

SUMMER 2024

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Fresh Perspectives



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EDUCATION, NEWS, PRODUCTS & IDEAS FOR PROFESSIONAL CATERERS

Summer 2024 CONTRIBUTORS



Executive **Anthony Lambatos** explores how to ensure your values and mission “stick” with your employees



Chef **Robin Selden** discusses why taking your team to Catersource + The Special Event is a recipe for success



Sales expert **Meryl Snow** defines several effective negotiation strategies that will help close sales



Chef **Keith Sarasin** shares how chefs can leverage the power of social media to serve and inspire

What do you think of this issue? Like it? Love it? Have something to contribute to our website? We'd love to hear from you. Write us at editor@catersource.com.

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by Robin Selden

Feeding Minds & Appetites

Why taking your team to Catersource + The Special Event is a recipe for success

When I joined my mom's catering company over 25 years ago, I never imagined we would be where we are today! Truthfully, from the beginning I used to joke that if we didn't fight or kill each other, we'd potentially have something pretty special.

In the catering world, staying ahead of the curve, and the competition, is the name of the game. I can't think of a better way to sharpen your team's skills than by sending them to the amazing world of educational inspiration that is [Catersource + The Special Event \(CS+TSE\)](#).

I know that it was a game changer for me when I attended my first conference many years ago! It's all about unleashing the power of creativity and building a

team that's ready to conquer any challenge. So, let's dive into why investing in your team's conference adventures is a smart business move.

Knowledge is power

Knowledge is power and CS+TSE is a serious treasure trove of industry insights, where your team can uncover the latest trends, strategies, and technologies to help build on their current skillsets while also helping you to keep your company ahead of the competition.

I will never forget my first conference. The session that changed everything for me was taught by Meryl and Andy Snow. I sat in the front row, eyes wide open, feverishly taking notes as I didn't want to miss a word. I remember thinking, "They understand my world and what I do and are going to help inspire me to be better and to take this knowledge back to our (at the time) small but mighty team to inspire and excite them too!" I remember Meryl mentioning the International Caterers Association (ICA) and I thought, "I must be a part of that too." Meryl can tell you that I literally followed them down the hallway after the session firing question after question and thinking this was the most incredible moment and that I finally found my tribe and people that cared as deeply as I did about our industry. Needless to say, we became fast friends, and joining the ICA (and later serving as president) was one of the highlights of my professional career.



I believe wholeheartedly that igniting the passion and motivating yourself and your team by attending CS+TSE and other educational conferences is the best way to uncover industry insights, forge meaningful connections and friendships, and boost morale.

Educational conferences like CS+TSE are not just about collecting business cards—they're about forging meaningful connections that can lead to exciting collaborations and opportunities. I was in and focused on doing just that. Fast forward to now and I can truly say that some of the greatest people I know and have in my life as friends and mentors came from the networking and relationship building that I've done (and continue to do) through the many years of attending CS+TSE.

Motivation overload

Another huge factor at CS+TSE is that it's like motivation on steroids when you attend the sessions and really dive into the incredible education!! It's truly like hitting the reset button on motivation, injecting a healthy dose of drive into your team's work ethic. For me personally, it's the catalyst for innovation that sparks new ideas and initiatives.

Still to this day, I strive to learn and be inspired by my friends and colleagues who speak at this event. I'm that person that loves to learn, be inspired, and is excited by what we do as an industry. Just because you own a company doesn't mean you also don't need personal and professional growth, right? It's like planting seeds of knowledge and watching them grow and flourish within yourself, your team, and your organization. It also goes without saying that it boosts morale and retention rates.

Teams bonding together

One of my favorite reasons to take our team to CS+TSE is that it's full of team building! It's not just about sitting through sessions—it's about bonding with your teammates over



The Marcia Selden Catering & Events team makes a point of bonding together with other speakers during Catersource + The Special Event. Photo courtesy Marcia Selden Catering & Events



Robin Selden (shown with Ron Ben-Israel, left, and Chef Tavel Bristol-Joseph, right) during DICED 2024. Photo here & below courtesy Ivan Piedra Photography/AGNYC Productions/SpotMyPhotos



Jeffrey Selden (right) served as a panelist during a session on corporate events. Also shown: Elizabeth Meyer and Michael Cerbelli.

shared experiences and some funny inside jokes. It's about breaking bread at the great restaurants in the city you are visiting and ordering food that can inspire new and exciting menu ideas to take home to your company. Where else can you hop in a Karaoke Cab with seven members of your team (like we did in Austin, TX) and enjoy a moment together that will always be an incredible and silly memory?! We are memory makers and create everlasting memories for our clients ... do it for your team too!



Registration Opening Soon!

The moment you've all been waiting for, registration for **Catersource + The Special Event 2025** is imminent!

Coming to Fort Lauderdale, FL February 24-27, 2025, we promise a showstopping event with knowledgeable speakers, education sessions, networking with catering and event planning industry peers, and cutting-edge suppliers—all in the Boward County Convention Center.

Registration is scheduled to open this July!

More details are coming soon on our new evening events, keynote speaker, and everything you love about Catersource + The Special Event.

We are so excited to see you again in Fort Lauderdale!

Get all the details at: <https://informaconnect.com/catersource-thespecialevent>

Brand building bonanza

Another crucial element is that it's all about building your brand and showing the world that your company is committed to excellence. Truly like a brand building bonanza! Our clients are psyched to know that our company is well respected and known throughout the country. They also love that we give back to the next generation and share our knowledge through the sessions we teach at CS+TSE.

New benchmarks

Education sessions offer your team the chance to measure themselves against industry standards and competitors, identifying areas for improvement and setting new benchmarks for success. It's like a benchmarking bash.


Each year when we return from CS+TSE, our team makes a presentation to the company to showcase what they learned and suggest new ideas that we can potentially implement. As a business owner, we need to see the return on our investment. Investing in your team's conference adventures is like riding a rollercoaster of ROI—with every twist and turn, you'll see your investment pay off in enhanced skills, knowledge, and relationships that drive your business forward. How exciting is that?

For those of you just starting out, or those who just cannot justify the expenses at this time, there are dozens of scholarship opportunities where you and your

team can attend CS+TSE for free. The amazing program that the **ICA Educational Foundation (ICAEF)** has put together offers people the opportunity for growth and learning that is like nothing they can get anywhere else.

If you haven't noticed yet, I am one of the most passionate people that you will ever meet! I believe wholeheartedly that igniting the passion and motivating yourself and your team through attendance at CS+TSE and other educational conferences is the best way to uncover industry insights, forge meaningful connections and friendships, and boost morale. There is a wealth of benefits shared by the most inspiring and dedicated people in the industry that can take your team—and your company—to new heights of success.

By providing your team with the chance to expand their knowledge, develop crucial skills, and forge these meaningful connections, you empower them to drive innovation, maintain a competitive edge, and achieve outstanding results. You not only cultivate a culture of continuous learning and excellence but also position your company for sustained growth and prosperity in an ever-changing landscape. Like they say at Nike®, "Just Do It."

So why wait? Start planning your team's next conference adventure today and get ready to watch your business soar! Who will we see next year in Fort Lauderdale, FL? 



Robin Selden is the Managing Partner & Executive Chef of Marcia Selden Catering & Events and Naked Fig Catering, where she oversees the culinary and marketing operations for her family's multimillion-dollar company. In October 2019, Robin was honored to be named to the BizBash1000 celebrating the top 1,000 event professionals in the USA in 2019 and to the BizBash 500 celebrating the top 500 event professionals in 2020 in the United States. Selden is in the President's Council as a past President of the International Caterers Association and won their Chef of the Year award.

She's a past Innovative Chef of the Year and a current Ambassador Chef for the Greenwich Wine & Food Festival.