



August 1, 2014

Conferences - Good or Bad?

The Culinary Business Institute does not have an ironclad allegiance with any professional trade organization representing Personal chefs in North America. But because The Culinary Business Institute is keenly aware of conferences, topics and speakers, we'd like to take this opportunity to share some of our thoughts. Because these are our observations and thoughts, take this information and use as a guide only – a piece to the overall puzzle. Personal chef conferences can be a wealth of information. These events typically draw from members within and outside experts to provide seminars on a wide range of topics. Classes may focus on actual cooking technique and packaging, to equipment, to business issues as in starting up, branching out, client retention, etc. All of these are excellent and needed classes. And provided the instructor (who is typically not a public speaker or instructor) can deliver the message in a clear concise manner and field questions with personal topic knowledge to give a solid answer, all is well. But after you've attended an annual conference for 3-5 years, you may have run out of useful classes or seminars to take advantage of. Perhaps your attendance is shifting from a knowledge grab to a social event. This is also fine – networking is a key instrument in staying in touch with the industry and trends. A typical attendance falloff does occur with Personal chefs after 4 or 5 years, only because they estimate that the return on investment may not be strong enough to warrant the time away from their business. These people will likely surface at a conference every 3 years, unless the conference venue happens to be very nearby – in which case all those travel expenses, hotel nights, etc become a moot point.

