

SESSIONS

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27 - 27/10/2024

LCA Executive Summit

October 28-30, 2024

Renaissance Chicago Downtown Hotel
Chicago, IL

**Preconference Cocktail Reception, Hosted by
Blue Plate Chicago**

17:00 - 19:00

Offsite

Welcome to Chicago!

5:00pm - 7:00pm

The Old Post Office: 2nd Floor, Telegram Lounge

433 W Van Buren, Chicago 60607

Join us for an evening of curated sips and bites as we toast to kick off the 2024 LCAES at the Old Post Office in downtown Chicago. Mix, mingle and take in the rich history, stunning architecture and incredible transformation of one of Chicago's most iconic buildings. Enjoy a selection of crafted hors d'oeuvres from Blue Plate Catering, each a testament to Chicago's bustling array of culinary excellence. After the reception, enjoy an evening out at one of Chicago's great restaurants. Welcome to the best food cities in the world!

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TIME	OFFSITE
17:00	17:00 - Preconference Cocktail Reception, Hosted by Blue Plate Chicago

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LCA Executive Summit

October 28-30, 2024

Renaissance Chicago Downtown Hotel
Chicago, IL

Breakfast

08:00 - 09:00

Renaissance Chicago Downtown Hotel

New Members Breakfast with Steering Committee

08:00 - 09:00

LCASC - Steering Committee

Intro & Welcome

10:00 - 10:15

All

Opening - Welcome, Schedule Review

10:15 - 10:30

All

General Session - Laura Schwartz - Lead First, A Presentation on Leadership

10:30 - 11:30

All

As any great leader will attest, leading in successful times is easy. It's what a leader does in times of turbulence and change that sets them apart. In this one-of-a-kind program, Laura shares little-known stories from more than 200 years of U.S. Presidents and First Ladies to inspire great leadership in any circumstance. Laura adapts these non-partisan stories to make relevant and relatable comparisons to your company or association, and offers tips that attendees can immediately put into action in their personal or professional lives. Laura uses her unique White House experience to share valuable takeaways and inspiring stories from the earliest White House inhabitants, along with first-hand accounts of defining moments during the Clinton administration. She illustrates real solutions from the successes and failures in leadership that we all can practice in our daily lives as we work with our customers and colleagues and share within our communities and families.

Participants

Laura Schwartz - Principal, Laura Schwartz Live

Opening General Session New Member Introductions (2)

11:30 - 11:45

All

Opening General Session Industry Partner Introductions

11:45 - 12:00

All

Buffet Lunch - Regional Lunch Meetings hosted by Steering Committee Members

12:00 - 13:30

LCASC - Steering Committee

Exclusive Venues and Increasing Revenue Streams

13:30 - 14:30

Sales Executive Group

By offering exclusive venues, we create a significant competitive advantage. These venues become destinations in themselves, attracting clients seeking not just exceptional food and service but also memorable and distinct settings for their events. This exclusivity not only differentiates us from competitors but also allows us to command premium pricing, thereby increasing our revenue and market share. Moreover, controlling the entire event experience—from the venue to the catering—ensures a seamless and high-quality service for our clients. This holistic approach allows us to maintain consistent standards and deliver a cohesive experience that meets and exceeds client expectations.

Exclusive Venues and Increasing Revenue Streams

13:30 - 14:30

Management Operations Group

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Culinary Roundtable

13:30 - 14:30

Culinary Innovation Group

Functional Menus and Foods-Fuel Specific Menus-Food as Medicine is here and is the next BIG trend, even beyond plant-centered food. Health-centered-menus for endurance, long working days, workplace anxiety, immune system building, virus-fighting, recovery, long screen time projects, pro-health, and vitamin enriched for the task. These concepts include selling menus as health-supporting options, offering a competitive advantage to the health-conscious buyer. Looking at food science based menus to add to the menu portfolio, it's the chefs' job to make these taste good and be creative.

Participants

Peter McCaffrey - Culinary Director, Certified Catering Consultants

Exclusive Venues and Increasing Revenue Streams

13:30 - 14:30

Principals Network Group

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Exclusive Venues and Increasing Revenue Streams

13:30 - 14:30

Financial Insight Group

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Leading and Influencing with Stories

15:00 - 17:00

Sales Executive Group

As a leader in catering sales or a high-producing sales professional, the power of stories will improve your communication, problem-solving, and innovative thinking. Most leaders struggle with providing feedback, coaching, and helping their teams exceed their goals to meet stretch goals. Storytelling helps paint a picture of what is expected and the roadmap to get there. This session will help both leaders and senior sellers create a more authentic conversation and improve performance.

Participants will walk away with the following:

- Crafting better stories both internally and externally
- How to influence others to get to the desired outcome
- Overcoming obstacles and objections with storytelling

Participants

Cindy Novotny - Managing Partner, Master Connection Associates

Principals Only Session – Future Strategies and Mission of LCA

15:00 - 17:00

LCASC - Steering Committee

This session, which is open to LCA principals, will be an open forum on the future direction and strategies for the LCA as an organization. We will address such topics as LCAES and LCA at Catersource programming, LCA regional group activities, and LCA interest group activities. We will also discuss LCA marketing, the LCA website and social media presence, outreach to peer organizations, and any other topics suggested by the attendees.

Participants

Carl Sacks - Executive Director, Leading Caterers of America

Time Management for Leaders

15:00 - 16:00

Management Operations Group

As managers and leaders, we are constantly pulled in a number of directions. From operational demands and employee needs to facility issues and event emergencies, it can be challenging to determine the best ways to allocate time and resources. Yet the best leaders are intentional about how they schedule and execute their days. During this session we will discuss how to budget time for training, how to prioritize responsibilities, and the balance between future planning vs. current needs. We will also assess where our time is being spent in comparison to our peers from across the country.

Participants

Anthony Lambatos - Co-Owner, Footers Catering

Culinary Offsite Tour

15:00 - 17:00

Culinary Innovation Group

3:00 - 4:00 FOUR STAR MUSHROOMS

A very hip Chicago mushroom cultivation company with extraordinarily high quality products. This tour will give LCA chefs the opportunity to learn about this most important ingredient in our menus.

4:00 - 5:00 THE HALSTED PACKING HOUSE

A historic meat processing facility located in the city's vibrant meatpacking district. Known for its industrial charm and deep-rooted ties to Chicago's culinary history, it has been a hub of high-quality meat production and distribution for decades. This tour offers a behind-the-scenes look at the intricate processes involved in sourcing, butchering, and preparing premium cuts of meat. For chefs, a tour of the Halsted Packing House is an opportunity to gain insight into the supply chain, understand meat quality standards, and connect with a critical aspect of the food industry.

Participants

Peter McCaffrey - Culinary Director, Certified Catering Consultants

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Participants

Carl Sacks - Executive Director, Leading Caterers of America

Who's In Charge of Customer Retention?

16:00 - 17:00

Management Operations Group

While the sales department is often thought to be responsible for repeat business, operations plays a significant role in making sure that customers come back year after year. During this session we will discuss how operations teams from across the country create exceptional experiences that cement the relationship between the customer and the company. We will talk about what makes companies unique, special touches that are carried out by the operations team, and how to build an operations team that takes ownership of customer retention.

Participants

Anthony Lambatos - Co-Owner, Footers Catering

• Opening Night Reception at Blue Plate Chicago's Larkin Hall: Where Happy People Make People Happy!

18:30 - 21:30

Offsite

Monday 6:30pm - 9:30pm

1362 W Fulton, Chicago, 60607

Join us for an exclusive behind-the-scenes experience at Blue Plate Catering's home in Larkin Hall, Chicago, located in the food mecca of Chicago, Fulton Market District. Step into the heart of our culinary world, where food, craft cocktails, and innovative ideas come together in a celebration of creativity and hospitality. You'll get an insider's look at our kitchen, where our chefs craft exquisite dishes using the freshest ingredients. Savor expertly mixed cocktails and bites in our 80,000 square foot facility & event space. This unique event is a rare opportunity to see where the magic happens with Blue Plate Catering.

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08:00	08:00 - Breakfast			08:00 - New Members Breakfast with Steering Committee					
10:00		<p>10:00 - Intro & Welcome</p> <p>10:15 - Opening - Welcome, Schedule Review</p> <p>10:30 - General Session - Laura Schwartz - Lead First, A Presentation on Leadership</p>							
11:00		<p>11:30 - Opening General Session New Member Introductions (2)</p> <p>11:45 - Opening General Session Industry Partner Introductions</p>							
12:00				12:00 - Buffet Lunch - Regional Lunch Meetings hosted by Steering Committee Members					

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13:00			13:30 - Exclusive Venues and Increasing Revenue Streams		13:30 - Exclusive Venues and Increasing Revenue Streams	13:30 - Culinary Roundtable	13:30 - Exclusive Venues and Increasing Revenue Streams		13:30 - Exclusive Venues and Increasing Revenue Streams
15:00			15:00 - Leading and Influencing with Stories	15:00 - Principals Only Session – Future Strategies and Mission of LCA	15:00 - Time Management for Leaders	15:00 - Culinary Offsite Tour	15:00 - Principals Only Session – Future Strategies and Mission of LCA		
16:00					16:00 - Who's In Charge of Customer Retention?				
18:00								18:30 - • Opening Night Reception at Blue Plate Chicago's Larkin Hall: Where Happy People Make People Happy!	

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Chicago, IL

Breakfast

07:45 - 08:45

Renaissance Chicago Downtown Hotel

General Session New Member Introductions (2)

09:00 - 09:15

All

General Session Industry Partner Introductions (3)

09:15 - 09:30

All

Keynote - State of the Foodservice Industry

09:30 - 10:30

All

The foodservice industry enjoyed significant growth coming out of the pandemic. Over the past 10 months, this growth has moderated to the point that certain channel segments have seen that growth disappear. Join Wade, Senior Principal of Technomic's advisory group, who will look at the underlying reasons for these challenges and how operators are reacting to get consumers back to spending.

Participants

Wade Hanson - Senior Principal, Technomic

General Session Industry Partner Introductions - ALL

10:30 - 10:45

All

Understanding the Different Buyer and Employee Styles

11:00 - 12:00

Sales Executive Group

There is a difference between personalities and behavioral styles. Cindy will show the importance of understanding your style and how it affects those on your team and your clients. Participants will be sent an assessment to take before this session to explore how applying this knowledge of styles will improve positivity among the team and help the salespeople sell more business based on their ability to be flexible with their clients.

Takeaway thoughts:

- Understanding how your behavior affects others
- How to identify others' styles
- Dealing with stress in a more productive way

Participants

Cindy Novotny - Managing Partner, Master Connection Associates

Show Some Love

11:00 - 12:00

Management Operations Group

Appreciation makes people feel valued and drives them to do their best leading to improved employee engagement. It has also been proven to improve overall well-being and mental health. Yet many organizations miss the mark when it comes to appreciation. Although we may value the people on our teams, they may not always feel appreciated by us because there are different ways in which people like to be appreciated. During this session we will discuss the languages of appreciation at work in addition to various recognition programs that companies have, and how companies can foster a culture in which appreciation is shown on a more frequent and regular basis. Participants will also have a chance to take an assessment to identify their primary language of appreciation prior to this discussion.

Participants

Anthony Lambatos - Co-Owner, Footers Catering

Culinary Offsite - Peter McCaffrey

11:00 - 17:00

Offsite

Due to limited space availability, this tour is open to chefs and chef-owners only.

11:30 - 1:00 "SWEET BABY RAYS" DEMONSTRATION & TASTING LUNCH

Join Duce Raymond, the visionary behind Sweet Baby Ray's Catering and Duce's Wild Competition BBQ, as he leads an exclusive presentation designed for the elite chefs of the LCA. In this program, Duce will showcase his mastery of Wagyu brisket, demonstrating how to trim, season, and smoke this premium cut to perfection.

1:15 - 2:15 CHEF STEPHEN SANDOVAL COOKING DEMONSTRATION AT BLUE PLATE

Chef Sandoval is the visionary behind the vibrant and rebellious flavors of Diego Restaurant in Chicago. From cooking amongst the fires of Francis Mallman's Siete Fuegos in Argentina to honing his skills under influential chefs like Rick Bayless and Donald Link, Sandoval's journey shaped his visionary approach to cuisine. At Diego, vibrant flavors, creative twists, and a celebration of cultural influences come together in an unforgettable dining experience.

2:30 - 3:45 EVER RESTAURANT TOUR WITH CHEF CURTIS DUFFY & PARTNER MICHAEL MUSER

Curtis Duffy is a renowned chef and restaurateur who is celebrated for his artistry and ingredient-driven menus. He owns and operates the esteemed Ever Restaurant Group in Chicago and has garnered international acclaim, with Ever earning two Michelin stars and his previous venture, Grace, earning three Michelin stars from 2015 to 2018. Partner Michael Muser will host an exclusive tour of the restaurant—although if you watched The Bear—you will have already glimpsed the kitchen!

4:00 - 5:00 FLASHPOINT INNOVATION TOUR WITH CHEF ADAM MOORE

Flashpoint is a trusted alliance of chefs, mixologists, product developers, strategists, designers, industry experts, and manufacturers. Founder Adam Moore is a collaborative, creative, and thought-provoking foodservice-focused innovator with experience across operations, management, and new product innovation. Our LCA chefs will tour his facility, replete with an Inspiration Kitchen, 10,000 square-foot rooftop garden and greenhouses, fermentation and preservation cellar, bar studio, and more.

Roundtables Lunch

12:00 - 13:00

Renaissance Chicago Downtown Hotel

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Chicago River Boat Cruise Architecture Tour

13:30 - 15:45
Offsite 2

Optional Offsite Tour Open to All Attendees

Woman Owners Group Meeting

13:30 - 15:45
Woman Owners Group

This exclusive session is designed for women businessowners within the Leading Caterers of America, offering a unique platform for collaboration, mentorship, and growth. The discussion will focus on the distinct challenges and opportunities women face as leaders in the catering industry, with an emphasis on fostering innovation, leadership, and business resilience.

Creating an Entrepreneurial Spirit

16:00 - 17:00
Sales Executive Group

Cindy will facilitate a session on how to take charge of your destiny. This session will help leaders and salespeople learn some critical actions for building a business and continuing to produce revenue. This one-hour session will focus on self-directed goal setting, increasing productivity, and profitability, all while developing a stronger drive among the entire team to be more entrepreneurial and win more business.

Everyone will leave with some tips on the following:

- Creating stretch goals
- Accountability to reach these goals
- New ways to find revenue outside of the regular catering business

Participants

Cindy Novotny - Managing Partner, Master Connection Associates

Rightsizing Your Team

16:00 - 17:00
Management Operations Group

Catering companies nationwide continue to adapt to the ebbs and flows of an ever-changing marketplace. As revenue fluctuates, matching headcount with the operational needs to execute that business is critical. Too many employees can lead to complacency and costs quickly getting out of control. Too few employees can result in subpar service, costly mistakes, and burnout among a team stretched too thin. During this session, we will dive into how companies approach hiring, firing, and retention of team members so they can optimize their team to execute the business on the horizon.

Participants

Anthony Lambatos - Co-Owner, Footers Catering

Financial Surveys Review

16:00 - 17:00
Financial Insight Group

During this session, we will discuss the responses from the LCA finance surveys done this year. These include various aspects of how the LCA members structure their financial departments, the reporting and analysis tools used, the integration of multiple reporting systems, and a discussion of what the LCA as an organization can do to help support improved financial results of its members. We will also offer an initial look into the results of the monthly economic survey of revenues and metrics implemented this year.

Participants

Carl Sacks - Executive Director, Leading Caterers of America

Closing Night Gala - A Progressive Dinner: Chicago Cultural Center – Hosted by Catering by Michaels

18:30 - 22:00
Offsite

Join us for our closing night gala at the historic Chicago Cultural Center. Opened in 1897, the CCC is a true Chicago landmark building and one of the City's top attractions. It is renowned for its stunning architecture and incredible views of Millennium Park. The LCA will enjoy a progressive dinner through three of the most iconic spaces of the Chicago Cultural Center, and be delighted to nosh under the largest Tiffany glass dome in the world. We will surprise and delight your senses as we eat our way through each space of the Chicago Cultural Center via an interactive cocktail hour, two-course seated dinner, and cap off the night with a little dessert magic while being entertained by our favorite Chicago band.

Return to Renaissance - Last Bus Leaves at 10:00 PM.

22:00 - 22:30
Offsite

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07:00					07:45 - Breakfast				
09:00	<p>09:00 - General Session New Member Introductions (2)</p> <p>09:15 - General Session Industry Partner Introductions (3)</p> <p>09:30 - Keynote - State of the Food-service Industry</p>								
10:00	<p>10:30 - General Session Industry Partner Introductions - ALL</p>								
11:00		<p>11:00 - Understanding the Different Buyer and Employee Styles</p>		<p>11:00 - Show Some Love</p>		<p>11:00 - Culinary Offsite - Peter McCaffrey</p>			
12:00					<p>12:00 - Roundtables Lunch</p>				
13:00							<p>13:30 - Chicago River Boat Cruise Architecture Tour</p>	<p>13:30 - Woman Owners Group Meeting</p>	

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16:00		16:00 - Creating an Entrepreneurial Spirit		16:00 - Rightsizing Your Team					16:00 - Financial Surveys Review
18:00						18:30 - Closing Night Gala - A Progressive Dinner: Chicago Cultural Center – Hosted by Catering by Michaels			
22:00						22:00 - Return to Renaissance - Last Bus Leaves at 10:00 PM.			

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Breakfast

07:45 - 08:45

Renaissance Chicago Downtown Hotel

Sustainable Menu Engineering

09:00 - 09:45

All

Can changing the default meal choice on catering menus from meat-heavy to plant-rich help diners make more sustainable choices? In this session, Ilana Braverman, Co-Founder & COO of Greener by Default, will shed light on how their organization collaborates with catering companies and events to achieve sustainability goals. By implementing behavioral science techniques, Greener by Default transforms menus to be more inclusive and encourages diners to embrace delicious plant-forward meals. Ilana will provide exclusive insights into their work with catering companies & events, revealing practical strategies and tips that you can incorporate into your menus and marketing materials. By embracing these techniques, you can make sustainable menus a win-win for your team, clients, and the planet.

Participants

Ilana Braverman - Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer, Greener by Default

Learning to Give and Accept Feedback

09:45 - 10:45

Sales Executive Group

This session will give leaders and sellers the tools needed to create excellence in the organization. In smaller to mid-sized companies, there needs to be more time to provide timely feedback. Everyone must take responsibility for helping each other continue to improve; therefore, it is not just the owner or leader who should provide feedback. Everyone wins when you create a cohesive culture of giving and receiving feedback. This will help build more trust between sales and operations as well.

Topics will be focused on:

- The difference between being assertive and aggressive
- How to give lateral feedback
- As a leader, how to give feedback so you are changing behavior

Participants

Cindy Novotny - Managing Partner, Master Connection Associates

Growing Your Company with a Modern Hospitalitarian Mindset

09:45 - 10:45

Management Operations Group

The challenges of developing a dedicated, selfless, hardworking team are myriad. The challenges of growing your company's annual sales from a stagnant \$5M-\$10M level to a flourishing \$15M-\$20M+ level are even more numerous. Join Dan Rose, President of Susan Gage Caterers, for insights into the "modern hospitalitarian blueprint" he has implemented to achieve runaway success in both of these arenas for his company in the post-COVID era.

Participants

Dan Rose - President, Susan Gage Catering

Growing Your Company with a Modern Hospitalitarian Mindset

09:45 - 10:45

Principals Network Group

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Participants

Dan Rose - President, Susan Gage Catering

Culinary Roundtable

09:45 - 10:45

Culinary Innovation Group

You're invited to our interactive roundtable session where chefs and catering professionals come together to share, learn, and grow. This class will feature:

A Cost-Effective Plate-Up Method: Chef Aaron Plascencia from Taste Catering will share an efficient conveyor plate-up solution for tight spaces.

Leadership for Chefs: Strategies for building effective teams.

Culinary Staff Growth & Training: How to develop training programs that foster growth and create learning opportunities for your team by partnering with other LCA companies.

Catering Business & Financial Literacy: Understanding kitchen finances for better cost control.

Come prepared to share solutions that have worked for you and discuss the challenges you're facing. This open sharing format will allow us to learn and grow from each other.

Participants

Peter McCaffrey - Culinary Director, Certified Catering Consultants

Wedding Market Update

10:00 - 11:00

All

After several years of robust post-pandemic recovery, the wedding market shows some signs of softness. This session will include updated insight from The Wedding Report and general interest publications, LCA surveys, and LCA wedding specialist panelists. Topics will include booking pacing, guest count trends, seasonality, pricing for non-catering wedding services, and strategies for maintaining market share.

Participants

Carl Sacks - Executive Director, Leading Caterers of America

Lunch & Closing General Session - LCA at Catersource + The Special Event 2025, White Paper Topics 2025, Steering Committee Update, Digital Media Credits

12:00 - 13:00

LCASC - Steering Committee

Update on LCA at Catersource + The Special Event 2025, Other LCA Activities, White Paper Distribution, White Paper Topics 2025, Steering Committee Update, LCA Marketing Update, Digital Media Credits

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07:00					07:45 - Breakfast		
09:00	09:00 - Sustainable Menu Engineering	09:45 - Learning to Give and Accept Feedback		09:45 - Growing Your Company with a Modern Hospitalitarian Mindset		09:45 - Growing Your Company with a Modern Hospitalitarian Mindset	09:45 - Culinary Roundtable
10:00	10:00 - Wedding Market Update						
12:00			12:00 - Lunch & Closing General Session - LCA at Catersource + The Special Event 2025, White Paper Topics 2025, Steering Committee Update, Digital Media Credits				