

# Franchise Times®

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The News and Information Source for Franchising

May 2010

## Just the Facts, Ma'am

It's not every day you can impress your kids, especially when they are past the age of, oh, let's say 9. Sons Ben and Sam are 21 and 17 respectively, so it can prove difficult. I don't try to stay up on their music, because I'm sure I wouldn't get it right, and really, who wants their mom listening to their music and pontificating on it? I don't try to be hip and use their catch phrases. I feed their friends pizza when they are at our house, but I don't watch TV with them. I know when I've become an interloper in their world and I respect that. But still, I would find some satisfaction in impressing them once in a great while. I don't ask for much.

I thought I had the opportunity the other day as FT Executive Editor Nancy Weingartner and I arrived at the Las Vegas airport to attend the Women's Foodservice Forum's annual convention. I came upon a "Tap Out" shop, which sells branded apparel that targets fans of mixed martial arts, or "ultimate fighting." Both boys are fans and would love one of its T-shirts. Their mom knows what they like, right?

Nancy was nice enough to browse with me (she's not a fan of the sport) and we picked a shirt for each of them based on the colors we liked—as moms do. I brought them home from my trip and presented Sam with his shirt. He loved it. But when I showed him the shirt I was going to send to Ben, who's at college, we happened to notice on the price tag that the shirt represented a fighter Ben "hates," as Sam put it. Sam and I scoured the shirt, looking for the fighter's name imprinted anywhere. We didn't find it, and I cut off the tag. "Next time call me, Mom," Sam said to his simpleton parent.

I'm still going to send it to Ben, hoping he won't discover the shirt represents

someone he "hates." Will I get away with it? Will Ben be impressed? I'm trying, people! Stay tuned.

What this reminds me of is franchising, of course, and how having your facts straight is such a big part of the story. I thought I could walk in and one brand would please both guys. But, just like in franchising, one size doesn't fit all, all the time.

This is evident to franchisors that have chosen the wrong franchisees. As columnist Mark Siebert writes in this month's issue, you have to fish where the fish are, but you don't want to pull just any fish into the boat. You want the best, and that takes time, research and patience.

Finance attorney and columnist Dennis Monroe espouses the same message, but with a different topic. The days of one-size-fits-all financing are long gone. Franchisees have to try harder to convince lenders to finance their businesses. Dennis gives tips on how to convince lenders to say "yes" when they want to say "no" — good information to have during a credit crunch.

And we have an extensive real estate section in this issue that also gives inside information on how to deal with landlords, and debunks the myths and generalizations surrounding the current real estate market. What do you have to do to secure the best site for the lowest possible amount, and what is reasonable to ask for?

Of course I have to mention the subject of our cover story, Cheryl Bachelder, CEO of Popeyes. Cheryl has a long history in the restaurant industry, and understands that helping franchisees to be profitable is part gut, and part facts and figures. She was astounded to learn after joining the company that they had no hard data to track unit profitability and other metrics.

Once she and her team pulled some of those numbers together, she could share with the franchisees best practices of those who were the most profitable. In this case, getting the facts first helped her convince those franchisees that sometimes one way of doing things is better.

Unlike me, I'm betting Cheryl doesn't buy the wrong T-shirts for her kids. She probably investigates, then acts. And as a result, I bet she doesn't have to hide yet another column from one of her kids. **FT**



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# Let's Get 'er Done

## Women's Foodservice Forum event promotes women

By Nancy Weingartner

**W**hat does the Women's Foodservice Forum really want? "To get her" into leadership positions. And they want to do it by combining those three little words into "together." The clever play on words was the result of brand-storming by the WFF's marketing agency as a visual reminder of the value of a multitude of women working in tandem.

About 2,000 women and men came together at the MGM in Las Vegas for the group's annual conference. A significant number — 950 — were first-time attendees. Why so many new attendees wasn't exactly clear, but could have to do with 20-plus new sponsors this year, said Debra Nelms, a consultant for WFF's board readiness program.

The conference offers education, networking and socializing for both mid-level managers and top executives. And, as one can imagine, there is no shortage of food, from breakfast to two snacks a day to cocktail receptions, much of which is donated from sponsors' companies.

Speakers at this year's event included Gladys Knight (sans the Pips, her one-time backup group). The famous R&B singer wasn't there to perform, but rather to talk about her restaurant chain, Gladys Knight and Ron Winans' Chicken and Waffles.

A popular keynoter, as evidenced by the number of women carrying around his books later in the day, was Keith Ferrazzi, founder of Ferrazzi Greenlight, a company that counsels top enterprises on how to "accelerate the

development of business relationships to drive sales (and) spark innovation." He's the author of "Never Eat Alone."

McDonald's Chief Legal Counsel Gloria Santana talked about what it was like to work for the world's largest QSR. She closed her speech with her take on "the best advice I never got." Here are three of her nuggets:

**1.** Focus your career on what's important to you. Know where you're headed, but also know there's more than one way to get there.

**2.** Don't let failure keep you down. Learn to be resilient so you can bounce back after a set-back in your career or life.

**3.** Managers make the trains run on time; leaders inspire through strength of personality and vision.

Haynes and Boone Attorney Joyce Mazero, the first non-foodservice recipient, was presented with the Leadership Award. Her

- 1. Cathlene Schiatta** of U.S. Foodservice with seminar speaker Nicholas Boothman
- 2. Shari Hagar** wearing the WFF T-shirt
- 3. Karen Keown**, founder of Chefsource, Charles Aeh, vice president with Service Management Group and Kathleen Wood, founder of Kathleen Wood Partners.

acceptance speech challenged women to pave the way for future women — even if you had ATto do it on your own.

The Top to Top Summit, designed for executive-level women, featured Saj-Nicole Joni, author and Forbes columnist. Insights from her panel discussion included: Too many companies reward playing it safe instead of risk-taking; and a future reality is that the restaurant industry is now competing for share of wallet, not just share of stomach. [FT](#)



**At the Coke-sponsored** reception: left to right, Roz Mallet, CEO and president of PhaseNext Hospitality; Joni Doolin, CEO, People Report; Michele Schmal, vice president, CREST product management, The NPD Group; and Susan Gambardella, VPcentral region Coca-Cola Foodservice.