



For Immediate Release

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## OPERATORS LEARN ABOUT THE LATEST BEVERAGE TRENDS AT THE 2019 VIBE CONFERENCE FEB. 25 - 27

*The Tenth Annual Premier On-Premise Beverage Conference Featured  
Networking Opportunities, Workshops, Tastings and More*

*VIBE Conference's Official Charity, Children of Restaurant Employees (CORE) Raised  
\$86K for Families in the Food and Beverage Industry Facing Terminal Illnesses or  
Sudden Losses*

**SAN DIEGO** - More than 200 operators representing more than 125 separate chain restaurants, hotels and cruise lines traveled to San Diego to attend the **2019 VIBE Conference** Feb. 25 - 27. Throughout three days, attendees learned about the latest beverage trends through education workshops, beverage tastings, research sessions and lively networking opportunities.

About 400 sponsor attendees representing 110 companies also attended in support of the conference, with 100 more attendees coming from distributors, agencies, consultants, speakers and industry notables, taking total attendance to the 700 mark. Before the start of the conference, the official charity of VIBE, **Children of Restaurant Employees (CORE)** invited operators to its annual "Giving Back to Our Own" party on Monday, Feb. 25. Through the event and its partnership with VIBE, CORE raised \$86,000 for families in the food and beverage industry facing terminal illnesses or sudden losses.

On Tuesday, Feb. 26, well-known wine consultant Evan Goldstein and Questex CEO Paul Miller kicked off the two-day event by welcoming operators to the VIBE Conference inside the San Diego Sheraton Marina. Following the opening remarks, attendees were treated to an innovative keynote session by award-winning professional speaker Scott Steinberg, hailed as The Master of Innovation by Fortune magazine. During his session, Steinberg spoke about what it takes to thrive in the new operating reality, to create competitive advantage and adapt to changing trends.

Steinberg was followed by one of the top-rated presentations annually, from Jack Li and Colleen McClellan of Datessential on the current trends that influence consumer behavior in the on-premise environment and how they decide what and how much to drink when away from home. Then Goldstein and Ed Korry of Johnson & Wales University presented the **VIBE Vista Awards** to 13 companies for their positive, result-driven corporate beverage programs.

During the afternoon sessions, operators had access to two workshop series featuring a variety of tastings, research sessions and discussion panels. Workshops included:

**Series One**

- “Build a Better Beer List in an Era of Change” presented by Bart Watson of the Brewer’s Association
- “Designing Cocktails with Millennials in Mind” with Datessential’s McClellan
- “Low-Hanging Drinks: Upping Your Game with Signature Non-Alcoholic Beverages” by Kathy Casey of Liquid Kitchen and Maeve Webster of Menu Matters
- “Trade Practice Compliance in an Active Enforcement Climate” presented by Elizabeth DeConti of law firm Grey Robinson

#### Series Two

- “Get to Know Gen Z Before it’s Too Late” presented by Aimee Harvey of Technomic
- “Is the Number of Draft Beers Crippling the Industry,” a panel of industry stakeholders led by Micromatic’s Cian Hickey
- “The Beverage Jungle: Best Practices for Navigating the Beverage World,” a panel of consultants led by Matt Durbin of Durbin Consulting Group
- “The Next Big Thing in Sparkling and White Wines,” a panel of operators led by sommelier Tim Gaiser
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After the sessions, attendees networked at the welcoming cocktail party, while sipping on delicious craft cocktails prepared by celebrity mixologists, beer and wine at the sponsored themed bars.

On Wednesday, the conference opened with David Henkes and Lizzy Freier of Technomic for a look at the impact of consumer hyper-choice on the on-premise environment and how choices will only continue to grow. Then David Portalatin, Vice President, Food industry Advisor, The NPD Group, Inc., addressed another facet of the changing consumer, those looking for the memorable and the experiential in their drinking and dining.

Later that morning, Tom Fox, managing partner of CM Profit Group presented the **VIBE Supplier Awards** to 13 companies for their concrete business-building support as well as service and support performance.

After lunch, more break-out sessions ensued:

#### Series Three

- “Beverage Trends” with Lizzy Freier and Aimee Harvey of Technomic
- “Take Rum out of the Blender and into the Snifter” by master mixologist Tony Abou-Ganim
- “The Next Big Thing in Rosé and Red Wine,” a panel of top chain operators led by Tim Gaiser
- “What’s Hot and What’s Not,” a panel of key operators led by David Commer of Commer Beverage

Three sessions ended the day: The annual VIBE On-Premise Beverage Consumer Trend Study, commissioned for the conference and presented annually by industry veteran Mike Ginley of First Choice Brands; an update on the growth of cannabis usage and its potential impact on the food and beverage industry by expert Ricardo Baca; and an overview of the state of technology and how it will continue to change the way on-premise operators do business, by Ben Salisbury of Salisbury Creative Group.

About VIBE Conference:

VIBE Conference, a division of Boston, Massachusetts based Questex LLC, is the premier event for chain and hotel adult beverage executives and suppliers. Produced for Questex LLC by

Weiss Foodservice Visions, Inc., the top on-premise conference is held annually and involves high-level content, tastings and networking opportunities. The 2020 conference will be held Feb. 24-26 at the Omni La Costa Resort and Spa in Carlsbad, CA.

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CONTACTS TK**