

# Today's Restaurant

THE FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

VOLUME 29

## Appetizers

World renowned Chef José Andrés headlines the NRA Show 2024



4

Downtown Orlando Sports & Entertainment District Plans



5

Gary Wollerman inducted into the DiRoNA Hall of Fame



6

Caribou Coffee brings their car coffeehouse to Florida



11

## Entrées

- Advertisers Directory ..... 2
- Appell Pie ..... 2
- Photo Bites ..... 5
- TR Network Group ..... 15
- What's Going On ..... 3

# You don't have to work 70 hours a week to build a successful restaurant empire

By Monte Silva

My restaurant manager career started out as a very fast rise to the top. I was a GM for a Mexican restaurant within 2 years of my first manager position. 2 years later I was a GM for Wolfgang Puck. In just 4 short years I had gone from a rookie who didn't know anything to running a restaurant for one of the greatest restaurateurs in America.

However, this sprint to the top took its toll on me with very heavy costs which included poor health and a divorce. At one point I was working over 90 hours a week running two restaurants as a GM. Imagine going through burnout the first four years of your career while you were still in your thirties. So, I did what any burned out manager does.... I moved to Las Vegas and went back to waiting tables. I saw I could make just as much if not more. Many of you may have a similar story to mine. But, then something happened.....

When I re-emerged into management in Nashville I had to pretty much start over. The one thing I determined to do was figure out how to get back to a GM position and run a very successful restaurant without burning out again. After a couple of years I met my wife Anita. I pledged to myself I would



Monte Silva

never again prioritize a job over my personal life.

Over the last 15 years I have run successful high-end restaurants in Nashville and Tampa as well as high volume restaurants including Acme Feed & Seed (the 31st highest grossing restaurant in the country). And, more importantly, I did it while staying true to my commitment of being married, a dad, and working a 50-hour work week. I now am enjoying great work/life balance.

So, when people say you have to work a 70-hour work week to be successful. Don't believe the lie. Tell them the New Norm doesn't require that. I did it and I can help you do it as well.

Having a son has completely reprimed this highly focused over-achiever. I just want to sit with him and hold him or play football or soccer with him. Time seems to stand still when he is in the room. My time with my wife is also more precious. Not only is she the greatest woman in the world but, she is also the mother of our child and we spend even less time alone so our time is now even more precious. Make sure the people you love get your best. Give them your focussed time and attention when you are home.

Being great at what we do requires such focussed intensity. Our work is more of a sprint. This is impossible to maintain for a long period of time. Fortunately, I learned that early in my career. If I hadn't I wouldn't have made it through the last 25 year career marathon.

Here are six great tips to help avoid burnout:

**1. Get enough sleep.** This seems obvious but we think "hey we are in the food & beverage industry so why not go

See **MONT SILVA** page 11

# Pepper Lunch continues North America expansion with multi-unit agreement

Japan's iconic, DIY teppanyaki tracking to have 100 North America locations by 2026



Los Angeles, CA - [Pepper Lunch](#), the Japanese-born experiential fast-casual concept unlike any other, with more than 500 locations in 15 countries, has announced it has signed its second development agreement for North America since announcing the company's investment in domestic expansion earlier this year, and less than five months after it filed its FDD.

The Majestic Restaurant Group has signed on to develop 10 units over the next five years in and around the Tampa, Orlando and Gainesville markets, with the first location planned to open in Q3, 2024. Boasting a legacy of developing and operating multiple successful concepts, each restaurant The Majestic Restaurant Group operates is designed to offer a unique dining experience, tailored to the tastes and preferences of its patrons. Specific

See **PEPPER LUNCH** page 11

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## Appell Pie Talk show host

Howard Appell ♦ Today's Restaurant Publisher

Several years ago, I received an email from one of our readers who is a professor in a Hospitality program at a college in the South Florida area. I began reading the letter and began to sweat and shake at the same time. As I read further the sweating got worse. Why, you ask? Keep reading!

I was being asked to be a guest speaker in the class he taught about purchasing. At first, I was surprised to be asked to speak on a subject I am really not that familiar with nor have I ever done purchasing for a restaurant or hotel. I finished reading the email took a deep breath and called the professor back. He immediately eased my fears by telling me that he wanted me to speak to the class about the industry and about how I got into it and the opportunities available in the industry. I still was sweating though. Why was I still sweating? Keep reading!

Some years ago, when my son was in Middle School, I was asked to be part of Career Day for the school. Representatives of many different professions were asked to address several classes during the morning session. There were Police Officers, Firemen, Military, Doctors, Lawyers, Retailers etc. and then me, the publisher of a fledgling trade newspaper for the restaurant industry. I think there was an Astronaut too. All of us there to speak to twelve-year old's and spark an interest in them for our industry. So why all the sweat? Keep reading!

In the first class I was paired with a Motorcycle Police Officer all decked out with boots gun and whistle. He gave his presentation to wide eyed young students who asked many questions and looked really interested. Then it was my turn. It was like open mic night at the Comedy Club for a first-time performer, bombs away! I gave my presentation to glazed eyes barely able to concentrate on me. When I asked for questions, not one hand went up. The Motorcycle Cop chuckled to himself and the teacher of

the class jumped in to break the silence. Gulp, Sweat.

The entire morning went the same way as I was paired with the Fireman, the Doctor, the Lawyer and on and on in several classes. I was exhausted and vowed never to do another Career Day. Fast forward to me opening the email and sweating. All of the feelings of inadequacy came rushing back and hit my sweat glands again.

*I made plenty of notes and had scheduled guests to appear at fifteen-minute intervals. I was ready.*

This time I plan to get it right though. I will prepare my notes and have plenty to say to a class of college aged students just like on my first day of hosting a one hour talk radio show about the Restaurant industry. I made plenty of notes and had scheduled guests to appear at fifteen-minute intervals. I was ready. Or so I thought. Here I am sweating again. Why? Keep reading!

I had my notes and I was ready to speak with callers who were going to be calling in to ask questions too. The one thing nobody told me was that the station had a range of about one mile and all of the people I had told about the show and asked to call couldn't pick it up on their radios. I went through my notes in under five minutes and was left to fill fifty-five minutes less pre-recorded ad time with ad lib. (I have an unrestricted respect for talk show hosts now.) I was really sweating.

I know exactly what I am going to tell these students, "Keep reading!"

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### Index of Advertisers

Broward Nelson.....	3	Metalcraft .....	2
Bunn.....	6	Restaurant Recruiters of America.....	8
Enviromatic.....	3	Rogue Financial Group.....	6
EPOMS.....	11	Seacoast Sales.....	10
Florida Restaurant Association.....	4	Thunderbird.....	16
Franchise Consulting Company.....	13	Toby Neverrett Auctions.....	12
Hotel, Motel, Restaurant Supply Show....	5	TRN Network Group.....	14 & 15
ITD Food Safety.....	7	TRN Recovery.....	2
MenuCoverMan Menu Covers.....	9		



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Important new products, corporate news and industry events

**Happy New Year!**

Pointe Orlando will open an all-new immersive dining and entertainment experience featuring new concepts, Sports & Social and PBR Cowboy Bar, in 2024. Sports & Social will offer elevated food and wine offerings, premier sports watching, live music and social games including skee-ball, foosball, shuffleboard and more. PBR Cowboy Bar will feature a professionally endorsed mechanical riding bull, multiple signature bars and private VIP booths. Pointe Orlando is located on International Dr.

Grimaldi's Pizzeria will open a 4,000 sq-ft restaurant at Stadium Trace Village located at 5225 Peridot Place Ste 121 in Hoover, AL. This is their 2nd location in Alabama.

Equitable Food Initiative, the capacity-building and certification organization that partners with growers, farmworkers, retailers and consumer groups, celebrated a year of progress in 2023 toward its mission to offer a full suite of supply chain assurance programs to the fresh produce industry.



Foremost Farms – foremostfarms.com - consistently wins awards for their products at the state, national and international levels. “We immerse our employees in sensory training to maintain our reputation for our highly regarded quality products, and our award performance is indicative of the work being done to meet and exceed customer and industry standards.” The name was originally created by immigrant pizzeria operators who purchased their cheese. Many of these operators did not speak English, making it a challenge for them to place a cheese order. However, they noticed that the boxes for their award-winning cheese—the very cheese they wanted on their pizzas—were labeled with the numbers 1950 127. When these operators placed their orders, they overcame the language barrier by simply requesting “1950 127”; the packaging numbers that appeared on their cheese boxes. “1950 is our USDA plant number, 127 was our cheese grader’s number at the time, says the company.”

The group celebrated an impactful new program launch, grew its dedicated staff and streamlined certification to make it more cost effective for growers starting in 2024. EFI’s reach saw continued growth in 2023, certifying produce facilities in the United States, Mexico, Canada and Peru. The year concluded with the first certified operations from two

new suppliers, Fruit World and Veg-Fresh Farms. Long considered the gold standard for social responsibility, the EFI certification helps growers meet industry sourcing requirements while driving improved business performance. EFI has trained more than 4,000 people in communications and problem-solving skills, helping to improve the working conditions of 60,000 workers who have generated 942 million

pounds of produce representing 46 commodities on EFI-certified farms. Of the positive shift Veg-Fresh Farms has experienced, Jasmin Amigon, food safety and social responsibility coordinator, noted, “We meet every month for about an hour and listen to what workers need. It has changed our culture and continues to improve our operations.”

Steeped Coffee, recently announced its inclusion on the Inc. 2023 Best in Business list. This prestigious list recognizes 215 ground-breaking companies that focus on purpose before profits to truly make a difference in their communities, their industries, and the world at large. Steeped Coffee’s inclusion is a testament to its revolutionary approach in the coffee industry, offering a unique and sustainable single-serve brew method. By brewing coffee as simply as tea and eliminating the need for wasteful pods and PET plastics, Steeped Coffee has set a new



See **WHAT'S GOING ON** page 8

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# World-renowned Chef José Andrés to headline the National Restaurant Association Show® 2024

Chicago, IL – The [National Restaurant Association Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show®](#), the premier event for the foodservice industry, has announced that acclaimed chef, restaurateur and humanitarian José Andrés will join in a keynote discussion at the 2024 Show, taking place from May 18-21 at McCormick Place in Chicago. Here, Andrés will participate in a captivating discussion on the transformative impact of his culinary innovation and philanthropic endeavors, inspiring positive change within communities. Named one of Time’s “100 Most Influential People” in both 2012 and 2018 and recipient of the 2015 National Humanities Medal, Andrés is an internationally-recognized culinary innovator, author, educator, humanitarian, and chef/owner of José Andrés Group.

A pioneer of Spanish tapas in the United States, Andrés is also known for his groundbreaking avant-garde cuisine and his award-winning group of nearly three dozen restaurants located throughout the country and beyond. José Andrés Group’s concepts include the two Michelin-starred minibar by José Andrés in Washington, DC, the acclaimed NYC food hall Mercado Little Spain, and multiple locations of the Bazaar by José Andrés. He has received the James Beard Foundation’s “Outstanding Chef” and “Humanitarian of the Year” awards.

Andrés is a committed advocate of food and hunger issues and is known for championing the role of chefs in the national debate on food policy. In 2010, he formed World Central Kitchen, a non-profit specializing in delivering food relief in the wake of natural and humanitarian disasters. Since serving nearly 4 million meals to the people of Puerto Rico following the devastation of Hurricane Maria, World Central Kitchen has responded to dozens of disasters worldwide and distributing tens of millions of meals in the process. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization has partnered with restaurants, small farms, and community leaders around the country to combat food insecurity. A naturalized U.S. citizen originally from Spain, Andrés has been a tireless advocate for immigration reform



Photo: Blair Getz Mezibov

Chef José Andrés

*“José Andrés’ work illustrates the heart of the restaurant industry—offering hospitality and serving others.”*

and on July 4, 2014, was named by President Barack Obama as that year’s “Outstanding American by Choice.”

Tom Cindric, President of Winsight Exhibitions, expressed enthusiasm about Andrés’ participation, stating, “We are honored to have José Andrés, a true visionary in both the culinary and humanitarian realms, as our keynote headliner. His journey and achievements serve as an inspiration to us all, reminding us of the power of having a vision and the profound impact that the foodservice industry can have on communities in need. José’s dedication to giving back resonates deeply with our own commitment to uplifting the local Chicago community through the Show’s annual food donations. We look forward to learning from his experiences and insights at the National Restaurant Association Show 2024.”



The keynote session featuring Andrés is scheduled to take place on Sunday, May 19, 2024, at 2 p.m. The session will begin with an introduction and presentation by Michelle Korsmo, President and CEO of the National Restaurant Association. Following the introduction, Andrés will engage in an interview-style Q&A session with Korsmo, providing attendees with a firsthand account of his inspiring journey as a Spanish immigrant in the United States. During this interactive session, Andrés will delve into his transformative experiences in the restaurant industry, emphasizing the importance of vision, culinary innovation, and the impact of giving back to communities. His insights will challenge attendees to think beyond the day-to-day operations of their


businesses and consider how food can be a force for positive change.

As part of the session, Andrés will further explore the profound influence food can have on communities and how his own culinary journey has intertwined with his philanthropic efforts. Drawing on his extensive experience as a world-renowned chef and the founder of World Central Kitchen, a nonprofit organization that has provided millions of meals to those in need, Andrés will share valuable insights on building sustainable food systems, empowering communities, and the crucial importance of giving back. His passion for using food as a tool for social impact will aim to inspire attendees to make a difference in their own communities and embrace the transformative power of food.

Korsmo expressed her excitement for Andrés’ message being a center-point of the Show stating, “José Andrés’ work illustrates the heart of the restaurant industry—offering hospitality and serving others. He is a culinary and humanitarian visionary, and everyone attending the National Restaurant Association Show has something to gain by hearing insights from his work and experiences. José Andrés’ commitment to giving back to communities across the globe and his remarkable achievements make him an inspiration. We are so glad to have him as the keynote headliner for the National Restaurant Association Show.”

The National Restaurant Association Show, known as the ultimate gathering for restaurant operators and foodservice professionals, has been driving the evolution of the industry since 1919. From celebrity-led demos to exhibits showcasing cutting-edge technology and trends, the Show offers an unparalleled platform for networking, education, and exploration of all things related to food, beverage, hospitality, and operations.

For more information and to register, visit [nationalrestaurantshow.com](http://nationalrestaurantshow.com). Connect with the Show online on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#) for event updates.

The National Restaurant Association Show, Hotel-Motel Show is owned and operated by Winsight LLC in partnership with the National Restaurant Association. 



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# Downtown Orlando Sports and Entertainment District reveals development plans and renderings

Orlando, FL — SED Development, LLC, [JMA Ventures, LLC](#) and [Machete Group, Inc](#) have recently revealed development plans and renderings for the sports and entertainment district to be developed on the 8.5-acre block adjacent to Amway Center in downtown Orlando.

The 900,000 square foot mixed-use project will serve as a vibrant, every day gathering place featuring a lifestyle hotel, high-rise residential, live music venue, office space, and an array of restaurants.

“We’re creating a place that will be active and inviting every day of the year, not just on event days,” said David Carlock, founder and principal of Machete Group.

The 260-key lifestyle hotel includes an outdoor lounge and pool deck; 16,000 square feet of meeting space (an acute need in downtown Orlando); and a chef-driven, marquee restaurant. The hotel’s extensive amenity package will be available to residents of the 270 high-rise apartments who will enjoy views of the downtown skyline to the east and the Disney fireworks to the south.

A 3,500-capacity live music venue will host an array of concerts and other promoted shows, and also provide a theatrical space equipped with state-of-the-art audio and visual



capabilities for galas, product launches, and other private events. The facility will accommodate up to 1,000 guests in a banquet configuration.

The project includes more than 200,000 square feet of Class A office space, of which 30% is already pre-leased. The office building includes a 17,000 square foot rooftop amenity featuring a 6,000 square foot glass-enclosed

jewel box event space; an outdoor veranda; and additional amenities and meeting spaces, providing exciting options for tenants, social event planners, and conference organizers.

100,000 square feet of retail space will be programmed with an emphasis on dining and entertainment concepts new to downtown and, in many cases, new to Orlando. The project

incorporates a mix of retail pads ranging from small to large format tenants.

Located at the heart of the new district, the 1.5 acre urban living room is flexible green space ringed with outdoor dining and configured to accommodate a broad range of programming from yoga classes, farmer’s markets, and food festivals, to movie nights, “giant” chess, and live music.

[www.jmamorlandoproject.com](http://www.jmamorlandoproject.com).

**About the Sports and Entertainment District:** The sports and entertainment district is an upcoming mixed-use development located in downtown Orlando. The project includes a full-service hotel, high-rise residential, office space, meeting space, retail, a live event venue, and parking. The sports and entertainment district is being developed by a joint venture between industry leaders JMA Ventures, LLC; Machete Group, Inc.; and the DeVos family.

**About JMA Ventures, LLC:** JMA – [jmaventuresllc.com](http://jmaventuresllc.com) - is a full-service investment and development firm focused on real estate and leisure-lifestyle assets. Founded in 1986 and based in San Francisco, the company’s portfolio includes landmark hospitality, resort, residential, retail, and office developments.

**About Machete Group, Inc.:** Machete Group, Inc. – [machetegroup.com](http://machetegroup.com) - has deep experience planning and developing sports and entertainment venues and adjacent mixed-use projects. With experience as developers, sports team executives, and venue operators, the firm offers unique capabilities and extensive knowledge of complex customer-facing real estate development, placemaking, and strategic partnerships.

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# Gary Wollerman owner of GW Fins inducted into DiRoNA Hall of Fame

Gary Wollerman, owner of New Orleans' premier fine dining seafood restaurant GW Fins, was inducted into the Distinguished Restaurants of North America's Hall of Fame.

Established in 1993, the DiRoNA Hall of Fame has named 64 previous restaurateurs to this esteemed list including legendary restaurateurs Leah Chase and Ruth Fertel. Wollerman is only the seventh New Orleans Restaurateur to receive this distinction.

Candidates qualify by having at least 25 years of dedicated service, making significant contributions to the dining industry and their local community.

Wollerman started his restaurant career in 1972 at the first Houlihan's Restaurant in his hometown of Kansas City. During his 18-year tenure with the company, Wollerman opened and managed numerous restaurants and was named Executive Vice President. He was then hired by Ruth's Chris Steak House as their Vice President and Chief Operating Officer.

Wollerman has established GW Fins as one of the country's most acclaimed restaurants, consistently included in the Top 10 Fine Dining Restaurants in the US on TripAdvisor and receiving the Wine Spectator Award of Excellence each year since opening in 2001. GW Fins' Executive Chef Michael Nelson was nominated for a James Beard



Award for Best Chef in the South.


Wollerman's attention to detail begins with serving guests the most pristine seafood from the Gulf and around the globe. He personally extols his passionate attitude on both staff and guests to ensure that each guest has the ultimate dining experience.

Wollerman has worked tirelessly to create several programs with the specific goal of increasing literacy,

self-esteem, and overall education for New Orleans' youth.

He had Little Free Libraries produced and placed outside New Orleans Police Department precincts to forge a positive relationship between New Orleans' youth and local police officers and established the "Fins Wings For Fins' Kids" Foundation, where 100% of the proceeds from every order of one of GW Fins' signature appetizers, Fins

Wings, would benefit local youth educational organizations.

Wollerman is omnipresent at GW Fins, welcoming guests, serving food and recommending wines. He promotes from within, creating a highly professional work culture, and many of his staff have worked at GW Fins for more than a decade. GW Fins - gwfins.com - is located at 808 Bienville Street in New Orleans' French Quarter. 

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[ITDfoodsafety.com](http://ITDfoodsafety.com)



# What's Going On from page 3

standard in environmental responsibility. Josh Wilbur, Founder and CEO of Steeped Coffee, shared his enthusiasm: "Receiving recognition from [Inc.](#) is an incredible honor. It validates our efforts in transforming the coffee industry through eco-friendly practices. This honor is a powerful motivator for us to continue driving innovation for a greener future."



**Tampa.** There will be several restaurants and cafes. The Pendry is a partnership between Pendry Hotels & Resorts and Two Roads Development. It is being designed by Arquitectonica and built by Coastal Construction. The tower is slated to open in 2026.

**GMA Architects & Planners completed architectural designs for Shops at Del Mar, a commercial center in Cape Coral that will introduce new retail and dining options.** Shops at Del Mar will feature a trio of standalone buildings that face Pine Island Road. One building includes a drive-thru. A fourth building, an inline structure is also behind the three standalone buildings. Shops at Del Mar will be located at 1019-1027 SW Pine Island Rd.

## Hotel Happenings:

◆ **Nobu Hotel Orlando**, an all-new property expected to open in 2025, will feature 300 accommodations including eight villas, a Nobu restaurant, 50 stylish residences and meeting and event space.

◆ **Fairmont Orlando**, a new Fairmont Hotels & Resorts-branded hotel, is slated to open in early 2025 in the heart of Orlando's entertainment district. The new seven-story property is expected to include 550 rooms; seven elevated dining experiences, including a specialty Mediterranean restaurant, an upscale steakhouse and gourmet café, more than 40,000 sq ft of meeting space and more.

◆ Construction has started on the 39-floor tower along the Tampa Riverwalk that will house the **Pendry Tampa Hotel and Pendry Residences**

◆ **Seven Brothers Burgers**, the Hawaiian-born restaurant putting a family-oriented, quality-driven spin on the average burger joint, is closing out a successful 2023 year and are excited about new plans for expansion

in 2024. With 7 locations currently open in 3 states, Seven Brothers Burgers offers a community-driven, family-oriented business model and dining experience for prospective franchisees looking to create a sense of community and share the taste of Aloha. Most recently, the restaurant has signed a groundbreaking deal that will bring 19 storefronts to consumers in Phoenix, Arizona; Las Vegas, Nevada; and Idaho. Visit them online at [sevenbrothersburgers.com](http://sevenbrothersburgers.com).



stair treads and walkway products. They have been manufacturing anti-slip products for new construction, renovation, marine and OEM applications since 1921 from their Wooster, Ohio facility.

◆ Wooster Products is now offering their **Stair Saver Epoxy Kit**, which rejuvenates non-slip stair nosings and treads, restoring them to like-new condition. This unique, easy to use kit will restore any brand of nosing or tread where the abrasive fill is missing. Treads repaired with Stair Saver meet or exceed all codes and standards for coefficient of friction.



It is far more economical than replacing the empty nosing shells, which are a trip hazard due to the missing abrasives. The Stair Saver Epoxy Kit is ideal for interior or exterior usage on any brand of nosing or tread and can be applied in less than 2 hours. Repaired treads are ready for foot traffic in just 24 hours. Wooster Products – [WoosterProducts.com](http://WoosterProducts.com) - is an industry leader in anti-slip

◆◆◆◆ **French founded [la Madeleine](#)** is expanding franchise opportunities throughout the U.S. as the brand carries on the tradition of serving approachable, French-cuisine fast casual dining across North America. The brand is specifically seeking growth with qualified franchise candidates in 10 states: Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Kansas, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Utah and Virginia. La Madeleine.com is owned by Rennes, France-based Groupe Le Duff and founded by Louis Le Duff in 1976.

◆◆◆◆ **EcoloxTech** – [ecoloxtech.com](http://ecoloxtech.com) - is a leading way in eco-friendly disinfection solutions. The company's cutting-edge technology harnesses the power of electrolyzed water to create a safe, effective, and sustainable disinfectant that's highly effective in killing a wide range of microorganisms, including bacteria, viruses, and fungi. It's particularly effective against pathogens such as MRSA, E. coli, COVID, Influenza, and Norovirus, and is compliant with CDC, FDA, and

See **WHAT'S GOING ON** page 14



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# How gratitude in the workplace benefits workers and employers

## EFI highlights benefits and stories of gratitude

Washington, DC – Equitable Food Initiative, the capacity-building and certification organization that partners with growers, farmworkers, retailers and consumer groups, celebrated National Gratitude Month recently, by sharing stories of gratitude and success from farmworkers and the benefits seen by workers and employers when workers feel valued.

The American Psychological Association's 2023 Work in America Survey reports that psychological well-being is a very high priority for workers. In fact, 92% of workers report it is somewhat or very important to them that their organization values their emotional and mental well-being.

Sierra Farms, an operation of GoodFarms, recently shared stories of two H-2A workers who were incredibly thankful to be back on the farm again last season. Zureyda commented that receiving the offer gave her hope, strength and purpose. She has since paid off debts and built a home of her own. Similarly, Julián was able to build a home for his family and noted that he recognizes the incredible opportunity he has and will work to keep it.

"Taking a farmworker's job for granted is a miscalculation we see too often in this industry, and the result can be

loss of skilled labor," remarked LeAnne Ruzzamenti, director of marketing and communications for EFI. "Recruiting and retraining during a labor shortage takes a lot of time and funds that could be used in countless more productive ways, not to mention how turnover undermines progress in organizational efficiency and safety standards."



For many seasonal and guest workers, comparable jobs close to home are not an option, and commercial farming organizations in the United States and Canada represent the best opportunity for career and financial growth. Bringing workers into the conversation from the beginning helps to better understand their needs, and working to bring them

back season after season builds relationships, improves production, reduces missed work time and greatly reduces recruiting and retraining costs.

The Work Institute reports that turnover of an employee can cost up to one-third of their annual salary when considering the time and costs of all employees associated with recruiting

that most EFI-certified farms boast high retention rates."

Hector and Esperanza suffered a devastating loss when their home was destroyed by floodwaters. Their employer, GoodFarms, provided support in the form of new furnishings for their home after it dried out and the option to stay in a hotel while their home was restored. Hector and Esperanza have expressed their deep gratitude for the GoodFarms team and its support.

"It's sometimes difficult to understand challenges that don't affect us directly," Ruzzamenti concluded. "Bringing farmworker voices to the table helps them to feel heard, builds trust, earns loyalty, and benefits both the farmworker and their company by helping everyone be seen and valued to create a common language for success and respect."

**About EFI:** Equitable Food Initiative is a capacity-building and certification nonprofit that works to improve the lives of farmworkers and drive business performance by integrating worker voice and engagement throughout the supply chain. As a multistakeholder organization, EFI brings together growers, farmworkers, retailers and consumers to create assessment, training and organizational development programs that support continuous improvement and address the industry's most pressing problems. For more information about Equitable Food Initiative, visit [equitablefood.org](http://equitablefood.org).

new talent, interviewing candidates, arranging travel, onboarding, obtaining credentials, on-the-job training, the expense in dollars and time to correct mistakes, and slower than usual performance due to unfamiliarity. "Lower turnover saves an incredible amount of time and money for companies," Ruzzamenti added. "We're proud to say

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# Caribou Coffee brings their car coffeehouse experience to Florida

Premium coffeehouse brand continues U.S. expansion with first Florida location opening in St. Petersburg

Minneapolis, MN – [Caribou Coffee](#)®, a global premium coffeehouse and Panera Brands company, announced the opening of its first Florida location. Owned and operated by Wake Up 727 under the leadership of Michelle Mathis, the coffeehouse opened on November 24 in [St. Petersburg](#), and is the first of many locations that Caribou Coffee intends to open in the state.

“I fell in love with Caribou Coffee as a guest many years ago and am thrilled to bring such a beloved brand to the St. Petersburg area and beyond,” says Michelle Mathis, CEO of Wake Up 727. “From using real, premium ingredients in our handcrafted beverages, to sourcing 100% Rainforest Alliance Certified coffee, Caribou Coffee’s commitment to purpose, experience and innovation will differentiate the brand in this market.”

In addition to the multi-unit franchise agreement Caribou Coffee has with Wake Up 727, the brand signed development agreements with Kevin Ricci, owner of Covelli Family Partnership, and Sam Covelli, CEO of Covelli Enterprises – to deepen the brand’s roots throughout Florida. Earlier this year, [Caribou Coffee announced the signing of several multi-unit development agreements](#)



to franchise more than 300 new locations across the U.S. The brand’s rapid expansion is fueled by company-owned location growth and Caribou’s successful domestic and international franchise model, which is comprised of like-minded partners with a common vision and sophisticated operational experience.

“Since we got our start in 1992, Caribou Coffee has emerged as a leader in the coffeehouse segment, and we have been anticipating the day we open our doors to guests in new states,” said Matthew Walls, chief development officer of Caribou Coffee. “We look forward to celebrating the success of our newest location in St. Petersburg and further growing love

for the Caribou Coffee brand throughout the state of Florida.”

The new location in St. Petersburg is a full-service coffeehouse with both indoor and outdoor dining spaces. The space features comfortable seating and coastal-inspired designs. Located at 701 Central Ave., St. Petersburg.

**About Caribou Coffee®:** Founded in 1992, Caribou Coffee provides high-quality, handcrafted coffee-forward beverages and craveable food options in more than 750 coffeehouses worldwide. Each menu item is crafted with the purpose to create day-making experiences. Known for a commitment to sustainable practices and making a difference, Caribou Coffee serves 100% Rainforest Alliance Certified coffees and espresso. This passion for premium is also why Caribou Coffee makes every handcrafted beverage with only clean label ingredients, like real chocolate chips and caramel, and no artificial flavors, colors, sweeteners or preservatives.

As of Sept. 26, 2023, Caribou Coffee has 329 company-owned, 139 [non-traditional](#) and 319 [franchise](#) locations in 11 countries. The company is also a craft roaster and retailer of specialty bagged coffee, K-Cup® Pods and ready-to-drink products, which can be found [online](#) and in grocery stores, mass retailers, club stores, [dining venues](#) and [office breakrooms](#) across the United States.

Caribou Coffee – CaribouCoffee - is part of a portfolio of complementary brands bound by common values, Panera Brands, comprised of Panera Bread®, Caribou Coffee® and Einstein Bros.® Bagels. Panera Brands companies are independently operated and united in their mission to be force multipliers for good for their guests, communities, the planet and the shareholders they serve.

## Monte Silva from page 1

grab a drink (or 4) after work.”

**2. Organize your day.** Each morning, write down your focus with the big things first. Divide your tasks into four categories: Urgent & Important-Urgent & Not Important- Not Urgent but Important or Not Urgent or Important. Then, do the urgent and important first, Do the important but not urgent second, delegate the urgent Not Important. Lastly, determine why the not urgent not important are on the list at all.

**3. Work in spurts.** Try not to work on the same thing for more than an hour at a time. By changing up what you are working on you use different parts of your brain and you don’t get drained

**4. Delegate.** Don’t do it all. We all need support. Also, delegate to grow your people so that you can maximize efficiency and lead your people better.

**5. Exercise.** Nike motto “Just do it” Your body needs fuel just like your car does.

**6. Unplug to Replenish.** You should take at least 1 day a week to clear your head. You should also take a vacation every 6 months. Replenishing is more about restoration of soul & mind than it is resting the body. This allows you to disconnect from the day to day and offers a refreshed perspective when you come back.

It’s critical that you focus on the right things and that you don’t waste time focused on things that really don’t matter. Steven Covey calls this focusing on the “Big Rocks”. What do I mean by “Big Rocks”? Have you ever

had a stash contest where you threw rocks in the water to make the biggest splash you could? You want to pick the biggest rock that makes the biggest splash.

It’s the same when you are planning your day. You need to focus on the things that make the most impact first. Google Steven Covey Big Rocks and check out the video where he shows you why it’s important to do the biggest impact things first. Conversely, many people focus on the wrong things. I knew a Manager once who would measure the distance of each piece of silverware from the end of the table. He did this at every table. He said he did this to show his team how important attention to detail was. I thought he was an idiot! Who cares what the distance of the fork is from the edge of the table? Did it make the guest’s experience better? No. The guest could care less.

Focus your attention on the things that move the needle on your business. I did 21 years ago and it changed everything. I have had a marathon career where I not only crushed it, but I did it without sacrificing my family or my health. if you aren’t quite sure what those things are or how to move them forward click the link NOW and book a FREE call with me personally, to see how we might work together.

<https://calendly.com/montesilva/free-one-on-one-30-minute-call-with-monte?back=1&month=2023-12>

**About the author:** Monte Silva can be reached by email at [Hashtagrestaurateur@gmail.com](mailto:Hashtagrestaurateur@gmail.com) or call 615.934.0261. You can visit Monte’s website online at [www.montesilvacoaching.com](http://www.montesilvacoaching.com).

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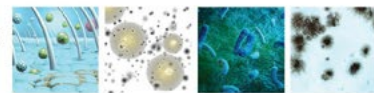
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## Empowerment

# The backbone of great customer service

John Tschohl ♦ Today's Restaurant Contributor

No matter what products or services you are selling, you are facing tough competition for customers. In today's global market, most companies make quality and price the focus of their competitive strategy. While those are important elements, nothing is more important that providing service that is so exceptional it sets you and your company apart from your competitors.

I can't stress enough how critical service is to the success of any company. I also can't stress how critical empowerment is to service. If you don't empower your employees to make-a-decision to satisfy your customers, on the spot, your customer service is average at best.

Most company executives think they have empowered employees. They don't because they don't trust their customers, and they don't trust their employees. They think customers will take advantage of employees and that employees will "give away the store" in order to keep those customers.

More often than not, empowering your employees will cost you nothing. Let me give you an example. I recently stayed at the JW Marriott Desert Resort and Spa in Phoenix, Arizona. On the final day of my visit, I called

the front desk at 10:55 a.m. and asked what the checkout time was. I was told it was at 11 a.m. I then asked if I could check out at noon.

*What too many companies don't realize is that the return on investment for that \$25 could easily be \$1,000...*

"Yes," the employee said, "but we will have to charge you \$50 to do that." I was flabbergasted. I have never been charged for a late checkout and couldn't believe that, on a Tuesday morning, people were lined up in the lobby, waiting to check in. It would have cost the hotel nothing to let me check out an hour late—and it would have greatly improved my opinion of the hotel, which dropped from a rating of 9 to a 5.

I had another experience at that hotel that left a sour taste in my mouth. I asked if someone could take

two boxes of training materials to the ballroom for me. I was told I could, but they would have to charge me \$20. I declined the offer and was struggling with my briefcase and the two boxes when a foodservice employee asked if I needed help. She took my boxes, placed them on her cart, and delivered them for me—at no charge. She then refused the generous tip I offered her; I had to force it on her. She went above and beyond to take care of me.

On average, most empowered decisions cost the company about \$25. What too many companies don't realize is that the return on investment for that \$25 could easily be \$1,000 because the customer will return to do business with you again and again.

You must empower your employees. That doesn't mean sending out a memo that says, "You are now empowered to make decisions to satisfy our customers." You have to train your employees on how to use empowerment, and then you have to support, and recognize them when they do so. Publicly praise them. Feature them in your company newsletter. Doing so sends a message to all employees that you value employees who use empowerment to not only retain—but

build up—your customer base.

The major roadblock to employee empowerment is fear. Employees fear they will be reprimanded or fired if they take it upon themselves to give customers something that carries a monetary value. Ensure them that you support them and their efforts. Eliminate policies and procedures that get in the way of providing superior customer service. Create a culture that celebrates empowerment.

No matter what industry you think you are in—retail, manufacturing, banking, or \_\_\_\_\_—you are actually in the service business. The sooner you recognize that, the better off you and your business will be.

Then sit back and reap the benefits of customers who wouldn't dream of leaving you for a competitor.

**About the Author:** John Tschohl is the founder and president of the Service Quality Institute—the global leader in customer service—with operations in more than 40 countries. He is considered one of the world's foremost authorities on all aspects of customer service and has developed 17 customer service training programs, including *Empowerment: A Way of Life*, that are used by companies throughout the world. His monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no charge at [www.customer-service.com](http://www.customer-service.com). He can also be reached on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

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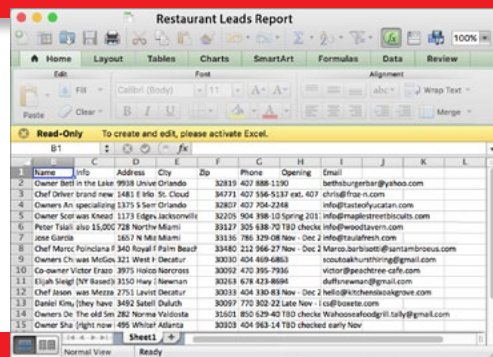
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# Pepper Lunch from page 1

concepts the group has brought to life include nearly a dozen sushi, poke and dumpling restaurants including the acclaimed Zukku Sushi, which have multiple locations in Tampa, reinforcing the group's market insight.

Established in 1994, Pepper Lunch is one of Japan's largest homegrown franchise restaurant brands with over 500 locations in 15 countries. Renowned for quality food served in a unique and innovative way for dining in or delivery, and with guest being able to get in, dine, and be on their way in 20 minutes for under \$20, the beloved Japanese-based brand seeks experienced franchise partners to expand its proven business model and cutting-edge customer offerings across the United States.

"Growing up in Indonesia, I have familiarity and admiration for Pepper Lunch," said managing partner, Ferdian Jap. "The opportunity to bring Pepper Lunch to our home location in Tampa, Orlando, and Gainesville is exciting as it fulfills Majestic Restaurant Group's mission to expand Asian focused concepts."

Instead of breaking the bank on expensive yakiniku Japanese BBQ, American diners continue to fall in love with Pepper Lunch's affordable teppanyaki-style concept that presents the novel menu of sizzling

Steaks, Curry Rice, Teriyaki and Pasta based dishes, and don't forget the signature Pepper Rice on the brand's patented hot iron plate. At Pepper Lunch, each guest is the MasterChef, where they can 'Sizzle It Your Way.'

"Pepper Lunch's service and guest experience are unique and special, and the food is authentic, yet approachable," said Pepper Lunch CEO, Troy Hooper. "We're thrilled to continue our domestic franchise expansion by partnering with industry veterans who understand the game-plan which leads to success." **TR**

**About Pepper Lunch:** The original Japanese D-I-Y teppan restaurant, Pepper Lunch was founded in 1994 by one of Japan's most famous chefs and entrepreneurs who wanted to introduce affordable premium steaks with quality ingredients served on a sizzling iron plate. Deliciously irresistible, Pepper Lunch proudly offers quality, tasty and affordable meals sourced from the finest ingredients paired with an unforgettable experience.

**About Majestic Restaurant Group:** Majestic Restaurant Group also known as Zukku Sushi, LLC started as a 375 sq. ft. stall inside Tampa's Armature Works Food Hall. Since then, the company has become a force in growing multiple Asian focused concepts. Its flagship brands include Zukku Sushi, Zukkusan Sushi Bar & Grill and ATO Poke & Sushi Burritos with locations in Tampa, FL Lutz, FL, Wesley Chapel, FL Lakeland, FL & Charlotte, NC. Other locations include Allen, TX and Knoxville, TN, along with Orlando, Winter Haven, FL, Trinity, FL and St. Petersburg which are also in the works. Majestic's other concepts include Ling's Dumplings and HAN Hand Roll Bar.

# What's Going On from page 8

EPA regulations. "Hypochlorous acid is a powerful, versatile disinfectant and sanitizer that's gained significant attention in recent years. With its ability to effectively kill bacteria, viruses, and fungi, while being safe for humans and the environment, HOCl is becoming increasingly popular in various industries, including healthcare, foodservice, hospitality, and more," said Morten Larsen, CEO & Founder of EcoloxTech.

**Florida's 1st Wawa drive-thru will open in Largo.** The new concept will not have gas or pre-packaged items found at the regular Wawas, but instead feature a limited menu centered around the chain's deli sandwiches, and a few other menu items. This one is part of the chain's plan to double its footprint and open 100 new locations around the country by 2030.



Kris Falkner

**Server**, a food and beverage technology leader in the foodservice equipment category has introduced its proprietary Core FourSM platform as it is nearing 75 years of innovation. Led by third-generation Chairwoman and CEO Kris Falkner, Server is committed to reimagining foodservice equipment smallwares — leading to its redefinition of smart-capable and smart-enabled

smallwares foodservice equipment backed by its inventive Core FourSM Platform. With a long history of industry-changing firsts and recent company achievements, Server's dedication to fostering a dynamic company culture is defined by a spirit of intelligence by design. Visit the company online at [www.server-products.com](http://www.server-products.com)

Filippo Berti, Chairman and CEO of the Ali Group, has announced that **Ryan Blackman has been named VP of Marketing and Communications for the Ali Group**, effective immediately. In this role, Blackman will be responsible for all of the Ali Group's marketing, communications, branding, media and public relations in North America. He will remain managing editor of the company's annual Aliworld magazine, and will also continue to oversee the company's online presence. In 2010, he was named Director of Marketing and Communications for the Ali Group, a position he held until 2022, when he was promoted to Senior Director of Marketing and Communications. "Ryan's commitment and knowledge of marketing strategies have been instrumental in helping the Ali Group grow and become what it is today," Berti said.

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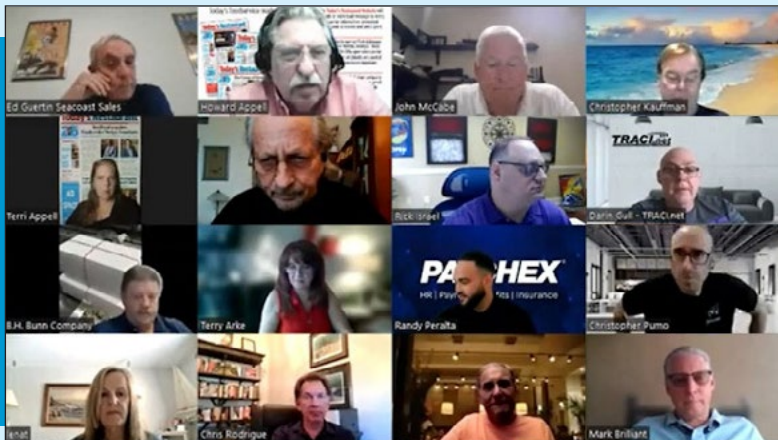
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