As 2014 comes to a close, we should take time to reflect on the many successes that this year has brought. The tremendous growth that SHFM and its members have seen during the 35th Anniversary year has been remarkable. The educational and networking opportunities have grown more abundant and reached more markets than ever before.

The total membership of SHFM exceeds 600; which is the first time in six years! This is attributed to the value that SHFM members have continued to find in their membership. In 2014, SHFM has seen over 400 members renew their membership. The association’s goal is for each SHFM member to renew and for the association’s membership to grow. This can be made possible by taking the time to renew your membership.

In an effort to recruit more members, we encourage you to share the gift of SHFM with your colleagues, peers, and overall professional network this holiday season. We thank those of you that have been a part of the SHFM family for many years, and appreciate your unwavering support. For those of you that are new to the association, we thank you and hope that you can find a niche within SHFM to become more involved. We look forward to partnering with each of you to increase the value of SHFM in 2015.

Renew your membership online! Click Here.
MEMBER BENEFIT SPOTLIGHT
Promote your products and services to industry decision-makers at noteworthy companies by sponsoring at any of the SHFM events, taking place year-round and across the nation! Contact Director of Sponsorship & Advertising Lorraine Houghton via email, or call her at 502.574.9036 for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS
THE 2015 SOLUTIONS³ CONFERENCE – SEATTLE
WHEN: Friday, January 30  │ 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
WHERE: Microsoft Conference Center  
16070 NE 36th Way │ Redmond, WA 98052

REGISTER NOW   MORE INFO

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!
Keelie Arneson  
Student
Brendan Coffey  
Intel Corporation
Joe Dnistrian  
CBRE – American Express
Sabrina Essex  
Realty USA, Inc.
Jessica Friedel  
Student
Joe Green  
The NPD Group
Candice Wells-Haas  
The Boeing Company
Katarina Haymon  
Student

Connie Kersee  
J.R. Dexter, Inc.
Amanda Lovelady  
Intel Corporation
Bobbie Manchester  
Student
Ted Newman  
Intel Corporation
Lori Rains  
Progressive Insurance
Scott Rothman  
Corporate Coffee Systems
Patrick Staackmann  
Mirkovich-Casper
Louise Tuite  
Epicurean Group

Shayne Varnum  
Hobart-Traulsen
Jeremy Vaughn  
Student
Jean Wahl  
Chrysler
Steven Wells  
American Food & Vending
Rodney Worrell  
Worrell Design Group
JIM WULFORST WILL SERVE AS 2015 SHFM HENNESSEY/MILITARY TRAVELER

Past President Jim Wulforst, will serve as SHFM’s 2015 Hennessey/Military Traveler. Jim carries forth a long tradition of SHFM’s support and encouragement of foodservice hospitality personnel in the U.S. Armed Forces. His travels will begin in early February, and SHFM will document his journey through regular communications with the membership.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Challenges in defense spending are ever present and the SHFM Foundation has once again taken on this important program as one of its initiatives. Corporate support of the program offered at $1000 or more annually, and personal donations in a suggested amount of $500 (amounts may be higher or lower) are also encouraged. Support of the program is completely tax-deductible and all supporters will receive benefits for their participation.

To support this important program, click here for complete support details. Submit your support before December 31st and receive a tax deduction for the 2014 year! We invite all SHFM members, business partners and industry members to “join forces” as we support the Hennessy/Military Traveler Program and the Travelers we send. This is not just a program… it is tangible evidence of our Society’s dedication to providing unmatched hospitality in the workplace, wherever that workplace may be. Thank you in advance for your support!
Bending Over Backwards

By Seth Prager, Assistant Vice President at elite | studio e

If you are in this industry, the industry of hospitality, the industry of pleasing people and making sure that what you are specifying, quoting, and even building, is above and beyond client expectation, then you have certainly heard and lived the phrase “Bending over backwards”. We have all done this and continue to do this as it is what makes us as an industry strive to be better businesses as a whole and as individuals. Even as I write this article for the consultants corner, mind you it is 4:45 a.m. in Manhattan, it is 34 degrees outside and I have just had my first sip of coffee, Bending over backwards is something that I know I have to live by to be successful in this industry of ours.

As we approach the meat of the Holiday season and everyone is gearing up for their much needed vacation; which for people in our industry, on the same side as me, means trying to source readily available equipment so that clients can spend those extra dollars they have before the new year or else they lose it. It is important to stop and smell to roses. It is important whether you, yourself, have a family, are starting a family or just need to stop and recharge your batteries; realize that Bending Over Backwards does not just apply to the business world. It also, very much applies to our loved ones.

I will give you an example. We all know that the NSF guidelines changed for Food Protectors. This means that product is more protected but it also means that with the standard depth of drop-in wells, the product is harder to access and more challenging to display because it has to be dropped down below the flange of the drop-in well. So in the middle of what is shaping out to be the busiest work week of my life, which includes four meetings a day in Manhattan on Monday and Tuesday, flying to Virginia for the day on Wednesday, getting in my car and driving to a University near Syracuse on Thursday, and having four kick-off meetings back in the office on Friday, I have to find solutions to make the product under the new guidelines of NSF Food Protectors more visible and accessible. Not really something I want to do, given my jam packed schedule, but “Bending over backwards” means just that! I will fit it in. I will find a solution. I always do! It makes me who I am and it is what makes my relationship with my clients, not just a client relationship but a true relationship, as they know they can depend on me at the drop of a dime. But make no mistake, I have a 10 Month old at home and no matter where I am or what I am doing, I ALWAYS make sure to be home around 6 p.m. so I can feed him, possibly give him a bath, read him a story and put...
CONSULTANT’S CORNER Continued

him to bed. As much as I want to marinate in my work clothes on my bed and watch National Lampoons Christmas Vacation (it might as well be on repeat in my house given the Holiday Season), I know what is truly important to me and as busy as I am, I hold my Family as my highest priority.

We are in the Holiday season, we are closing all the books, we are inking all of our last minute deals and we are certainly ALL running around like chickens with our heads cut off. Everyone is busy no matter what side of the fence you are on but that doesn’t mean losing sight of what is important. The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little extra. Give that little extra in everything you do especially in our industry but even more importantly in your other life; the life outside of business.

Business is extremely important, I am a very aggressive and driven person, I love running around. I love the feeling I get when my client hugs me and tells me, “thanks.” It is what satisfies me and what makes me want to exceed their expectations for the next time. I give that little extra, I live by these sayings but I also try every day to apply it to my personal life as well. We are in the Holiday Season, it will be Christmas and New Years before we all know it. Spend time with your family, apply that little extra to them, stop and smell the roses and I promise you will be a better person for it! Happy Holidays everyone and I hope that 2015 brings you even more success and satisfaction than 2014. Cheers.

INDUSTRY TRENDS

It’s More About Value, Not Just Price

The world and foodservice-related enterprises like restaurants, manufacturers, and food retailers are changing at an ever-increasing pace. But just as much as many things change, others will remain the same. The fundamental pillars of good business still apply, though they are evolving, bringing new challenges and opportunities to the marketplace. In this fast-paced world, we have to recognize that consumer needs change steadily. Operators and their suppliers must stay in tune with these changes in order to drive their businesses forward.

Value speaks directly to the benefits a product or service can add to a consumer’s life. The key for any operator is to increase average check by providing more value to the end user. Food quality remains the most important value driver when choosing restaurants and should be viewed as a cost of entry. Operators must go further, however, and deliver on customization and fresh ingredients, as these have become important drivers of the value equation, as well.

While focusing on these key factors, operators must take care to not neglect their value offerings or hurry to increase prices. Doing so may result in alienating a portion of an operator’s customer base, especially with the economy improving at a slow pace. To consumers, a bottom-dollar price alone does not a value make.

When is the price right for consumers? When is it not too expensive and not too cheap, but just right? In 2015, operators will need to add more value by offering their customers:

- The ability to customize
- More choices — portion size — right price
- Fresh ingredients
- Different preparation styles
- More focus on food quality

Value is really defined by the consumer, not the “great value” marketing messages. Operators need to provide a balanced value proposition with multiple price options. The bottom line is that operators must develop new and unique ways to create value for current and new customers.

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.
Alison Fearn │ Sr. Vendor Relations Consultant │ MetLife

**You are a relatively new SHFM Member. What do you get out of your involvement?**

There are too many benefits of the group to count. After the first year, I have gleaned many things, wonderful insight from peers, soundboards for upcoming projects, sharing of not only best practices but the current challenges faced in our marketplace. I enjoyed the open forum session at client liaison day. Many were sharing similar challenges within their business along with best practices, and their outlook on the future.

**What were key takeaways for you from this year’s conference?**

The great fellowship aside, knowledge is power and to have such an abundance of knowledge in one room is a tremendous resource. I came back with stacks of notes regarding best practices, business improvement, and goals for not just the upcoming year but the next three. I particularly enjoyed Danny Meyer’s segment. Taking the time, not just to “hear” the customer but listen, truly listen, and the value that has on the business. In the busy day to day of meetings, conference calls, and projects it is too easy to not take the time talk with customers, examine the opportunities within the business and how we can continue to move forward and be better. Additionally an award recipients speech about leaving the door open for the next. For the Society to continue to grow and thrive getting the next generation involved is critical. Those words reminded me of the good fortune I have had over my career, the wonderful managers and clients I had, that took and still do take the time to share and support. Your time is one of the most important things you can give and in the spirit of back to the basics will be a top priority in 2015.

**Which hospitality and foodservice services do you oversee and how does SHFM help you balance these responsibilities?**

Dining Services, Fitness and Mail Centers. Enhancing the customer experience is always the cornerstone of all we do, coupled with fiscal responsibility in executing our services. SHFM provides benchmarks, innovations, and support for dining, which has enabled me to gain synergies with my other responsibilities by challenging our vendors to not only provide similar data, but to constantly raise the bar with our customer’s experience. Customer Centricity is always in the forefront.

As the acquisition and retention of talent becomes increasingly difficult, senior leadership looks to our services to attract and retain talent. The quality of the products and services provided are increasingly being scrutinized for opportunities to attract talent. A grill, deli and a hot line isn’t enough. Knowing your customer is a constant ongoing process as the workplace continues to change and further evolve into collaboration areas.

**Which SHFM event has been your favorite to attend?**

My favorite event(s) are the local ones. Our local Charlotte chapter is a tight knit group. Sharing of best practices, discussion of similar challenges/opportunities, and wonderful sounding board are just a few of the benefits of our local. Kathy Sanders and Marcia Austero, both leaders of our local Charlotte Chapter, have been extremely generous with their time and perspective. Their support over the past year has been a tremendous help as I have acclimated into my current role at MetLife.

MetLife Charlotte had the opportunity to host our local Spring event. The overall experience was rewarding, as was the content of the programming/speaker. We were very fortunate to secure the Emily Scofield, Executive Director of US Green Building Council. Especially in foodservice, we are always looking towards what we can contribute to LEED certification over and above the norm.

**What and where was the best meal you have ever had? (please share some of the experience)**

That’s tough! I’ll go with the most recent great meal: Nightbell in Asheville, NC. Cold Roses Cocktail, rose infused vodka with lavender foam, so good I make it at home. Memorable dishes from the evening, Angels on Horseback fabulously fresh oysters on the half shelf with parmesan foam and pancetta powder were nothing short of phenomenal. Canadian Waffle – waffle topped with Duck Confit, Foie Gras Poutine and Cheddar Mousse, Fondue Grilled Cheese, Seared Scallops with Marrow, and Molten Peanut Praline and Dark Chocolate Cake with Mandarin Orange Sorbet. Overall, it was a fabulous meal with the added bonus of a past associate as the Chef de Cuisine which was a proud moment.
Social Media Update: Defining the Social Media Opportunity for Foodservice Suppliers

By Erik Thoresen

Technomic recently published a white paper on social media opportunities for restaurant organizations. Making the connection between restaurants and social media promotions on sites like Facebook and Twitter is relatively straightforward. However, defining the social media opportunity for foodservice suppliers is a different story.

At consumer-facing organizations like restaurants (both chains and independents) and manufacturers of branded consumer products, the opportunity is clear — social media platforms represent, first and foremost, a new channel to reach consumers. For the foodservice supplier, the opportunities to engage in social media are different. For the supplier, effective social media activities are highly targeted and more refined. Opportunities are framed by:

- **Audience and reach.** Most foodservice suppliers (with the exception of those offering branded beverages) operate primarily in a B2B environment. This means that social media initiatives must be focused on specific user groups, such as chefs, the media or independent restaurant owners, all of whom can help pull products through distribution.

- **Platform and execution.** Blogs and collaborative platforms are more relevant than purely social sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and YouTube — the dominant channels for social media online traffic. While these platforms are consistently ranked as the most powerful social media tools online, foodservice suppliers seek platforms that facilitate a narrower, targeted subscriber base instead of the general public.

The goal of this white paper is to concisely define the current and future impact of social media for foodservice suppliers.

**What Is a Social Media Platform?**

Social media platforms span multiple functions, including:

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Keeping Pace in a Changing Environment

Social media platforms are becoming more than just a consumer engagement mechanism. A recent study by the Association of National Advertisers (ANA) found that 66% of marketers utilized social media in 2009, compared to just 20% of marketers in 2007. The top social media sites being used by companies in 2009 include:

- Facebook 74%
- Twitter 63%
- YouTube 65%
- LinkedIn 60%

With such rapid technological development, the social media platforms that are available to foodservice suppliers are growing in terms of both reach and variety.

Potential uses of social media include:

- Gaining consumer insights. The emergence of social media allows foodservice suppliers to monitor activity at the consumer level in real time and gain qualitative insights about emerging trends and shifts in consumer demand.
- Enhanced communications. Social media platforms can be used as low-cost media for PR and other targeted promotional initiatives.
- Empowering and guiding employees. Providing employees with a voice through social media makes a powerful statement internally — helping your organization engage employees in your business. Balancing this empowerment with clear limitations through well-constructed guidelines will help reduce the associated risks.

The reality is that more and more B2B social media opportunities exist today. Developing expertise and fluency in these major social media platforms is a good first step in developing a social media-aware organization.

Capitalizing on Consumer Insights

Social media platforms provide an up-close look at consumer demand. While foodservice suppliers and other B2B organizations have more limited opportunities to engage in social media than do consumer-facing organizations, the monitoring side is wide-open for gathering competitive intelligence, “listening in” on end-users of your products and learning about changes in the marketplace. Tracking consumer trends through social media platforms can provide significant benefit to R&D groups.

Recent survey data released by TNS and The Conference Board show a substantial 16 percentage point increase in just a year’s time in the proportion of Internet users who visit social media sites. In Q2 2008, 26.7% of U.S. Internet users surveyed said that they visited social media sites; the percentage grew to 42.7% in Q2 2009. Growth across popular social media platforms allows for greater segmentation in the collection of consumer insights. The base of users of major social media sites is changing each day. For example, the fastest-growing group of Facebook members is older adults. The base of 18 to 25-year-olds represents more than a third of users, but has only grown 15% in the past year. In contrast, 26 to 34-year-olds are about a quarter of users, but numbers in this age group have doubled within a year. And older age groups (ages 35 to 65) have seen annual growth rates of 300% to 500% — in part due to their relatively small base.

By mining these consumer insights, suppliers can better serve their national accounts and operators in general. For example, suppliers can gain understanding of emerging consumer demands around topics ranging from emerging flavor profiles to nutrition-related concerns.

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