

# SESSION FOUR

LATE NIGHT WITH SHFM

# KEY TAKE-AWAYS



# SESSION FOUR: LATE NIGHT WITH SHFM

## LESSONS I'VE LEARNED ABOUT INNOVATION THAT YOU MAY FIND USEFUL:

Our team lives and breathes the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship, driven by a passion not just for commercial success, but for the well-being of people and the planet.

Over the years, we've gleaned invaluable lessons about how to extract real value from innovation—and the critical questions to consider before diving in headfirst. Innovation can certainly be thrilling, but all too often, the allure of the “shiny new toy” fades, revealing a flash of brilliance that quickly fizzles out.

First and foremost, any innovation must fundamentally contribute to creating exceptional food experiences that make people feel good. If it meets that standard, we then evaluate it through the following lenses:

1. **Relevance:** Does this address a genuine business need or a critical issue?
2. **Scalability:** Is there potential for widespread adoption? Implementing innovation is usually a significant undertaking, and if it's only applicable to a small percentage of locations, it may not justify the effort.
3. **Economic Viability:** Does the economic model make sense? Does it require significant capital investment or infrastructure changes? How will it impact costs for clients or consumers, and will they perceive its value?
4. **Experience:** Does it enhance the experience for operators, guests, and clients?
5. **Core Values:** Does it align with our core values of food and hospitality?

Finally, we've discovered that the most impactful innovations often come from our operators and field teams, rather than from top-down initiatives. This speaks volumes about the talent and creativity within our organization!

### Lessons I've Learned in Life (that you may find useful):

- Always be curious and open-minded, while cautiously optimistic.
- Treat everyone you meet with kindness and respect.
- Lead with empathy, good intentions, and a clear sense of purpose.
- Don't waste time—or food!
- As a leader, be relatable and approachable.
- Oftentimes, big things start small.
- The timing and sequence of your actions and conversations can determine your success.
- Simplify, simplify, simplify—make it easy and the probability of success increases exponentially.
- Focus on what you can control, and let go of the rest. (Easily said, not done!)
- Being a Cleveland Browns fan constantly tests your loyalty and builds resilience.

## A PARTING THOUGHT FOR CONFERENCE DELEGATES

Given our collective scale, recognize the positive impact that we can make in the industry and food system – and commit to do your part.



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## BOOKS/PODCASTS/INSPIRATION

### Books:

*The Leadership Challenge (Kouzes & Posner)*

*Power of Positive Leadership (Gordon)*

*Dare to Serve (Bachelor)*

*O Great One (novak)*

*Moments of Truth (Carlszon) Old book, but good message*

*A Complaint is a Gift (Barlow, Moller)*

*Multipliers (Wiseman)*

### Podcasts I follow:

Diary of a CEO

Mel Robbins

Happiness Lab



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## BRIEF

The meeting notes from "Late Night with SHFM" on September 11, 2024, cover a wide range of topics including career paths, mentorship, work-life balance, purpose and job satisfaction, future trends in onsite food service, industry challenges, and opportunities. The discussions also delve into loyalty programs, sustainability, lab-grown meat, tipping in the hospitality industry, workplace innovations, diversity and inclusion, and advice for future leaders. Key action items and takeaways are highlighted to provide a comprehensive overview of the major decisions and outcomes.

## INTRODUCTION

### Host:

Amelia Ekus

### Panelists:

Susie Weintraub, Chief Executive Officer, Envision Group at Compass Group USA

Heather Schlesinger, Vice President of Marketing for Workplace and Corporate Services Food, Sodexo

Ellen Wilson, Chief Growth Officer, Aramark Workplace Experience, Oregon

Kimberly Weinstock, Chief Executive Officer, Envision Group and Thomas Group, USA

## OPENING REMARKS

- Amelia Ekus emphasized the importance of the food service industry in nourishing millions daily.
- Mentioned the unique paths and leadership approaches of the panelists.



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## PANEL DISCUSSION

### Career Paths and Leadership

#### Ellen Wilson's Journey

Role: Chief Growth Officer, Aramark Workplace Experience Group

#### Career Path:

- 17 years at Aramark across multiple lines of business (healthcare, higher education, workplace experience).
- Faced a challenging role with high failure risk but learned to take risks and be comfortable with failure.
- Emphasized the importance of surrounding oneself with a good team and making necessary changes.

#### Key Takeaways:

- Importance of taking risks and being uncomfortable with failure.
- Need for a positive perspective during restructuring.
- Influence of collective work on the industry and food system.

### Anne's Risk Navigation

Role: Chief Operating Officer, Kuggenheimer

#### Career Path:

- Early leadership experience in high school.
- Took significant career risks, such as accepting a VP role while managing personal responsibilities.

#### Key Takeaways:

- Evaluating and embracing risk is crucial.
- Importance of a supportive system and taking leaps of faith.

### Heather's External Obstacles

Role: Vice President of Marketing Workplace Experience and Corporate Services, Sodexo

#### Career Path:

- Faced external skepticism and bias as a young mother and first female leader in her organization.
- Overcame adversity through hard work, preparation, and support from a mentor.

#### Key Takeaways:

- Importance of mentorship and support.
- Overcoming bias with facts and perseverance.



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## PANEL DISCUSSION

### Mentorship and Work-Life Balance

#### Ellen Wilson's Mentorship Approach

##### Mentorship:

- Mentors individuals at various levels and learns from mentees.
- Encourages everyone to mentor others.

##### Work-Life Balance:

- Practices "puddle time" for personal reflection and setting daily intentions.
- Encourages team to set boundaries, such as not sending emails on weekends.
- Emphasizes the importance of recharging and maintaining balance.

## MENTORING AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Informal Mentoring

- Mentoring Inspiration: Emphasized the importance of informal mentoring. "Any interaction, whether it's within your organization or with a client, can be a mentoring moment."
- Personal Experience: Shared personal experiences of having multiple mentors across the company and industry, rather than a formal mentor.
- Team Inspiration: Highlighted how team members can be a source of inspiration and learning.

### Personal Board of Directors

- Concept: Introduced the idea of having a "personal board of directors" or a "care team" which includes mentors, therapists, acupuncturists, etc.
- Diversity in Support: Stressed the importance of having a diverse care team for both professional and personal support.
- Relationship Maintenance: Encouraged maintaining relationships by checking in and offering support to those on your care team.



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## WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

### Perception of Work-Life Balance

- **Generational Differences:** Discussed the varying perceptions of work-life balance across different generations in the workforce.
- **Team Norms:** Suggested allowing teams to collectively decide on their norms rather than enforcing them top-down.

### Managing Different Perceptions

- **Advice:** Recommended understanding and respecting the different values and perceptions of work-life balance within the team.
- **Collective Decision-Making:** Emphasized the importance of collective decision-making in setting cultural norms.

## PURPOSE AND JOB SATISFACTION

### Aligning Values with Work

- **Personal Experience:** Shared a story about working in a quick service restaurant and the challenges of aligning personal values with organizational goals.
- **Data-Driven Decisions:** Highlighted the importance of using data and customer feedback to drive changes and align with personal values.

### Importance of Purpose

- **Statistics:**
- **American Psychological Association (2023):** 93% believe it's important to have a job with meaning.
- **Deloitte Gen Z and Millennial Survey:** 86% of Gen Zers find a sense of purpose vital for job satisfaction.
- **Rejection Based on Beliefs:** 50% of Gen Zers have rejected assignments due to personal beliefs, and 44% have turned down employers based on ethical status.

### Organizational Studies

- **Employee Desires:** Employees want to work for companies that do good and feel that they matter individually.
- **ERGs and Benefits:** Encouraged using Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to voice priorities and influence benefits and programming.



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## FUTURE OF ONSITE FOOD SERVICE

### Trends and Insights

- **Future Predictions:** Discussed the future of onsite food service, including personalized nutrition, AI, robotics, and sustainability.
- **Sustainability and Flavor:** Emphasized that future sustainable food options should also be delicious.
- **Hospitality and AI:** Predicted that AI and robotics will provide efficiencies, allowing for an amplified human element in hospitality.

### Industry Insights

- **Client Conversations:** Importance of asking the right questions and listening to understand client goals.
- **Data and Analytics:** Using data to balance consumer behavior with cultural goals.

## INDUSTRY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Pre-Competitive Collaboration

- **Opportunity for Collaboration:** There is a significant opportunity for industry players to work together in a pre-competitive space to address larger issues.
- **SHFM's Role:** SHFM is recognized for its ability to foster collaboration by setting aside competitive differences.
- **Quote:** "SHFM does such a great job of kind of weaving the competition at the door."

## INTERACTIVE SESSION

### Gay or Nay Game

- **Purpose:** The game aims to spark conversation on controversial industry trends.
- **Mechanics:** Participants use paddles (or thumbs up/down) to indicate their stance on various trends.

### Practice Round

- **Example Trend:** S-H-F-M
- **Consensus:** Agreement among participants.



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## INTERACTIVE SESSION

### Industry Trend Discussion

#### Shrinkflation

- Participant Responses: Mixed reactions with one green (in favor) and three reds (against).
- Alan's Perspective:
- Smaller Portions: Supports the idea of smaller portions to reduce food waste.
- Pricing Concern: Opposes the practice of charging significantly more for smaller portions.
- Quote: "I think smaller portions are a good thing to move in that direction. But I don't necessarily think that charging more for them is the right thing."
- Suzy's Perspective:
- Food Waste: Emphasizes the importance of reducing food waste.
- Food Insecurities: Highlights the sensitivity around pricing, especially concerning food insecurities.
- Quote: "I'm in favor of the smaller portions, but the price certainly, from a sensitivity standpoint, when we think about food insecurities and the amount of waste."

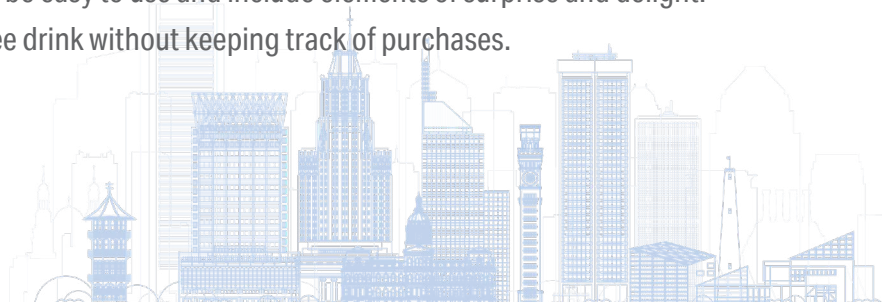
## LOYALTY PROGRAMS

### Importance and Benefits

- Customer Insight: Loyalty programs provide marketers with valuable insights into customer wants, needs, and desires, enabling better engagement.
- Example: Knowing which customers would come during the rain.
- Personalization and Customization: These programs help in personalizing customer experiences, making them feel valued and building brand loyalty.
- Quote: "It makes you feel good, right? It builds that loyalty to that brand."

### Areas for Improvement

- Rethinking Loyalty Programs: Current loyalty programs are seen as outdated and need to be revamped to address individuals rather than groups.
- Quote: "We need to find a way that we're addressing people and not just groups."
- Ease of Use and Surprise Factor: Programs should be easy to use and include elements of surprise and delight.
- Example: Walking into Starbucks and getting a free drink without keeping track of purchases.



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## SUSTAINABILITY AND RECYCLING

### Current Challenges

- Infrastructure Issues: The majority of municipalities lack the infrastructure to support effective recycling.
- Quote: "The problem is, the majority of municipalities do not have the infrastructure to support recycling."
- Misconceptions: People often think they are doing good by recycling, but in many places, recyclables end up in the trash.
- Data: Less than 9% of recyclables actually get recycled.

### Potential Solutions

- Support for Infrastructure Development: Organizations like SHFM could focus on supporting the development of better recycling infrastructures.
- Quote: "Maybe we think about, how can we support developing better infrastructures to support recycling?"

## LAB-GROWN MEAT

### Perspectives and Considerations

- Mixed Opinions: There are varied opinions on lab-grown meat, with some seeing its potential and others being skeptical.
- Quote: "I think there's an appropriate time to put us forward in the appropriate circumstances."
- Sustainability and Animal Welfare: Lab-grown meat could be a solution for feeding a growing population and addressing animal welfare concerns.
- Quote: "If we're going to feed however many billions of people in 2050, there's going to have to be a little bit of give and take as to how we do it."

### Economic and Resource Implications

- Resource Efficiency: Producing lab-grown meat requires different resources compared to traditional agriculture, potentially enabling economic growth in resource-intensive areas.
- Quote: "The resources that are required in order to produce lab-grown meat, as opposed to traditional agriculture, are so different."



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## TIPPING IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

### Current State and Issues

- Service Quality: Tipping has traditionally been about rewarding great service, but this expectation has shifted.
- Quote: "Tipping has always been about having great service."
- Controversy and Expectations: The expectation of tipping has become widespread, even in situations where it may not be warranted.
- Example: Being expected to tip for a simple transaction like buying a bagel.

### Industry Challenges

- Valuing Workers: It's important to value the people working in the industry, but the current tipping culture presents challenges.
- Quote: "We all know how important it is to value the people that are working every single day."

## UNLIMITED PTO POLICIES

- Observation: Organizations with unlimited PTO policies often see employees taking less PTO.
- Reasoning: Employees may feel uncertain about how much time off is acceptable, leading to underutilization.
- Example: Employees with significant vacation time based on years of service may lose vacation days at the end of the year.

## WORKPLACE INNOVATIONS

### Four-Day Work Week

- Feedback: Highly favored within the industry.
- Agreement: Positive reception from participants.

### Robots in Food Service

- Challenge: Difficulty in filling certain positions.
- Solution: Autonomous technology can replace repetitive labor, reducing injury rates and increasing job satisfaction.
- Perspective: Emphasis on moving forward with technological advancements.

### Artificial Intelligence

- Feedback: Universally positive reception from the panel.



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## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN C-SUITE POSITIONS

### Creating an Inclusive Environment

- Strategy: Develop a workplace that attracts diverse backgrounds.
- Support: Provide opportunities and support through coaching and mentoring.
- Championing Diversity: Actively promote and address diversity issues to drive change.

## INDUSTRY IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

### Collective Goals

- Focus Areas: Food waste, recycling, and carbon emission reduction.
- Challenge: Achieving carbon emission reduction goals, particularly in the supply chain.
- Support for Farmers: Need for increased support for the farming community to meet sustainability goals.

### Global Influence

- Dual Influence: Exchange of best practices between the U.S. and other regions.
- Sustainability Goals: Higher expectations in Europe for sustainability and reporting.
- Diversity Focus: Greater emphasis on diversity in the U.S.

## ADVICE FOR FUTURE LEADERS

### Leaning into Strengths

- Focus: Emphasize strengths and passions to fuel career growth.
- Example: A basketball player focusing on athletic strengths rather than weaknesses.

### Staying Positive and Intentional

- Mantra: Maintain a positive attitude and be intentional in actions and decisions.
- Sequencing: Importance of timing and order in project execution.

### Taking Risks

- Three-Legged Stool Concept: Balance skill set, company, and culture when taking risks.
- Advice: Embrace ambiguity and seek mentorship.

### Empowering and Inspiring Others

- Mantra: Always aim to empower and inspire colleagues and family.
- Example: Encouraging children to take extra credit opportunities.



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## ADVICE FOR FUTURE LEADERS

### Taking Unwanted Projects

- Strategy: Volunteer for less desirable tasks to gain unique insights and career growth.
- Example: Early career experience with outdated equipment leading to strategic understanding.

## ACTION ITEMS

- Encourage team members to find their “puddle time” - [Ellen Wilson]
- Implement email boundaries to improve work-life balance - [Ellen Wilson]
- Compile a list of potential mentors and care team members - [All Employees]
- Encourage team discussions to set collective norms for work-life balance - [Team Leaders]
- Utilize ERGs to gather and prioritize benefit suggestions - [ERGs]
- Support the development of better recycling infrastructures - [SHFM Organization]
- Develop a strategy to support the farming community in achieving sustainability goals - [SHFM Team]

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Career Growth: Embrace risks, seek mentorship, and maintain a positive perspective.
- Work-Life Balance: Encourage personal reflection time and set boundaries to recharge.
- Mentorship: Informal mentoring and diverse support systems are crucial for personal and professional growth.
- Purpose and Job Satisfaction: Align personal values with organizational goals and use data to drive meaningful changes.
- Future Trends: AI, robotics, and sustainability will shape the future of onsite food service.
- Industry Collaboration: Pre-competitive collaboration can address larger industry issues.
- Sustainability: Focus on developing better recycling infrastructures and supporting the farming community.
- Diversity and Inclusion: Create inclusive environments and actively promote diversity in leadership positions.
- Leadership Advice: Lean into strengths, stay positive, take risks, and empower others.





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**2025 SHFM NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

