A BALANCING ACT

As I think about this issue of the Presidents Quarterly, I am honored to serve this Society of industry leaders as your President. I am particularly honored to join such a prestigious group of SHFM Presidents who have shown vision and leadership by evolving our Society as our industry has evolved. SHFM is a reflection of its members, who strive everyday to meet the changing demands of their professional environment.

As we embark on our second year with the “H”, we are finding our balance between the “H” and the “F” much like each of our members do in their everyday work life. Food is and will always be our foundation. We will continue to provide programming that fuels our passion for food, while adding programming that will fuel the natural extension of our food world, workplace hospitality.

Our upcoming Critical Issues Conference will serve as the perfect example of that balance we need to achieve professionally and as a Society. Please watch your inboxes for more information about this event, which will be held on **April 13th in New York City.**

Just as our members work every day to balance the variety of roles they are asked to accomplish on behalf of their companies, SHFM will continue to reflect the professional needs of our members.

Sincerely,

Tony Kaszuba | SHFM President
How has the advent of social media changed your company’s approach to marketing?

The advent of new media overall has been tremendously impactful as we apply these alternative communication vehicles to create new, innovative service experiences.

From tweeting, posting, yammering, and chatting, to simply finding new ways to easily collect guest feedback, we’re utilizing new and social media as a means to extend our ability to offer great customer service.

Social media is quick, relatively low-cost, and offers great flexibility to support constant innovation, however, traditional communications channels still have their place. When matching message to medium, the most important activity is understanding the occasion and consumer and identifying which method most enhances the overall experience. In our business environment today, digital communication is the prevailing channel, and on that front our options are limitless.

Sustainability and environmental responsibility have been prominent within the foodservice industry lately. What are some “green” initiatives at your company?

Within Aramark, our environmental sustainability initiatives are focused on responsible purchasing, green building operations, energy and water conservation and waste management.

For example, in 2008, Aramark made a commitment in partnership with the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch® program to transition all of our seafood purchases in the U.S. to sustainable sources by 2018. To date, 74% of our frozen finfish purchases meet the Seafood Watch® “Best Choice” and “Good Alternative” recommendations. Through such progress, we’re able to drive responsible purchasing, while minimizing impact on the environment and fisheries.

We have also made a commitment to eliminate all pork from animals bred using gestation crates in our U.S. supply chain by 2017 and as of January 1, we are sourcing all shell eggs in the United States from cage-free hens.

At Aramark, we’re committed to minimizing waste and follow the adage ‘refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle’ — a simple way to remember what to do first, what to do next and in which order.

Through these and many other programs, Aramark is helping to transition the industry toward environmentally sustainable practices.
Where do you see the most opportunity to grow the industry?

Among the business dining sector, I see significant opportunity to compete strongly with fast-casual to drive base growth. For years on-site cafés have relied on convenience as a main traffic driver, however, the future holds higher share of stomach and spend rates as more of the on-site providers have become retailers with prowess.

From scratch cooking, custom restaurants, food trucks and retail outlets to partnerships with top restaurants and celebrity chefs, the industry is improving service levels to become competitive at a very high level.

I also see opportunity for greater on-site capture between various points of service, such as catering, fast-casual style cafes and smaller retail outlets which are conveniently located across a business campus.

What do you consider to be the most valuable part of doing business with Aramark for your customers?

Our customers often tell us that it is our focus on everyday innovation which distinguishes the experience we deliver. It is our promise not only to the marketplace, but to each-other, that we hire, train, inspire and reward everyday innovation, which translates into exceptional service.

Please share a story about your early foodservice career that still serves you well today.

Early in my career, I was fortunate to learn that investing in the right team and creating a culture of accountability, courage, and recognition makes for exceptional outcomes.

The team I invest in as a leader in many ways defines the experience our customers will have with us.

So if there is one most important thing that continues to serve me well, it is remembering to recognize those innovation super-stars that may go otherwise unnoticed, the everyday service hero, and the leaders-in-training which make up the fabric of our real, everyday customer service.

Frank Kiely | President, Business Dining | Aramark
What are your goals as the Executive Vice President for NAFEM?

Our headquarters team goal is to deliver a value to our members every day for their membership and engagement in the association. Whether that includes providing access to information and industry data; developing and implementing programs and services that help them in their day-to-day business; collaborating with other organizations in the foodservice industry to foster innovation and progress; or serving as their industry voice and advocating on their behalf; we strive to exceed members’ needs.

Are there any new benefits or features your association has introduced lately?

NAFEM has taken a much more aggressive role with federal legislators and regulatory agencies on new and pending regulatory changes that impact the way foodservice equipment and supplies are manufactured. We see many more opportunities to provide information that can shape how the regulatory world will change in the next decade. We’ve entered to very unique kinds of partnerships – with the Culinary Institute of America Institute and the New Orleans Culinary & Hospitality Institute to showcase NAFEM-member products in teaching kitchens, and the role of equipment and supplies in culinary and foodservice curriculums. The opportunities for collaboration are endless.

What is a common challenge within your industry?

One of the biggest challenges our industry faces — like many others — is recruiting talent to all facet of the operation — sales, operations, engineering, human resources, financial management, customer service, IT, quality assurance, and more. NAFEM is busy developing a campaign to educate those entering the workforce on what the hospitality/foodservice work is all about, and the wealth of opportunities worldwide in this dynamic, high-energy business.

What legacy would you like to leave from being NAFEM’s Executive Vice President?

I would like NAFEM (and its members) to be recognized as an organization that equips the world to provide the best food-away-from-home experience.

What is one key take-a-way you hope to have from your position with NAFEM?

My one take-away is to never stop learning... and always be in a position to learn from my members, and the industry, every day. If you’re learning, you’re growing!

What is the best meal you’ve ever eaten?

That’s a really tough question. One of the luxuries of working with NAFEM is the opportunity to experience some amazing meals, created by the most innovative of culinary professionals. But sometimes, it all comes down to comfort food, so I’d have to say it’s not a meal as much as an item — the onion rings at Chick’s Drive-In, or a slice of “a pizza,” as we call it, from Zuppardi’s. Both are in scenic West Haven, Connecticut.
In what ways had the association grown/stayed consistent since your Presidency?

I’m embarrassed to say that I’ve not been nearly as active with SHFM as I should have been since my Presidency in 2005. The good news is that there have been several President’s that have followed me; all of which I know put their hearts and souls into the organization during their tenures. I know membership has been up and down but that’s only due to the economic climate liaisons are faced with since my tenure. It’s a great organization and having key female industry leaders take the Presidential helm has only made the organization better and stronger.

What do you see as the biggest challenge facing client liaisons in today’s business climate?

Pure economics. Big and small companies don’t always see the benefits of membership the way members do. I think all current members need to do a better job of “managing up” to their bosses by inviting them to conferences (both regional and national) so they see firsthand how powerful the networking and relationships built during at those events will help the liaison and company as a whole. Keeping a liaison’s exposure limited to phone calls, websites and magazines is reckless and will lead to a stale dining program. Everything I’ve initiated in the hospitality roles I’ve held have been based on other liaison’s ideas and execution of those ideas. It’s critical for liaison’s to benchmark other operators programs and to see them first hand. So to answer your question, the biggest challenge for liaisons is to get funding approved for membership, for national and regional conferences and most importantly, have the opportunity to step “out of your back yard” and visit other liaisons that are not your neighbors. The best food trends start on the West Coast and migrate East... and I’m not just talking about going to California!

Looking back, is there anything you would have done differently?

I would have stayed closer to being involved in the operation of the Board after my Presidency. I was just burned out and had key challenges with my leaders at Duke who stifled me. There were many years I was not able to attend conferences or do benchmarking and that just killed me. I should have taken personal time to do so and used personal funds so I could maintain my drive and knowledge of what was happening outside Duke. I regret not doing so.

How has your involvement with SHFM helped you professionally?

No question. Serving on the board and then becoming President had many benefits; most of which were relationships I forged with other industry professionals. There are folks like Kent Bain, Tom Newcomb, Kathy Sanders, Russ Benson and Ron Ehrhardt that if asked would do anything for me. You can’t place a value on those relationships; they are very special.

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How has your professional role change since your 2004-2005 year of Presidency?

With leadership changes, I was forced to retire from Duke in 2011 at 58 years of age and 15 years of service. I never thought I’d have to start over again looking for a job. The opportunity with Coca-Cola came along at a great time yet commuting to Atlanta while my family stayed behind took its toll on me. I make half the pay I used to but am home every night with my wife and kids... and at 61 years of age I’m not looking to work 100 hours a week for someone that doesn’t appreciate me and what I bring to the table in the way of experience. My consulting role provides a meaningful way for me to stay in the industry and pick and choose who I want to work with/work for. Of course pay is important, but I’m more inclined to do things that allow me to “give back” to the industry for less pay and less stress. Working for someone that appreciates you is more of a reward than most people realize!

What is your most fond memory from that year?

SHFM’s annual conference was supposed to take place in New Orleans yet Hurricane Katrina beat us to the punch. Without pause, SHFM’s organization leadership (Tony and Peg) took charge and moved the conference to Miami, Florida. Two days into the conference the National weather service broadcasted that another hurricane was going to hit the Florida Coastline; yet most of the hundreds of folks that came to Miami refused to leave. I had the honor of recognizing Tom Lackman for his distinguished service to SHFM for the 25+ years he was a member by giving the award to his sons, since Tom had died shortly before that conference. It was a touching opportunity for me to do that. Once the award was presented...most people then left the conference IF they could book a flight or rent a car to “get out of dodge.” We stayed behind and enjoyed the Presidential Suite with a number of SHFM members that still talk about the evening we faced the hurricane head on while on the top floor of the hotel. Now people refer to me as the past SHFM President (without the “H”) citing me as the President where Storms Follow ME! Worth a good chuckle; no?

Jim Wulforst | Industry Consultant

UPCOMING EVENTS

CRITICAL ISSUES CONFERENCE
Monday, April 13th
Convene — NYC, NY

SAVE THE DATE!

SHFM LOCAL BOSTON
Thursday, September 17th
Boston, MA