VOLUME 27

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ALD Kitchen celebrates 10 year anniversary



Smoke-free air entices custiomers to stay longer



Elliano's Coffee celebrates 20 year anniversary



Research shows more restaurants are using pre-made food



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# 2022 small business projections for the hospitality industry



Everyone is grappling with inflation, which stems from underlying issues that are important to address.

By Ben Johnston

Chief Operating Officer of Kapitus

No industries faced greater challenges during the pandemic than hospitality and travel. While we expect COVID levels to decline in the U.S. in 2022, we see new travel preferences limiting growth for traditional players like airlines, hotels and cruises. We expect some of our COVID vacationing habits to remain such as driving (vs. flying), camping or staying in an Airbnb (vs. a hotel) and avoiding long, crowded trips (like cruises and other types of international travel). On the plus side, many long-delayed weddings will finally take place, bringing important revenue to caterers, florists and wedding venues.

It has also been a challenging two years for the restaurant industry but 2022 holds real promise for those who have thus-far survived the pandemic. Today's restaurants are battle-hardened and flexible, able to handle both in-person and delivery while marketing themselves in new and creative ways. We expect COVID levels to decline this spring and to have less of an impact on consumer behavior in 2022 than it has in years past. Those restaurants still standing will experience reduced competition and an eager customer base waiting for them.

### Challenges facing small businesses in the hospitality industry:

Inflation: The US inflation rate surged in 2021 led by the energy and automotive sectors. Other raw materials also surged during the summer months but then cooled as supply chain issues began to improve. While we expect inflation to remain higher in 2022 than the recent historical average, we believe that planned Federal Reserve rate hikes, increased investments in energy production and repairs to the supply chain will combine to cool inflation in the latter half of the year. Lower inflation is generally preferrable for small businesses which struggle to pass on higher costs of goods and labor to their customers without negatively impacting demand.

Small businesses should keep an eye on the Federal Reserve to gauge how aggressively it chooses to implement rate hikes as these actions could have a significant impact on consumer prices and economic growth in the coming year.

Everyone is grappling with inflation, which stems from underlying issues that are important to address. Certainly, coming out of the pandemic, demand has increased. But the supply of labor coming back into the market has not increased at the level required

See SMALL BUSINESS page 14

# Carpigiani launches combination soft serve/shake machine

Carpigiani North America's Model UF920 soft serve and shake machine offers highest production in it's class and 42-day cleaning cycle

High Point, NC – Carpigiani, an Ali Group Company, and global leader in the production of equipment for fresh ice cream, gelato, and pastry is pleased to introduce the best-in-class model UF920, a versatile combination soft serve and shake machine developed for high-volume foodservice operations. The UF920 has an impressively rated 42-day cleaning cycle, specifically designed to meet the industry's labor-saving needs.

"Carpigiani has engineered the highest production gravity fed combination soft serve and shake machine in the industry today," said Penny Klingler, President Carpigiani North America. The new model UF920 will produce up to 960 - 4 oz servings per hour of ice cream, soft serve, gelato, sorbet, frozen custard or plant-based recipes or up to 60



gallons of shakes per hour or a combination of soft and shake all in a one machine.

"This versatile model UF920 is a game changer for high-volume ice cream shops, quick service restaurants and concessions," continued Klingler.

The UF920 can be customized to the configuration that meets each customer's unique specifications. Each of the two cylinders can be programmed to produce either soft serve, ice cream, gelato, sorbet, frozen custard or various shake products, from thick to thin. The option of an onboard spindle mixer provides for unlimited flavoring and mix-in options to expand menu items and seasonal limited time offerings. "In one operationally simplistic machine, foodservice operators will

See CARPIGIANI page 13



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# NEWS What's Going On

#### Important new products, corporate news and industry events

For three days in August the Western Foodservice & Hospitality Expo and **Coffee Fest Los Angeles** will showcase hundreds of leading vendors demonstrating and sampling the newest food products, technology and equipment for the restau-

rant, foodservice, specialty beverage and hospitality markets at the Los Angeles Convention Center from Sunday, August 28 through Tuesday, August 30. The Western Foodservice & Hospitality Expo is sponsored by the California Restaurant Association, and produced and managed by Clarion Events, Inc., a global leader in trade show management.

Cheney Brothers broke ground in April for a 367,427-square-foot facility for its first phase of its distribution and

food storage warehouse facility in Legacy Park at Tradition, in Port St Lucie. The company plans to employ a local workforce of over 255. Cheney Brothers,



Smokin' Oak Wood-Fired Pizza & Taproom, the fastest-growing wood-fired pizza franchise in the U.S., has opened its first in Florida. The new restaurant is located at 13180 Cortez Blvd. in Brooksville. This will be a true family-run business, locally-owned and operated by Rod and Cat Scott and managed by their adult children, Anthony and Brittany. "We are thankful to have our first location in our home state of Florida opened by such passionate local owners as Rod and Cat," said Matt Mongoven, CEO and Co-Founder of Fourth Avenue Restaurant Group, the Franchisor

of Smokin' Oak Wood-Fired Pizza. "The local Brooksville community has been extremely welcoming to our restaurant concept and we are confident they will fall in love with our wood-fired menu items and self-serve Taproom wall." More units are in the works. For more information visit www.smokinoakpizza.com.

a Florida-based food-service distributor, is in its fourth generation of family-owned operation. It purchased the Pate Dawson Company in 2016, adding facilities in North Carolina in Statesville, Goldsboro and Greensboro. Cheney Brothers – cheneybrothers.com - has been serving the Southeast and the World Since 1925.

> ParTech, Inc.. a global restaurant technology company building a unified commerce cloud platform for enterprise restaurants, has acquired the Techknow multi-sensor

drive-thru timer to expand their drive-thru solutions in the restaurant technology space. Techknow - gotechknow. com - is a drive-thru management solution for quick service restaurants (QSRs) that uses drive-thru timer systems and analytical software to improve operational performance. The

Techknow multi-sensor drive-thru timer enhances the drive-thru experience by improving communications between QSRs and their customers, giving operators real-time access to manage quick and responsive

customer service and enhance employee satisfaction. Visit them online at Partech.com.

The Peach Cobbler Factory's President of PCF Franchising LLC, Greg George, has announced multiple multiunit agreements in the state of Florida. The company announced a total of 10 new locations which will be built in Santa Rosa Beach, Navarre Beach, Orlando, Destin, Winter Park, Buena Vista, Fort Walton Beach, Gainesville, Daytona Beach and New Smyrna Beach. Visit peachcobblerfactory.com.



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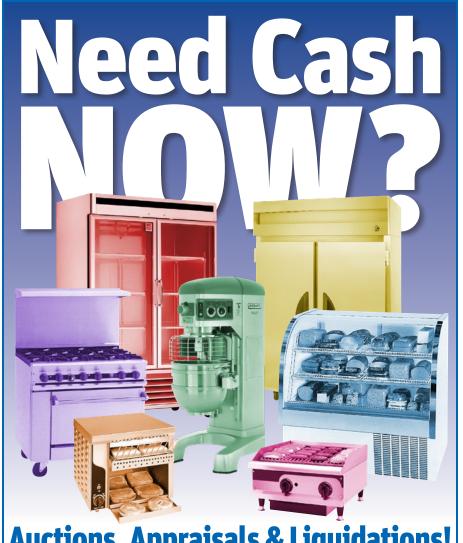
of over 300 distributors and dealers. Driven to create solutions to improve people's quality of life, ifi combines innovation, food science research,

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# **Appell Pie**

#### The Pros & Cons of Zoom

Howard Appell ◆ Today's Restaurant Publisher

When you described a fast car a supersonic jet of a fast runner you probably used the word zoom. "That Chevy took off and zoom, he was gone" That's the way most people would have used zoom. The year 2020 changed the world and the usage of the word Zoom. According to Wikipedia Zoom was created in 2011 and it was a financial hit by 2013 but 2020 really saw it take off.

"Zoom Video Communications, Inc. (commonly shortened to Zoom, and stylized as zoom) is an American communications technology company headquartered in San Jose, California. It provides videotelephony and online chat services through a cloud-based peer-to-peer software platform used for video communications (Meetings), messaging (Chat), voice calls (Phone), conference rooms for video meetings (Rooms), virtual events (Events) and contact centers (Contact Center), and offers an open platform allowing third-party developers to build custom applications on its unified communications platform (Developer Platform).

Eric Yuan, a former Cisco engineer and executive, founded Zoom in 2011, and launched its software in 2013. Zoom's revenue growth, and perceived ease-of-use and reliability of its software, resulted in a \$1 billion valuation in 2017, making it a "unicorn" company. The company first became profitable in 2019, and completed an initial public offering that year. The company joined the NASDAQ-100 stock index on April 30, 2020.

Beginning in early 2020, Zoom's software usage saw a remarkable global increase after quarantine measures were adopted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Its software products have faced public and media scrutiny related to security and privacy issues"

The popularity of video meetings has exploded and it has its Pros and Cons, some of them include:

#### Cons

Most sales people I speak to use Zoom but they miss the personal meeting and shaking somebody's hand while looking them in the eye. Showing sales material is now regulated to Power Point presentations on Zoom. I was able to meet a Zoom contact for lunch towards the end of 2021 and if you use Zoom, you see your contact from the chest up and I think we all have a pre conceived idea of what the person in the box really looks, so when I walked in to the restaurant and he stood up and all 6'5" of him said hello it shocked me for a second because I pictured him as a much shorter person.

Zoom has eliminated working in an office environment and having team members around all day to interact with. Now, for some, this is a Con as office space is no longer needed and a large monthly expense can be either eliminated or reduced.

#### **Pros**

Zoom allows some employees to maximize their productive time by cutting out or reducing commuting time.

Zoom helps to expand sales areas and networking opportunities. Prior to COVID, TRN hosted a lunch meeting in Boca Raton twice a month. Meetings started at noon and ran for one hour while lunch was served. In order to be there for the start of the meeting some members had to leave thirty to forty minutes to get to Boca and it prohibited potential members from Miami for example to get there and participate without using a full morning. Our Zoom groups have expanded our membership geographically to allow members from Florida, Georgia, California, Texas, Louisiana, New England, New York, The Carolinas and even Canada to meet every week.

I invite you to send me any other Pros and Cons that you feel have changed your business life and I also invite you to join us at our Network Meetings every Friday at 9AM or 11AM Eastern time-zone. Restaurant owners, managers and chefs who want to meet new vendors or need to resolve a problem in their business and feel they need professional help are always welcome. For your invitation simply send me an email with your meeting choice and full contact information howard@trnusa. com See you on Zoom.

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# New ServSafe Ops App drives operational efficiency for the hospitality industry

The customizable technology empowers restaurant employees and offers measurable results to restaurant owners

"Hiring and onboarding employees is harder than ever, and staff expect clear communication about their responsibilities."

Chicago, Il - Running a restaurant takes a lot of coordination. From the front of the house to back of the house, from managers to dish washers, there are details for which every employee is responsible. Operators looking for every advantage are turning to technology to codify and simplify their training and execution to gain efficiencies. The new ServSafe® Ops app automates a

is imperative to the future of the hospitality industry.

ServSafe, the premier provider of educational resources, materials, and programs that help attract and develop a strong restaurant workforce amassed their knowledge and experience in creating an application that leverages technology to standardize daily operating procedures and enhance an operation's efficiency.

The ServSafe Ops application was developed through a partnership with WorkMerk, a Philadelphia based technology company. The combined hospitality expertise of the leaders of the respective organizations created an app "for restaurant people, by restaurant people."

"Hiring and onboarding employees is harder than ever, and staff expect clear communication about their responsibilities," said Sherman Brown, executive vice president of business aligns with strategic initiatives by providing verification of task completion, consistency in system wide messaging and enterprise metrics.

"WorkMerk is proud to work with the ServSafe in the creation of ServSafe Ops," said John New, chief executive officer of WorkMerk. "The hospitality industry thrives on standard operating procedures and workforce engagement. Through the digitization of those efforts, we can empower the most powerful workforce in the world who have the incredible responsibility of ensuring food safety for all of us. This customizable application is providing measurable ROI to companies and restaurant groups of all sizes."

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#### EMPOWERING WINNING HABITS

restaurant's standard operating procedures (SOPs) and, at a time when it's harder than ever to engage their workforce, it places productivity in the hands of all employees.

According to the National Restaurant Association 2022 State of the Restaurant Industry Report, for roughly half of operators, recruitment and retention is their top challenge. Restauranteurs are seeking efficiencies in operations that will allow them to focus their efforts on recruitment, efficient onboarding, and ongoing education that builds tenure. With the knowledge that 8 in 10 restaurant owners started their industry careers in entry-level positions, this focus

services for the National Restaurant Association. "The ServSafe Ops app was created to respond to these needs, while helping to maintain a culture of food safety. The app puts valuable training and information in the hands of restaurant staff and provides the data needed to efficiently manage day-to-day operations."

ServSafe Ops empowers the winning habits of hospitality workers using "nudging," digitization of daily tasks to drive performance, issue reporting and resolution, ongoing training, and access to vital brand specific information. The customizable application enhances a culture of safety and



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# A ten year journey from café to manufacturing

#### ALD Kitchen celebrates 10 year anniversary with new custom-mold pop-stick waffle makers

Los Angeles, CA - ALD Kitchen is celebrated its 10th anniversary in April, and brings out an new range of Stick Waffle Makers for high-end restaurants, function centers, and others who want to eat on the go to be able to make this popular dessert that is big in the industry.

This dessert, also known as Babycake Waffles, is shaped like a Christmas Tree and served with a variety of toppings such as chocolate, ice cream, fruit, and peanut butter. ALD Kitchen's Stick Waffle Makers are designed to cook six small or four big waffles and ensure that the cooking process is fast and easy, taking no more than five minutes. This is the revolutionary machine takes cooking experiences to the next level.

The story of ALD Kitchen as a supplier of quality and affordable commercial cooking equipment to the restaurant industry has been 10 years in the making. It is a journey that has seen the company's products become synonymous with that mark of excellence and durability that chefs rely on in the restaurant trade, and are indispensable when it comes to customer service and reliability.

Now, as ALD Kitchen enters 2022, the company is launching an exciting new range of machines dedicated to making pop-stick waffles.

American-owned and -operated, ALD Kitchen's emergence as a prominent global supplier of wholesale machines is no mere accident. The business was formed through the creative minds of owners Dillon Mykalo and Vladi Mia who opened a small restaurant in South Miami specializing in innovative Asian cuisine. Determined to build a successful business, they realized that they faced a lack of equipment

within the industry asked them to make machines specifically manufactured for the making of traditional Spanish desserts. From those initial inquiries, ALD Kitchen has developed into a company that works with over 10,000 restaurants throughout the USA, Canada, and beyond.

Before Mykalo and Mia's foray into the marketplace, there were only two options available to business.

Both were problematic for North American and global clientele. Firstly, there was the high-cost route from

Europe that offered little in the way of diversity of products and was barely able to meet the emerging trends of a highly competitive dessert indus-

try. Secondly, there were the cheap

Asian imports that continually broke down and meant kitchens could be out of action for weeks at a time.

To overcome these problems that can severely impact a company's capabilities and ultimately their bottom line, ALD Kitchen searched for a solution that would bring that much-needed assurance to the catering industry. Assimilating its production lines with the big manufacturers allowed the company to keep its build costs low while ensuring that outwardly its machines have that air of distinction. The genius of the design, however, is that all the internal componentry is individually sourced and superior to what customers normally experience, thereby achieving a standard that is beyond compare.

Using the best thermostats, heating elements, motors, 304 or 201 stainless steel with a minimum thickness of 0.8mm, ALD Kitchen's range includes waffle makers of all varieties, churro makers, donut machines, takoyaki makers, and so much more. With every machine equipped with a three-layer nonstick coating from a leading brand, they are ready to use and custom-designed to unleash the potential and creativity that every kitchen requires to stay at the top of its game.

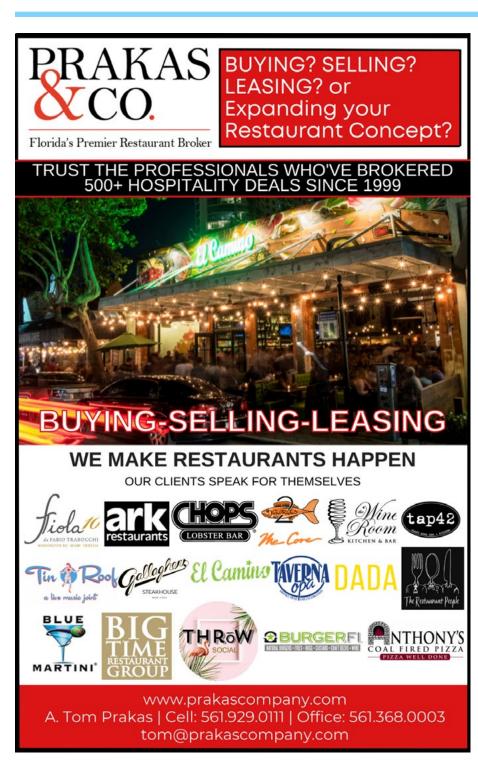
ALD Kitchen also guarantees honest low prices and will always keep them at a level that will ensure that clients get value for their money in a world of constantly shifting price pressures.

ALD Kitchen understands that is not just the machines that are its only assets. The ALD Kitchen team members and their devotion to customer service is the essential ingredient that has seen the company establish itself beyond the average wholesaler. Communication is key and, whether it be by email or with a real person on the telephone, the company will cater to its clients' every need.

No matter the size of the restaurant, from the boutique local eatery to huge commercial operations, they can become part of the ALD Kitchen family.

necessary for the preparation of some dishes. They wanted to work smarter, not harder, and the world of commercial cookery is all about maximizing efficiencies, cost-saving, and producing food that sits at the pinnacle of the dining experience.

That initial dive into procuring and designing professional equipment for themselves soon transformed into a fully-fledged business as friends





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# Smoke-free air entices customers to stay longer and order more

Commercial-grade air purifiers keep customers comfortable, so they indulge in dessert, cocktails and other add-ons

Racine, WI - For restaurants, too much accumulated indoor tobacco and food prep smoke and odor can become a serious problem that drives away customers and creates an unhealthy environment for employees. Even when smoking is designated to certain sections of a restaurant, the smoke can drift to common areas creating an uncomfortable environment for all.

Patrons who are sensitive to smoke or concerned about their health will be quickest to avoid restaurants that do not adequately handle this issue. Employees may be forced to find other, more healthy work environments. Even smokers will frequent an establishment less often and if they cannot enjoy its culinary tastes and aromas because they are sitting in a cloud of smoke that overpowers all subtlety.

Left unaddressed, smoke can even discolor a restaurant's furnishings and a strong smoke odor can become difficult and costly to remove, creating a less than desirable environment.

One effective solution for restaurants is to install advanced air purification systems known as "smoke eaters" that filter large volumes of air quietly to remove both smoke and odors. In doing so, all customers can enjoy a more pleasurable experience that encourages



lingering, ordering dessert and another cocktail or glass of wine. The approach also enables all diners to savor subtle nuances in the restaurant's offerings, which encourages sampling appetizers and menu favorites.

In restaurants, cleaner air allows customers to enjoy their dining experience more fully. Every appetizer, entree, dessert, or beverage has its own complex mix of flavors and aromas. Wines and alcoholic beverages in particular are purchased at many different price points and can comprise a significant part of a restaurant's sales profits, along with other add-on purchases. Clean, odor-free air allows the qualities of fine

cuisine and beverages to be fully appreciated, so customers ultimately purchase more. These factors increase bill totals and profitability.

Restauranteurs, employees, and their customers can see and smell the difference that the smoke eaters make when units clear the smoke from the air in dining areas.

Extended exposure to smoke can also lead to physical discomfort, even for regular smokers. Over time, smoke can burn their eyes and get into their hair and clothes. This can cause even some smokers to spend less time in the establishment.

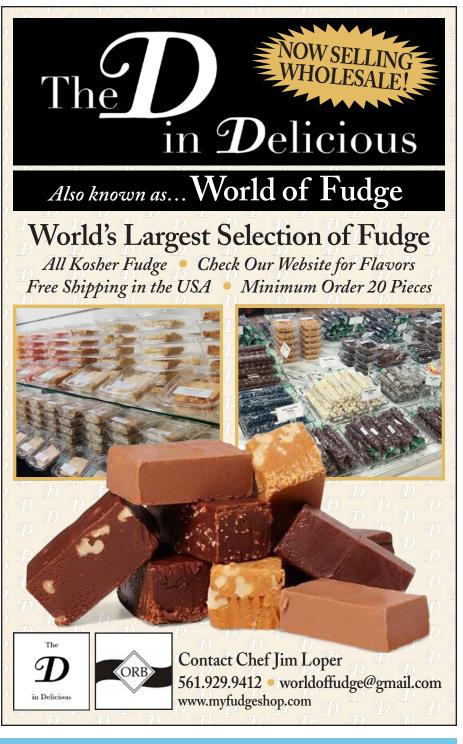
Opening doors and windows can



help but is insufficient by itself. To improve the customer experience, a growing number of restauranteurs, particularly those that sell upscale products, are purifying the air and protecting their furnishings with advanced "smoke eater" air filtration.

About the company: Racine WI-based LakeAir, a manufacturer of commercial and residential air filtration systems has been in business since 1968. The company consults with restauranteurs to determine the best air filtration for their establishments based on the physical layout, square footage, and expected number of customers, employees, and smokers. For greater aesthetic appeal, some of the most popular smoke eater air purifiers mount flush to the ceiling within the ceiling panel grid. For more information call 800.558.9436 or visit the company website at www.lakeair.com.





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## Ellianos Coffee celebrates 20 year anniversary

Lake City, Florida – Ellianos Coffee, a dominant specialty-coffee brand in the southeast United States, is celebrating twenty years of serving their incredible customers *Italian Quality at America's Pace!* To commemorate the special anniversary, Ellianos will be hosting giveaways throughout the month of April and releasing a special anniversary drink.

The first Ellianos
Coffee store opened
on April 5th, 2002,
in Lake City,
Florida, and was
well-received.

The Ellianos Coffee story first began twenty years ago when coffee aficionados Scott and Pam Stewart noticed the exploding drive-thru specialty-coffee industry during a trip to the Pacific Northwest. They returned home with the idea of bringing the Northwest coffeehouse tradition to the Southeast and started working to make their vision a reality. After months of planning, hard work, and dedication, Scott and Pam's dream came to fruition - their dream of opening a drive-thru coffeehouse in their town was now standing in front of them. The first Ellianos Coffee store opened on April 5th, 2002, in Lake City, Florida, and was well-received. The community's residents fell in love with the coffee, excellent customer service, and the convenient concept. Ellianos Coffee began franchising in 2003, and these simple principles - outstanding quality and exceptional, timely customer service - are still found at the very core of the family-owned business.

Scott reflects with pride over the past twenty years, stating, "Ellianos Coffee didn't happen overnight. It has resulted from an exciting dream, a lot of hard work, determination, and most importantly, a family of great people. Ellianos has always been much more than the stores or coffee - it's always been about the people that make it all possible. From the hardworking baristas in our stores, amazing franchisees, and loyal customers, every face makes Ellianos what it is today. We couldn't celebrate twenty years without saying 'Thank you!'"

There's no better way to celebrate twenty years than with cake! To commemorate such a momentous anniversary, Ellianos is releasing a special drink, The Cake Shake, available at Ellianos Coffee locations starting April 5th. The shake boasts notes of sweet vanilla swirled with cupcake flavoring and infused with rainbow sprinkles, available with or without coffee. Make plans to stop by your nearest Ellianos location to try The Cake Shake, and follow Ellianos on Facebook and Instagram to be a part of the giveaways they will be hosting throughout the month.

About Ellianos Coffee: Ellianos Coffee is a rapidly growing drive-thru coffee franchise founded on the principles of exceptional quality and excellent, convenient customer service - truly, Italian Quality at America's Pace! Since launching Ellianos in 2002, Scott and Pam Stewart have continued their dedicated work of expanding the franchise while making everyone feel like they are a part of the family. There are currently over twenty operating store locations with several other locations on deck to open their doors in the coming years.

Advertise in Today's Restaurant call: 561.620.8888

# Find the right business coach for you

#### By Derek Goodman

Business coaches can do a lot for entrepreneurs, whether it's teaching them how to develop new skills or giving them a sounding board to bounce ideas off of. Even business owners who have been in the game for a while can benefit from a coach, so if you've been feeling stuck in a rut, need to come up with a new marketing strategy, or need some motivation, consider hiring a like-minded professional who can help you meet a few goals. Here are a few things to think about when you're ready to get the process started:

There are many qualified coaches out there, but only a handful might be the right fit for your needs...

#### Come prepared

If you'd like to do some legwork on your own to find a great business coach, set a few networking goals in the coming weeks. Head out to conferences, conventions, and other events where you might meet someone who

fits the bill. Just make sure you come prepared with a few opening lines and a memorable business card so you can stand out and separate yourself from the crowd. You don't have to spend a ton of money on a professional designer; use a free business card maker that offers a premade template. These allow you to customize the card with your branding info and color choices. You can also think up an interesting elevator pitch or two just in case you run into a potential investor or someone who might be interested in a partnership, as networking events are great places to do so.

#### Find the right fit

There are many qualified coaches out there, but only a handful might be the right fit for your needs, and you may not have any luck at networking events. That's okay! There are other ways to find a great coach. Start by thinking about what your specific needs are and narrow down the choices by industry. Then, consider asking for a referral from other business owners who have been down this path before, or utilize social media platforms—such as LinkedIn—to reach out to professional friends for tips.

Once you have a few names, do a little research online; any legitimate business coach will have a website full of info, and many will have customer reviews and testimonials that will help you make a decision. Start a conversation about your needs and ask if they

can offer a free consultation so the two of you can meet up and make sure you'll work well together. Your first meeting should include plenty of back-andforths, as they'll need to ask you questions to make sure you're a good fit for them, as well. Be wary of a coach who takes you on as a client without finding out first what your specific needs are.

#### Stay open to new tools

When working with someone new, it's important to stay open to their ideas and to the possibility of utilizing new tech and online tools. Once you find the right business coach, make sure you get an idea of the kinds of tools they suggest you use within your business. Resources that can help you and your team stay on top of different tasks are invaluable, such as a process map template. This is a great way for everyone to stay organized and to process the outcomes of each project, which will help you reset your goals if necessary.

#### **Keep expectations realistic**

Once you've found the right fit with a business coach, it's crucial to keep your expectations realistic when it comes to both the process and the end result. It can take months to see any real results, and that doesn't mean they aren't doing their job. As long as you both keep communication open throughout, you'll have peace of mind that things are on the right track.

#### **Evaluate your options**

Every business coach will vary when it comes to their methods, the cost of their services, and how much time they'll spend working with you. For many business owners, hiring a coach can be hugely beneficial in the long run, but if you don't have the cash flow at the moment, take stock of your specific needs and evaluate how you can change things on your own first.

For instance, many entrepreneurs need more flexibility in the way they run their businesses, or they want to take advantage of a few tax benefits. Forming the right structure can help with both of those things, and the process is as simple as hiring a formation service to file the LLC paperwork. There are some fees involved, but you can save quite a bit of money on attorney's fees by doing it this way. Read up on the process for starting a Florida LLC, as every state has different guidelines.

Hiring a business coach is a great move if you're feeling stuck or overwhelmed, and as long as you ensure the working relationship is a strong one, you'll find success even if it takes a bit longer than you anticipated.

About the Author: Derek Goodman is an entrepreneur. He'd always wanted to make his own future, and he knew growing his own business was the only way to do that. He created his site Inbizability, to offer you tips, tricks, and resources so that you realize your business ability and potential now, not later. Contact Derek by email at info@inbizability.com or visit his company website at Inbizability.com.

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### What's Going

engineering, technology, and design to create people-centric displays and

equipment that elevate food conservation, display, hygiene, and functionality. ifi America was established in 2014 to service growing demand from customers in North America. With an expansion of dealers, distributors, ser-



vice, and logistics infrastructure that began in 2019, ifi America has been introducing its internationally acclaimed, Italian-designed, award-winning food displays, bar/counter systems, and front-of-house design services to a wide range of shops selling gelato, & ice cream, pastries & bakery, chocolates & pralines, coffee & tea, delis and concessions, and restaurants & pizza. ifi America is headquartered in Miami, and is led by Giovanni Montanelli. Visit ifamerica.com.

Kari-Out Company, a leading manufacturer, importer, and nationwide distributor of paper, aluminum, recyclable food containers and food ingredients in the restaurant takeout industry, has acquired Paper Bags USA based in New Brunswick, NJ. With more states across the United States banning single-use plastic bags, the need for paper shopping bags

continues to grow. According to Future Market Insights, The U.S. paper bag

> market is projected to hit over seven billion dollars in sales by 2030. The acquisition expands Kari-Out's focus on paper packaging and complements the company's vast import network with new domestic production. "With this new facility, we will be able

to service our customers faster and with a higher level of supply security," said David Epstein Vice President for Kari-Out.

Mark Schnurman, owner of Franchising Force, has published The Perfect Franchise. The Perfect Franchise is a guide to help people explore franchising and provides clear and actionable steps to help people find

the right franchise fit. The Perfect Franchise is available at amazon.com. If you are interested in exploring franchise ownership or franchising your company, please contact him at mark@ franchisingforce.com or 973-452-4558.



North Carolina Restaurant and **Lodging Association** (NCRLA) has named Bonnie Davis one of the 2022 Stars of the Industry. Davis, who works at the 3029 Gate City Boulevard location in Greensboro, is a shift leader with more than 33 years of experience in the restaurant industry. She is one of only four award recipients from across the state to be recognized by NCRLA as a 2022 Star of the Industry in the Restaurant Employee of the Year

Biscuitville announced that the

category. Nominees for the prestigious annual award were evaluated based on

their outstanding leadership qualities, awe-inspiring community outreach, and exceptional service and character. Biscuitville employs over 2,000 people and operates 68 restaurants in North Carolina and Virginia. For more information about Biscuitville Fresh Southern® visit Biscuitville.com.

> Through Rouxbe's Culinary Foundation program, organizations can now choose which lessons to assign their employees depending on existing skills and immediate kitchen needs. This new modular approach is designed for the current state of the industry, as many restaurants and hospitality organizations struggle to staff their es-

tablishments, being able to teach employees what they need, quickly and efficiently, is critical. These custom paths are chosen by management and include everything from knife skills and food safety to pastry basics and dry heat cooking. These changes are a result of working with and listening to our partners to help them run their businesses as smoothly as possible in today's hospitality environment. In addition, their enterprise program includes Plantbased Foundations, Baking & Pastry, Seafood Literacy and Food Waste (in partnership with the James Beard Foundation). Visit rouxbe.com/ industry-training.

Berner International, New Castle, Pa., a North American leading air curtain manufacturer and innovator, has introduced the Architectural Elite, the debuting model of Berner's new Architectural Collection, which has the most revolutionary and beautiful cabinet redesigns in air curtain history. The patented Architectural Elite air curtain combines the air curtain industry's decades-old energy savings and thermal comfort protection performance with today's industry-leading controls platform and efficient, quiet electronically commutated (EC) motors. The Architectural Elite's patented geometric, balanced shape is inspired by the Golden Ratio, which is a radical departure from the industry's century of rectangular boxy cabinet designs. The triangular shape targets U.S. and Canadian architects, interior designers and business owners searching for a quiet, functional air curtain performance that matches today's retail, restaurant, hotel, and hospital doorway

> design aesthetics. Visit berner.com.

"I thought there should be a simple way for patrons to adjust the temperature when dining in a

booth," said an inventor, from Moses Lake, Wash., "so I invented the **Temperature Regulating Restaurant** Booth. My design could make eating in a restaurant booth more enjoyable." The patent-pending invention provides added comfort when sitting in a restaurant booth. In doing so, it could contribute to greater customer satisfaction. It also could increase revenue for an establishment. The original design was submitted to the Ottawa sales office of InventHelp. Learn more about InventHelp's Invention Submission Services at www.InventHelp.com.

The National Restaurant Association understands the challenges faced by restaurant operators in today's conditions. "As an advocate for the restaurant industry, let us be a resource as you navigate decisions to benefit your business." The Association's suite of member-exclusive products offers discounts on traditional health insurance, customized programs for small restaurant operators and Telemedicine options for Part-Time and Seasonal Employees . Ask your broker or get an online quote to compare pricing and learn about the different plans. Have questions? Schedule time with National Restaurant Association's Health Care expert, Clinton Wolf, SVP of Health and Insurance, for a one on one meeting or visit https://restauranthealthcare.org.

Today's Restaurant News is looking for new vendors who supply a service or a product to the restaurant industry to participate in the TRN Networking groups on Zoom every Friday at 9AM or 11AM. Only one company per category is allowed and members are located in Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, N. Carolina, S. Carolina, New York, Boston and Canada. Restaurant owners, managers and chefs are welcome to attend anytime to meet the members. For more information visit www.trnusa.com/networking-group or call us at 561.620.8888.



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# Research shows more restaurants are using pre-made foods — which ones?

As restaurants head into the third year of an industry-changing pandemic coupled with dramatic labor shortages, they're beginning to make longer term decisions to help them make the most of the labor they do have while still providing high quality food and service. That's reflected in an increase in premade food items they're ordering from their purchasing partners.

Buyers Edge Platform is a digital procurement network that leverages data and technology to help restaurants save money on everything from tomatoes to tablecloths. Buyers Edge Platform looked at more than \$10 billion in restaurant purchases by American restaurants in the last six months and found that less labor-intensive food items are gaining in popularity.

#### **Specifically:**

- Orders for frozen premade soups and soup bases are up 54.45%
- Orders for refrigerated premade soups are up 34.33%
- Restaurants are ordering more premade beverage bar mixers, up 32.34%
- Orders for frozen dessert products are up 32.33%
- Orders for frozen appetizers are up 31.66%
- Orders for gravy and gravy bases are up 25.34%



Here's an expert interview source on the topic - Christina Davie Donahue, Buyers Edge Platform.

"Operators are realizing that there are places for scratch cooking, and places where not everything needs to be made from scratch," said Buyers Edge Platform President Christina Davie Donahue. "But that doesn't mean they are sacrificing on quality. In fact, many of the premade items they



This may mean that operators will put a bigger investment in time saving products to free up even more valuable labor.

are ordering can be customized into signature dishes.

Chefs can add some of their own fresh ingredients to a premade soup base or gravy and still have a dish they can be proud of. Some people call this speed scratch cooking.

The key is that operators are recognizing that there may be better ways to use the valuable labor they have in order to get the best products on the table. They're thinking more about where their labor is adding the most value to their restaurant. Is having someone hand squeeze limes making a huge difference in your bar sales? Or could that time be saved for more productive activities by buying premade lime juice or margarita mix?

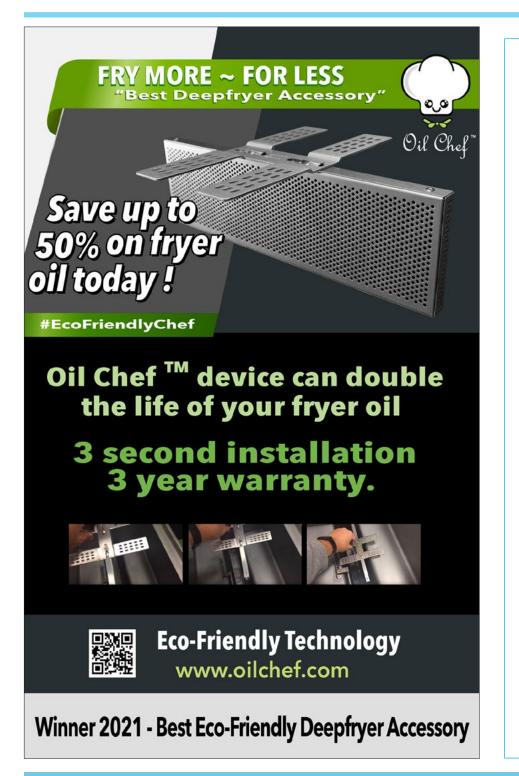
This may mean that operators will put a bigger investment in time saving products to free up even more valuable labor. For years, operators only thought about the bottom line of their purchases, buying the food items that cost the least. But now they're also thinking about the bottom line of their labor. It's a finite resource that needs to be managed as well."

Davie Donahue can talk about the trend toward more labor-saving foods, and also talk about concerns in the industry over "Premade" items.

Traditionally people may have perceived a stigma over premade items as being lower quality.

But food manufacturers are doing a much better job of creating items that are easy to prepare without skimping on quality.

About Buyers Edge Platform: Buyers Edge Platform is a digital procurement network that leverages data and technology to help restaurants save money on everything from tomatoes to tablecloths. https://buyersedgeplatform.com/



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### Getting the ingredients right when building a niche food concept

Specialization can be lucrative for any business and it's especially successful in the food industry, which is so large and diverse. Building a niche lets you stand out and be unique, and you can gain traction quickly if you are specialized in one area. At Graze Craze, we were able to carve out our own niche in the charcuterie space, putting our own stamp on the grazing trend that we could see was growing in popularity. But working in a new concept, as we did, offers some challenges.

You first have to educate the public about what you actually do and who you are. Pizza and burgers are long-established niches that people are very familiar with, but in our situation, the charcuterie board idea is pretty new. Not everybody knows what charcuterie is – a lot of people can't even pronounce it. (It's shar-COOT-eree, by the way.)

Getting it right when building a niche food concept takes careful planning, analysis and thoughtful consideration of everything from demographics to the way you evolve and grow. Here's some of what we've learned at Graze Craze:

Make sure you appeal to a lot of different people.

When choosing the niche you want to serve, don't rely on a particular demographic; that's where you get in trouble. You need to look at whether there is diversity in the customers who are attracted to what you're providing. If you're only going after millennials or one segment of a demographic group, you could be jumping on a fad that will eventually fade away. If you are diverse in who you are targeting, that will give you staying power and broaden your appeal to a wider customer base.

Expect to evolve – but stay true to vourself.

Not every niche works, and for those that have failed it's usually because the brand didn't evolve. Often times people will get to market, get a good foothold on their business and continue doing what they always do by just resting on their laurels. It's a fine line, continuing to grow and evolve to be better but not straying too far from what made you successful. You still have to stay true to who you are.

Don't overcomplicate. Make sure that you are keeping it simple.

When building a niche food concept, it is important in the beginning to keep the model simple. Think about your audience and what the most important elements are in your concept.

The charcuterie business is a \$378 million industry that is ripe for growth. We believe that the popularity of charcuterie boards is here to stay. Graze Craze will be the name synonymous with charcuterie. People will say they want a Graze Craze Board, and not just because it's easier to pronounce.

About the Author: Brady Lee is President of Graze Craze®, a booming new concept in charcuterie boards and boxes for healthy lunches, of-

fice catering and special events. He is also Chief Operating Officer of United Franchise GroupTM (UFG), an affiliated family of brands and consultants including Graze Craze®. Lee started his career at a Signarama® franchise located in Tallahassee before joining the UFG headquarters team. He has held a number of positions at UFG focused on franchise development in both the U.S. and Australia, including Regional Manager, Vice President of Franchise Development and Director of Sales in the Australia Corporate Headquarters.

#### Carpigiani from page 1

be able to rapidly serve a variety of excellent quality products with peak performance," said Kami Poppen, Vice President, Sales & Marketing Carpigiani North America. This unique model is also available in a pressurized version for operators seeking a high overrun, creamier textured products.

"Labor savings, capacity and total cost of ownership are at the top of operators concerns," continued Klingler. The high-performance heat treatment cycle featured in the UF920 supports safe, high quality product production for 42 days before cleaning. "The annual labor and materials savings of this longer cleaning cycle is an average of \$3,000 which will pay for the machine during its life," said Klingler. "At Carpigiani North America, we are proud to introduce this new technology and manufacturing excellence assembled in North Carolina, leading our industry in serving the unique needs of operators in today's environment." Tp

About Carpigiani: Established in 1946 in Italy, Carpigiani has an unrivaled market position, thanks to its high standards, top-quality products, customer service and technological innovation. The company supports its equipment with a worldwide network of highly skilled sales and service technicians. The premier brand name in frozen-dessert machines, the company has built a reputation as the essence of quality and service in the foodservice industry. Carpigiani – www.Carpigiani.com has seven subsidiaries and four manufacturing facilities serving the global market.

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#### Small business from page 1

to meet that demand, which is ultimately creating wage inflation.

That's especially difficult for seasonal businesses, and for businesses that require staff at nontraditional hours — and the hospitality industry has a lot of demand in those areas.

In addition to wage inflation, hotels and restaurants have faced real challenges getting a steady supply of the basic foods they need to provide their service, which has inflated the cost of goods. That is compounded by variable demand. The pandemic ebbs, and everyone rushes back. Then there's a new spike, and suddenly demand fades away.

Supply Chain Normalization: We expect disruptions in the supply chain to improve but not fully return to normal in 2022. Lead times will come down for many products, especially those with fewer component parts and those manufactures in onshore or nearshore locations. However, we expect labor shortages to persist in 2022, causing strains on manufacturing as well as the trucking and logistics sector. We also expect backlogs in ports and on cargo ships around the world as pent-up demand continues to outstrip the supply of containers, ships and port-space. Covid spikes in China, which does not have mRNA vaccines and has less heard immunity than most western countries, could exacerbate existing problems in the global supply chain.

What can businesses do as they ramp up?

 Businesses need to be very attuned to how demand is changing coming out of the pandemic, and tailor their services and their future investments to meet the demand that they're seeing - not the demand that they had in 2019.

 Try to be as flexible as you can around the number of staff that you require. It might not be possible for a hotel to offer all the amenities that required humans in the past. You might need to be prepared for more barebones service.

 When it comes to procurement and supply-chain issues, make sure you have a Plan B. Supply-chain disruptions will likely continue for months, if not for the rest of the year.

The small business economy has proven resilient over the last two years of unprecedented turmoil and change. We expect 2022 will bring a welcome sense of normalization as the virus dissipates, inflation weakens and some supply constraints are resolved. However, many uncertainties remain for America's small businesses and we have no doubt that the coming year will prove as eventful and potentially more opportunistic than those of recent past.

About the Author: Ben Johnston is the Chief Operating Officer of Kapitus, one of the most reliable and respected names in small business financing. Kapitus provides growth capital to small businesses and has provided over \$3 billion to over 50,000 small businesses since 2006. Kapitus offers a number of loan products to small businesses, including SBA loans, revenue financing, equipment financing, cash-flow based factoring, revolving lines of credit and invoice factoring.



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