

PRESIDENTS QUARTERLY

The Crossroads of Conversation in the Industry



THE KEYWORD IS GROWTH

“If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant.” — *Ann Bradstreet*

I saw this quote the other day and thought, “After the winter many of us had, this spring is going to be more than pleasant!”

Ah, spring — you hear it all the time, spring means new birth, growth. It’s corny, but, as I thought about it on my commute home, growth is what it’s all about. And nowhere is that more evident than at SHFM.



Your Board, committee volunteers, and staff have been working hard not only to maintain the health of your professional organization but to continue growing the Society, making it more than ever your essential resource for networking and professional development.

In the last few years the overall membership has grown approximately 20 percent, with growth in every membership category. This is especially true in our client liaison and self operator segments, which are up significantly from a few years ago.

We have been working the strategic plan, bringing you more Locals in new markets across the country. We chose a few cities to test market the client liaison/self-operator round tables which have always been a huge success at our conferences. Our recent Critical Issues Conference surpassed the goals for attendance and sponsorship, and it was a success from an educational content and networking point of view.

We have enhanced the content of the E-library and links as we work to bring you more diverse industry education. We continue to incorporate the “H” into our Society, with our eye never leaving our core of Foodservice. We continue to refine this important balance in order to best serve the ever evolving needs of our membership.

It is a pleasure serving as your President during this exceptional time in our history. The credit for this amazing growth goes to so many, from your Board of Directors, to Past Presidents, and to the dedicated volunteers who serve on our committees. But, the most credit goes to our loyal members, who see value everyday in the benefits offered through this one of a kind network of professionals.

Enjoy your spring, you deserve it, and I look forward to seeing you at an SHFM event soon.

Tony Kaszuba | SHFM President

What do you think creates the greatest challenge to our industry?

The biggest challenge, I feel, is our labor pool. We have amazing associates and we are forever raising the bar on our food and service. Our great clients drive us to be better and we continue to deliver through our great team. However, filling the labor pool continues to be a challenge—especially in certain markets. We are nothing without our great people.

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

Serving sustainable seafood is a large initiative for us. Eurest serves 93% sustainable seafood and we just pledged to have 100% of our contracted skipjack tuna be FAD-Free. Another big initiative for us is Imperfectly Delicious Produce. We are buying slightly misshapen, or slightly smaller than the norm produce that otherwise taste perfectly fine. This produce would usually be thrown away and wasted.

How has your company incorporated environmental responsibility within recent years?

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) is a worker-based human rights organization internationally recognized for its achievements in the fields of social responsibility, human trafficking, and gender-based violence at work. In 2010, the CIW signed a groundbreaking agreement with the Florida Tomato Growers Exchange to put in place a strict code of conduct, a health and safety program, as well as other systems to over 90% of the Florida tomato industry. In 2009, Compass Group announced a partnership with CIW. As part of the agreement, Compass has agreed to pay an additional 1.5 cents per pound for the tomatoes we purchase in Florida annually. One cent per pound is passed from the supplier to the harvesters. We also signed a ‘Code of Conduct’ designed to improve working conditions and give harvesters the opportunity to advance beyond field work.

Where do you see the most opportunity to grow our industry?

The landscape is forever changing and we constantly strive to be cutting-edge in a very competitive retail marketplace. Breakfast is always an opportunity for growth, but another huge opportunity is catering and events. These give us the chance to bring our great chefs and passion out of the cafés and into the meeting spaces to drive quality, fresh, sustainable food programs.

Eating cleaner and educating our customers nationwide should always be top-of-mind; our industry will grow if we remain cutting-edge.

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

My philosophy is, “Food first, keep it fresh, keep it simple, and less is more.” When I was training with the Roux Brothers in their Michelin starred London restaurants and contract foodservice, I learned that bringing that quality from Michelin star training is always hard to do. When I first started I would see all these dishes and had no clue what any of them were. But, I was a great artist so I would draw everything I saw and tasted, knowing one day I would know what they were or how to cook them. [I still have those drawings.](#)

During my time in Holland at the Grand, I started drawing everything again. And then again for my chefs at the restaurant — and still today, I do that for event layouts, station concepts and recipes. J&W did a museum exhibit on me and displayed some of those drawings—that was a great honor. Visual aids for my chefs serve me well today and will continue to do so. I could tell you lots of horror stories but went with a nice one.



What are your goals as the President for AHF?

I have two main goals for this year. The first goal is to ensure that each of our conference attendees has a number of takeaways from attending our national conference. I want our conference to deliver the most value possible to our members and for them to leave with hands-on tools which they can implement in their facilities the moment they get home.

My second goal is to reach out to younger potential members. We are doing this in a number of ways. We are conducting focus groups to determine what benefits are most important to this upcoming group, as well as how AHF can communicate more effectively with the younger demographic, especially the Millennials who are entering the work force.



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

AHF has so many wonderful benefits for our members. We have worked diligently since our inception to provide exceptional tools that have practical application and that improve not only our individual members but also the industry as a whole. If I were to pick one benefit, it would be our benchmarking program. AHF's Benchmarking EXPRESS™ Program allows our members to instantly compare their operation to other like facilities across the country, with the ability to compare your facility using a number of data points to truly make the practice of continuous improvement a reality.

What is a common challenge within your industry?

The Healthcare industry is in transition and there are many challenges that lie ahead. I think the most daunting is the unknown. How does Healthcare Foodservice shape their services to assist with Value Based Purchasing initiatives and Population Health? The end result is declining reimbursement and patient volumes so it will be imperative to be on the forefront of change. It will be imperative that operators work more efficiently to drive down cost and increase value.

What legacy would you like to leave from being AHF's President?

I would like to leave AHF as a nimble, growing organization which reflects the ever changing needs of our membership. I would like to set a path for a future organization that can easily evolve to meet the many challenges of the healthcare industry. We are a strong association today and I believe the strategic goals we have in place will only grow our association and our position in the industry.

What is the best meal you've ever eaten?

Although I don't eat a lot of red meat these days, I love a good steak. My three favorite restaurants for getting an excellent filet are Southern Hills Country Club and Mahogany Steakhouse in Tulsa and Michael Jordan Steakhouse in Chicago.

Lisette Coston, MBA, RD/LD | President | Association for Healthcare Foodservice (AHF)

SHFM INSIGHT: JAY B. SILVERSTEIN
HEAD OF HOSPITALITY SERVICES — AMERICAS | CREDIT SUISSE

What do you see as the biggest challenge facing corporate foodservice and workplace hospitality in today's business climate?

Years ago, companies promoted on-site food service as a big employee benefit and supported that idea with very large subsidies. Throughout the years, although companies still see on-site food service as an employee benefit, the appetite to subsidize the operations have all but gone away in most industry segments. Although the subsidies have gone away, employees still expect on-site food service operations to provide lower pricing that they can buy comparable items on the street, which makes for a very challenging activity for both the client liaisons and the operators. Additionally, the customer of today has a much higher level of food knowledge and expectation. Food must not only be good, but must remain true to its native culture. Today's customers not only expect to be fed, they also want to stimulate their taste buds with their own personal mandates on social responsibility and healthier lifestyles. Because they wear so many more hats, today's liaison is not only expected to be an expert on foodservice, but also on overall hospitality. They are running conference centers and all of the ancillary services associated with them, as well as many other related services like reception, fitness, and medical centers.



In what ways has the association grown/stayed consistent since your Presidency?

SHFM has grown in so many ways since my Presidency. Although we never left the roots of our true core DNA of an organization – food, we have expanded to truly reflect the state of on-site food services by covering all aspects of hospitality. Our members today are so much more demanding of quality programming to feed their own personal needs and expand their knowledge. One of the things that has remained a solid aspect of the association is the idea of providing the opportunity for networking and the exchange of ideas across all levels of the industry.

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

I think I gave it my all while I was President. It is a very time consuming job if you want to do it right. I spent a lot of time on the phone over the course of that year with the FSA team, trying to stay on top of everything that was happening within the organization. Membership was a big issue as it was on the decline. So, thinking back, maybe that was something I would focus more time on if I went back.

How has your professional role changed since your 2002 – 2003 year of Presidency?

Not much has changed in my professional role at CS since back then, except I am working many more hours today than I did previously. Corporate culture has changed and the amount of meetings that need to be attended are so much greater, that time at my desk to physically do the work has been added on before and after normal business hours. As a result of being President of SHFM (SFM in those days) my involvement in the industry outside on-site foodservice has widened. I have the opportunity to be on the board of the culinary High School within the county that I live in, it is very rewarding to work with young people just starting out on their journey. Additionally, last year I was the SHFM Military Traveler, I spent 6 weeks with the U.S. Marines evaluating for the WPT Hill Award.

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What is your most fond memory from that year?

There are just so many memories. All of the people that I got to know and have developed strong relationships with. The memory that stands out the most for me was at the President's dinner when I accepted the gavel. All three of my boys attended, along with Kim and my mom and dad. The boys were very young at the time. Without me knowing, they arranged to get on stage and each one spoke about me. Still to this day, it brings tears to my eyes. What my boys did was expose what I am truly about - family and caring for people. The people within SHFM are truly like my family and I would go to the ends of the earth for them when needed. I will never forget the opportunity to be President of this organization which has always been so near and dear to me.

Jay B. Silverstein | Head of Hospitality Services – Americas | Credit Suisse

UPCOMING EVENTS

2015 NRA NETWORKING BREAKFAST

Monday, May 18

JPMorgan Chase | Chicago, IL

[REGISTER NOW](#)

SHFM LOCAL WASHINGTON D.C.

Tuesday, June 9

Kennedy Center | Washington D.C.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

SHFM LOCAL CHARLOTTE

Thursday, June 11

MetLife | Charlotte, NC

[REGISTER NOW](#)

SHFM FOUNDATION GOLF TOURNAMENT

Monday, June 22nd

Elmwood Country Club | White Plains, NY

[MORE INFO](#)

[REGISTER NOW](#)

SAVE THE DATE

SHFM LOCAL TEXAS

Thursday, August 20

Ecolab | Irving, TX

SHFM LOCAL BOSTON

Thursday, September 17

One Channel Center | Boston, MA

SHFM NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Wednesday October 28-30

Hyatt Regency | New Orleans, LA

SHFM LOCAL CALIFORNIA

Wednesday, November 11

San Francisco, CA