

Our PANEL of EXPERTS

The many chefs, food & beverage experts and industry analysts who provided valuable insights and takeaways for this issue



MELISSA ABBOTT, Bellevue, Wash.

Melissa Abbott is senior director, culinary insights at The Hartman Group, and has been tracking key trends in the health, wellness, food and retail industries for over 17 years. She has a deep understanding of retail and cultural trends in her consultations with a variety of companies.

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KATHY CASEY, Seattle

Kathy Casey, celebrity chef and mixologist, owns Kathy Casey Food Studios - Liquid Kitchen, specializing in food, beverage and concept development, training, opening support, social media and photography. She has a cocktail show on Small Screen Network and is a frequent speaker and TV and radio guest, and author of 10 cookbooks, most recently "Sips & Apps" and "D'Lish Deviled Eggs."

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MINDY ARMSTRONG, Springfield, Mo.

Mindy Armstrong is the director of innovation at Food IQ, a marketing agency and culinary consulting firm. Her background in branding, food and menu innovation gives her clients an added development of insight-driven menu concepts.

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SHARON OLSON, Chicago

Sharon Olson is the executive director of the Culinary Visions Panel, which tops cutting-edge chefs, emerging leaders and consumer foodies to provide unequaled insight related to new products, menu development and emerging trends.

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SUZY BADARACCO, Portland, Ore.

Suzy Badaracco is a toxicology and registered dietitian. She holds a Science degree in Criminal Justice and a degree in Culinary Arts and a

degree in Human Nutrition, and has worked as an analytical chemist, corporate chef, nutrition specialist, trainer, knowledge manager and trends forecaster for the food industry since 1992. Suzy uses her training in military intelligence, chaos theory and predictive analysis techniques to predict and profile food, flavor, consumer, packaging and health trends in the U.S.

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CHARLIE BAGGS, Chicago

Charlie Baggs is chief executive chef and founder of Charlie Baggs Culinary Innovations, leading a team of chefs, scientists, nutritionists, brand specialists/marketers, stylists and photographers to develop innovative foodservice solutions. For more than 13 years, Baggs has consulted on product development, new item commercialization, national account representation, technical lab analyses, concept development, portfolio reviews and benchmarking, marketing and consumer insights and culinary training. He is a recognized speaker, teacher and author and he also sponsors an employer-of-choice intern program.

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David Commer is a chain account beverage specialist with over 35 years' experience in the industry. Since 2001, Commer Beverage Consulting has provided beverage services and strategies to clients including Applebee's, TGI Friday's, Maggiano's, Cheddar's, Uncle Julio's and Mimi's Café. On a project basis, Commer provides sales and marketing strategy services, product analysis and recipe development to major beverage manufacturers. He brings a deep and diverse experience in all aspects of restaurant management and operations. dc@liquidassets.org



ROB CORLISS, Nixa, Mo.

Rob Corliss is a three-time James Beard House guest chef with over 20 years' experience that includes running world-class hotels, launching new concepts, working in top marketing agencies and currently owning a consulting company: ATE (All Things Epicurean), focused on flavor, menu and restaurant innovation. With an energizing passion for food, he is dedicated to connecting people to their food, environment and wellness. robcorliss@7ate9.biz; www.7ate9.biz