



## The Holidays Are Here

**G**et ready to create a buzz. The holidays are a special occasion for restaurants. Time when genuine hospitality can make a difference in the lives of our guests and help to insure that our business year ends on a positive note.

Regardless of the economy, somehow each year folks look to share good cheer with their family, friends and co-workers and head to their favorite dining spot to break bread together. What an opportunity to put on your best performance of the year, win some new friends and

thank the old. Here is a checklist to insure you are ready to reap the benefits of a prosperous season:

**1. Clean, polish and decorate.** Get the whole team involved. Remove tired plants, dig deep, organize, and remove any clutter. Give everything spit and polish, especially windows and light fixtures so rooms will sparkle before adding decorations. Then bring on the lights, garlands, greens, wreaths, ribbons and ornaments. Cleanliness and beauty are memorable and will open wallets.

**2. Holiday foods set the stage and sell.** Get the creative juices of the kitchen crew flowing. Develop new seasonal items that speak to the spirit of the holiday. Involve everything from soup to nuts. For large parties organize the favorites into pre-fixed or limited item menus. Add holiday prose on special paper and add the names of guests when possible. Make it easy for them to feel special, make selections and spend money.

**3. Add a lagniappe.** In N'awlins this means something extra, an added value. It could be a small gift from the chef as a starter, or complimentary cookie or candy as a thank you at the end of the meal. If budget allows, prepare something as a take home morsel wrapped with ribbon or a tag with your name embossed on it.

**4. Catch the staff doing some thing right and make it fun!** Have regular meetings with your team to engage them in the excitement. This can be a very profitable time for them also. Let all servers taste the special items on the menus and practice describing the preparation and ingredients. Try having the chef put the descriptions of the items on a tape so each server to play as needed. Encourage serving staff to work together in teams to help each

other as parties grow larger and larger. Continue to acknowledge them for their contribution to your success.

**5. Gift certificates are the gifts that keep on giving!** Pull out all of the stops to make your gift certificates impressive and easy to purchase. Print several denominations on handsome holiday paper with matching envelopes... perfect to hang on a tree, stuff in a stocking or give to a VIP. Organize a display of the certificates at your entrance, add a clever reminder in the rest rooms and any place the menu is displayed. Put a reminder in with the check and make it easy for the servers to get the certificates and put them right on the guest's credit card. Let your guests dine and do their holiday shopping at the same time.

**6. Personal greetings.** Owners, managers, and chefs: Visit every table. Never has there been a more important time to meet and greet your guests than the holiday season. Make sure to not only check on how content they are, but thank them for their business.

Remember, there is no word of mouth without something to talk about! Create a buzz this holiday season and reap the benefits in 2003.

*Phyllis Ann Marshall is the President of FoodPower, Inc. a restaurant consulting firm as well as the restaurant reviewer for Orange Coast Magazine. She can be reached at [pamarshall@foodpower.com](mailto:pamarshall@foodpower.com)*



**The Roundtable for Food Professionals**

Join Us At The Following Meetings

Wednesday, December 11, 2002  
**Holiday Dinner**  
at  
**The Reef Restaurant**  
Long Beach

Wednesday, January 8, 2003  
**The Three Marketeers**  
Panel Discussion with  
**Kerry Retzlaff, Tom Rogers & Tim Hackbart**  
Gurus of the Marketing World  
Location TBA

Thank you to the staff and students at California High School in Whittier for a tasty and eye-opening evening learning about PROSTART.

Thank you to all those who donate items for our Opportunity Drawings.  
All proceeds from these drawings go directly to our Scholarship Fund for students in Culinary, Foodservice and Nutrition/Dietetics programs at local colleges and universities.

Congratulations to **Robin Nalowitz** of Options Marketing Research for being recognized as one of the **NAWBO Remarkable Women of Orange County**

For Meeting and Membership Information - Contact List  
**The Roundtable for Food Professionals**  
a California Non-Profit Organization  
949 219-0520 ext. 418  
[www.rfp.org](http://www.rfp.org) • [rfp@optionswmc.com](mailto:rfp@optionswmc.com)