



Hi Folks,

Taking it from the top; things I have learned this past quarter:

Earlier this month I did an event for 1800 people. The event was a BBQ/Band outdoor festival theme, and potato chips were on the menu. I wanted to do individual bags but we decided to do bulk chips. Not a smart move, know why? Besides it isn't sanitary—how do you get the chips from the bowl onto your plate? Without smashing them? You don't, that is the answer...tongs/large spoon? There is no graceful way to manage this..that is what I learned. And maybe an opening for me to invent a new tool.

Beer Here—Beer inventory...I wrote last year about counting beer caps is the best and most efficient way to count beer actually used. This still holds true. But be careful when you agree to this that a fast one isn't pulled on you and they go to cans. Put on the BEO that you want beer bottles. Most people prefer beer in bottles as opposed to cans. Plus, the profit margin of beer in cans instead of bottles is higher on the property side. Just have everything put on the BEO and you will be covered.

Beer is proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy.
Benjamin Franklin

Does everyone who is reading this know what TIPS trained is?? That is a bartender alcohol awareness training. Cover yourself as buyers and have put on your BEO's that all bartenders are TIPS trained. Just a good safety precaution.

While the glass is still raised—and this is pretty much across the board—are bartenders sneaking tip jars on hosted events. The standard answer I get from beverage managers is that they know better. I question that as if they know better why are they still doing it? My rule of thumb is if they want to leave a tip have the bartender put it in their pocket. If I see a tip jar out or money laying on the bar then it becomes mine and I donate it. Remind folks in the pre-planning stages that this is not acceptable.

Stepping up on the famous Rx for Catering, LLC soapbox—what I have learned is when doing a large event INSIST on having the banquet and bar captains for that event present at the final pre planning meeting. The reason why INFORMATION finalized at that meeting DOES NOT get passed down. It doesn't matter where you are working or the number of stars/diamonds, etc. at the property this happens everywhere. So do yourself a favor and get the people who are actually executing the work to be present at final meetings.

Let's talk AV for a minute. Meeting planners CRAB at your AV companies and hotels. I have been buying AV services lately and this is what I am seeing. We are getting charged a labor fee for set up/strike of AV and THEN getting charged 22% service fee on top. WHY? The service fee should cover the labor. That is why it is there. The hotels are double dipping as this money is going no where but to their bottom line. Then I asked the AV company where did you get this outrageous number for labor of two meeting rooms that were going to take them all of 1 hour to set. He said we charge 20% of the total bill for labor. I said no way. I would pay what it costs them in labor to set up the room. So between the 20% labor and the 22% hotel service fee we are paying an additional 44%..and, yes, we do get a discount, but at the end of the day the scale isn't balancing out equally.

I was sitting with my 3-year-old niece, Emily, the other day...when I dropped something and said "Shit." She informed me that is a bad word and I should say "Oh my goodness," instead. I stand corrected by a 3 year old.

Swinging into fall; you are doing a reception and want a different taste? Be brave and go with duck. And, no, you won't be quack-quack for doing it—this can be very well received. Just make sure that you are working with chefs that know how to properly work with duck. A good cherry sauce or maple glaze, carved with a rolled pancake Asian-style will make for a popular action station. Promise!

Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.

- Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

Foods for the fall? What is talking to me right now is foods that the native Indians would have eaten. Pumpkins, squash, different types and colors of corn etc. It takes a bit of research, but it's worth the time on investment.

Trends we are still seeing are dessert shots. I am not sure if I am still liking this—but at the end of the day it makes a lot of sense. Just be creative when you are coming up with a variety of shots to put desserts in.

What does 12nn EST and BBJ have in common? A lot, actually, is what I found out this past quarter. When placing an order with BBJ—which I do quite frequently with the extreme patience of Ken Krom. 12nn EST is the deadline for placing an order that needs to ship the next business day. I messed this up terribly this quarter and Michael McPeake came to my extra shipping charge rescue. This is important to remember. If you need an order to ship the next day then it has to be placed and paid for by 12nn EST. 12:01 it won't be shipped until the day after. Meaning if you place an order at 2:00 p.m. on Monday it won't go out until Wednesday. Also keep this in mind in relation to business days for weekend events. As a rule of thumb, FEDEX doesn't make deliveries on Sat/Sun unless you want to pay the up charge. And TRUST ME the Fedex cost is extreme and Michael assisted me with making it lower. Thank you my dearest Michael, I am very grateful for this lesson learned.

Some of you know I handle the event marketing for a company called Aerion Corporation. Aerion is one of my pride and joys as the people who work there are truly amazing. They are doing the engineering for the world's first Supersonic Business Jet. When completed this airplane will travel at max speed of 1.6 Mach. What did I learn when I worked National Business Aircraft Association with them? I learned that "Mach" should always be spelled with a capital as it was the person's last name. Guess who didn't spell it with a capital "M"? and that 60 seconds traveling 1.6 Mach will carry you 15 nautical miles. That my friends is FAST.

When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it.

Henry Ford

Folks, thank you for taking the time to read The Claire Diaries, feel free to pass them along.

With Appreciation,

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