There is no question that this year’s conference will be remarkable! As we count down the days until we meet at Mohegan Sun, here is a glimpse of what the Opening Reception & Silent Auction will entail:

Join SHFM for the Opening Reception and Silent Auction to kick off the 35th Anniversary Celebration! These simultaneous events provide an excellent opportunity to network and connect with industry professionals. The reception has a new element you do not want to miss; the SHFM Scholarship Showdown, a student culinary competition featuring college students that are nominated by their school. In partnership with the SHFM Foundation, this first-time event will bring student chefs to our conference opening.

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The competition is modeled after several popular television series, and will feature Celebrity Chef, Marc Forgione, as one of the judges. Forgione, is a Celebrity Restaurateur, and will be joined by a panel to critique and determine the winner of the SHFM Foundation Scholarship. Chef Jet Tila will serve as the master of ceremonies for the event. Tila is a Culinary Consultant and Media Personality, as well as a host for various functions and a culinary judge.

The Silent Auction serves as an opportunity for conference attendees to Bid High and Bid Often. The auction raises funds to promote and educate college students on the merits of corporate foodservice and workplace hospitality. The SHFM Foundation develops outreach programs to attract the most qualified college students to the industry, so please support this important cause! If you are interested in donating an item, please complete an auction donation form.

If you have not registered yet, please do so here. The anticipation is high, and the networking opportunities promise to be abundant. SHFM and the SHFM Foundation look forward to seeing you there!
UPCOMING EVENTS

FOOD INTEGRITY
WHEN: Wednesday, September 17 | 2:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
WHERE: LinkedIn Headquarters
580 Mary Ave | Sunnyvale, CA 94085

BETTER RUN BUILDINGS – SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS
WHEN: Tuesday, September 23 | 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.
WHERE: Café 300 | 300 N LaSalle St | Chicago, IL 60654

HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN EVERYDAY TERMS AND EVERYDAY PRACTICE
WHEN: Thursday, October 9 | 2:00 – 6:00 p.m.
WHERE: ConocoPhillips | 600 N Dairy Ashford | Houston, TX 77079
The Key Ingredient to Renovation: Programming
By Ivan Weiss, Executive Vice President at elite | studio e

As a design/build firm, one of our most significant challenges is that our clientele are typically not primarily responsible for renovations. This is a function that gets “thrown on top of the pile.” The result is a need to have us, as the experts, lead the process. For many aspects of a renovation, this is fine. We can manage the design of the details, the coordination between contractors, timing of equipment deliveries, and the installation itself.

However, from a design perspective we need the input of the people that live in the space daily. This process, programming, is the key ingredient to a successful renovation. All too often tight deadlines and pressures to put pen to paper force the programming phase to be skipped or accelerated. This phase is what sets a project on the right foot to success or dooms it to failure.

Programming is the all-important exercise of gaining the understanding of the core goals and requirements of the project. Are we aiming to increase sales, improve flow, balance the usage of various culinary stations, or make a cosmetic improvement? How can we support these goals with real target benchmarks and specific examples? Most importantly, what are the consumers, both current and non users telling us? If they are not utilizing the café, why? How do we address their needs and capture them?

Through programming we analyze the sales mix, surveys and questionnaires, as well as physical observation of a typical day from a consumer perspective. We are able to gain a tremendous amount of insight just by watching a meal period and speaking to a few customers about their likes and dislikes. This input turns into things we must improve on post renovation and things we would like to improve.

Programming is a very unique phase because it must remain an active ingredient throughout the duration of a renovation. At the completion of design development we can put our design elements behind us as they have been incorporated into the plans. We can focus on construction details, such as providing power and plumbing to the right components.

This cannot be done without programming. As the project evolves we constantly recheck our programming phase to ensure we are addressing the core values and goals of the project. Are we meeting those needs? With every budget challenge we face, are we cutting and redesigning in the right areas. We may all love that fantastic light fixture, but if a core element of the renovation is customer service and sales generation at the deli have we addressed that first?

On your next project give special attention to the programming phase. Establish a written concept for what needs to be achieved and what is a must have for the project. Along the way, reflect on that and ensure that where you started is still where you are heading. There is no project that will yield a success without a clear direction from the start, the programming phase!
What is the biggest challenge you face in business? How do you manage it?
The biggest challenge is downsizing at several sites and maintaining a level of good service in a P&L environment. We manage it through daily, weekly, and monthly communication of all aspects of the business; from sales, food, and labor cost to current participation. Finally, we conduct 30, 60, and 90 day planning.

You’ve been involved with SHFM since 2001 – what is your favorite aspect of being a member?
I would have to say the sharing of ideas and how others are handling their business in particular scenarios.

Which foodservice/hospitality services do you oversee and how does SHFM help you balance these responsibilities?
I oversee contract feeding through three suppliers at Boeing in the Southern California and Arizona areas. SHFM provides a look into other companies and how they are handling their respective business issues.

What advice would you share with a young professional considering the industry?
It would be that they get involved from the lowest level to the highest to gain as much insight as possible into what happens throughout the business and how the financials get to the end state! You have to know how the business operates so that you can make the right decisions going forward.

What and where was the best meal you ever had?
My wife and I travel around in our fifth wheel trailer and we try a number of small local locations wherever we are either through Guy Fieri books around his DDD adventures, or I will simply ask someone where they go to get the best Mexican, Italian etc. food in their area. Best Mexican outside of California would have to be in Salt Lake City, Utah at the Red Iguana via DDD! Another great location is the Brothers restaurants in Central California Sides Hardware and Shoes in Los Olivos or The Red Barn in Santa Ynez, the later being a little higher-end but both have outstanding food. And I highly recommend them if you’re in the area.
Restaurant traffic held steady for the first half of 2014, while non-commercial outlets showed improvement.

- For the year ending June 2014, overall foodservice softness continued with visits holding steady versus one year ago. Growth within non-commercial channels helped to off-set weakness at full service restaurants and, for the first time in five years, non-commercial outlets outperformed quick service. Full service declines continued for the fifth consecutive year, while visits to quick service held steady after three years of growth.

- Within the non-commercial segment, there were several bright spots. Visits to secondary school and recreation venues increased over one year ago. In addition, lodging occasions grew versus one year ago for the fourth consecutive year. Usage of foodservice at college and university and business and industry held steady. However, not all channels fared well. Hospital foodservice visits dropped off versus last year.

The NPD Group is the industry’s leading source for foodservice trends and restaurant market research data. NPD’s CREST® service, which continually tracks consumers’ use of commercial and non-commercial foodservice, assists foodservice manufacturers, foodservice operators, and other foodservice organizations with strategic planning and positioning, product/menu development, and consumer targeting. For more information visit our website at www.restaurantindustrytrends.com.
It’s All About Efficiency

If you have ever driven on an icy road, you will understand what happens when you stomp on the accelerator and the tires spin madly, but the car doesn’t go very fast or react to your coaxing. This is a good example of inefficiency. The spinning wheels are not doing any work until they get traction, and even then you don’t have positive control over the vehicle.

In the foodservice industry, our patrons determine at what time and how fast we need to react to their demand for our product. Too many in our industry buy the least expensive cooking equipment they think they can get by with. The thinking is that one piece of equipment is just the same as another piece, and if it is out of sight of the customer, it really doesn’t matter. Instead the money is spent on tables, chairs, and dining room ambiance. Why should we spend extra money and purchase efficiency?

Efficiency directly equates to profitability. How can an owner/operator know which pieces of equipment they should purchase? They need to do their homework. Assistance with selection of energy efficient equipment can be obtained from foodservice experts such as Fisher- Nickel, Inc., the research firm that operates the Pacific Gas and Electric’s, Food Service Technology Center.

The Department of Energy has instituted a program called Energy Star™ to help operators select the most efficient cooking equipment. Information on manufacturers and model numbers can be found at the following web site: foodservicetechnologycenter.com/saveenergy/energystar/ Any of the cooking equipment that is Energy Star™ certified will give you the performance you need to compete in a fast paced business like the restaurant business.

To read more of this article, visit the SHFM E-Library & Links.
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