

volume 2
Winter
2008-09
issue 3



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Wooing the customer

During these tough economic times, are you doing all you can do to make the cash register ring?

Are you adding more value to your menu?

Are you taking business cards and informing your customers of in-store special values?

Are you balancing rising food costs with a down economy?

Are your sales reps making your customers feel like they just entered their second home away from home?

Most chain restaurants witnessed sales dropping an average of 7.1 percent year over year, so ... It's time to pay attention to the details and the things you can control.

How hard would it be to send an email for first-time welcomes, birthdays and subscriber anniversaries, which would demonstrate your

interest in the customer and earn their loyalty? This is a huge issue in tough times. Each customer matters more than just a concept.

If you have not put out your "fishbowl" fishing for business cards, and started logging in your email data to an Excel list, you should think twice about who will be coming to your store during the tough times. Don't forget the profit margins and realize everyone is in the same boat with food items driving up their home budgets, etc.

So, when they leave home, they want stress relief, fun, no cooking messes and good comfort food. Your barbecue restaurant or catering company should be practicing all, if not some, of these techniques on a daily basis during this economic downturn. 🔥

Joe McCullough

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A personal invitation from the **president** of the NBBQA



Everyone in the barbecue industry has the great opportunity to be continually educated about our business through meetings, seminars and hands-on opportunities. These opportunities come from NBBQA sponsored meetings, workshops and seminars. NBBQA also gives you the opportunity to talk to others in the barbecue business on a daily basis to get solutions to problems you might have. You will find in the barbecue family that everyone is very friendly and willing to help you by sharing their ideas with you.

I think this is very unique in our world of competition, but it is one of the reasons I love the barbecue business. Every barbecue meeting you attend, you should and will come away with something new. I know I do. I keep my mind open to all ideas from others. Just one of their ideas might trigger a thought for me that I can use. Be open-minded to all things and use the ideas that pertain to you and forget the others. It only takes one idea to make that meeting worthwhile.

The NBBQA Annual Conference will soon be upon us. It is the culmination of many meetings. It is something I look forward to each year. I remember the first conference I attended and how I looked forward to it with great energy and excitement. I still feel the same way after all these years. I enjoy coming back knowing that when I leave I will have learned something NEW!! I enjoy all the networking with old friends and many new ones that right now I don't know. The learning opportunity at the BBQ Conference is great! You will get face-to-face networking with great people within the barbecue family.

The NBBQA Annual Conference is growing and offering more to its members each year. Your executive committee and board have already been working hard to make sure this next conference will exceed all expectations. Several new ideas will be presented that I think you will like.

I encourage you to mark these conference dates down in your calendar and then do everything you can to make sure you come and join me and hundreds of your peers at the National Barbecue Association Conference in Austin, Texas, Feb 17 – 22.

If you are new to barbecue and not yet a member of the National Barbecue Association, take advantage of this great opportunity and join. Start your BARBECUE LIFE off on the right path. You will be very glad you did. For all members, especially new members, we will have a time set aside for you to meet and talk to your president and board members. I, as the current president, look forward to seeing all of you there. 🔥

Howard Miller
PRESIDENT NBBQA

Serving something *new...*

What about a little lamb on the customer's table?

To make just enough of an impression without overdoing the wow-effect, try slow-cooked, succulent barbecued lamb at the catering or restaurant table, perhaps pre-marinated, accompanied by a small but distinguished variety of finishing sauces, and watch the faces light up at the spirited idea of it all.

While lamb can come with a high price tag, stateside availability has



Seared Western Lamb Chops accompanied by a Goat Cheese Soufflé makes an incredible impression. Credit: American Lamb Board

According to Food and Drug Administration guidelines, 3.5 ounces of lamb meat has only 175 calories, with less than 10 grams of fat, 4.5 grams of saturated fat, and less than 95 milligrams of cholesterol. And because it contains many essential nutrients, like protein, vitamin B12, niacin, zinc and iron, it is a smart choice among meats for a nutritious diet. If prepared correctly, even the staunchest beef or pork eater could be swayed to try this elegant alternative.

brought the price down, and it makes for an easy dress-up of the menu, say barbecue and lamb farm professionals. It attracts a niche, devoted crowd, says one restaurant executive. And from kabobs to sausage, the possibilities are endless.

Susie Wilson of SuDan Farms, a well-reputed grass-fed lamb and sheep farmer and distributor in Canby, Ore., will attest to the beauty of serving lamb. “I have seen the sale

variety of cuts and with a plethora of mouth-watering recipes to choose from. According to the American Lamb Board, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, lamb, which offers a high meat-to-bone ratio, is available and plentiful year-round and is perfect for barbecuing. Some of the best value cuts from a lamb include loin, leg, shoulder, shanks and ribs. With retail sales at approximately \$4 a pound for ground lamb, \$6 a pound for leg of lamb, bone-in or boneless, there’s no reason not to fill the pit with lamb of any variety. Loin and rib chops are about \$10.50 a pound, or about four chops, and the most

hours or so. A mint pesto is served on the side of the rack of lamb.

Paul Mejia, the meat market manager at HEB Grocery in Austin, Texas, likes his lamb prepared simply. “A lamb loin chop is best done medium-rare,” he says, “and I’m a simple man. I like salt and pepper, or plain

“ There are lamb growers cropping up all over the country and Oregon is the perfect place to raise them. ”

of lamb over the past several years go from moderate to impressive. Lamb once primarily came from Australia or New Zealand, so it was expensive to serve. That’s not the case anymore. There are lamb growers cropping up all over the country, and Oregon is the perfect place to raise them. We have a damp climate, so we’ve got grass year round for our herds to graze on.”

As for lamb sales, Wilson says, “People have realized there are a lot of ways to prepare lamb, and barbecuing has certainly become a favorite, especially among those who buy from us at the farmer’s market on the weekends. People often want to know how best to barbecue lamb without making it tough. I always tell them to watch the temperature and keep it simple.”

These days, the lamb industry in the states has indeed made marked progress in producing American raised, grass-fed lambs that yield tender, high quality meat in a wide

expensive is the boneless lamb tenderloin, at about \$16 a pound. A lamb tenderloin makes for a great presentation, and is fun to decorate with fresh mint or rosemary.

Travis Carpenter, director of research and development for Fiorella’s Jack Stack Barbecue in Kansas City, Mo., readily admits that the barbecued rack of lamb at the restaurant, established in 1974, is his well-earned personal favorite. “After having worked there for over a decade, it’s still the best dish on the menu in my opinion.” And the owner’s favorite dish off of the lengthy barbecue menu, according to Carpenter, is the lamb ribs. “They’re the lowest sellers on our menu,” Carpenter explains. “A lot of our customers just go for the traditional pork or beef ribs. But the owner and I both favor our two lamb dishes.” Carpenter admits that lamb eaters belong to a niche crowd. “Some people are afraid lamb will taste gamey, so they don’t order it. But if your cut of lamb is high quality” (Jack Stack’s only buys high-quality Iowa lamb) “there is no gamey taste.” The restaurant’s lamb ribs are seared first over a hard wood fire, with a rub, then cooked slowly for two

meat season salt on my lamb chops. No rub necessary.” He also likes to slow-cook a rack of lamb on the pit, and again, no fancy



Barbecued Pulled American Lamb Shank on a crusty, sourdough roll is a simple, not-so-messy way to feed the kids! Photo Credit: American Lamb Council



Crispy American Lamb Ribs make a classic dish. Photo: American Lamb Board

rubs or marinade are necessary, as the lamb flavor should stand on its own. Lamb loin at about \$10 a pound is not that much more expensive than certain cuts of beef, but it is still a somewhat lower seller. “We do see a lot more lamb sold over Easter, and of course, over the Christmas and New Years holiday.”

Mark Doxtader, owner and chef at Tastebud Farm in Portland, Ore., is known to barbecue a suckling pig every spring. At Tastebud, where Doxtader caters private parties as well as serves small crowds in his dining area, he uses a holiday rub on his barbecued lamb ribs of cinnamon and cloves, and serves a finishing sauce on the side of black cherry and chili. “Lamb sausage, meatballs, and kabobs all barbecue well, and remain a favorite of my customers.” The trick is to never get the pit too hot – between 140 and 170 degrees is ideal, though some smokers can go to 250 degrees. 🔥

recipes...

Slightly Sweet Lamb Marinade

Some prefer to marinate their lamb meat before barbecuing, if for no other reason than to add a special flavor to its already inherent ones. Although it's not a necessary step, marinating can personalize your lamb recipe. Here is one good example, submitted by SuDan Farms, which will indeed hold up on a hot pit.

½ Cup inexpensive red wine (Chianti, Burgundy, Merlot, etc.)

½ Cup water

1 Tablespoon olive oil

2 Cloves crushed, minced garlic

1 Teaspoon crushed rosemary

1 Teaspoon thyme leaves

1 Teaspoon freshly grated ginger

1 Teaspoon lemon pepper

½ Can (12-oz size) Classic Coca-Cola (do not use diet Coke) – don't skimp! Salt to taste (optional)

Mix together and place in a Ziplock bag with any lamb cut and marinate for a few hours. Add to pit for slow cooking.

Seasoning Salt

Diane E. Santucci of Russell Street Bar-B-Que in Portland, Ore., (www.russellstreetbbq.com) offers a practical way to season and barbecue lamb ribs. “When you can, buy your ribs at a local farmer's market or lamb producer,” Santucci emphasizes.

1/2 Cup Table Salt

1 Tablespoon Onion Powder

1 Tablespoon Garlic Powder

1 Teaspoon Celery Salt

3 Tablespoons Ground Black Pepper

Combine all ingredients in a bowl and mix with a whisk. Transfer to a shaker and/or an airtight container. Sneeze a lot. Lasts almost indefinitely.

...of lamb

Russell Street Bar-B-Que's Smoked Salt & Pepper Lamb Ribs

Plan on at least one rack of ribs per person for an entree or at least three bones per person for an appetizer. Big eaters will need one-and-a-half racks of Lamb Ribs.

1. Prepare the ribs by removing the membrane from the back of each rack. Trim away any extra fat.
2. Sprinkle the racks evenly with the seasoning salt on both sides.
3. Set up your smoker either using a rig or a kettle with indirect heat.
4. If you like a heavy smoke, use mesquite or hickory; if you like a sweeter, gentler smoke flavor, use white oak, apple or pecan.
5. Maintain 250 degrees for about 2 to 3 hours, depending on the size of your ribs.
6. When they are super tender, they're done.
7. Either cut into individual bones, "French" style, or

serve a whole rack with a knife.

To "French" a rack of lamb, use a sharp knife, cut the rack of lamb along the bones, scraping away the 'tough' part of the meat, into individual chops—usually each rack will yield six to eight chops. They should be small and resemble lamb "lollipops". Also, when preparing lamb, be sure to trim away the "fell", the paper-like fat on the outside of the meat, before cooking. It does not melt, but should be initially left on the meat to help it retain moisture until it is ready to prepare for barbecuing.

If done right, lamb ribs really don't need a sauce! But for those who do love to dip, the American Lamb Board offers this barbecue sauce recipe, sure to please sauce connoisseurs.



Barbecue Sauce

- 1 Cup prepared barbecue sauce
- 1/3 Cup brown sugar, packed
- 2 Tablespoons red wine or chicken broth
- 1/2 Teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/8 Teaspoon red pepper sauce

Grilled and Crispy Lamb Ribs are a classic dish. Photo Credit: American Lamb Board

Banding together

Four Texas communities combine efforts to sell some of the best they have to offer: **great barbecue**



Brisket, sausage and chicken from Luling Bar-B-Q in Luling, Texas.

Central Texas plays host to the popular “Texas BBQ Trail” that can serve as a model for other regions in the U.S. with its own marketing campaign and website.

TEXAS BBQ TRAIL

One of four participating towns in The Texas BBQ Trail boasts one million visitors a year, in part because of the area's barbecue offerings. With a mere \$5,000 marketing budget, customers come to Lockhart, Texas, and other towns on The Texas BBQ Trail, as a result of word of the trail. The trail has received accolades from around the nation – and requests from towns to be added to the exclusive club.

“It's unique that four communities would cooperate in something like this,” said Gena Carter, Elgin Chamber of Commerce president. “It is a unique situation...that we're all working together on this trail project,” she continued. “We hear that at every trade show and association conference.

“Elgin also was a good fit for the trail because in 1994, we were named the official “Sausage Capital of Texas” by the Texas Legislature. We have two large sausage companies in our town that produce more than five million pounds of sausage... hence the designation.”

Twenty miles south of Elgin, those traveling The Texas BBQ Trail are in for another treat when they stop at the historic Taylor Café in

Taylor, serving barbecue since the 1930s. Then, it's on to Luling and another satisfying barbecue meal at Luling BBQ & Lounge and the historic Luling City Market.

Then, travel 20 more miles to the city of Lockhart, named “The Barbecue Capital of Texas” in 2002 by the Texas Legislature, and a feast of barbecue served up at the historic Black's Barbecue, Smitty's Market with its three generations and a time-honored location as well as the newer Chisholm Trail Bar-B-Q, where prices are low and portions of hefty barbecue will bring tears to your eyes and a few extra pounds.

“When we created The Texas BBQ Trail, the four communities involved decided to jointly market the entire trail,” Carter said. “Lots of people were visiting our restaurants, so we designed a brochure that would build even more interest.

“Then, we went to restaurants that had something unique to offer and would be good partners with us,” she continued. “We all put aside our competitiveness, had the restaurants sign on and donate toward printing our brochures, which included advertisements for each...and with that, The Texas BBQ



Trail was up and running.”

The brochures, promoting the BBQ Trail, have since won awards and each of the chambers, as they market their individual cities and tourism, always include the BBQ Trail in their pitch, making sure BBQ Trail brochures can be found in all of the restaurants and popular tourist destinations within their individual areas.

“In the beginning, we set rules about the restaurants included on the trail,” Carter continued. “They either had to have longevity in the barbecue business, something unique about their setting or something significant about their menu offerings. Some restaurants have wanted to join the trail, but their food just didn't make the grade.”

The chambers themselves budget money for promo-

tion of the trail annually, and market it as vigorously at tradeshows and visitors' centers around the state as they do their individual communities.

“We're all small Texas towns with limited budgets,” Carter explained, “and none of us could do the project by ourselves. The first year, without the website, was totally funded by the restaurants. It didn't cost our chambers anything because we were taking the brochures to trade shows and distributing them to the trail's member restaurants and tourist stops. Part of the incentive, partnering was for financial reasons and it has taken on an entirely different life, including the website, which the Taylor Chamber maintains as part of its contribution.”

Deby Lannen, interim pres-



The beginnings of Southside Market in Elgin, Texas, date back to the 1800s.

Welcome to The Texas BBQ Trail

Luling, Texas: City Market; and Luling BBQ

Lockhart, Texas: Black's Barbecue; since 1936, Smitty's Market (1999) in same building where her father served BBQ for 50 years; and Chisholm Trail BBQ.

Elgin (pronounced El-ghin): Meyers Smokehouse; and Southside Market

Taylor: The Taylor Café.

For more information: www.texasbbqtrail.com

ident of the Taylor Chamber, has only one restaurant on the trail. “I know, just from my personal experience, that people know and travel our BBQ Trail every week,” she said.

Vencil Mares, a 79-year-old war veteran, owns the Taylor Café and consistently serves some the area’s best barbecue, Lannen said. “He’s had winning reviews from as far away as Paris, France, and locals say the Taylor Café is the best place for barbecue served on a piece of butcher paper and topped off with a bottle of red soda water.”

Apparently, this quad-city effort has attracted attention far and wide. In 2007, *USA Today* published an article, naming the Top 10 Tourist Destinations in the U.S., counting the trail and its restaurants in their Top 10...and more recently, the *Dallas Morning News* ran a story on the trail and, shortly thereafter, a Dallas tour company began offering a trail tour, including visits to all four communities for a smorgasbord of tastes from Central Texas.

Most of the restaurants on the trail have earned accolades – on their own merits – from television’s *Food Channel*, the *Travel Channel* or respected regional and state publications, such as *Texas Monthly* and movies and documentaries about



barbecue.

“Definitely, the trail motif attracts attention,” said Rita Moore, executive director of the Luling Chamber, “and *Texas Monthly* rated our City Market in the top five in June and Luling BBQ in the top 50 Texas BBQ restaurants.

“Each of our restaurants offers a little different experience,” she said. “The various owners and the chambers work as a team. We all like each other and we have a unique situation.”

Brian Bracewell, a third-generation owner of Southside Market in Elgin, believes the trail has added to his business.

“We’ve produced our own all-beef sausage since 1982,” he said. “It’s kept us around and put us on the map for 126 years. We make it fresh daily – close to 3 million pounds this year and on a good Saturday, we’ll cook about 2,000 pounds of sausage and sell another 1,000 pounds fresh in our meat market.”

“We got involved in the BBQ Trail as a company and because barbecue is so regional,” Bracewell said. “We’re proud of our region. We don’t know if it’s righter or better than anyone else’s barbecue, but we’ve developed a neat cooperative effort to bring awareness to how we make our barbecue in Central Texas.”

“The trail has definitely added customers because many make it a point to tell us, this is their fourth or fifth stop,” he said. “We also know the trail’s reputation is spreading across the country. We were at the Big Apple BBQ block party in 2007 – and right before we went up, the CEO from *Reader’s*

Digest came through, saying they were doing the trail.”

Wayne Bock, president of the Lockhart Chamber, said the trail had added to the tourism the town already known for its barbecue restaurants. “We know those following the BBQ Trail are also bringing benefit from local motels, grocery stores, antique shops and campgrounds,” he said.

Bock has hosted tours of reporters from Canada, writers and radio commentators...and the last reading he took totaled more than one million visitors a year, enjoying Lockhart’s barbecue and festivals. Lockhart estimates that about 250,000 people eat barbecue in its town a year.

Back at Elgin’s Chamber, Carter said the challenge is knowing what comes next for the BBQ Trail. “The trail, itself, is easy to administer,” she said, “but we have quite



a few calls from surrounding communities, asking that new barbecue restaurants be added to the trail, so the challenge is, do we include other communities...even those as far as 200 miles away?

Carter said she’s been approached by a limousine company that wants to become a partner so it can transport tourists along the trail and more partners seem to be coming out of the woodwork to get on board. “Maybe the BBQ Trail will become a much larger project,” she said. 🔥

A new trail is born

In the days of this nation’s westward movement, the plains and Hill Country that eventually became the state of Texas were crisscrossed with rugged cattle trails. Cowboys and wranglers spent weeks, even months, driving cattle herds along these trails to markets in the north and later to more convenient railheads. Steady traffic made these trails famous, as did the tales and traditions springing up along the way.

With the expansion of railroad service, however, the old trails became memories of times past.

Then, 150 years later, in 2002, another trail was created...a trail that beckoned exploration by tourists and natives alike, offering some of the best barbecue Texas had to offer. The name? The Texas BBQ Trail.



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NBBQA Attendee Registration

18th Annual Conference & Expo
Austin Texas February 17-21, 2009

	Savings		After		Selected Amount
	Before Jan. 31st, 2009		Jan. 31st, 2009		
Pre-Events for Tuesday, Feb. 17th, 2009	Member	Non-Mbr	Member	Non-Mbr	
A. ServSafe Course/Restaurant Certification	<input type="checkbox"/> \$200.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$215.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$200.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$215.00	\$ _____
B. Legends of BBQ Bus Tour (PreReg 1/31/09)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$85.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$85.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$85.00	\$ _____
Pre-Events for Wednesday, Feb. 18th, 2009					
A. Meet the Masters (Roundtable Discussion)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$95.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$95.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$109.00	\$ _____
B. Bus Tours of Local Austin BBQ Restaurants	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$70.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$70.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$80.00	\$ _____

Full Registration * Best Value <i>Includes All Meals, Receptions, Educational Programs, Exhibit Admissions for Thursday, Friday & Saturday</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> \$235.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$310.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$310.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$333.00	\$ _____
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Single Day Registration (Or Add On Registration) * Note: Does Not Include Competition Cooking Class or Judging Certifications below.

A. Thursday, Feb. 19th - Education Day <i>Includes Educational Programs, Keynote Luncheon, President's Welcome Reception, Awards of Excellence Presentation, Tradeshow & Exhibits</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> \$160.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$185.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$210.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$235.00	\$ _____
B. Friday, Feb. 20th - Education Day <i>Includes Educational Programs, Caterer's Showcase Dinner, Tradeshow & Exhibits</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> \$160.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$185.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$210.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$235.00	\$ _____
C. Saturday, Feb. 21st - Education Day <i>Includes Educational Programs, Tradeshow & Exhibits</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$125.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150.00	\$ _____

Single Event Registration (These Event Options are for Single Events Only or for Guest/Spouse Tickets)

A1. Thursday, Feb. 19th - BBQ Exhibitor Trade Show	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35.00	\$ _____
A2. Friday, Feb. 20th - BBQ Exhibitor Trade Show	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35.00	\$ _____
A3. Saturday, Feb. 21st - BBQ Exhibitor Trade Show	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35.00	\$ _____
B. Thursday, Feb. 19th - Keynote Luncheon - Chris Elley Award-Winning Filmmaker	<input type="checkbox"/> \$45.00	\$ _____
C. Thursday, Feb. 19th - Awards of Excellence Presentation	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35.00	\$ _____
D. Friday, Feb. 20th - Caterer's Showcase Dinner & Auction	<input type="checkbox"/> \$45.00	\$ _____
E. Saturday, Feb. 21st - Old School Vs. High-Tech Competition Cooking Class	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500.00	\$ _____
F. Saturday, Feb. 21st - MBN Judging Certification <i>MBN Mbrs must present member card at door - NonMbrs receive 1 yr free membership</i>	MBN Member <input type="checkbox"/> \$40.00	Non-Mbr <input type="checkbox"/> \$80.00
G. Saturday, Feb. 21st - KCBS Judging Certification <i>KCBS Mbrs must present member card at door - NonMbrs receive 1 yr free membership</i>	KCBS Member <input type="checkbox"/> \$40.00	Non-Mbr <input type="checkbox"/> \$80.00

Join NBBQA Today and Save on Your Registration! (1 Yr Membership Prices) <i>Membership saves an average of \$50.00 on conference & event registrations.</i>	Individual <input type="checkbox"/> \$50.00	Business <input type="checkbox"/> \$150.00	\$ _____
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Conference Registration & Badge Information For: Total: \$ _____

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 Company Address: _____ City: _____ ST: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone:() _____ Fax:() _____ E-mail: _____

Additional Registrant Names For Badges

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 I authorize NBBQA to charge my: AMEX Mastercard Visa Discover card in the amount of \$ _____
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Payment with credit card can be faxed to 512/454-3036 or mailed to NBBQA, 1306-A West Anderson Lane, Austin, TX 78757

For more information, visit nbbqa.org, or call NBBQA Headquarters at 888/9092121

Additional Forms may be downloaded from www.nbbqa.org

NBBQA MEMBER BENEFITS

From a world-class national convention to the ever-popular BBQ 101 program, National Barbecue Association members reap the benefits of having a strong association behind them - and their businesses. Here is a look at what you can expect from your association.

1 Annual Conference Benefits:

There is one annual meeting a year for the membership of the NBBQA. This meeting is aimed entirely at providing BBQ information and education. This is a full scale Conference and Exposition with booths, speakers, entertainment and some fun. Suppliers are invited to develop new leads, show their products and support for the NBBQA by displaying their goods and services during the EXPO events. The annual conference and exposition moves across the country where barbecue is king, but focuses on the Southwest and Southeast southern climates since it usually meets in February.

2 Member Merchant Services: Credit Card Discounts & Great Savings:

A number of NBBQA members are quickly and easily recovering their membership dues investment by simply enrolling in the extremely competitive Member Merchant Credit Card processing with NBBQA's newly-endorsed provider. It is common for savings on processing fees to be reported in the range of 24, 36 and 44 percent over your current charges, or possibly even more in the first year. This merchant service includes many other benefits and potential income for your restaurant and/or catering service. Gift Cards and other innovative ideas are associated with their capable services. This is not an everyday credit card promotion or ploy - you are literally wasting money the longer you wait to check your rates and services against the NBBQA's Association service provider. All of these saving are brought to you by "The nicest credit card guy on earth," **Butch Hofferbert**.

3 BBQ 101

Each year NBBQA invites a number of members to participate in BBQ 101 to increase their knowledge of what makes great barbecue. BBQ 101 is held in May during National Barbecue Month at the **Rosenthal Meat Science Center at Texas A&M University**, College Station, TX. Classes fill up quick so be sure to register early. This is where you learn what you don't know about barbecue!

4 Hotel Discount Card:

Go to the front page of www.nbbqa.org and find the hotel discount advantage card, which can save you significant dol-

lars on your business travel hotel stays. It's easy to sign up for and when you receive your card, carry it in your wallet and get discounts from well known participating hotel chains at 30-50 percent off the advertised room rates. It's tried and true and it is simply money in hip-national-bank every time you use it. It beats Internet rates and it's simple to call the 800 number and find a hotel in the city your traveling in - just call them as you travel. Download the CheckINN card information now and start saving money when you have travel needs.

5 Online Membership Directory:

With the use of computers, access to active members of NBBQA will be decidedly easier. A printed version is now published with advertising, but an electronic version is not far away. Presently online, you can locate members across the U.S. from the NBBQA website. Active members will have the option of having a direct link to their personal websites from the NBBQA central locator. The online directory is planned so you can access the information to find a name, but you will eventually be allowed to update your own personal information from your computer with your phone number, address or employment changes.

6 Annual Who's Who in BBQ Member Directory:

The National Barbecue Association publishes its annual membership directory to provide an up-to-date list of "who's who in barbecue." In addition to the current NBBQA Officers, Code of Ethics, Bylaws and Mission Statement, you'll find the NBBQA Members list broken down by contact's last name or by region as well as a current "Barbecue Buyers Guide" where you can search for business members based on company last name or by business member listing. Restaurants and caterers are easily found as they are sorted by state and country. Also included is a membership application, a directory update form as well as a full listing of all NBBQA membership benefits.

7 Communications:

Associations like NBBQA deliver a lot of news to their members in the form of a regular tabloid newsletter, website content, emails, faxes, letters and phone calls. There is a

constant flow of information available to members that the non-members usually do not receive. Members, however, have an opportunity to express their opinions in many ways with articles, contributions, news tips and new ideas.

8. Discounted Shipping and Freight:

NBBQA Members enjoy a variety of services to fit your specific freight shipping needs! With automated dispatch, documents, tracking and more, it's no wonder that NBBQA has partnered up with the leading web-based freight transportation provider. Whether you're shipping a pallet or a truckload, ship freight once a day or once a month, ship across the state or across the ocean, our partner can help you save time and money.

9. NBBQA Website:

The NBBQA website is a national hotspot for those seeking barbecue information. With over 16,000 hits per month, you know you have a successful site that pays off for advertisers and associate NBBQA members. All kinds of BBQ information are at your fingertips, with recipes, conferences, tips and editorials, past Q magazines and much more!

10. Peer Networkings:

The most valued benefit that associations offer their membership is the opportunity to network with their peers from across the United States at association meetings. As an active member of NBBQA, you will have numerous opportunities to talk to others and discover what is happening in the field of barbecue in other cities. Then you can prepare for the changes that will be coming. Much of the benefit of belonging to an association such as NBBQA takes place at association events in the hallways between meetings and in the evening during free time. You will develop lifelong friendships you can contact throughout your career when you are in need of an idea or solution.

11. BBQ Promotions Across the US:

Every May is designated National BBQ Month by NBBQA, and members of the Association display their association memberships and participate in promotions to increase awareness of the great taste of barbecue. This voluntary effort goes a long way to raising barbecue awareness, and to promote visits to restaurants

and calls to caterers. It makes the cash register ring and creates fun and goodwill. National BBQ Month launches the summer season with sales of grills, rubs, marinades, sauces and new "secret" recipes. All the major vendors of summertime products like to tie into NBBQA's promotional efforts since it is associated with families, fun and good taste.

12. Advocacy Role of the NBBQA:

NBBQA has noted an increasing role of local governments to control air particulates and smoke across the country. They are passing ordinances and regulations against outdoor grilling or on apartment balconies, and sometimes in back yards. The Association office is regularly contacted about these regulations and provides advocacy in favor of the freedom to safely barbecue where one lives. Although well meaning in many cases, these are serious trends that cannot be dismissed or overlooked.

13. Public Relations:

NBBQA is the public relations spokesperson for the barbecue industry. It provides interviews, statistics, colorful perspectives, and useful information to reporters and media sources around the United States and other countries interested in current barbecue trends and tastes.



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In these troubled times...



What's a business owner to do?

In any business environment, having a plan for the launch and growth of a business is important. But in today's business climate, with its dizzying economic highs and lows, knowing where you're going – and having a detailed business plan to get there – is absolutely critical.

After all, a business plan is essentially a roadmap, and without one, companies don't have the one essential tool they need to know where to go.

For South Carolina-based barbecue chain **Sticky Fingers**, having a solid business plan has helped the company fuel aggressive expansion plans that currently include a stable of 22 restaurants in North Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, and Georgia, with more in development.

CEO **Jim Balis** says that, for a brand

to grow, financing is a big piece of it and for that, a business plan is crucial – especially in today's economic environment.

"It's hard to grow on just cash flow, and to get financing, you need a solid business plan," he says. "Banks are analyzing in more detail. It's not enough to say you're going to put a restaurant here and there are two other chains you're competing with. Instead, you need to have proof that you'll be able to penetrate the market and that there's an opportunity there."

Creating a package

Experts say that, in general, your business plan needs to be a complete package.

"The main elements of a successful business plan should include the market, the product, the competition,

technology – if applicable, your sales/revenue model, your staffing plan, and financials," says business-plan expert **William Leake**, a longtime technology entrepreneur and the CEO and co-founder of **Apogee Search**, an Internet search marketing agency based in Austin, Texas. "You need to know why you are doing the plan and what you are going to do with it."

Balis says that, while business plans of a few years ago would project one to five years out, the norm now is to include a one-, three-, five-, seven- and even 10-year perspective, especially if you're asking for financing.

"There aren't any pitfalls to doing a business plan," he says. "It's a great exercise because, if done properly, it forces you to take an inside-out view of your business."

For restaurants in particular, Balis says that intense view includes delving into costs at all levels of the operation; how many guests you need to be serving in certain dayparts; what your break-even point is; and where your profits are.

“It helps you know, going in, that you’re going to need two versus three line cooks, for example, or you’ll lose money,” he says. “A business plan really helps you analyze your own existing operations better.”

Soul-searching – and being flexible

Shane Thompson, founder of chain **Shane’s Rib Shack** out of Atlanta, Ga., says that being able to define what kind of concept they wanted to be was very important when the company launched in 2002 – and having a business plan was essential to that process.

“We wanted to start a different kind of barbecue restaurant that was more a fast casual setting than traditional sit-down, but that also gave customers the same quality you’d get in a casual or fine dining restaurant,” he says. “A lot of restaurant owners love barbecue and decide to open up a storefront, but it’s a big undertaking, especially without a business plan. There are so many variables and a lot more to it than most people think.”

Thompson says it was important for them to re-evaluate the plan after the three-month “post-honeymoon” period after the first opening – including setting money aside for when things don’t go as planned and being flexible, no matter what happens.

“You have to be willing to change with the economy as needed, depending on how things go,” he says. “We did our business plan a year out and did change it a few times, but we always stayed with the core plan and never really diverted from it.”

Knowing when to switch gears

Experts say that, once you have a core plan, it shouldn’t change drastically – unless it was a wrong or unrealistic plan

from the start.

“If you’re already readjusting your plan a month out, it was probably off,” says Balis. “You should anticipate a honeymoon period of about 90 days, and if you’re in a new market, it’ll be longer.”

Balis says restaurants should revisit the plan as needed, while also making sure from the beginning that you plan for hiccups along the way.

“There will always be additional costs early on, especially with new servers, staff and in making sure you’re delivering good service,” he says. “As long as you factor those in, you can revisit the plan as needed.”

Thompson says that, especially for barbecue restaurants, it’s what you do in that early follow-up period that important – because that’s what will give your concept longevity.

“Barbecue is less forgiving and seems to be very dependent on first impressions,” he says. “The food and the service have to be great the first time, or it’s a lot tougher to get them back a second time. People want to know they’ve found the next best barbecue place – that’s their expectation.”

Building community

Thompson says that one element many restaurants often overlook in creating a business plan is around community outreach efforts. In his company’s case, it was a specific plan for community involvement and support that gave them the loyal customer base they have today.

“You have to be willing to change with the economy as needed, depending on how things go.”

It’s also that following that has given the company the ability to expand out of Georgia to Arizona, Kentucky, Ohio, Florida, North and South Carolina, and even New York via a wide network of franchisees.

“The community and schools aspect was a big part of our plan from the beginning,” says Thompson. “So many people don’t include that, but it has really helped us and made us successful, and that’s also translated to



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our franchisees.”

The franchisee community also played heavily in Thompson’s business plan, since he knew he wanted to franchise from the beginning, and included specifics to ensure consistency across the Shane’s Rib Shack brand.

“We tell franchisees to control their own four walls first, then venture out,” he says. “Consistency is our biggest challenge, especially the food and ensuring the product is the same from store to store, so we have systems and processes in place to ensure that. Our stores need to be the same customer experience from Albany to Atlanta.”

Avoiding traps

Of course, there’s always the possibility that restaurant owners and caterers

will make mistakes along the way with their business plans; as a rule, trial and error is often the nature of the food-service business.

Balis says one of the most common mistakes is actually too much detail and getting in too deep with overanalyzing what needs to be in your business plan.

“Detail is good, but it’s not prudent to break out dairy costs or other things because it becomes too time-consuming and creates challenges,” he says. “You just want to make sure that you’ve thought it through correctly – like the people you’re going to hire, what they bring to the table, an analysis of market and demographics, your price point, competition and expected financial results. The main pitfall is in not thinking things through properly.”

Finally, most experts advise against hiring someone else to write a business plan for you. When you do, you automatically lose the “top-down” perspective every entrepreneur needs to run a successful business.

Balis advises saving hiring a professional for when you’re trying to improve operating efficiencies – like controlling costs, making the most of the traffic you have, or increasing your frequency and guest counts.

“You should always try to do it yourself first; if you can’t, or if the bank turns you down for financing, then bring in a pro,” says Balis. “It’s a good exercise to analyze your business. Not a lot of people analyze their business with the detail they should, and this provides incentive to do it.” 🔥



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Florida BBQ Chicken

OK, this month we picked up some thighs to barbecue. Now, regardless if you are cooking these for a contest or for personal consumption, they will need to be trimmed up some – just a little for eating at home and somewhat more for use in a contest.

When trimming chicken thighs, the first thing I do is place it in front of me on the cutting board, skin side down, and with the “oyster” on top. I’m not sure if oyster is an official term, but many barbecuers use it, and we will too. The oyster is a chunk of meat about the size of the tip of your finger, that is above the ball joint of the thigh. For a contest we will remove the oyster, while we will leave it on for cooking at home. The goal for trimming contest chicken is to get it all looking just alike, both in size and shape.

After removing the oyster, I like to work on squaring up the thigh. With the thigh still skin side down and the bone going north and south, you will notice that on one side of the bone there is more meat than on the other. I think most teams will try to even out the sides by trimming one side to match the other. Be careful not to cut all the way through the skin, as we will need to have extra when we cook. With practice, you will be able to feel when you have reached the skin, and then you can turn the blade of your knife out and fillet the extra meat off, leaving the skin intact. Now the thigh should be relatively squared up.

The next step for me is to turn the thigh over, meat side down, with the



bone still running north and south. If you lift up on the edge of the skin, you will find that the side you just trimmed has the skin attached. On the side you did not trim, the skin will peel back some. Pull it back and you will see a strip of white fat running along the edge of the meat. This needs to be trimmed off, because for the most part, chicken fat will not render out during the barbecue process, and the last thing you want is a judge getting a mouthful of fat. Once the piece is square with the fat off, flip it back over skin side down. Center the meat on the skin, and then trim the skin to even it up. It is best to try to leave at least a quarter- to a half-inch of skin all the way around.

Remember, you can always trim the excess off after cooking, if needed. Chicken skin has a tendency to draw up and shrink during the cooking process, and if you trim it too closely, you’ll end up with what looks like a postage stamp sitting on top of the thigh. Not good.

The next step we will take is marinating the thighs. I like to use Newman’s light vinaigrette salad dressing. In a gallon Ziplock bag, add the thighs and

the dressing, put in the refrigerator for at least three hours.

I like to season my thighs heavily, making sure to get the seasoning between the skin and the meat. **Byron’s Butt Rub** is a good rub for chicken, and so is **Everglades** seasoning, but use it sparingly. Chicken is not like ribs, pork butt or brisket because chicken can be cooked at a higher heat. The idea of high heat with chicken is to get the skin crispy so you can bite through it, instead of all the skin coming off with your first bite. The temperature I like to cook at is 325 degrees. This will make the cooking process a lot shorter than what most people are used to.

The faster cooking also helps hold in the juices (which by the way are sometimes red). As long as the chicken has been brought to an internal temperature of 165 degree and it is not bloody, you are safe. Good luck on the chicken and don’t hesitate to come to a barbecue event to say hello or see what it is like. You may just be a barbecue judge or part of a cook team before ya’ know it. 🔥

Jim “Big Daddy Q” McGoan is a board member with the Florida BBQ Association and is head cook with the “Big Daddy Q” team in FBA competitions.

Byron’s Butt Rub is a good rub for chicken, and so is Everglades seasoning, but use it sparingly.

by BRAD MASSEY



Having the best
employee starts with

you

Ever experience an employee quitting and as they walk out the door, you find yourself feeling grateful because they were a real “pain” to begin with?

If so, take a long look in the mirror and ask yourself why you settle for mediocre or even bad performance. Why do you wait for a problem to fix itself rather than being proactive and addressing the issue? Why do you avoid those uncomfortable personnel discussions?

If you are like most small-business owners I know, it’s because we live in fear of the unknown – the idea that while we would want a better employee, we worry about hiring someone who could be worse than the one we have. And we are filled with anxiety about that because we do not know how to correctly and professionally manage people. As small-business owners, it is not something we got in small-business school!



And if we look even harder at the issue, we will realize we do not have a defined recruiting and hiring model. We run our businesses based on knowledge, education and experiences we have acquired to date. We rarely make time to read, learn and expand our knowledge on anything not immediately and directly related to the running of our businesses. The idea of taking a human relations class or seminar, reading a book on “how to



- * Want a better business, start with better employees.
- * Define each employee's job function.
- * Establish exactly what, how and when functions should be performed.
- * Communicate and then over-communicate with them.
- * Measure their improvement and success.
- * Now, enjoy the benefits.

recruit and hire," or even just writing out a job description is beyond most small-business owners' idea of business improvement.

While reading business books and exposing ourselves to new experiences truly grows our ability to lead people and make better business decisions, we often resort to just working "in" the business rather than "on" the business. Operating in this mode is called staying in our comfort zone – doing the things we know, rather than forcing ourselves to try new ways of doing things.

An easy way to push yourself out of your comfort zone is to simply start to look and think about your business as a set of systems. Break down the things you do into easy step-by-step procedures. For example, try bringing systems and processes into the "people part" of running our businesses. You already know that if you want to make great barbecue, you have a very well defined process for getting to the end product. It starts with the prep materials, followed by the appropriate heat source, and finishes with specific sauce and application methods.

Now think about breaking down the people side of your business as well. I constantly meet business owners that

when asked, can tell me exactly what they expect from their employee. Yet when I interview the employee, I often find a large gap between what the employee thinks their boss wants and what they think they are responsible for. Why do you think this occurs? How can we, as business owners, have employees who work for us not be clear about our expectations? Could it be that when we told them that one time, way back when they first came to work for us, we figured they got it? Problem is most of us rarely "get it" in one take. Now try putting a process in place where your employees hear what you want, when you want it, six different times, in four different ways, with three different illustrations and examples. Think it may cut down on gaps in expectations?

Yes it could. You see, managing people is like teaching. You have to communicate, communicate, and communicate! You should be clear about expectations and tell people what you expect. You can then tell them again what you expect. You might even remind them of what you told them in the beginning.

Here is the key. People do what gets measured. How do you measure what you expect your people to do?

Want to improve your business? Start with better employee performance achieved through improved employee communication. Start at the top and identify who you are. List the things you do at work, how you interact with others, how you communicate, how you dress, and all the other things can think of that describe you and your style. Write out exactly what you want from your employee job position. Be as detailed as possible. You have just made a big step in crystallizing for yourself what you want your employees to do.

Now communicate your thoughts. Remember the method, "early and often." 🔥

Brad is the owner and founder of Sandler Training in Austin Texas. He has worked with Fortune 100 as well as locally owned businesses to help leaders establish systems and processes for managing people and growing revenue. He is available for speaking engagements or seminars and you may contact him and receive his free newsletter at www.massey.sandler.com.



Arizona Association Revamps Website

I am pleased to announce that AZBarbeque has just revamped our website. If your company is not part of the number one barbecue club in Arizona, there is still a chance. There are also some fun contests going on; be sure to enter them.

Since our re-launch Aug. 2, we have averaged over 1.3 million hits per month on our site and are now approaching 600 registered members.

I look forward to seeing you at the hottest barbecue site in Arizona: www.azbarbeque.com

Our design team has been hard at work re-designing and re-developing the entire website and look of AZBarbeque.

AZBarbeque is all about barbecue here in Arizona. It is a free site, thanks to our amazing sponsors, so we encourage you to join – become a member today and enjoy all the site has to offer.

BBQ is all about making new friends, enjoying great events and eating great food. And we strive to keep that going here at AZBarbeque.

We want to thank our gracious 2008-2009 sponsors for helping support us and keeping the site free to everyone. Please make sure to visit our sponsors page.

If you or your company are interested in becoming a sponsor here at AZBarbeque or at any of our events, please contact us at: Sponsor@AZBarbeque.com Submitted by David Reimann.

Evergreen State Championship Ends the PNWBA Season

The Pacific Northwest Barbecue Association's traditional end-of-the-year competition was once again at the Evergreen State BBQ Championship held on Seattle's Alki Beach Park Sept. 13-14. It had been a packed season featuring 29

events (competitions, cooking classes, and judging classes) spread throughout the three western U.S. states and three western Canadian provinces. In fact, that same September weekend, the PNWBA held its first competition in Saskatchewan, Canada. The Alki Beach event was one last chance to come together with friends and compete before the long winter break.

The Evergreen State Championships has long been a favorite competition for cooks, families and spectators. Held at the most

scenic water front park in Seattle, it commands panoramic views of the downtown Seattle waterfront, Cascade and Olympic Mountain ranges, sailboats, ferries, ocean going ships, not to mention the parade of people, dogs and children. Consequently, this competition always draws a large number of teams. This year's event had 36 teams from all over the West Coast of the U.S. and a few teams from British Columbia. Fortunately, this year's weather was picture perfect, making it a great weekend to be at the "beach".

The sponsor of this year's competition was Tom Douglas Restaurants. Tom Douglas is nationally known Chef



Steve and Pauline Sanders, of Smoke a Fat One, were named Grand Champion at the PNWBA's last contest of the season. Submitted by the Pacific Northwest Barbecue Association

and an icon in the Seattle restaurant business, owning restaurants such as Lola, Palace Kitchen, Dahlia Lounge, Etta's and Serious Pie. In addition to sponsoring the event, his crews were vending to the public grilled salmon sandwiches with arugula and fennel mayo and other treats that featured his line of barbecue rubs called Rub With Love.

The competition began on Saturday with the additional extra categories. Instead of the normal "Anything But" and Dessert categories, this year the extras were Appetizers and everyone's favorite, Rib Eye Steak. The requirement on the Appetizers was that it must be "finger food." For the Rib Eye Steak, teams were allowed to turn in one uncut steak in a regulation 9"x9" container, with or without garnish. Following the judging of the extra categories on Saturday night, there was a pot-luck dinner for cooks and judges. Needless to say, everyone was well fed on steak, as most teams cooked more steaks than they needed for the competition.

The Appetizer category was won with an almost perfect score of 178 by Greg Fujino of

Reserve Champion went to Greg Fujino of Woodstock Smokers. Submitted by the Pacific Northwest Barbecue Association.



Woodstock Smokers. Second place went to **Smokin' Ty** and third was **Baltic BBQ Boyz**. Woodstock Smokers also won the Rib Eye category, followed by **Sublime Smoke BBQ** and then **Bird Dog BBQ**. We should mention that this is the first year for Greg Fujino of Woodstock Smokers to cook in competitions, although he has been hanging around with other teams for the past several years.

Sunday was turn-in day for the main categories, starting with Pork Shoulder/Butt, which was won by long-time competitor/champion **Steve Sanders of Smoke a Fat One BBQ**. Second place went to **Dances With Smoke BBQ**, followed by **Sugars BBQ**.

The next category was Beef Brisket. First place was **Scott Watters of Fat Dads BBQ**. Second was **Smoke a Fat One BBQ**, and third place went to **Sugars**. Chicken followed Brisket with Greg Fujino of Woodstock Smokers, with second going to **Carolina Smoke**; coming in third was **Smoke a Fat One**. The Pork Ribs category came last with **Bob Beeman of Gold Bar-B-Que** taking first. Second place went to **Ono BBQ**, and **Smoke a Fat One** took third.

At the end of the day, there was no question that **Steve and Pauline Sanders** of **Smoke a Fat One** would be the Grand Champion. Less obvious was who would take second. Taking the lead for Reserve Champion by one point was Greg Fujino of Woodstock Smokers. He just passed **Fat Dads**, who came in third overall, and several points below them were **Gold Bar-B-Que** in fourth. It was a great end to a wonderful weekend on the beach.

Submitted by Tom Wallin, president of Pacific Northwest Barbecue Association.

Bubba Chucks Named Team of Month for FBA

Our Florida BBQ Association (FBA) feature "Team of the Month" is "**BubbaChucks BBQ Team**" from Auburndale, Fla.

"BubbaChucks" head cook is Mike



Seattle chef and icon Tom Douglas' line of barbecue rubs, called Rub with Love. Submitted by the Pacific Northwest Barbecue Association.

Rossetter, who leads the team that includes his brother **Adam Rossetter** and their father, **Jerry Rossetter**. These three guys actually work for the same construction and development company, and cook together on the weekends. They also happen to be very good at it, placing eighth in the FBA "Team of BBQ'ing with 'Big Daddy

Q' of the Year" competition in 2007 – which was their very first year competing. If you are ever in the neighborhood at one of our FBA events, please be sure to stop by and see these guys at a competition. I have had a lot of fun getting to know these three. It is fun to see family members that get along so well. Also, they are hard to miss in their customary bib overalls. They make Georgia tuxedos look good!

Happy BBQ'ing!

Here are the Florida BBQ Association's Upcoming Events:

Jan. 11-12 – Central Florida BBQ Festival in Sebring

Jan. 18-19 – "Top of the Lake BBQ Affair" in Okeechobee

Jan. 19-20 – "Panama City BBQ Fest"

Feb. 1-2 – "Chillin' & Grillin' on Main" in Wauchula

Feb. 8-9 – Citrus Center Boys & Girls Club "Smoke on the Water BBQ" 'Love Those Thighs' in Winter Haven, Fla.

Submitted by Jim McCain, board member of FBA. 🍷

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Wiley and Janet McCrary display their numerous competition awards. Photo Courtesy of Wiley's Championship BBQ.

Texas barbecue icon dies after gaining accolades

TAYLOR, Texas – Texas barbecue icon Bobby Mueller, known for his 90-hour

workweeks, has died at the age of 69.

The owner of Louie Mueller Barbecue in Taylor, Texas, ran the family joint launched by his father, Louie Mueller, in 1949. The restaurant, named recently as one of the top five in Texas by *Texas Monthly*, won a James Beard Foundation Award in 2006, and was known for massive beef ribs and nubs of meat provided to customers waiting in line, according

to the *Austin American-Statesman*.

Mueller preferred to run out of food before selling yesterday's meats; all of the items on his menu were made fresh daily, his son Wayne told the Statesman.

"He was dedicated to his principles," said Wayne Mueller. "He made sure to do everything he could to fulfill his responsibilities."

Bobby Mueller was born in 1939. He played football and ran track in high school before leaving Taylor for Texas Christian University, and he spent a year in Korea while serving in the military, the newspaper reported. He returned to Taylor in 1965 to work in his father's restaurant, which he took over in 1974.

Mueller's September death came as a surprise, and was an avid runner until recent years. "He wore out more shoes than I did sets of tires," said Wayne Mueller of his dad.

Wayne Mueller plans to take over the restaurant that grew out of a Safeway grocery store that Louie Mueller started in 1936.

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Champions have launched their Savannah restaurant

SAVANNAH, Ga. – After years on the catering, sauce and competition circuits, **Wiley and Janet McCrary** have launched a Whitemarsh Island restaurant called **Wiley's Championship BBQ**.

In the backyard of Savannah, Ga., the restaurant, which opened in September, features a “Cheers” feel of television fame, barbecue memorabilia, wine and beer, the blues and WiFi.

The couple's sauce, featured on CNN, leads on the menu.

“We waited out hurricane Hanna before making our soft opening announcement; we'll do more of what we do best – serve up championship-quality barbecue,” shares Janet McCrary.

Co-champion Janet clarifies her husband's barbecue passion. “Wiley thinks of himself as a barbecue evangelist spreading the ‘Gospel of BBQ.’” Competing in the by-invitation-only National Barbecue Festival in November 2007, the couple placed first in both pork ribs and beef brisket. Those same techniques, including spices, sauces and a pool of Wiley's 500 best recipes will be on the menu at the restaurant and for catering.

Before opening Wiley's, the McCrarys began their barbecue careers catering in Atlanta, then weaved their love of Savannah with their popular Savannah BBQ catering. They first sought out charities, such as the Savannah Blues & BBQ Festival and Savannah Union Mission, as places to put their high-volume barbecue capabilities to work, while serving up their champion-tested recipes.

Wiley's Championship BBQ is located six miles east from downtown Savannah. The restaurant will be open daily for lunch – Monday through Saturday, from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. – “or until the barbecue runs out,” says Janet McCrary. The restaurant is also now open Thursday through Saturday 5-8 p.m.

From hot sauce to – revolutionary skin care?

ANDS, N.J. - Blair Lazar, widely known in the food business as the creator of Blair's Death Sauce, has developed a skin-care treatment through his Biocap By Blairlab that uses a naturally occurring substance called capsaicin, which can be found in hot sauces.

Biocap has been shown to reduce wrinkles and smooth skin around the face and other problem areas for complexions of any type. Since its launch in 2007, Biocap has received accolades from several news agencies, including Marie Claire magazine, the NY Post and on Fox News. ABC News has reported on the healing effects of capsaicin, according to the company, reporting the natural substance's ability to relieve arthritis pain and discomfort when injected into certain joints. Blairlab founder Lazar says: “The healing properties of capsaicin were something I had heard of in my searches far and wide for the hottest substances on the planet. But it wasn't until I discovered it myself that I truly

learned of its power.”

Lazar's hot sauce, released in 1989, has long enjoyed retail success. His limited edition sauces called Blair's Reserves are listed in The Guinness Book Of World Records as “World's Hottest.”

“Tackling skin care was the furthest thing from my mind,” says Lazar about the accident in the kitchen that got him thinking about cosmetics. A splash of capsaicin to the face while creating a new hot sauce got him started. What Lazar uncovered was that the natural substance that makes chili peppers hot also acts as a vasodilator and collagen-building agent. This translates to healthy, glowing and smooth skin from a natural substance.

After this discovery, and many years of research, with scientists in cosmetics, Lazar birthed the Biocap and Biocap XS line, which harnesses the power of capsaicin without the burn. Along with the natural effects of capsaicin, Biocap is rich in antioxidants in order to eliminate the harmful effects of free radicals. 🔥



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Michael Roman, of *catersource*, on catering & barbecue

After careers in teaching and catering, **Michael Roman** co-founded *catersource* with **Bernice Phillips** in 1992 to provide education and support for caterers around the U.S. The project, with corporate headquarters in Minneapolis, has grown to include an award-winning magazine and an annual catering tradeshow.

Today, at 63, Roman works out of his Chicago home and enjoys the benefits of a lifetime of hard work. He paused from his work on an untitled book due to come out in February – in time for *catersource*'s convention – to offer thoughts about catering and barbecue.

Q: Tell me about your decision to step somewhat away from the business you've developed.

A. Recently, I decided to step back a little bit and I'm sort of working out of my home now, and working less, which is kind of fun. I have wonderful people who are taking my dreams and ideas to new heights.

Many caterers, many barbecue companies grow and the issue is, we bring to our dreams and our growth hours of work and motivation. But sometimes when you are a leader, you don't always see the total picture of potential and you're working in such a way that you cannot do everything yourself to a certain point. It's hard to resign ourselves to the fact that other people can actually do the job as well as we can or better.

I made the decision about five years ago that I wanted to take the business to a bigger height – not just for financial reasons but for service reasons. I wanted to touch more of the industry, and I wanted very much to have a magazine (*catersource Magazine*) that was worthwhile...it's a magazine that's breaking all sorts of records and winning awards and has been very successful.

My choice was to happily embrace outside partners to help me...who knew how to build a business, to be

responsive to the market place, how to expand the business side of growing an organization, and that's what it has been about. The most amazing thing is the wonderful people we have been able to seduce to come work for us...because they all tend to be younger, they have high quality education, but they also have tremendous dedication to the mission of care service, which is to bring continuing education and opportunities for personal advancement, growth to caterers.

Q. The economy is on everyone's mind. What does it mean for caterers?

A. Our surveys show us at least right now, sales for the vast majority of caterers are stronger than they were the year before. We don't know what next is going to happen, but currently we are proving ourselves once again recession resistant. Remember, if you take the simple matter of a corporate client, you may have a total expenditure for galas, they'll spend that or as much money on that as for training sessions. Food and beverage continue to flow into corporations. People who are a little more cautious about spending money are going to look at ways to save money. And that's where your caterers come in.

Barbecues and picnics are supposed to be fun, casual and less expensive. So therefore, our hosts and hostesses trained to economize and save money are wise to select a barbecue-type caterer for a wedding. Why? Because, beyond money, it's just more fun. 'Let's do a wedding on a beach, with a barbecue caterer.'

If I'm a corporate business person, and I had shrimp last year at my party, and this year I take shrimp off, everyone knows I'm in trouble fiscally. But if I say, 'Let's do barbecue, guys, it's going to be fun,' everyone's happy. It's good food. There should be a lot of growth and promise for the barbecue segment. They should be growing, and marketing this way. They should be saying to potential corporate buyers that it's perfectly permissible for them to go out and use a barbecuer. You want to save on money? Use a barbecue caterer. They are making money, the barbecuers are making money, even if their prices are perceived as lower than other catering.

Q. You mentioned a little bit about marketing. How can you market yourself in a way that's more economically feasible in these times?

A. I think you just create a postcard vehicle to mail. I think postcards are a cool thing to do. You use oversized post-

cards, 6x9, you send them out bulk mail. The first thing I would do is make the postcards smell of smoke. There are two ways of doing that. One is to use chemicals to have that flavor, but otherwise, quite frankly, your members can take a stack of postcards and just put them in a smoker. You think about it, I'm a guy in a corporation – and I'm sincere about this – and I have a stack of mail, the flavor of good wood is cool. It's going to bring attention to that particular client. Everybody loves barbecue. Maybe they don't want it everyday, necessarily, but everybody loves barbecue. They love the casual nature of it; they don't have to wear suits. So, I think that's the simplest marketing thing to do.

Q. Is there anything that barbecue caterers should be avoiding in these times?

A. They should avoid working with clients they can't make money with. The honest problem you have with barbecue companies is they tend to be very friendly, they tend to be very casual, they can be shrewd, also. But they need to qualify their buyers to make sure that the time they are spending on them in explaining what they do is worthwhile. There's no sense in talking to a person or a company that isn't going to give you a valid price for your work. What should they do, rather what shouldn't they do? What they should do is concentrate on incoming market. There's nothing more important than a buyer's decision on what company to use than in the first 40 seconds of talking to somebody. So the first thing for a restaurant to do is have a separate line for catering. 'Hi, ABC Restaurant, can I help you, please?' 'I want catering.' 'Oh, I'm just a restaurant hostess; I'll have to have someone call you back.' That's not going to make you very successful. So you need to treat catering as

a separate product line, with its own phone number. It can be the same desk as the hostess, but the hostess needs to be trained to answer the phone in a catering way. It's great when a caterer is part of a restaurant, there's nothing wrong with that, but they want to talk to the catering part of the restaurant. They perceive them as having different chefs, different equipment. That's not necessarily true, but they perceive that as buyers. So the most important thing is to practice and rehearse and have scripts of what one says when people call in. The first 30-40 seconds of a phone call are very important. What they should not be doing in the first 40 seconds is



asking people how much money they want to spend. They should ask, first of all: when the person wants the event done; approximately how many people it's going to be; and what type of event it is. The caterer should be able to say: 'Well, what you've told me so far, I have some wonderful solutions, we can run from this price to this price.' Very few caterers use that concept.

There's a lack of respect that caterers have for themselves. They feel they have to sell everybody and please everybody. That's not true. You can please and sell to people that you can make money from and grow a business with. And you really shouldn't have to put up with a bunch of nonsense from people who are trying to get the lowest price,

and make you jump through hoops. A caterer is a professional. They have a right to determine who they sell to and who they don't. In catering, we have a right to decide who comes in and doesn't come in to our system.

Q. What about presentation? What should the caterer be going for?

A. Barbecuers have to be careful, because the image in the mind of a guest or a buyer of barbecue is predetermined. And it may be determined by Hollywood movies, it may be determined by their childhood. For gosh sakes, barbecue done in Tennessee is different from Virginia. It's like two different worlds.

There are certain traditions and areas... you're not going to serve barbecue in a suit, but a barbecuer can say, 'We have several divisions, we have our traditional, casual division; but we also have our new division that does barbecue creole, shark.' You can sell an image as you so choose. A barbecuer under one roof can have different feelings, different names and different divisions.

Q. Is there anything you wish I had asked?

A. Yeah, you should have asked: 'Why should I come to catersource?'

Q. Well, that's a really good point! Why should they?

A. Nobody has the best education, the latest trends, the latest products, the latest services offered to caterers than catersource. At our convention, we had over 4,000 attendees last year. 1,000 booths. It's a very successful event because of what we offer to catering. It's an opportunity to learn in a very short four-day period an unbelievable amount of information. It helps them go back to their own businesses and excel even better than they do now. 🔥

Go for the gold – customer, that is



Are you the owner or co-owner? Are you wondering how to survive or perhaps even thrive in tough times? For some of us, barbecue is a necessity. But, maybe, right now we don't eat it as often as we did.

If you have seen your sales drop, it is time to make some decisions. In 26 years of working with small businesses, we have found that making the right decisions and acting on them at the right time is the difference between success and failure.

But what decisions? Do you cut back on expenses – staff, hours, food quality, advertising? The main thing is, you can't do "business as usual," even if your sales are stable.

And how do you make those decisions? You don't want to make things worse. We want you to thrive, not just survive.

So when you are making decisions, do not cut out what makes you unique to your "gold" and "platinum" customers. Focus on them.

Who are these folks? Can you name yours? Here are their most valuable characteristics:

- They are not DIYers – "Do It Yourselfers" who want to cook their own barbecue.
- They bring in friends with them – maybe they even introduce them.
- They send people to you – referrals are your life blood.

- They are your ultimate quality control – most importantly, they tell you when things are not right.
- They give you ideas – you can't use all of them but it means that they care.
- They ask your opinion.

What is everyone else? Silver– which might become "gold" or even "platinum" if handled right. Bronze – you can live with. Or worst of all, lead and concrete. Get too many bronze, lead, and concrete customers and you will end up closing your doors or wishing you had because the business will probably not be stable and profitable.

How can you spot them? It boils down to whether or not they are really legitimate, qualified and interested buyers of what you sell. (Some of these are more applicable to caterers than those who just have a restaurant.)

- **Silver customers** are qualified and are either an easy sale or highly lucrative; willing to talk and easy to serve.
- **Bronze customers** are qualified, usually want a discount price and are never satisfied – like to argue.
- **Lead customers** are not qualified, are time wasters and not really serious about enjoying the experience.
- **Concrete customers** are not qualified buyers, not interested in barbecue, weigh you down and add nothing of value.

We've all had them. Don't think your food or service will change the bronze, lead and concrete customers – they won't. Even worse, they attract more like them and you won't focus on your gold customers or encourage your silver customers to the special benefits of being "gold".

When people visit your restaurant or call you about a catering job, it is possible to tell which kind of potential customer they are. That is, if you focus.

Create a "Gold Customer Profile". Once you have the profile, train all

staff to use it to determine if customers match or not. How? By asking questions of customers and recording the results. There are some easy ways to do this that will seem natural and not interfere with staff.

Then, analyze other decisions and actions before you make them. Use what you learned in your market research efforts above. Be sure you do not attract the wrong people. Get rid of staff that are bronze, lead or concrete. Only advertise places that reach "silver" or "gold" customers.

Finally, implement a process so front of house and the kitchen know how to make "golds" feel special. What do "golds" want?

- To feel unique
- Not to be "sold" as if they were just anybody
- To be in on things

Am I suggesting you treat them differently? You bet – special seating, special presentation, extras that do not cost you a lot but encourage them to come back, spend more, and bring others like them.

This takes some analysis and concentrated effort but it can be the difference between life and a slow death.

Jan F. Triplett is the co-developer of "VIA", Virtual Business Incubator & Accelerator program for the Business Success Center, an SBA national award-winning program. She is also the author of Thinking Big, Staying Small and A Networker's Guide to Success and creator of the Owners MBA. She and her partner are NCRC Certified Technical Advisors who specialize in creating sustainable businesses, guided growth and business turnarounds. Initial consultation is free. Contact her at HYPERLINK "mailto:triplett@bscusa.com" triplett@bscusa.com or (512) 933-1982. 🔥

Advertise in Q Magazine

Q is the official publication of the National Barbecue Association and is the ONLY publication geared toward barbecue store owners, caterers and enthusiasts. Each quarter, Q reaches over 1,700 NBBQA members and barbecue industry leaders.

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