

# CONTENTS



20

## INTRODUCTION

- 4 2020 VISION**  
Luciano Berti and Filippo Berti of the Ali Group discuss the company's strategic vision and the state of the foodservice industry.

## COVER STORY

- 8 MANDARIN ORIENTAL, LAS VEGAS**  
With assistance from companies of the Ali Group, the foodservice operations at this elegant hotel consistently deliver top-quality food.

## TRENDS

- 16 SECRETS FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA**  
Strategies you need to know for effective social media programs.
- 20 FEEDING GENERATIONS**  
How the different eating habits of each generation are affecting foodservice today.



16

## PEOPLE

- 24 METRO JOINS THE ALI GROUP FAMILY**  
Metro becomes the newest member of the Ali Group of companies.
- 28 ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS**  
The Ali Group's Rob Geile talks about the importance of consultants.

## SUCCESS STORIES

- 32 TACO BELL'S NEW CANTINA CONCEPT**  
With help from Beverage-Air and Edlund, the Mexican-style quick-service restaurant chain is moving into more upscale territory.

- 37 MODMARKET: FARM-TO-TABLE FOOD MADE EASY AND DELICIOUS**  
The Modmarket chain uses Eloma ovens to serve fresh, natural food quickly and consistently.
- 42 ON THE RISE**  
A unique partnership between Belshaw and QualServ brings donuts to all corners of the world.
- 46 MAKING ICE FOR AIRLINES**  
The elegant lounges of Singapore Airlines demand top-quality ice, which is why they chose Scotsman ice machines.
- 50 MISTER SOFTEE AND ELECTRO FREEZE**  
The classic ice cream truck moves into new ventures, such as the Jacksonville Jaguars' EverBank Field.
- 55 GELATO POPS AT MARIANO'S**  
Carpigiani's Fantasticks 4U gelato bar is wowing the customers at a Chicago-area grocery store.



37

- 56 DRIVING COFFEE SALES WITH RANCILIO**  
Black Rock Coffee, an up-and-coming coffee chain, uses Rancilio espresso machines to increase their drive-up business.

## EVENTS

- 59 ALI UNIVERSITY FOR CONSULTANTS**  
Consultants from all across North America gather for information sharing.
- 60 HOST MILAN SHOW 2015**  
A worldwide trade fair is a showcase for the Ali Group companies.



50

## INNOVATION

- 66 SMALLCAKES AND CARPIGIANI**  
Ice cream made with Carpigiani machines is a perfect match for Smallcakes' cupcakes.
- 68 MENUMASTER AND PRIMROSE SCHOOLS**  
The ACP Menumaster Microwave saves time and money at Primrose Schools.
- 70 CUSTOMIZED SOLUTIONS FOR SETON MEDICAL CENTER AUSTIN**  
A new meal-delivery system and Aladdin equipment help a hospital increase patient satisfaction scores.
- 72 ICE-O-MATIC'S GRANDE CUBE MAKER**  
The new Grande Cube Maker provides a wide variety of ice sizes.



66



56

- 74 THE BURLUDGE MULTIGEN**  
Changing the way people think about meal-delivery systems.
- 76 CMA'S NEW EST FRONT LOADER**  
The new EST Front Loader from CMA Dishmachines is compact and reliable.
- 77 MOFFAT MEANS CONVENIENCE FOR PETE'S**  
A Moffat convection oven makes breakfast delicious at Pete's.

## ALI GROUP WORLDWIDE

- 78 AROUND THE WORLD**  
Worldwide news round-up
- 86 OUR BRANDS**  
Ali Group's sector expertise
- 88 CONTACT US**  
Ali Group contact information across the globe

“The most reliable way to forecast the future,” said American futurist and author John Naisbitt, “is to try to understand the present.” Anticipating tomorrow’s success by concentrating on the small details of the present is something Ali Group founder and chairman Luciano Berti has come to fully appreciate, having spent 52 years at the helm of the business.

“Concentrating on the short-term means being able to adapt day-to-day,” he says. “You have to think long-term but also consider the small details of the present. It is like trying to cross a river. You need to keep looking at the other side of the river, but you must also focus on keeping your balance on the stones beneath you. Sometimes you need to take a step back, or sideways, to keep your footing. But in business, as in life, it is important to look ahead and push boundaries. That’s the beauty of life.”

The Ali Group vision for the coming years is to further grow the Group, add great brands to the portfolio, attract more talent and expand globally. Growth is intrinsic to the Ali Group’s nature. In an ever-changing and ever-expanding foodservice environment, to be successful a company must look forward, not backward. Solutions that worked decades ago may not work today, and even today’s successes always need to be examined to find ways to improve. That constant striving for improvement is one of the foundations of the Ali Group’s success.

Luciano Berti’s son Filippo is perfectly positioned to manage as head of the company’s North American operations. For Filippo Berti, who manages the Ali Group’s brands, manufacturing plants and 3,600-plus employees in North America, the global foodservice industry is set for further change in the next five years, despite not being the most “fast-paced” of sectors. “It’s still very fragmented on the manufacturing and the distribution side. In some markets, though, we are experiencing consolidation trends at both ends, especially in mature markets, while Asia and the Middle East are seeing new players coming to the game. There are now more players in competition and I think we are likely to see more consolidation at the top of the sector. One of the bigger players could become significantly bigger,” he says.

# 2020 VISION

*The Ali Group’s executive  
management team of **Luciano Berti**  
and **Filippo Berti** outline their  
five-year plan for the company.*

According to Luciano Berti, external economic factors will continue to impact the industry, particularly in Europe. “The long recession still isn’t behind us. It is hard to say if we will have a full recovery in the next five years, but something’s got to give. For the economy to become stronger we need a stronger Europe. The handbrake is still on because of the political situation, but Europe is still a top tourist destination where entrepreneurs are innovative and willing to take a risk.”

Asia is of critical importance to the Ali Group in the near future, although individual political and cultural differences may make the road to success in that area sometimes rocky.

**“Metro is an absolute global leader in its product category. It has strong penetration with chains and great potential for further development within the Group.”**

*—Filippo Berti*

Close to home, the North American sector is far from stagnant. While some of the larger chains may be at the point of maturity, there are new, forward-thinking chains sprouting up constantly. These chains may offer fare that is lighter or healthier, or serve up previously unexplored ethnic cuisines. Furthermore, both newer and more established foodservice operations are reexamining their use of technology to cater to today’s time-crunched, tech-savvy customers front of house and to improve efficiency back of house.

Creating innovative products for these markets is what the Ali Group is all about, says Filippo Berti. “We are increasingly manufacturing products with more technological content and innovative features,” he says.

In order to assess the appetite in the market for innovation, Ali Group stays close to those in the most influential and important industry segments in foodservice. “We listen to consultants, distributors and end-users. We take the pulse of the market and adapt to it,” says Filippo Berti. The Ali Group’s long-term forecasting

**The Ali Group vision for the coming years is to further grow the Group, add great brands to the portfolio, attract more talent and expand globally. Growth is intrinsic to the Ali Group’s nature.**

is easily adjusted to changes in the market. But the company firmly believes that flexibility is important to the Ali Group’s overall success, giving each business the independence it needs to grow in its individual market.

One of the key reasons Ali Group has achieved profitable growth is through the acquisition of selected brands that are very specialized and are experts in their fields. “We recently completed a new acquisition for the Ali Group portfolio,” says Filippo Berti. “InterMetro (Metro) is an American company that, for more than 85 years, has been the world’s leading manufacturer of storage and transport equipment in foodservice and commercial markets. Metro is an absolute global leader in its product category. It is a brand known globally, with a direct presence in Europe, the Middle East and Asia, besides the U.S. It has strong penetration with chains and great potential for further development within the Group.”

The core strength and values for the Ali Group come from Luciano Berti, says his son. “My father is a titan of the industry,” Filippo Berti says. “His knowledge, fairness and dedication have set the standards for everyone in the Ali Group. Working with him is a daily education. He is the best teacher anyone could have.”

Ali Group is in superb shape to face whatever is on the horizon in large part because of the tone set by its founder and chairman. And with Filippo Berti at the helm, the Ali Group is poised for continued growth in the years ahead.



## IN HIS OWN WORDS: LUCIANO BERTI ON FILIPPO BERTI

“Since Filippo joined Ali Group in 2008 he has proven to be a dynamic, discerning manager, well respected by his team.

“While our personalities are different, constant collaboration helps keep our objectives aligned. Filippo has shown himself to have vision and a great sensitivity to the market. He is able to foresee the evolution of the business and is quick to grasp the opportunities the market has to offer.

“Filippo pays attention to the numbers but is also able to read the reality behind the figures. He knows how to listen, which for me is one of the most important qualities. He is able to give direction to our managers while at the same time leaving them free to act as entrepreneurs.

“Filippo has a passion for the world of foodservice, but most of all he loves the personal relationships that the business allows him to build. He has traveled the world and lived in different countries. He is truly a citizen of the world. That is why he is ideal for a global company such as Ali Group.

“I have done my best to give Filippo direct experience in the field and to see the many different aspects of our business, so that he can learn first hand and develop confidence in his own expertise. I have always shared my views about business, but it is a two-way dialogue. His observations are always stimulating. I hope I have made a contribution to Filippo’s professional growth and to who he has become today.”

*Creative, exciting dishes are served up at Mandarin Oriental, Las Vegas, driven by Executive Chef David Werly, with the help of Ali Group company products.*

# Dining Elegance at Mandarin Oriental, Las Vegas



The Asian-inspired  
MOzen Bistro.



## A hotel this elegant demands exceptional foodservice, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

or leisure, you're going to judge us through our breakfast."

The fact that the hotel operates multiple concepts under one roof represents another way this operator segment differs significantly from traditional restaurants. Where an average restaurant has only one concept, "in a hotel you can have many different concepts of restaurants, and you have to be able to switch between one and the other," Chef Werly says. "It's going to take a different approach on the conceptualization of the menu, the way you organize yourself and the way you're going to look at resources in the kitchen."



Mandarin Oriental's elegant ballroom can accommodate up to 400 guests.

**H**otels in Las Vegas are among the most exciting and elegant in the world. And when it comes to top-of-the-line hotels in Las Vegas, few can match Mandarin Oriental, Las Vegas. Part of the worldwide Mandarin Oriental chain, the hotel has 392 rooms and suites, ranging from standard suites all the way up to the sophisticated and stylish 3,100 square-foot Mandarin Suite. Additionally, there are a number of exclusive private residences atop the hotel.

A hotel this elegant demands exceptional foodservice, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Executive Chef David Werly oversees the restaurants at Mandarin Oriental, Las Vegas. "Our fine dining restaurant, Twist by Pierre Gagnaire, is very high-end French cuisine," Chef Werly says, adding that Gagnaire has earned three Michelin stars in France. "We also have an Asian bistro called MOzen. There we do American favorites and Asian favorites. We serve breakfast, lunch and dinner there as well. We also have a Pool Café and restaurant where we serve American favorites, but we try to be on the healthy side," he notes. Chef Werly oversees room service for the entire hotel and for the hotel's residences as well. "We have about 200 residents who live with us," he says, and the residents also have access to the hotel's foodservice offerings. The hotel's banquet facilities and employee dining room also come under Chef Werly's command.

Obviously, the demands on the foodservice staff at Mandarin Oriental, Las Vegas differ from those of a traditional restaurant, and it all starts in the morning. "Check-in really happens from the middle of the day throughout the evening," Chef Werly says. While some guests will experience the hotel's restaurants right after checking in, for many the following day's breakfast becomes their first exposure to the hotel's foodservice. "I think breakfast time is the most important to us because it's the first impression you're going to give for the overall culinary program. That's what's going to trigger the guests to book one of the restaurants in the evening. It's not the same when you work for a restaurant because the most important meal is usually the dinner or the lunch, depending on the clientele. It doesn't matter if you're business



## CREATING MAGIC AT MANDARIN ORIENTAL, LAS VEGAS

**Executive Chef David Werly's career has taken him around the globe**

The guests at Mandarin Oriental, Las Vegas enjoy the culinary magic Executive Chef David Werly creates on a regular basis. What they don't see, however, is the lifetime of hard work, rigorous training and valuable experience behind each dish that the chef creates.

As with many chefs, Chef Werly found his love for food early in life. As a child growing up in northeast France, he created desserts for his family. Soon thereafter, he went to École Hôtelière de Strasbourg (France) for four years of culinary training. Then he was off to Paris to spend a year working at famed chef Gaston Lenôtre's three-star Michelin-rated restaurant, Le Pré Catelan. His next job found him working as private chef for the French Minister of Industry and following that was a stint at the legendary Ritz Hotel in Paris.

A list of the high points of Chef Werly's career would be as long

as one of his delicious menus. He opened Le Cirque in Mexico City and reopened the New York Le Cirque. He earned a Michelin star and Five-Diamond AAA rating during a stint at Le Cirque at the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas. After he became Executive Chef in charge of Food and Beverage at the Setai Hotel in Miami, the hotel's restaurant was named one of the top 10 hotel restaurants in the world in 2011 by *Hotels* magazine.

To Chef Werly, any successful chef has to be a team leader as well. "If you're a chef, you have to be someone who likes the human relationship," he says. "You will determine your success by your capacity of being able to work with a team, drive a team and be a leader."

Chef Werly knows that no good chef works alone, and he says that the most enjoyable part of his job is the fact that he "comes to work with a team of people who are on the same page and want to do the best job they can. And do it with a smile and with a dynamic approach where we want to be the best at what we're doing. We challenge ourselves on a daily basis."



The intimate Tea Lounge provides a respite from the hustle and bustle of Las Vegas.



The Pool Café serves up delicious cuisine al fresco.



Other Ali Group products are helping Mandarin Oriental, Las Vegas make their meals. See page 15, for details.

Those resources obviously include equipment, such as refrigerators. “When you are producing for 500 people on a daily basis you’re going to look for refrigeration where you’re going to be able to push a full cart inside. It’s a very different concept from equipment for a restaurant,” he adds.

Last year, the hotel went through an upgrade of its refrigeration equipment, so Chef Werly had to examine his options. He started discussions with three major brands, two of which already had significant penetration in the Las Vegas market — and Victory Refrigeration. “I worked in New York,” says Chef Werly. “You can find Victory more often there.”

What first attracted Chef Werly to the Victory products was the appearance. “I looked at how good looking the product is. That’s the first impression. Victory did a very, very good job with the design.” But flexibility was equally important for the chef, who was also looking for refrigeration that would give him “the capacity of adapting to every need that we’d have in the future. If I bought for my banquet operation and wanted to use it as well in the restaurant, do they offer flexibility? And they did.”

“In a hotel you can have many different concepts of restaurants, and you have to be able to switch between one and the other.”

—Chef David Werly

Just like every other operation, being environmentally conscious is important to the hotel. Chef Werly calls Victory “more green in their approach with refrigeration because we’re using refrigeration that’s cooled with water. That’s a greener option and not many companies offer that. Victory offered that. That was a very, very important aspect for me.” Along with that, Victory offered energy-efficient features. “Energy efficiency was very important to me. The fact that the light inside of the refrigeration is LED — that’s saving a lot of energy. Not only was Victory really focusing on being high-end, but it was adapting to the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs of a new refrigeration system.”

Werly selected a variety of Victory refrigeration and freezer units, including a reach-in Dual Temp Cabinet, a roll-through Refrigerator, a roll-in Refrigerator and a roll-in Freezer, all in the ULTRASPEC™ Series. Additionally, he chose three side-mounted worktop refrigerators.

For Chef Werly, the SecureTemp 1.0™ monitoring program offered by the Victory refrigerators helped him eliminate a third-party monitoring service he was using previously. SecureTemp 1.0, the industry’s first and only temperature monitoring solution with no software or monthly monitoring fees, is standard on all Victory models. “The fact is that Victory was providing a system that is quite easy to set up, allowing me to have electronic monitoring for the refrigeration that I just installed. That

## FAST FACTS ABOUT MANDARIN ORIENTAL, LAS VEGAS

Opened **DECEMBER 4, 2009**

**NON-GAMING** hotel

**47** stories

**392** guestrooms and suites

**335 guest rooms** decorated in a chic, contemporary style

**57 SUITES** ranging in size from 850 square feet to 3,100 square feet

**LOCATED ON LAS VEGAS BOULEVARD,** The Strip, at the entrance to Las Vegas’ CityCenter

**SKY BRIDGE TO CRYSTALS RETAIL** and entertainment district

**27,000-SQUARE-FOOT** spa and fitness center

**12,000 SQUARE FEET** of function space

**7,650-SQUARE-FOOT ORIENTAL BALLROOM** with floor-to-ceiling windows and dramatic views of The Strip

**FOUR RESTAURANTS:** Twist by Pierre Gagnaire, MÖzen Bistro, the Poolside Café and Tea Lounge, as well as the Mandarin Bar

**LEED® GOLD CERTIFIED** by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)

## THE FEATURE-PACKED VICTORY ULTRASPEC™ SERIES

It's no wonder Mandarin Oriental, Las Vegas chose the Victory ULTRASPEC™ Series, with all these standard product features:

- Exclusive **SecureTemp 1.0**® temperature monitoring
- Expansion valve technology
- Santoprene door gaskets with two-year warranty
- LED lighting
- Dual-speed, energy-efficient EC motors
- 20-gauge, stainless steel doors
- Stainless steel breaker strips
- Full electronic control
- Coated coil located outside of the food zone
- Stainless steel hinged, lift-up grill
- Heavy-duty door handles with cylinder locks
- Three-year parts and labor warranty with an additional two-year compressor warranty

Standard on all Victory refrigerators, the unique SecureTemp 1.0 technology is the only temperature monitoring solution in the industry that does not require expensive software or monthly monitoring fees. It provides instant notifications when equipment is not maintaining temperature (such as in a power outage, cabinet failure or open doors) or requires preventative maintenance. It is HACCP compliant and meets NAFEM's data protocol. Also, it's available as an option to monitor other units such as walk-ins, dish machines and ice machines.



"Providing Victory ULTRASPEC products, featuring our exclusive SecureTemp 1.0 technology, brings peace of mind to Mandarin Oriental, Las Vegas. We are proud to be part of this project and to work not just with David and his team, but with our manufacturer's rep, Greg McIntosh of Lund-Iorio, Inc. and Jim Barks of TriMark Raygal, our dealer," says Jennifer Ward, Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Ali Group North America - Refrigeration Division.

"The fact is that Victory was providing a system that is quite easy to set up, allowing me to have electronic monitoring for the refrigeration that I just installed."

—Chef David Werly

should help me save some money in the long run by getting rid of this system that I purchased separately."

However, the people behind the refrigerators were just as important to Chef Werly. After meeting the Victory team, the chef felt that the "company was really oriented toward high-end refrigeration. Then I met the people and I have to say that I like to do business with people I've come to appreciate. I feel like we're going to be able to work together. That was really the overall feeling from the Victory team when I met with them."

The follow-up after the sale has been just as impressive to the chef, particularly because he feels the Victory team listens. "I've seen many

of the higher-ranking Victory reps come in to speak with me and check on the install to see how it looks. As we speak, we're still working together to find a couple of solutions with some of the designs. I'm very pleased with the fact that Victory is still very open to listening to the professional who is using the product."

Chef Werly feels that the relationship between Victory and Mandarin Oriental, Las Vegas is mutually beneficial. "Everybody has been extremely helpful. The Victory management and sales team are willing to work as a partner and to put the best product out there for Victory and for me as well. It's a partnership and I really like it."

(Right and below)  
The CMA Dishmachines  
GL-X Chemical Sanitizing  
Glasswasher hard at work  
at Mandarin Oriental.



(Above) Sturdy Super Erecta Shelving helps keep the hotel's kitchen organized.

(Left) MetroMax Q Shelving handles all types of storage jobs.

## MORE ALI GROUP COMPANIES AT MANDARIN ORIENTAL, LAS VEGAS

Victory Refrigeration isn't the only Ali Group brand that can be found at Mandarin Oriental, Las Vegas. Some of the other products from Ali Group companies seen in Chef Werly's kitchen include:

The **Edlund KSS-5050 Knife Sanitizing System** provides a complete method of liquid sanitizing, air-drying and storage of knives. The liquid sanitizing tank allows for submersion of the entire blade, thus ensuring complete sanitizing. The built-in knife rack provides air-drying and safe storage of knives. This system eliminates cross-contamination and results in providing a safe food product to the consumer.

The **CMA Dishmachines GL-X Chemical Sanitizing Glass Washer** can handle up to 30 racks per hour, using only 1.7 gallons of water per cycle. Its upper and lower rotating wash arms guarantee excellent results and all stainless steel construction means long life and years of trouble-free operation. The "works in a drawer" design attaches all the electrical components to a sliding drawer for easy access and service.

Metro's **MetroMax Q** Shelving features removable polymer shelf mats with epoxy-coated frames. Quick-adjust shelves allow the shelving units to be reconfigured without tools. The vented mats allow for light and air penetration, and are easily removed for cleaning by hand or in dish machines. **Super Erecta** Shelving is the original, post-based adjustable shelving system. Easily configurable for stationary, mobile or wall-mount applications, Super Erecta shelving can hold up to 800 lbs. of weight per shelf, and is available in a variety of finishes or stainless steel.

*Tips from the experts on using social media effectively.*

# SECRETS FOR USING

**S**ocial media is here to stay. We all know that. But with so many platforms out there, how do businesses a) navigate the social media landscape, and b) get the most value out of their activity? For a niche community such as the foodservice equipment industry, deriving value from social media becomes an even greater challenge.

“When speaking at conferences, I often get asked, ‘Can social media help us to reach new clients or sell more products?’” says Karen Fewell of the full-scale marketing firm Digital Blonde. “Social media on its own isn’t the answer and there certainly isn’t a magic

solution to make social media work. But what will work is creating useful, interesting and informative content that can be used across a range of marketing channels.”

While it’s certainly possible to buy ads on Facebook, Twitter and other feeds, which will draw visitors directly to your website or product releases, generally businesses find more benefits through the indirect benefits of social media.

“Social media can be a great research and networking tool,” says Andy Crestodina, co-founder and strategic director of Orbit Media Studios, a web design and interactive marketing agency in Chicago. “People buy from those they



# SOCIAL MEDIA

## in the Foodservice Equipment Community

know, like and trust. When you build relationships with trade associations, magazines and other gatekeepers for different audiences, it’s a way to be known, liked and trusted.”

Businesses and professionals can take “hundreds of little actions” to build their connections and audience online, from following others that follow you, to answering questions, joining groups and more. Here are some top tips from Fewell and Crestodina to get the most out of your social media platform.

### Make Your Presence Known

Even if you’re not currently active in a social network or don’t plan on becoming very active, at least create a profile on different social media sites.

“Social media profiles often rank high in search engines, so claiming a presence

in each social network is a way to dominate the first page of Google when people search for your name or business,” says Crestodina. Always include your website on these sites to draw visitors back to your main page.

Make sure the profile is complete, and yes, that includes an updated photo. “There is nothing worse than looking at someone’s LinkedIn profile and there’s no photo — it begs too many questions.” Filling out a profile doesn’t have to be difficult; create a Twitter bio that describes what you do in a basic way, Crestodina says. Use the same profile photo for multiple sites, if desired. And consider “call forwarding”: don’t be afraid to mention on Twitter that you’re more active on LinkedIn and direct them there.



### Consider LinkedIn

As Facebook becomes more of a personal space and Twitter continues to disseminate information 140 characters at a time, many equipment companies and professionals — and businesses in general — turn to LinkedIn as a place to network and connect with others, market their products and services, and ask and respond to industry-related questions.

“Generally speaking, LinkedIn is better for B2B, while Facebook is better for B2C,” says Crestodina. “While the way in which businesses use social media differs, there are two main ways to use these platforms: to promote products and services directly, or to research and network with influencers.”

The easiest way to build an audience on LinkedIn is to make 500 connections and join groups. Search groups for “foodservice,” and use the filter icons to identify which groups you might join. Then, ask and answer questions, connect with others and build relationships with those in and running the groups. “Some of those people have access to wider audiences,” says Crestodina. “This is called influencer marketing.”

When polishing your profile, use keywords that will help others find you in searches through LinkedIn and Google, Crestodina suggests. Foodservice, restaurants, equipment, sales and service are top word searches.

Also, try to get about five recommendations — from colleagues, clients, customers and others — for your profile, which helps build credibility. The easiest way to get these is to write recommendations for others.



Andy Crestodina  
Principal, Strategic Director  
www.orbitmedia.com

They, in turn, might feel compelled to do the same for you, Crestodina says.

### Listen and Research Influencers

“It’s not what you say, it’s how you listen.” This is one of Fewell’s favorite phrases, and especially when it comes to social media.

“Discover what chefs, operators and consultants think, and use this information to grow your business.”

Social media, particularly Twitter, can provide up-to-date information on trends, equipment, events, new products, producers and suppliers on a wide range of areas for the hospitality industry.

“Listening” to Twitter and LinkedIn group feeds can also help you understand your target audience,” Fewell says. “Too often I get told, ‘we need you to create us a Twitter strategy,’ and when I ask them why they need one it’s very rare they know the answer. First of all, understand why you are using a social channel and what you want to achieve, be aware of how your customers behave and then create your strategy.”

### Connect and Network

Bridge the gap from listening to building your network by becoming an expert, says Crestodina.

Connecting with others by answering questions posed on Twitter and LinkedIn, as previously mentioned, is a start. But then use those answers as the basis for forming good content on your site and also as you post on social media.

“You could easily create a quick roundup article or other content for your website or other platform by publishing your answers to top questions in the industry,” Crestodina says.

Fewell agrees. “Social media should be about human to human,” she says. “Social media should not be used to put out lots of sales messages. It should be used to share stories about your business, the industry and the work that you do. These stories must engage your target audiences. Each piece of content, whether it’s a blog, infographic, video,

podcast, Slideshare, image or white paper may be shared on Facebook or tweeted. However it can also be used by your sales teams, in brochures, on your website, in email newsletters and presentations.”

Even when networking in-person, social media can help leverage those connections. Twitter hashtags can help locate people attending the same event as you and assist in starting a conversation around that particular conference.

Back in the day, all we had were trade show conferences and phones when it came to networking. Nowadays, we have so much more, offline and online. And we seem to have moved past getting caught up in monetizing, quantifying or even justifying social media activity.

“Don’t get caught up in sharing metrics,” says



## CHAMPION: A CASE STUDY IN SOCIAL MEDIA

**Champion**

In today’s social media-conscious world, it’s essential for a company to have a focused social media strategy. Champion Industries embraces social media because doing so completes its online footprint and brand strategy by connecting with plugged-in audiences on a three-way social platform. As one component of a public relations strategy, social media can propel a brand to “top-of-mind” status with engaging and relevant content, including photos, videos, articles and more.

Champion uses social media to tie in with and highlight its PR efforts. For example, the company thanked and tagged *Foodservice Equipment Reports* magazine for including Champion in the recent glass washer piece they published. The post also links the magazine article so with just one click, viewers can learn more about Champion glass washers from a respectable third-party source.

Sharing award recognition can be another valuable use of social media. Champion used a post to raise awareness of its KI (Kitchen Innovations) award-winning Foodwaste Reduction System and showcase the booth where it could be found at the National Restaurant Association’s Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show.

Leveraging social media efforts with business partners or corporate parents can have benefits for both parties. Recently, Champion shared an Ali Group post of an event it was involved in as part of the Ali Group companies as a whole. It brought recognition to both the Ali Group and to Champion simultaneously and raises recognition for both brands.

Finally, social media can be a worthwhile tool for showing company interaction and involvement. Another

of Champion’s social media posts showcased its involvement in one of the largest foodservice equipment shows in America. This raises brand awareness and shows the company’s activities in foodservice. Posting relevant articles on social media can help spread a company’s message but it is important to know what subjects followers may be interested in. While one of Champion’s posts did not directly mention any of its equipment, it did speak to time-sensitive Mother’s Day dining-out statistics. The more dining out, the more dishes; thus, the more restaurants need Champion equipment.

**Social media can propel a brand to “top-of-mind” status with engaging and relevant content, including photos, videos, articles and more.**

What are the pitfalls to using social media? Mishandling social media is just like mishandling a speech or an interview, but on a worldwide scale. Users have to know the rules of engagement and expectations of followers on social media. If users mishandle the microphone, they come across as disconnected, distant and superficial. Instead of propelling their brand, they unintentionally damage it. The foodservice industry is a great fit for social media because it’s constantly changing and is extensively creative. Social media is a great venue to share ideas and innovations and it’s also useful for fostering positive and engaging conversation.

Crestodina. “They don’t correlate to website traffic.”

Rather, social media should, and is just another way to, build your own “brand” and credibility as well as relationships, and even friendships. Because that’s what the equipment business is all about, after all.

### SELECTED ALI GROUP APPS

The **CMA** app provides dealers and end users sales and service information in the field. The app features include manuals, diagrams, parts, installs and sales. Available for iOS and Android.

The **GENNI** app from Electro Freeze helps operators manage soft-serve assets across the store in real time. Available for iOS and Android.

The **MYGELATO** app from Carpigiani helps consumers find gelato stores with Carpigiani machines. It also allows them to send a voucher for a free gelato to a friend. Available for iOS and Google Play.

The **TEOREMA** app from Carpigiani allows end users to monitor Carpigiani equipment in their stores wirelessly and tell at a glance in real time the past and current operating condition of the machine.

Rancilio Group’s **SNAP&SHARE** is a QR code-scanning app that can be used to download the main parameters of a coffee machine, including beverage counters, recipe settings and diagnostics, and share them by mail. Available for iOS.