

# PRESIDENTS QUARTERLY

*The Crossroads of Conversation in the Industry*



SOCIETY FOR FOODSERVICE MANAGEMENT  
Onsite Dining Experts



## What an exciting time to be President of SFM!

So much is happening this summer. We are building up to an incredible conference in Bonita Springs, Florida — at a tropical, beautiful, intimate resort property that is absolutely perfect for our group. When SFM is there, we will have almost the entire resort to ourselves — ideal for the networking and camaraderie our association is known for. Some of you have already seen our conference website and my personal invitations to join the conference, which I filmed while our leadership was in Florida earlier this year. Check it out on a regular basis as it is continually changing. We had a fun time making the videos. I hope you enjoy them. Don't forget to register early and pass the word on to your colleagues. We want to blow all previous attendance records out of the water!

This is the SFM conference you simply cannot miss. We are not only unveiling a new logo and direction for our Society. We're offering an expanded program that is packed with all new learning opportunities. Our Client Liaison and Self-Operator Day is filled with the focused topics that matter most to this member segment, plus opportunities to network with key vendors and suppliers in a relaxed setting. We have a five-star lineup of guest chefs and presenters, many of whom are internationally acclaimed (including an al fresco evening prepared for SFM by none other than Florida's own, Chef Michelle Bernstein!)

The resort is a beautiful setting for a truly historic conference. We continue to make progress on evolving and expanding our association to include all facets of workplace hospitality. As you know, the Big "H" — Hospitality — plays a huge role in the job responsibilities that used to be focused exclusively on foodservice. And while foodservice will always remain our core focus, the expanded emphasis on hospitality in programming and industry influence (in areas like employee health and wellness, catering, vending, fitness and childcare) are a welcome addition to the broader duties SFM's members oversee.

On that topic, I am extremely pleased to announce our new strategic partnership with the International Association of Conference Centres (IACC). We have forged a commitment to join forces, combining our respective industry-leading specialist knowledge to benefit both groups.

In a recent press release, Mark Cooper, IACC's CEO, commented "We are delighted to create this formal partnership with SFM. From our very first discussions with Mark Freeman, President of SFM, and his leadership team, we felt there was clear mutual benefit to collaborating in future research and educational projects. In combining our expertise on the Meetings Experience and SFM's knowledge related to trends and innovation in the foodservice industry, we are confident that we will each produce greater benefits for our members as a result."

IACC leaders will join our lineup of speakers at the conference this fall, raising awareness of IACC and its best practices to our Client Liaison members who manage conference facilities.

So much is happening, and so much is in store... hope you feel the momentum! In the meantime, enjoy this issue and look forward to Florida — I'll see you there!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Freeman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Freeman | President



### *How has the advent of social media changed your company's approach to marketing?*

Social media has provided us with new, creative opportunities to connect and interact with our customers. Whether we use Instagram to showcase our chef's food or use Twitter to do a flash deal or instant value offer in one of our cafés, social media platforms enable us to have a more direct conversation with our guests. We can adapt our messages instantaneously and target offers based on the specific needs of the business. The key is to start by truly understanding the business objective as it relates to social media and build a digital plan that aligns with our overall marketing strategy.

### *How has your company incorporated environmental responsibility within recent years?*

We've continued to expand our legacy initiatives, working to move our supply chain towards more responsible practices. One example is our work with aquaculture industry to transition away from unsustainable operational methods, which allowed Compass to transition close to 950,000 lbs annually from Seafood Watch's Avoid rating to a Good Alternative. Our commitment to support small and midsize farmers continued to grow. In 2012, we purchased over \$29M with American family farmers, which we see as an important contribution to their economic viability.

The key focus however, has been the development of a robust business solution to clients who are interested in mitigating the carbon footprint of their foodservice operations. Our Carbon Footprint™ Toolkit is a unique web-based tool designed to allow our operators to create customized strategies to reduce their carbon footprint by decreasing waste disposal, energy and water use as well as addressing menuing strategies that will help to lower ghg emissions. The tool is designed to benchmark and measure the improvements using a dashboard and calculations that are based in strong, verifiable science.

### *What do you think is the greatest challenge for our industry?*

I believe one of the biggest challenges for our industry is preparing our managers to be better equipped to cope with the ever-changing business landscape in onsite foodservice. It has certainly come a long way since my days as a manager where my only tool was a clipboard, paper and pencil. The demands and compression on the business are extreme at times. It's our responsibility as leaders to better prepare our managers and associates to excel in the new landscape and environment. The great news for our people is that with the right tools, education and "total ownership" mindset, there continues to be tremendous opportunity to grow in this business.

### *Where lies the greatest opportunity for onsite foodservice?*

Our greatest opportunity is delivering solutions that resonate with the Millennial generation (those born 1980 to 2001) and Gen Z (those born after 2001). Their need to be "always on" and connected; tendencies toward collective optimism and transparency; expectations of holistic wellness – good for me, good for community and good for the planet; and desire for personalization, extreme customization and personal validation need to be key considerations as we develop strategies and solutions for the future.

Both Millennial and Gen Z lifestyles, behaviors, need states and reliance on technology have a tremendous influence on our business and it's imperative that we truly understand the values of these generations in order to develop business solutions that engage and appeal to customers of today and tomorrow.

### *What is a good story about your early foodservice career that still serves you well today?*

I remember two lessons when I first started out as a once very young onsite foodservice manager (too many years ago to remember)!

The first came from my former District Manager (DM) – and I will always vividly remember that day because I always take everything to heart. It was a Friday afternoon and unfortunately after many tries to win over a very difficult customer, I felt very battered and discouraged and knew the situation would bother me the entire weekend. As I was on my way out the door, I bumped into my DM who noticed I was very down on myself. He then wrote down on a paper napkin a simple phrase which I have never forgotten, "Those who make you angry have already won!" He then said, "Have a great weekend." Those words put an immediate smile to my face and I never forget them! I still use that expression today and I do still have that napkin!

The second lesson is short and simple, yet very powerful. It came from my Mom who always reminded me, "Treat people the way you want to be treated no matter what level you are currently at. You never know what part of the ladder you will be on in the future!"

Lastly, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention how important SFM has played a role in my career along the way as I still remember my first SFM conference in Boston many years ago. Richard Ysmael was president at the time and I was so inspired by him and the many people I met along the way that I am more engaged today with SFM than ever before! Don't ever underestimate the power of networking!

**Rick Postiglione | President & CEO, Contracted Foodservice | Compass Group, NAD**



### *What is your goal for the IACC over the next couple of years?*

Our goal is to increase value to our members over the coming years, regardless of where they are in the world. We have members in the Americas, across Europe, in Asia and Australia.

We want IACC to be the association of choice for anybody running a conference and training venue who wants to provide the very best Meetings Experience they possibly can. We expect to grow our learning and develop a member accreditation program, expand upon our trends and research activity. We expect to grow our membership as a result of this activity.

### *What are the newest benefits for your IACC members?*

Our members are seeing IACC take responsibility in the marketplace for generating greater awareness to Meeting Planners and raising the profile of our association globally and the status that comes with being an IACC-certified conference venue. As part of the IACC Institute, members can expect to see new educational content delivered through the events we run and new online educational delivery in the coming months as the Global Education Committee creates conference venue specific programs for our members.

### *What is a common challenge for conference centers?*

Meeting the continually changing expectations of meeting delegates has to be one of the greatest challenges our members face. I often hear it is a key reason why IACC's members value being part of IACC so highly. We continually strive to be the thought leader on the Meetings Experience by researching the market and client expectations. We deliver this knowledge to our members to allow them to develop their meeting spaces and services accordingly.

A key requirement of managing conference and meeting facilities is to create environments that inspire delegates. These delegates are both well travelled and also have high expectations when it comes to the services they must have at their fingertips (for example technology and WiFi bandwidth) in their meeting and social environments.

Where you operate a corporate or commercial conference or training venue, the learning environment you create has an effect on the quality and return on the investment for that event.

Clients want food and beverage offerings to suit their mood and their timetable, as well as accommodation of a standard they are used to when they travel the world! Expectations have never been higher!

### *What legacy would you like to leave from being IACC's CEO?*

Some 8 months into the position as full-time CEO, this is the first time I have been asked about my legacy! As CEO, I know that to achieve our goals we need to continually be seen to be representing our members' interests as strongly as possible in our industry. That needs a full program of activities and a committed group of board members, committees, ambassadors and staff playing a vital part. It is my intention to support a strong and passionate group of stakeholders that deliver great results for IACC and gain the just rewards in return for their efforts.

Through these efforts, we can foster the relations of our global membership, constantly learning from one another, wherever we are in the world!

### *What is the best meal you've ever eaten?*

The best meal I have ever had was a fantastic Mediterranean fish platter served at a restaurant I cannot remember the name of, to our outside table overlooking the harbor in the beautiful town of Sitges, Barcelona. I was with my IACC colleagues from our Global Board who had travelled from all around the world to be together. You could taste the salt of the sea in the air and the fish was the freshest I have ever experienced, served in a non-pretentious way by staff that were extremely proud of their restaurant and the food they served.

The fact of the matter being, like so many of my colleagues in the hospitality industry, I have been fortunate enough to enjoy many great culinary experiences. Each of them had their moment and their sense signature; the warm breezes of a Catalan evening help, of course, to make it a truly complete experience and one you remember forever. Then there are the people. I remember each meal not just because of how it tasted but also because of who was there; family, colleagues and friends I shared that moment with. That's really what makes a truly great meal, isn't it?!

Mark Cooper | CEO | International Association of Conference Centres



*What do you see as the biggest challenge for SFM as it becomes SHFM?*

There are a few challenges as we move into this next phase. The first challenge would be to keep with the core value of foodservice while broadening our reach to help increase the value to our Client Liaison membership base. The Client Liaison and Self-Operator roles have changed but foodservice will still be our primary focus.

The second challenge focuses around being able to keep the intimate nature of SFM intact. One of the benefits of being a member is how approachable we are as a group. Part of that is based on the smaller, more intimate size of our association. As we grow, we need to make sure we keep that welcoming feel for all members.

*SFM is a truly special organization. What makes it special for you?*

The friendships I have made at SFM over the past 9 years. There is something so welcoming about SFM; I view the members more as my family than an association.

*How has your involvement with SFM helped you professionally?*

I could fill this entire newsletter with ways SFM has helped me professionally. From great educational sessions, to the broad network of industry leaders I have built, to the leadership skills they have helped me acquire. SFM gives everyone the opportunity to become better at their jobs. You just need to get involved and let the association do what it does best!

*Is there anything you would have done differently last year?*

I try not to second guess choices I have made, but the perfectionist in me always wants to accomplish more. I would have liked to meet more people; either new members, or members that have been part of SFM for years that I just hadn't had the chance to meet. That's what this association is all about – Networking!

*What is your most fond memory from that year?*

Wow, that's a tough question. There were so many wonderful things that happened during my term, but if I have to pick one, it would be surprising Tony Butler with the President's Award. So much of our success last year was based on the ability to execute a number of changes at SFM. Tony and his team made it seem seamless to members, which truly helped us become a better association.

**Barbara Kane | Vice President, Industry Relations | Ecolab Inc.**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### 2013 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Monday, September 30 – Wednesday, October 2  
Bonita Springs, FL

### SFM LOCAL – BOSTON

Monday, October 21  
Framingham, MA



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