



# Newsletter

Seeing the Workforce in High Definition

March 2009

## In This Issue

- BHI Helps Celebrate 20 Years of Elevating Women Leaders
- Root out pro-union staff hiring
- Costco, Whole Foods Offer Alternative to Union Bill
- WFF Top-to-Top Executive Summit
- Leadership in Turbulent Times
- SO Success
- Thinking Outside the Cube

## Insights from the WFF Top-to-Top Executive Summit

by Jill McFarland

[Lewis Hollweg, Phd.](#) presided as moderator at the Top-to-Top Executive Summit at the [Women's Foodservice Forum](#) Annual Conference. The panelists included Chairman and CEO of Sysco, [Rick Schneiders](#); President and CEO of Buffalo Wild Wings, [Sally Smith](#); President and CEO of Brinker International, [Doug Brooks](#); Founder and CEO of People Report, [Joni Doolin](#); and President and CEO of Rich Products, [Bill Gisel](#). The panel discussion focused on leadership in tough economic times and many critical issues were raised including the looming issue of unionization.

## Newest Additions to the BHI Family



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## BHI Helps Celebrate 20 Years of Elevating Women Leaders



The [Women's Foodservice Forum](#) (WFF) Annual Conference was held this week in Dallas celebrating the 20th

anniversary of the WFF. BHI has been committed to the mission of the WFF and has actively worked to help the organization achieve its vision. [Linda Pharr](#), Chief Restaurant Relations Officer of BHI, has served as the WFF Chair and on the Executive Committee and currently serves as the interim President. [Lewis Hollweg](#), Chairman and CEO of BHI, is a past member of the Board of Directors. [Lori Bierman](#), Management Consultant for BHI, is the outgoing Chair for the Leadership Competency Assessment Committee and the incoming Steering Committee Chair for the Emerging Leader Milestone.

Linda provided spirited leadership and insightful direction to the WFF this year. Linda was involved in every aspect of the conference from keynote selection to show flow to

Here are some highlights from the discussion:

Growth has stopped as the industry has matured and the current economy has caused overall sales declines. In addition, the wave of layoffs in other businesses in the last 6 months has a large number of people scrambling for jobs. Restaurants are now being flooded with resumes and it is a great opportunity for companies to invest in choosing the best talent and developing this talent for the future. Strategic thinking restaurant companies are trying to find new ways to make line positions in the food service industry appealing to those with potential to rise in the ranks.

Transparency is critical. People want to see leadership. In a time where layoffs may appear imminent, it is important to let people know where they stand. Keeping quiet breeds negativity and that is infectious in an organization. However, it is important to balance openness with a strategy and plan for improvement. People respond to confident leadership in tough times.

Change should be seen as an opportunity to rethink things that probably should have been examined earlier. If growth is slowed or halted, find ways to increase productivity by examining what has and has not worked in the past. Increase efficiencies in equipment design, technology, and any other areas may benefit your organization.

The panel closed with a discussion about how anxiety and fear can be both positive and negative. Fear with a plan can be a very good thing, causing you to re-evaluate and improve in many areas, becoming a stronger organization for the long haul. However, too much non-directed anxiety, fear, and worry paralyzes people and leads to large drops in productivity and poor morale. Most employees are currently worried about their future. By using good leadership skills to show employees a path to greater success and sustainability, we ensure their effort and engagement in making good things happen. Continual communication is the key.

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### Leadership Ideas for Turbulent Times

By Lewis Hollweg, PhD.

Every business today is re-thinking its strategy and business model. Precipitated by the global recession, this reevaluation process is the subject of great discussion and debate within and across businesses and industries. However, my view is that a significant number of companies lack the deep talent necessary to effectively engage in an innovative re-invention of their business. If you do not have available the level and quantity of talent necessary to think and plan in a broad, creative, and fundamental manner, no amount of strategic techniques and brainstorming will help. Practical problem solvers and experienced operators will be able to reduce costs and increase quality and speed of delivery. However, if radical perspective shifting thought leadership is needed, those practical improvements may not prepare the company

approving all of the creative and staging. She was an integral part of both the planning and execution teams. Her team has made it very clear that they couldn't have done it without her.

Lori was an active contributor at this year's conference. She presented "Creating your Professional Development Plan" and "The Derailers to the C-Suite" which highlighted the joint research done by WFF and BHI on the critical success factors and barriers for women to reach C level positions.

**Root out pro-union staff with hiring process - Nation's Restaurant News Article**  
by Dina Berta

Union membership is on the rise after years of decline. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that union members accounted for 12.4 percent of the workforce last year, up from 12.1 percent in 2007. The Employee Free Choice Act, often referred to as "card check," is a measure intended to make it easier to form unions by eliminating secret-ballot elections. Observers say that the proposal, which was passed in the House

for sustainable success in an uncertain environment.  
[read more](#)

## Great Choices in Talent Lead to Rave Reviews

by Lori Bierman



Beyond reducing turnover, the Service Questionnaire (SQ) helps companies hire hourly employees who can provide high-end guest service. [BRAVO! DEVELOPMENT, INC. \(BDI\)](#), owners of [BRAVO! Cucina Italiana](#), [BRIO Tuscan Grille](#) and [BON VIE Bistro](#), has always emphasized memorable guest service, and with an increased focus on hiring hourly employees with the SQ who exhibit strong sociability and friendliness, they consistently receive positive guest feedback about their team members who go above and beyond...

*"Your hostess and wait staff are friendly and efficient, even when the restaurant is extremely busy or when dealing with difficult customers. In this day and age, it is refreshing to see young people so professional and courteous at all times."*

*"The exceptional service started from the moment we sat down. (Our server) was not only helpful in answering questions about the menu, but more than accommodating in making changes in our meals to suit our tastes. The service was far more than courteous and while he was engaging, he was attentive and pleasant without being smothering."*

*"Our server was exceptional! Her knowledge of the menu and personal opinions of the food (I think she has tried all the items!!) allowed our group of 9 (see photo attached) to make the right decisions to satisfy our cravings! In addition to her knowledge of the menu, her attentiveness to our table (always asking about the bread, water, drinks, etc.) made us feel like we were the only customers in the restaurant!"*

BHI recently embarked on a large scale research initiative to explore the key traits that drive success in hourly level positions in the restaurant industry. Partnering with our clients, we not only re-validated existing scales, but also created and validated new scales that give a more in-depth assessment of candidates and pinpoint job-specific characteristics, like hospitality as well as future potential.

BHI analyzed the data collected to update the current scales from the Service Questionnaire (SQ), and developed new scales to ensure measurement of specific performance areas necessary for success in hourly Front of House and Back of House positions. In next month's newsletter we will share the results of our study and introduce the new scales that we feel will provide an even higher level of accuracy in hiring

last year but defeated narrowly in the Senate, may finally make its way through the Democrat-controlled Congress this year. [read more](#)

**Costco, Whole Foods Offer Alternative to Union Bill (Update1) By Holly Rosenkrantz**  
March 22 (Bloomberg) -- Costco Wholesale Corp., Starbucks Corp. and Whole Foods Market Inc. offered an alternative to the union-backed "card-check" legislation that U.S. business groups are spending millions of dollars to defeat. [read more](#)

**Lewis Hollweg, PhD weighs in on an Article in Food and Beverage Magazine -**

**Beauty is a Beast**  
*by Mario Ponce*

The old adage, "where the beautiful people work, patrons will follow" is a mantra heard throughout the industry. Yet, beautiful doesn't always equate to honest, energetic, friendly, hard-working, caring, or even sensible. Nonetheless, many nightclub operators continue to rely on the practice of primarily hiring 'hotties'; those model types, as cocktail servers or bartenders. Some operators have

decisions.

## Please Contribute

We at BHI are of course very pleased to receive this feedback. If you have a story or feedback you would like to share with us we would love to hear it. Please contact Jill McFarland: [jmcfarland@batrushollweg.com](mailto:jmcfarland@batrushollweg.com).

## Thinking Outside of the Cube - Heather Gipson

Heather's role as a Senior Consultant on the Talent Solutions team has given her the chance to establish relationships with many clients over the last nine years. She partners with clients to build talent selection and development systems, measure and drive employee engagement, and improve business performance by assembling high-performing teams.



You may have heard about her love of horses and ranch living. Heather grew up on a ranch just outside of a small rural town in central Oklahoma. As a kid, she spent the summers riding horses and motorcycles with her big brother, Houston, and helping her parents work the ranch. While Heather resides in the Dallas area now, she frequently visits her parents' home and relives the excitement over the course of a weekend. She packs up her mini-van, trades in business suits for cowboy boots, and heads north with her two-year old daughter, Happy. While Happy learns to ride her miniature pony named AnnaBelle, Heather joins her Dad and brother in the family-friendly sport known as Team Penning.

Little Happy is starting off in her mother's footsteps. Her grandparents, Hoppy and Pat Heidelberg, bought her a miniature paint mare this past Christmas which she loves to brush, feed and ride. Happy is so fond of AnnaBelle (pictured above) that she spends hours atop her horse and has been known to fall asleep in the saddle while the horse is tied to a fence on a warm February afternoon.

found that relying on the tactic has cost them plenty. The risks include theft, lack of productivity due to low energy or stress tolerance, and poor social skills to name a few. These risks can be avoided with thoughtful hiring practices. [read more](#)

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