

# The Fare Trifecta

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If there's one thing I can say about the Fare brand, it's that nothing's sacred. Well, that's not true. Our readers are sacred, as is the entire foodservice-at-retail community. What I mean to say is, we're constantly trying to innovate, keeping things new, exciting and relevant. As soon as we reach one milestone, we're on to the next one.

So of course, we've got some changes for 2012.

With the help of our Advisory Board, we're already at work tweaking the 2012 Exchange. In fact, one bit of feedback we received was to bring FARE back to the Midwest, making it easier for more people to attend. With that, I'm happy to announce we'll be back in Schaumburg, Ill., June 25-27 at the Renaissance Hotel. Those of you who attended the first two years of FARE know this is a tremendous facility that's just 15 minutes from Chicago's O'Hare Airport.

On to *Fare* magazine. This year we launched the Foodservice at Retail Handbook, which looks at sales data across the channels. That first-of-its-kind project helped us realize something missing from this burgeoning industry: comprehensive data, long-term guidance and insightful best practices. We don't want *Fare* magazine to have a shelf life of a month or two. We want each issue to be a "keeper" issue, one that finds a home in your bookcase for months to come. But that takes a lot of manpower. So we're moving to three issues next year, each focusing on a major theme. We like to call it the Fare Trifecta:

- ▶ The Best-of Issue (March): a collection of the best concepts and ideas in the industry.
- ▶ State of the Industries (June): crucial benchmarking and forecasting, with commentary from operators themselves.
- ▶ The Foodservice Forecast (October): a 2013 Outlook Operator Survey and a look at the foodservice future.

We are very excited about the year to come. Clearly, our only goal is to give you the best solutions for all of your foodservice needs. Please continue to send us ideas and topics that you want us cover. It's with your feedback that we grow. ■

# 'The Body'

By **Abbie Westra**, Executive Editor  
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Food is a powerful thing. Even more powerful? Free food.

I was a student at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis when Jesse "The Body" Ventura was running for governor. Granted, I wore the blinders of a college freshman, but from my perspective, Ventura won based on a single clever move: Every week, his people arrived on campus with hundreds of boxes of free pizza, encouraging out-of-state college kids—who had no idea of local politics nor a lot of spending money—to go vote.

Of course, free food won't sustain you forever. Case in point: Ventura's political career. But sampling is one of the oldest tricks in the book to get someone to buy something. One of my favorite childhood memories is grocery shopping with my mom and swinging through the bakery for a free doughnut hole (except for the time I stuck my gum behind my ear Willy Wonka-style and spent the rest of the night fighting to get it out of my hair). Most trips ended with us buying a couple dozen to take home.

So do you sample your products? Yes? OK, when? Are you sampling lunch items in the morning and dinner items in the afternoon to get the return visit? What are you sampling, a customer favorite, or something you're trying to build sales on? To whom? Customers, or employees too? Pastries to the coffee customer? Yogurt parfait to the salad customer? How much is it costing you, and are you accounting for those costs somewhere?

The devil's in the details, and this month's cover story, "What Are You," asks a lot of questions about seemingly obvious things. Who is your customer? What do they want? How will you deliver that?

Trouble is, most people don't take the time to walk through all the questions—to do the due diligence on their program. Answer these really very easy questions up front, and you'll save yourself a lot of pain and money down the road.

And if you're wondering if I can be bought with free pizza, well, there's only one way to find out. ■