



# newsletter

january 2008

## ♦ president's message

Happy new year, IFEC-ers! 2008 promises to be a banner year for IFEC, and I'm excited to be your (mostly) fearless leader as we forge ahead with lots of exciting plans for the year ahead.

Under the "new and exciting" header, this year's NRA show will feature the debut of a never-before-seen IFEC event, an educational session called "Get Covered: Foodservice PR Pointers Straight from the Editors," moderated by our own *Alexei Rudolf*, with panel members including Blair Chancey of *QSR*, *Kathy Hayden* of *Flavor & the Menu*, *Chandra Ram* of *Plate* and *Kate Leahy* of *R&I*. Time and location TBA.

In other news, conference and other IFEC committees have been formed, but there's still space available for those interested in lending a hand. Committees looking for volunteers include Scholarship Auction, Professional Development Awards, Food Tours, New Member Orientation and Gift Bags.

Also, we greatly appreciate all those who tossed their hats into the ring so quickly and in such impressive numbers to help vet potential conference locations for 2010. All three presentations are covered now (thanks to *Natalie Palmatary*, *Jamie Estes* and *Kathy Hayden*), but if you're particularly partial to Boston, New Orleans or Portland, Maine, feel free to get in touch and make your best argument.

Finally, in less than 10 short months, we'll all get to find out how much Cleveland really does rock at the 2008 Annual Conference Nov. 3-6. Carol, *Mary Humann* and I already made our first scouting trip—thanks to much-appreciated guidance from *Gail Bellamy* and *Bob Krummert*—and will return over the next couple months to narrow down the list of killer sites for food tours (microgreens, anyone?), dining (how about Food Network's newest Iron Chef, Michael Symon?) and drinking (yes, there are breweries!). If you have suggestions for what else we shouldn't miss, please get in touch.

-- *Allison Perlik*, IFEC President (Senior Editor, Food, *R&I*)

## ♦ about people

*Betty Bastion Varese* (retired IFEC director for whom The Betty award is named) reports that she and husband Michael sold their little house in East Hampton to the mega rich and are now basking in warm weather in West Palm Beach year round. New address: 780 S. Sapodilla Ave. Apt. 306, West Palm Beach, Florida 33401. Tel: 561, 868-7852. new email [evarese@bellsouth.net](mailto:evarese@bellsouth.net). Betty just signed the publishing contract for a sequel to her first mystery. This one is called "The Marigold Mafia" and should be published in late 2008 or early 2009. They hope to be at IFEC in Cleveland in November.

*Melinda Morgan* announces that Fatburger, a Santa Monica, Calif.-based fast casual restaurant with more than 90 restaurants worldwide, has selected Morgan Marketing &

Public Relations LLC to create and execute strategic campaigns, generate local and regional publicity for their restaurants, and support the company's continued growth into international markets such as China and Dubai.

*Diane Welland M.S., R.D., was recently honored by the Food and Culinary Professionals dietitians practice group of the American Dietetic Association as the Grand Prize Recipe Winner for the Lamb Lover's Roundup recipe contest. Her winning recipe was a Lamb Panzanella salad. The contest was sponsored by the Tri-Lamb Group (New Zealand, Australian and American lamb producers). The Grand Prize was airfare, accommodations and registration to the 2007 American Dietetic Association Conference and Exposition in Philadelphia. If you'd like Diane's recipe, contact her at [Dfoodie@aol.com](mailto:Dfoodie@aol.com).*

### ◆ insights

*Ed Hoffman will be a featured speaker at the annual Colorado Independent Publisher's Association conference (March 27-29) discussing how and why authors need to think of themselves as brands to better distinguish their publications. Ed agreed to share some of his branding insights with IFEC.*

How do writers, like all successful brands, differentiate themselves from the competition?

Choice is king. We all know that consumers demand countless options in every aspect of their lives—from dish detergents and facial tissues to restaurants and snack chips. Think about the last time you went to purchase a specialty coffee. Did you know Starbucks offers over 87,000 drink combinations? Yet, consumers generally buy the same brands of products, or consistently order the same grande, soy, light foam latte each morning. Now think about people, like your favorite morning talk show hostess or evening news anchor. Or what about that special server at your weekend breakfast spot who always remembers the way you like your eggs prepared. All of these products and people connect with you for specific reasons, which is the key to successful brands.

A “brand” is something that lives in your head. It's a promise that links a product, service or person to a consumer through words, images and/or emotions.<sup>1</sup> Writers and authors are no different, especially when you consider that there were over 3.2 million books sold in 2006 and over 500 online, magazine, newspaper and television media outlets dedicated to the food industry.<sup>2</sup> How is a writer or author expected to build a loyal following of readers in such a competitive industry?

There are three components to defining a successful brand, which are true for products, services and even people. A brand must be...

- Unique to you and no one else
- Believable in the marketplace
- Motivating to your readers

At The Varick Group, we use our BRAND<sub>3</sub>™ process when working with clients to define a differentiated brand positioning that resonates with their customers. Here are the steps to get you started.

#### Discover Your World

To establish a successful brand positioning for yourself, you must first understand your world. Take a 360-degree look:

Competition – Who are the writers in your field or authors in the genre? What is their point of difference or core message for their work? Why is (or isn't) it believable?

Reader – Who is this person? What do they believe about your topic? What do you want them to believe about it?

You – What in your background strengthens your work? What weakens it? You may want to solicit input from trusted colleagues who are familiar with your work and can provide objective, honest and critical insight.

### Distill for "Nuggets"

It's time to evaluate all of the Discover insights to identify the strongest "nuggets" of information that will support a compelling brand positioning. In other words, what aspects of your world will best help to clearly differentiate yourself and ultimately your work from others. Make some tough choices and select about five to seven "nuggets."

### Define Your Brand

Now categorize your "nuggets" as Unique to you, Believable in the marketplace, or Motivating to your reader. A few may seem appropriate for more than one category, but select the category where it will be most compelling for your brand positioning. Once the categories have at least one "nugget," use this information as a basis for crafting a few sentences about what sets you apart.

The brand positioning you define becomes your reality check when considering new topics about which to write: Can I offer a point of view unlike anyone else? What in my background gives me the credibility to write about it? Do my readers even care? By taking the time to identify a special point of difference in the marketplace, you will more easily resonate and connect with your readers to create a loyal following.

<sup>1</sup> Adamson, Allen P., BrandSimple: How the Best Brands Keep It Simple and Succeed

<sup>2</sup> Vocus, December 2007

*Edward Hoffman is president of The Varick Group, a brand positioning and marketing strategy consultancy for the food industry. He is based in New York City and may be reached at [ed@thevarickgroup.com](mailto:ed@thevarickgroup.com).*

### ◆ **funds available for professional development**

If you have belonged to IFEC for 3 years or more you should consider applying for one of our newest member services -- professional development reimbursement. The program helps underwrite expenses for a variety of educational experiences. Workshops, seminars, formal education, even travel may qualify for reimbursement. Deadline to submit your application for funding activities taking place any time during the calendar year 2008 is March 1st. You'll find information and an application on [www.ifeconline.com](http://www.ifeconline.com). Click on "Member Files" on the members page, scroll down and click on "Professional Development Assistance Program."

### ◆ **job posting**

Morgan Marketing & Public Relations LLC  
Position opening: Director  
1/2008

Recently honored by the Orange County Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America with the prestigious Distinguished Service Award, Morgan Marketing & Public Relations LLC has an immediate opening for a Director of Consumer PR in its Irvine Spectrum offices.

The Director must be an enthusiastic senior level strategic PR professional who can manage and motivate a talented PR team. Candidates must be results- and deadline-oriented with experience developing and executing successful consumer public relations campaigns. Applicants should have a proven track record of pitching and winning new business.

Qualifications: At least seven years of agency, in-house or PR experience and a degree in communications/journalism/PR. Agency experience is a definite must and food industry experience is a plus. Responsibilities include:

- Key interface for multiple clients
- Strategic council for clients and staff
- Staff training and development
- Manage media relations strategies
- Supervise writing and editing
- Oversee billing and budgeting process

- Lead new business development

Morgan Marketing & Public Relations LLC is an established, financially strong PR agency with long-term growth opportunities. Benefits include 401(k) with matching contributions, 100 percent employer funded profit sharing program and health insurance along with a positive, high energy, rewarding environment working with incredible clients. Flexible scheduling is available.

Send resume with salary history to [christy@mmpr.biz](mailto:christy@mmpr.biz)

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