One: Current Image Problems and Solutions

Team One examined the image problems faced by the foodservice industry. This team argued that this poor image has been created by a lack of consensus regarding what the foodservice industry actually is and what occurs behind the scenes. This lack of consensus has led to disorganized attempts to recruit new employees. Team One concluded that FIA can help change this perception by using its own members more effectively. FIA should focus its energy and resources into recruiting and more outreach efforts. To begin to address these needs, Team One suggested that FIA members start attending more tradeshow and industry conferences to increase awareness and the prominence of its presence. In terms of recruitment, FIA should use

its position to build relationships with high schools, colleges, and trade schools that offer foodservice programs. Early exposure to high school students offers numerous possibilities to show the true diversity of the industry and the opportunities it offers for people who, although passionate about food, do not want to work in a hotel or restaurant.

Team One also suggested recruiting the many talented veterans who have yet to retire by establishing relationships with the Department of Veterans Affairs and other veteran groups across the country. These veterans can offer management and work experience that would greatly benefit many companies in great need of experienced workers. Employees can also be recruited through Hire Heroes, an institution comprised of service men and women seeking quality jobs after completing tours of active duty with which FIA has recently established a relationship.

Team Two: Training and Internships

Team Two determined that the motto “Think globally, act locally” should be used by FIA and its proposed internship program to describe their mission. The team members determined that offering a scholarship program would be the best way to attract motivated students to the industry. To find these students, FIA could encourage its members and contacts to attend career fairs and establish a good rapport with recruitment offices in colleges and universities. In addition to targeting colleges and universities, Team Two argued that targeting high school career fairs would allow the foodservice industry to educate young people about the industry and the multitude of positions it offers. Team Two added that the marketing message from the industry has been too negative and that each member could create value and outside interest by promoting their careers in a more positive light.

Team Three: Recruit From Various Disciplines Within the Foodservice Industry

After discussing the various disciplines within the industry and other possible industries from which to attract new talent, Group Three concluded that the skill sets required to fulfill the many responsibilities within the industry are more diverse than many outsiders realize. The image of foodservice employees is that of “burger flippers” who work for low wages in dead-end jobs. Lack of recognition of the diversity of careers within the industry has led to a negative image of the industry as a whole.

Team Three suggested investigating the following industries as possible sources of new talent:

- Sales and entrepreneurship
- Manufacturing
- Architecture
- Production and distribution
- Construction
- Marketing
- Finance and accounting
- Management
- Clinical
- Military
- Communications/public speaking
- Technology
- Research and development
- Liberal arts
- Engineering

To successfully attract employees from outside the industry, FIA members must invest resources in marketing open positions and those of their firms to employees with the desired skill sets. FIA members must convince potential employees that their skills will be well rewarded with pay and advancement opportunities comparable to firms in other business sectors.

Team Four: Overcoming Public Relations Problems

After examining the industry's public relations problems and poor image, Team Four concluded that they could be attributed to a lack of understanding of and familiarity with the variety of careers and facets of the foodservice industry. FIA's primary strength is that it encompasses much more than just the front lines of the foodservice industry. For example, while many in the industry are familiar with the chefs, cooks, servers, busboys, waiters, and banquet staff who comprise various foodservice associations; they remain unfamiliar with the FIA members who represent the food or equipment manufacturing, construction, assembly, and technological divisions responsible for the development and maintenance of foodservice facilities.

Team Five: Recruiting Employees From Other Industries

Team Five considered ways of recruiting employees from other industries, in particular more experienced employees seeking a career change. The team members agreed that other industries, including those listed previously, are an excellent source of new and experienced talent. However, they recognized that they must find a fulfilling purpose for these potential employees or they might leave the industry shortly after hire. The team members discredited the idea that those who leave the industry shortly after hire are simply unreliable employees; instead, they concluded that such employees leave because they feel that there is little room for mobility or opportunity for personal growth in the industry.

During the group discussion, the particular differences between the generations were brought to the forefront. Because Generation Y employees (those born between 1977 and 1994) are generally less motivated by money and more motivated by passion whereas Generation X employees are motivated by loyalty to the company and reward for high performance, the marketing of new positions must be targeted to appeal to both generations.

Team Six: Marketing to and Managing Employees From Different Generations

Group Six discussed the difficulties of managing workers from different generations. Not being motivated by financial gain like their predecessors, members of Generation Y seek jobs that inspire them and allow them to give back to the community. Although members of Generation X tend to be very company focused and financially motivated, many have already reached positions of great responsibility and thus are not available to fill open positions within their company. Differences between generations can make it very difficult for their members to work together, especially if one generation is subordinate to the other.

Many of the industry's potential employees within the Generation X demographic are seeking a career change. Having the potential to bring much experience, company know-how, and insight to new positions, these workers are a great source of talent who must not be

overlooked. There are additional resources with further information about multigenerational management.¹¹

Team Seven: The Importance of Synergy and What It Can Do for FIA

Team Seven discussed why FIA is so important right now and how to make it a strong organization with a clear purpose and achievable goals. As a relatively young organization, this network of different foodservice employers has made remarkable progress but not yet been able to leverage its full capacity and that of its members. FIA has taken advantage of the opportunity to step up and publicize the positive aspects of the industry that are so often ignored by the media and public. Although acknowledging that turnover is high and potential employees are abandoning the industry in favor of more rewarding positions in other industries, FIA has demonstrated that these aspects are only some among the many positive aspects of a very large, very dynamic industry. With its unique and varied membership, FIA has the potential to show potential employees that the industry needs more than just foodservice workers; it needs architects, computer software engineers, CAD operators, manufacturers, and engineers. FIA can help attract a diverse workforce by disseminating a unified message developed and agreed upon by its members.

Afternoon Discussion: Presentation of Group Ideas

While the groups presented their findings and ideas, a general discussion took place regarding the key issues of employee recruitment, retention, and turnover.

Employee Recruitment

Frequently, the most productive employees come from unexpected industries. Some of the most dynamic and productive employees are career changers who tried their hand at other careers before becoming dissatisfied and deciding to pursue other interests. In a modern economy in which frequent career changes have become commonplace, other industries with similar jobs offer pools of talent from which to recruit employees. Although some of the attendees still believe that people who have changed careers many times are unreliable and thus poor prospects for employment, fearing that their required investment in these employees' training might not be returned, this stereotype has diminished over time. Changing careers is becoming more prevalent as more people seek challenges not offered in their current positions. It should also be noted that frequent career changes are generally not due to a lack of good compensation or benefits but rather a lack of purpose and a sense that one's personal growth is waning.

Hotel and Restaurant Management programs are becoming increasingly more accessible in colleges and universities across the United States. As these programs grow, the internship and recruiting efforts of these programs must also increase. Dr. Bowen remarked how efforts have been made to increase visibility at high schools and community. Building relationships with high school teachers and career counselors to educate them on the employment opportunities within the foodservice industry provides a starting point from which to reach high school students.

¹¹ Spragins, Ellen. "The Talent Pool. The Gen Y workers now flooding the job market are a difficult breed to manage. Here's what our 15 best bosses are doing about it," *Fortune Small Business*, Oct 2005.

Equally important is the education of parents about the wide range of opportunities and possibilities for upward mobility within the industry. Improved publicity that goes beyond highlighting only its most salient features will help restore the image and credibility of the industry.

College internship programs are also essential in developing a more positive image of the industry. The Disney Internship Program has been recognized as a good example of a well-executed internship program. Disney earns its interns' loyalty by keeping them excited about their work and exposing them to different positions and careers throughout the company. Foodservice companies that are facing conceptual and strategic problems should consider employing both undergraduate and graduate students to study these problems in depth and develop solutions.

The language used by industry professionals must become more positive to promote the industry to potential employees. Many participants noted that although they understand that there are unknown strengths in the hospitality industry, this image problem is exacerbated by insiders. Instead of focusing on the negatives, a positive view must be projected to those who are unfamiliar with the breadth of the industry.

The foodservice industry can learn lessons from the high-tech industry, which has also experienced difficulties finding qualified employees. This industry has expanded its job efforts far beyond the simple job fair; they now include technology lectures, cocktail parties, pizza parties, treasure hunts, and programming contests such as the "Google Games."¹² The foodservice industry must identify similar creative ways of recruiting employees.

Green Recruiting

According to *Workforce Management*, many major companies now highlight their "green" environmental practices as a new way to recruit members of Generation Y and environmentally savvy workers.¹³ This trend can be promoted within the foodservice industry by promoting environmental practices such as solar energy, energy efficiency, distribution of excess food to the homeless, and water-saving measures. The industry must recognize that aligning corporate values with personal values is important to young employees.

Turnover and Retention

Most participants agreed that although there is significant turnover and attrition in the foodservice industry, these occur primarily among young and part-time workers during the first few years of employment. Employees who remain in the industry for more than 2 years are often very satisfied and able to identify the opportunities and latitude in the industry that their more impatient counterparts could not. Many participants commented that they have more job security than outsiders believe they do and work according to schedules that have become more flexible and accommodating to other lifestyles.

It is also important to note that many participants have backgrounds and skill sets that they understand to be commensurate with foodservice. Many of the audience members had not originally intended to enter the industry, but found employment in hospitality through unforeseen

¹² *New York Times* article dated May 28, 2007 titled "In Fierce Competition, Google Finds Novel Ways to Feed Hiring Machine."

¹³ "Green Recruiting Helps Bring in Top Talent": by Charlotte Huff, *Workforce Management* Online, August 2007.

circumstances. A number of attendees commented that “I just fell into it” or “I needed a job and an opportunity just came up.” Such statements are demonstrative of an industry that is far more diverse than many realize. A number of audience members who came from engineering, technical, and other non-foodservice backgrounds had had no exposure to this industry during their studies. Before entering the foodservice industry, these workers had maintained stereotypical views of the industry, leading them to experience disbelief when they learned of the abundant technical employment opportunities within the industry. These members also commented that because of the poor reputation of the industry within their original fields of study, their employment came only through happenstance and not active pursuit of a position within the industry.

Key Points

- Work with communities and schools to demonstrate the abundant opportunities within the industry to younger individuals.
- Publicize all of the foodservice positions available to youth, even children, beyond celebrity that of celebrity chefs.
- Publicize the college internships available through hotels and resorts (e.g., Disney) and restaurant chains.
- Highlight all facets of the industry.
- Change the language used to accentuate the positive aspects of the industry.
- Demonstrate to workers in other industries and older workers that their skills are transferable to the foodservice industry.

How Can FIA Best Serve Its Members?

The afternoon session included a discussion on how FIA should brand itself and how it could best serve its members. Many positive aspects of this newly formed organization have been underleveraged but have great promise. FIA also faces limitations that will make branding difficult. The audience agreed that the most valuable resource of FIA is its maintenance of extensive contacts among key people in every aspect of the industry and in many locations throughout the United States. FIA should use this network to bring independent companies together for greater communication and collaboration. The industry’s diversity is a strength that can be marketed more successfully to improve the brand. As Web sites have become the most visible resources of organizations, FIA should use its Web site as a tool to provide members with education and information about industry possibilities that go beyond simply operational updates. Many members now use blogs and message boards to remain in contact. FIA’s Web site could also list internships and job opportunities with member companies and the sets of job skills necessary to perform the work.

FIA needs to publicize the variety within the industry and the diversity of positions available, as well as defining their duties and functions. Its Web site, which should be an integral

part of this endeavor, could be used as a source for job information. Employers should be able to post opportunities and search through resumes to find viable candidates on FIA's Web site in the same manner that they can on www.monster.com or www.careerbuilder.com. A unique feature that could be added is relocation information. FIA could offer ways for members to connect when they relocate to different areas of the United States. This would be difficult to implement but well rewarded by the employee loyalty it would create. Using FIA's Web site as a strong resource for jobs and networking opportunities will create the stability that could become another selling point for the industry among current and potential employees.

FIA is well positioned to advertise the purpose of the industry in such a manner that potential employees understand that they could gain much career satisfaction within one of the many foodservice positions available. This may be a particularly effective manner of recruiting veterans, who tend to have a strong sense of purpose and work ethic. Although veterans could contribute positively to any organization, they are regularly overlooked.

The effective acquisition and use of resources is important for any organization. FIA must prioritize its tasks and allocate its resources accordingly. Because measuring success is difficult, FIA must clearly communicate its expectations to all of its members. FIA's image must accord with the reputations of its member organizations and other foodservice organizations. This can be achieved through better marketing practices. Many members suggested that FIA should not concentrate the majority of its efforts on promoting itself internally or in magazines and trade journals, whose readers are already foodservice professionals. FIA and its members need to look beyond standard industry communication and promotion vehicles to find new employees.

As a 'young' organization, currently relatively few people within the industry know about FIA, increased public relations will create greater brand awareness. Because branding is an important tool for attracting excellent employees, it should be a future topic for an FIA conference or educational session that can review the multitude of studies that have been published on best branding practices over the last 10 years.

Because competition for the best employees is intense, the foodservice industry must offer a greater number of tangible incentives to attract desirable employees. More importance should be placed on employee attitude when making employment decisions. A popular business mantra that proved successful to Southwest Airlines' recruitment effort and which the foodservice industry should consider is "Hire for attitude, train for skill." The industry should embrace the multigenerational workforce by reaching out to older employees who want to change careers. Members of the Baby-Boomer generation (those born between 1946 and 1964) are not ready to retire but still largely ignored by younger generations. The foodservice industry should increase its presence and market to these older employees with hidden talent. Although creating a central job resource could lead to success, there has been inconsistent effort to publicize this information cohesively.

Summary

Many solutions have been posed for industry-wide problems that although manageable and common to emerging organizations must be addressed. First and foremost, the network of professionals within FIA must market the industry. Current marketing campaigns designed to attract employees have not proven adequate. Employers must focus on publicizing important points to students, particularly that the wage potential is far better in this industry than many realize. As mentioned earlier, salaries can easily reach into six figures for dedicated company employees.

Excellent practices of successful companies should be emulated. Human resource issues are often difficult to overcome, but companies outside the industry have achieved success despite facing similar obstacles. People want to work for companies with interesting brands, such as Disney and Starbucks. Companies that are socially responsible and charitable tend to be seen in a more favorable light, leading them to attract better talent. One model to emulate is that of Disney, which uses campus representatives and students who have already completed the program to recruit others.

An important aspect of recruiting for the foodservice industry is contacting and improving industry relationships with high school counselors. For specific functional opportunities, college programs other than hospitality programs should be targeted. Furthermore, it should be understood that communication among and the needs of generations varies greatly. Recruiters should be cognizant of this fact and use techniques appropriate to their target employees.

Promoting a paradigm shift should also be considered as a method of changing the perception of the foodservice industry. For instance, General Mills and Starbucks are seen as a respectable corporations rather than merely foodservice companies because of their successful positioning endeavors. Starbucks has a great corporate responsibility campaign, rewards its employees with ever-increasing responsibility, and offers great benefits to all of its employees, regardless of the amount of hours they work. The company also encourages its employees to take initiative and develop leadership roles, which builds trust and employee loyalty. Goodwill is priceless and provides intangible benefits in the long term. Community involvement is the least expensive and easiest way to achieve a more consumer-friendly brand.

For organizations looking to allocate employees, managers should place extroverts in sales positions. Although the most difficult to fill, sales positions offer much potential for high wages and interpersonal communication. Although FIA has built relationships within the industry, it must continue doing so. Developing relationships with associations and organizations in the industry is key to gaining exposure among businesses, leaders, and talented employees. Employers must encourage employees to attend lectures, network at tradeshow and industry events, and use Internet technologies to remain in contact with others in the industry. Offering payment incentives to employees to recruit others may be costly but prove very successful to recruitment efforts. Employers should take advantage of the diversity in the industry and look for differences in people. It is also important to remember that the foodservice industry is diverse in many aspects, not just that of its workforce. The industry's often-neglected connections to the healthcare industry, hospitals, and retirement communities can also be used to recruit employees.

One specific marketing technique that should be used is buzz marketing. Word of mouth is cost efficient and contagious but requires effort. Graduate students can be employed in a cost-effective manner to find solutions to business problems. Veterans and career changers can develop into top employees if offered the right challenges. Finally, it is imperative for FIA and the foodservice industry to provide fun and purpose at the workplace.

Biographies of Panelists

Steven M. Bergman

Steven M. Bergman, CEC is the founder and principal of CEC Culinary Consulting, LLC in Houston, Texas. Chef Bergman is widely recognized as an authority and teacher in many segments of the foodservice industry. CEC Culinary Consulting provides client-based, customized culinary services for corporate and private clients, including restaurant startups, menu concept development, recipe development, menu engineering, culinary training, spa cuisine and recipe modification, food safety and HACCP compliance strategies, food production systems and auditing services. Through CEC, Chef Bergman has served local and national foodservice operators, K-12 governmental agencies and high profile clients.

Mr. Bergman's formal training included Culinary Arts Certification in Houston, Texas. He continued his professional development at the Culinary Institute of America in New Hyde Park, New York. Chef Bergman maintains his professional credentials as a Certified Executive Chef, sanctioned by the American Culinary Federation, through attending seminars and culinary training at the annual ACF convention and the National Restaurant Association and NAFEM trade shows.

John Bowen

John Bowen, Ph.D. is the Dean of the UH Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management. He has presented marketing courses and seminars in Asia, Australia, Central America, Europe, Mexico and South America. He has published over 100 articles on marketing and is coauthor of *Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism*, the leading hospitality marketing text worldwide and published in eight languages. He is also the coauthor of *Restaurant Marketing for Owners and Managers*. Dr. Bowen has won numerous awards for both his teaching and research. In a recent article in the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education* he was listed as one of the five most influential hospitality management faculty based on the number of times his publications were cited by other scholars in their work. Dr. Bowen's industry experience is in the area of food and beverage, having worked in hotels, freestanding restaurants and as the corporate food and beverage manager for a hotel management company.

Joleen Flory

Joleen Flory is the President and CEO of the Elliot Leadership Institute, a not-for-profit organization. Before joining The Elliot Leadership Institute, Ms. Flory served as Executive Vice President, Human Resources and Training for Famous Dave's of America. In that position, she led human resources, organizational development, payroll, risk management, training and development. Prior to joining Famous Dave's, the 20-year industry veteran worked for Buffalo Wild Wings, Advantica Restaurant Group, Family Restaurants, Inc. and Bubba Gump Shrimp Company, Inc., where she held various positions in training, human resources and operations.

Ms. Flory has served on the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation's (NRAEF) Certification Governing Board. Certified as both a Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) and a Foodservice Management Professional (FMP), she is also a member of the Council of Hotel and Restaurant Trainers (CHART) and a past President of that organization.

John Nackley, Jr.

John Nackley, Jr., is the Manager of Marketing for MLB Advertising in Wilkes Barre, PA. He is currently working as the marketing manager for Maslow Lumia Bartorillo Advertising, with responsibilities including marketing strategy development and execution, brand strategy, and client management. He works with several prominent foodservice equipment firms, as well as several companies from other industries. A graduate of Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with an MBA in marketing and a BS in Food Marketing, Mr. Nackley finds the foodservice industry to be a dynamic, exciting industry with many challenges and opportunities.

Ken Wasco

Moderator - Ken Wasco of Gordon Food Service. Mr. Wasco has lectured to foodservice/hospitality related majors at Indiana University, the University of Michigan, The Ohio State University, Ohio University, Bowling Green University, Central Michigan University, Michigan State University and other colleges and universities. He has been the keynote speaker for numerous national, regional and state foodservice conferences, including ADA, NACUFS, ARA, DMA, ASHFSA and HFM among others. Mr. Wasco is also the author of "Live Like You Mean It."

Rudy Miick

Breakout Facilitator – Rudy Miick, President Miick & Associates. Mr. Miick since 1978 has focused on successful start-ups, performance improvement in restaurants, hotels and resorts. He holds an MA in Human Resources and Organizational Management and postgraduate certificate in Organization and Systems Design from the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland.