



Hi All,

Drum Roll PLEASE!! or in the culinary world that would be the equivalent of banging a wooden spoon on a pot. I am very pleased to announce after five years, I finally have a mission statement for Rx. It is simply one word: "Inspire." That is it. The mission statement is designed so each customer will customize the statement according to their needs. The goal of the company is for every customer to be inspired through their experience with Rx for Catering, LLC.

Pasta stations can be a little "tired" but always seem to be a crowd pleaser. Here is a different suggestion for the pppassttaaa bar (as they say in Chicago) that will yield good results. Try a Ravioli bar and offer three different types of the tasty squares. My recommendation is to do mini raviolis in the form of meat, cheese and mushroom. This is an effective alternative when you need to feed people on a budget or at lunchtime. Pair the "squares" with fresh herbs and sauces such as a broth to enhance the flavors. Do know that it is "hip to be square."

I had a really bad experience with a hotel in Alabama last August. It was one of those bad situations that just doesn't go away..it just keeps going and going and going..and all's people can do is say they are sorry. What I learned is I HATE HEARING the words I am sorry. If you are truly sorry then follow it up with an action step to take away the pain. This hotel's non existent communication on behalf of reservation's caused my group a lot of unnecessary grief. More disappointing was the GM; all he could do was say he was sorry. We know the GM--the one PERSON WHO CAN MAKE IT RIGHT--but chose not to...personally, I was embarrassed for him. There was no action step here ~ it should have been, "I am sorry let us..upgrade a coffee break...let us send an amenity to the people we are walking with a letter of apology." This is an example of words followed with an action step. This is what impresses the client and makes for harmonious customer/client relationships. The old phrases action speaks louder than words are very applicable for these upsetting customer situations.

Hate foggy windshields? Buy a chalkboard eraser and keep it in the glove box of your car. When the windows fog, rub with the eraser. Works better than a cloth! ~ That is courtesy of Rx for Catering's resident doc, my dad.

Quotes this quarter are coming from this FUNNY book I read. The book takes place in redneck Georgia where all the characters are in small town context. The author starts off each chapter with a quote from a bumper sticker or sign. I think many of them are hysterical and worth sharing.

"Beware of the high cost of low living."
Sign outside the Rock of Ages Baptist Church

Wanna add a little color to your banquet table? Spice up the boring white linen? Place the butter in colored votive candle glass holders. They are inexpensive to buy; gives everyone their own personal butter dish and washes well in the dishwasher.

A step back in time?? Add extra crispy tater tots on your buffet. Everyone loves them along with homemade three onion ketchup.

"No one will win the battle of the sexes. There's too much fraternizing with the enemy."

AAAHHH, now for a good food catch that is near and dear to my waistline and hence the reason why my little black dress is no longer little. LambWesson makes a brand of frozen potato chips that are Delicious! Just pop them into the deep fryer; throw on seasoning salt and you are good to go! I have turned several hotels onto them especially for lunch buffets.

Oxygen Bars are very kool at breakfast. Especially after a big night of drinking and attendees are going into meetings. It is worth the return on investment as it will snap the fuzziness out of people's brains and clear their noggin up to pay attention to content.

The main character in the book was dumped by her husband. The quote for that chapter read:
"Welcome to Dumpsville. Population You"

Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water, an industry colleague asked me to participate in an RFP. He emailed me and said I AM NOT going to tell you who the client is until I talk to you. OK, I thought come on, this is dumb. I have 23 years industry experience, working all over the world, plus Olympics, plus Superbowl--plus major citywide conventions. This is going to have to be some pretty strong water he is putting in my gun to give ME a moment. Still no luck--and we just continued to play phone tag. He wouldn't tell me who the client is. I finally left him a VM saying *enough of these games!* If you want me to think about it at least tell me WHO the client is. Well, my dear friend sent me the RFP to read and I do have to admit defeat folks HE GOT ME! and HE GOT ME GOOD. The client was none other than an adult publishing company. What I learned is I should never think that I have been there; done that regarding events. What I can confirm regarding this type of client, is I have NOT been there; NOR have I done that. On the flip side of the story, congratulations to my friend Pete who through his leadership was awarded the business. I did write the culinary part of the RFP and am proud to say I left the whipped cream in the diary case at a grocery store near you.

For you folks who received 4Q-2005 Diaries I wrote about my nephew Bennie moving to Pittsburgh. My brother's temp job ended and he packed up everyone and is now living in Denver. Asking my now 6-year-old nephew Bennie if he had any new girlfriends yet, he said no..simply because school hadn't started. Ok, fair enough. So I asked how many girlfriend(s) (notice the plural) he wanted. 16! I said, I hope you have a lot of allowance as affording 16 might be a problem on a 6-year-old's weekly. I think I lost him on that although one day soon he will know what I am talking about.

"Some family trees bear lots of nuts."
Needlepoint on a Pillow

Cucumber--dice it up and put it into a fruit salad. It gives a wonderful refreshing taste to an otherwise very ho-hum dish.

Need an inexpensive AM Coffee Break Item? ~ Meet my dear friend, the doughnut hole. It is a quick, cheap pick-up with a mid morning cup of coffee.

While working in Arizona I took a nighttime jeep tour of the desert. The guide explained to us that the Sonoran desert is actually a young desert at the age of 10,000 years. The oldest desert is the Sahara, clocking in at 2.5 million years. I have to say all the sudden I didn't feel so old at the age of 44. Now, please pass the wrinkle cream.

How refreshing is this? For all you road warriors, this actually happened. I arrived back in Atlanta Hartsfield Airport and while riding the tram to baggage claim a flight attendant in uniform was on the phone talking to someone. She was on the first day of a three-day trip and was frantically looking for "something" that was lost. She was panicing because her next leg was leaving in 30 minutes. Guess what was lost? HER LUGGAGE! The baggage handlers accidentally took it off the plane and she was going to the baggage office to fill out her claim. The best I could say to her was "Good Luck."

This is a touch long, but as we are all gearing up for fall this is worth reading. This "banquet bar" actually happened in Arizona a couple of weeks ago. You know the scenario--we all get a touch lazy about checking inventory. I know, hard to believe! It was while signing off on checks the next day this bar bill comes through that had me hitting the "Bullshit" buzzer.

So what is a gal to do? The beverages have been consumed? How did I know this bill was so off for this group of 90 people?

For starters, I watched the bartenders pour the night before and no one was over pouring, and yet ALL beverages consumed had high numbers. This is a good indicator something is wrong especially for a smaller group. Usually if liquor or beer is high then wine or sodas/waters will be lower. Next, I added the total number of drinks consumed and divided it by attendees. The per person drink total was very high. As this was arrival day people are tired and the majority of them left after 1.5 hours. I explained all of this to my CSM. Her comment was they have the inventory sheets to prove the numbers. WWEELLLL, no, the only thing proven is someone knows how to write a number in the appropriate slot. Not happy with their lack of seeing the light, this is the action step I took. I purposely waited until 5 minutes before the next evening's function and told the banquet captain to instruct both bartenders to save all beer caps and wine corks. That I was only paying for what was turned in that evening and that I would be doing inventory with him.

Below is a recap on what happened with 25 more people in attendance:

Mixed Drinks went from 144 Monday to 114 Tuesday @ \$6.00++ per drink
Imported Beer went from 135 Monday to 104 Tuesday @ \$5.50++ per drink
Domestic Beer went from 97 Monday to 45 Tuesday @ \$4.50++ per drink
Bottles of Wine went from 20 BOTTLES Monday to 10 BOTTLES Tuesday @ \$34.00++ per bottle
Sodas went from 54 Monday to 15 Tuesday @ \$3.25++ per drink
Bottled Water went from 63 Monday to 17 Tuesday @ \$3.50++ per drink

Needless to say, Tuesday's numbers made more sense. Do yourself a favor: follow the liquor inventory steps outlined above and this will give you the truest on actual spend.

"Marriage is a three-ring circus; engagement ring, wedding ring and suffering."
Sign outside a divorce lawyer's office

While attending a pre-planning meeting at the Georgia Aquarium, we were sitting in a room that had a fish-viewing window. I got very jealous watching the fish enjoy their cushy life of hanging out in this roomy glass house without a worry on their mind. It was then that I realized that if reincarnation does exist, I would like to come back as a long, lean fish with thin fins, pretty colors and sexy full fish lips. I think it will be a combination of these features that will make me the most sought after catch in my school.

How dumb is dumb? Read on and you will have an answer. This diddy was in *Nations Restaurant News*.
Westlake Ohio--A would-be patron of the Moosehead Saloon here was foiled when she handed a stolen driver's license to her waitress. How did the waitress know the ID was fake? It was her own. It had been stolen a month earlier. The Associated Press reported that the patron, 23 year old Maria Bergain, fled after becoming suspicious of the delay as the waitress, 22 called the police. Her companion provided her name. The report did not say why the thief, who was old enough to drink, didn't provide her own ID.

Rx for Catering, LLC's housekeeping notes:

I was asked to participate in the MPI's national magazine for October. They are doing an article on F & B and what is happening in the world of culinary. The gal who interviewed me wasn't familiar with a company such as Rx because there are so few of us. After a couple of phone conversations she asked to speak to one of my clients on what it was like hiring an F & B consultant. Take a bow Ms. Kim Johnsen of Honeywell Aerospace--I appreciate your time in being interviewed for the article.

Don't forget my "Monthly Morsel" at planyourmeetings.com

Last but not least ~ thanks to those of you who read my blog at: <http://rxforcatering.com/blog.php>--this gives real time on F & B.

"If you're not living on the edge, you're taking up too much space."
Sign posted outside of Rx for Catering, LLC

Thank you to everyone for reading The Claire Diaries and do feel free to pass them along.

Be Safe, Be Sound 4Q of 2006

Claire R. Gould
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