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### **Professional Trade Associations - The Pros & Cons**

You want to or have recently become a personal chef. Congratulations. At some point you're bound to discover that there are a few professional trade associations out there dedicated exclusively to the personal chef industry. Are these worth the investment you ask? We'll try to break it down for you, seeing as how we are not affiliated with any association, yet have extensive professional background with more than one personal chef association. Associations are good in that they provide networking among other personal chefs coast to coast, and beyond. Regardless of where you are located, a Personal Chef Service has the basic operational foundation no matter the location (in North America, and primarily within the USA). Personal chefs have the same issues, the same client requests and the same obstacles wherever they are located. So networking with others gives you a true community of professionals who are more than happy to share their experiences, and address questions you might have. Honestly, this is a great benefit. Associations typically conduct an annual conference. This is a business deduction, and allows you to be face-to-face with countless others in the field, plus learn new tricks and tips first hand with classes, seminars and demonstrations. In addition to the networking and conferences, associations generally offer a variety of elements that you may, or may not find a need for. This is where you'll want to review what the association offers, and see if it is a benefit you'll actually use. It doesn't matter if the list they have is long - if you don't use those items, then it's of no importance to you. Professional trade associations have membership dues. While this also is a business deduction, you'll want to make certain you get value for your money spent. One association, USPCA, actually includes personal chef liability insurance for active members - this single benefit alone is huge to many people, but examine the insurance, because it is only intended for the traditional personal chef. More advanced services may not get good return for their money spent if insurance was their only concern. In summary, there are not many "cons" - you just need to decide if what they offer gives you benefit. It is not uncommon for a new personal Chef service to become a member and get active for the first few years during their development stage(s). After 2-5 years of involvement, what once was important to you may not carry the same clout, and maybe it's time to separate yourself. You'll know when the time is right - and we're not saying this is a temporary gig - many personal chefs remain in a professional trade association their entire career. Without question, you will find that virtually everyone is bonded by that same common interest with excellent food and culinary creativity. Note: on this web site you'll find a quick comparison chart - intended as a starting point only.