

FAST FORWARD

A newsletter from the Association of Taco John's Franchisees

February 2016

NEW YEAR PROVIDES NEW OPPORTUNITIES

by Bryon Itterman

With the New Year well underway, there are several things happening or in the works I would like to share with you.

2016 NATIONAL CONVENTION EVENT

We're looking forward to spending quality time with you during Taco John's National Convention April 11-14, 2016, at the beautiful Hilton Head Marriott Resort & Spa, Hilton Head Island, SC. This year's schedule of events has been modified in order to provide valuable information and time to interact with fellow franchisees. We've worked to create something to satisfy every attendee. The following are some highlights:

Monday, April 11: Things get started with a late afternoon session from 5:30-7:30 p.m. including the ATJF membership meeting and presentation of the 2015 Operating Profit Study. A pizza and pasta party will wrap up the evening.

Tuesday, April 12: You won't want to miss a first guest speaker, Jody Urquhart, who will present a customized, interactive workshop from 9:30-11:30 a.m. Later, everyone will come together for the Grand Welcome Reception that evening followed by the Golf Calcutta Auction beginning right after the conclusion of the reception at 8 p.m.

Wednesday, April 13: The General Session will feature Keynote Speaker Steve Gilliland provid-

ing a custom presentation designed for the Taco John's audience. The awards banquet will begin with a cocktail party from 6:30-7:15 p.m. followed by a terrific dinner at 7:30 and the annual awards program.

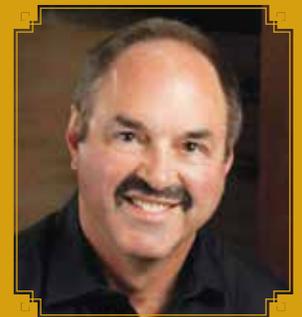
Thursday, April 14: The day begins with the ever-popular vendor show from 8 a.m.-noon. The annual golf tournament will begin after lunch (for registered participants) with a 1:30 p.m. shotgun start. Then, there will be a final gathering from 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Reminder...If you have not yet registered and reserved your hotel, please do so right away. The cut off for obtaining discounted rates is March 11, 2016. Don't miss it!

NEW ATJF BOARD MEMBERS ANNOUNCED

Two newly elected Association board members were confirmed during the December 2015 board meeting. The new directors are Jeff Bremer, franchise owner of 10 restaurants in Omaha, Bellevue, Fremont, and Columbus, NE, and Jim Atkinson, franchise owner of four restaurants in Austin, Albert Lea, Owatonna, and Faribault, MN. Jeff and Jim began their term in January 2016.

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Our Mission

"TO PROVIDE OUR MEMBERSHIP AN ENVIRONMENT FOR INCREASING LONG-TERM PROFITABILITY IN SUPPORT OF IMPROVED BUSINESS VALUE AND BRAND EQUITY."

Association Directory

ADVERTISING PRODUCTION COMMITTEE

Rick Kammerer, Chairman	<i>brewed4me@aol.com</i>	641-420-2230
Jeff Bremer, Vice Chairman	<i>jbremer@quikserve.com</i>	402-884-2799
Jim Atkinson	<i>jdatkinson@charter.net</i>	507-451-2023
Doug Heidebrink	<i>tacos@premieronline.net</i>	712-545-4008
Brian Fuder	<i>tacojohn@prtel.com</i>	218-998-1993
Lance Peterson	<i>lancep@midco.net</i>	507-238-2322
Alex Habeeb	<i>alexanderhabeeb@yahoo.com</i>	815-939-1313
Ted Miller	<i>tedkmiller@gmail.com</i>	605-728-6616
Dale Gossett	<i>gossettdc@msn.com</i>	701-226-2567
Eric McBroom	<i>emcbroom22@yahoo.com</i>	763-390-7092

These franchisees serve on various boards and strive to represent your interests. Call them with your questions, comments, and concerns. They want to hear from you.

ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bryon Itterman President	<i>itterman@pentexmanagement.com</i>	605-229-2005
Walt Cressman 1st VP, Secretary & Insurance Liaison	<i>waltcres10@aol.com</i>	612-804-9200
Jim Atkinson VP, Treasurer & Purchasing/Technology Liaison	<i>jdatkinson@charter.net</i>	507-451-2023
Jeff Bremer VP & Marketing Liaison	<i>jbremer@quikserve.com</i>	402-884-2799
Scott Dominiack VP & Operations Liaison	<i>scottdom@usa.net</i>	605-692-6900
Mike Sartwell VP & Development Liaison	<i>mikesartwell@gmail.com</i>	701-838-3996
Gary Wofford, Executive Dir.	<i>garywofford@atjf.net</i>	877-455-4749

To learn more about Association membership or committee or Board participation, contact any member of the Board of Directors or the Association office by phone at 877-455-4749 or by email to ATJFranchisees@comcast.net.

NEW YEAR PROVIDES NEW OPPORTUNITIES Continued from the previous page

SPECIAL THANKS TO DIRECTORS BRANDS AND KAMMERER

Having completed their terms, Jeff Brands (Taco John's of Iowa) and Rick Kammerer (Mason City, IA) have retired from the board. Jeff and Rick have been key contributors to the activities of the Association and deserve our appreciation for their time, commitment, and dedication to fellow franchisees.

ATJF directors are elected to a 3-year term and are eligible for re-election for one additional term. For enhanced communication purposes, each director serves a liaison role with a TJJ department. There will be two seats open to be filled for 2017. The nomination and election process will take place during November and December of 2016.

ATJF PRODUCES TWO INFORMATIONAL VIDEOS

In response to a number of lingering questions related to the Franchise Agreement and Amendment, the ATJF board has created an informational video designed to provide a broader understanding of the influence of Association efforts toward the final language within the agreements.

A second video has been produced to provide a better understanding of the structure and function of the ATJF board of directors while highlighting some of the more noteworthy accomplishments and benefits of membership.

These videos will be posted on the Association website, www.atjf.net, and a video link will be sent to all members.

I encourage you to take a look and listen. If you are left with questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Association office or any board member.

2015 OPERATING PROFIT STUDY UNDERWAY

In keeping with our objective to provide this study each year, you should have recently received information for the year-ending 2015 study. Data will be compiled for presentation at the National Convention on Monday evening, April 11.

If you have not participated before, you can begin now with the 2015 study. Please contact the Association office with any questions related to the process.

MEMBERSHIP CONTINUES TO GROW

Association membership remains strong and continues to grow. We are excited to welcome the following new members and congratulate them on the opening of their new restaurants:

- Dave Dickerson and Gail Richardson—Twin Falls, ID
- Brian Schmidt and Graham West—Gretna, NE

In closing, let me again thank you for your support of the Association. As fellow franchise owners, we are committed to protecting your interests as a Taco John's franchise owner while working to fulfill our mission: "To provide an environment for increasing long-term profitability in support of improved business value and brand equity".

I hope to see you soon in Hilton Head Island, SC!

Have You Had Your LAUGH Today?

THE BENEFITS OF LAUGHING

By Jody Urquhart, Guest Speaker at 2016 National Convention

Deep laughter lowers our levels of stress hormones, raises our pain threshold, increases our ability to fight upper respiratory diseases, relaxes muscles, and reduces anxiety. Cracking up even has cardiovascular benefits! Studies done at Stanford University found that a two-minute belly laugh is equal to 10 minutes on a rowing machine in terms of boosting heart rate.

The good news is that anybody can use laughter as therapy. There are no limitations in how often it's done, and there's no cost involved. How's that for motivation? It doesn't even have to be a real laugh—the body doesn't know the difference. If you start by pretending to laugh, the body takes over and you start genuinely laughing. The following is only a partial list of the benefits of laughing:

- Laughter takes the focus off your problems and puts your focus on a positive emotion.
- Laughing invokes feelings of happiness and joy, instead of gloom and doom.
- It's easier to think creatively around a problem when the mind is lighter from laughter.
- Shared laughter promotes bonding and unity within the group.
- Laughter also opens the door to more real and risky communication.

Laughter is not the same as humor; it is the result of humor. Laughter is the physiological response to humor. A sense of humor helps us gain a fuller and more realistic perspective of the world. Humor can dramatically change the quality and outlook of our lives. Humor is an easy way to get in touch with your feelings, and control those emotions in difficult situations.

Laughing makes us feel good for a reason. The physiological effects on our body do some pretty amazing stunts. For instance:

- Laughter appears to reduce levels of certain stress hormones.
- Laughter boosts the immune system and lowers blood pressure.

- Laughter may lead to hiccupping and coughing, which will clear the respiratory tract by dislodging mucus plugs.
- Laughter gives your diaphragm and abdominal, respiratory and facial, leg, and back muscles a workout.
- There also has been some belief that laughter may help prevent some life-threatening diseases.



Laugh because it puts you in the present, instead of focusing on the future.

Laugh because it feels good to laugh, not because the joke was necessarily funny.

Laugh when everything goes wrong instead of getting upset and you learn to deal with negative things in a positive way. You will be in control of your responses instead of letting the situation control you.

Taking a lighter approach is a lifestyle choice. It is the goal of this newsletter to help you do just that. Every article is quick and compelling to read and is a reminder to lighten up.

WHY YOU NEED TO LAUGH MORE

- Humor alleviates stress and tension.
- Fun improves communication.
- Fun eases conflict.
- Laughter can help us survive. Literally.
- Laughing at yourself is the highest form of humor.
- Laughter has a natural healing power.
- Humor helps lighten the load.
- Fun unites people—it builds bridges.
- Fun breaks up boredom and fatigue.
- Fun creates energy.

QUICK THINGS YOU CAN DO TO LIGHTEN UP...

When something makes you angry...smile, just because. You are teaching yourself to respond positively to a negative situation.

Laugh at yourself at least a couple times a day. You're worth it!

Adjust your expectations.

Blow it out of proportion...whatever the challenge, exaggerate it to see the humor in it and balance your perspective.

Give people the benefit of the doubt. Stop ruining your day over a friend giving you the cold shoulder. (It probably has nothing to do with you.)

FAST FACTS

Hearty laughter speeds up the heart rate, improves blocked circulation, accelerates breathing, and increases oxygen consumption.

Laughing for 15 seconds adds two days to your life span, and if you're laughing, they're good days!

Laughing 100 times a day is equal to a 10-minute session of rowing. So, why sweat when you can laugh?

It takes three muscles to smile and 50 muscles to frown, but there is no cardiovascular benefit to frowning, so you may as well laugh!

Jody Urquhart is passionate about spreading the message of the importance of fun at work. A motivational speaker for over 14 years, Jody delivers her humorous and inspirational message to more than 60 organizations and associations every year.

Enjoy Jody live and in person...on Tuesday, April 12 for an interactive workshop at the 2016 National Convention. You don't want to miss it!

NEW QUESADILLA TACO



NEW CHICKEN SOPAPILLA TACO



Your People are Your Most Important Asset

8 TIPS TO INTERVIEW LIKE A PRO

By Barbara Polk, National Restaurant Association – Human Resources

Your staff is your top resource, so it's critical to assemble your team strategically. In addition to functioning as a hiring tool, interviews allow you to reinforce your brand.

The following is some guidance for interviewing job candidates:

1. Conduct interviews away from other people in a quiet spot, so you can focus on the conversation and not disturb customers at your establishment. Speaking in a well-lit environment can boost engagement and attentiveness.
2. Show the same respect to candidates that you expect from them. For example, don't check your email or take a call during the interview. Schedule a time where you can give the candidate your undivided attention.
3. Learn more about the candidate's personality and work ethic with behavior-based prompts, such as "Describe a time when you delivered service in a way that clearly showed care and concern for the customer." Through his or her responses, you can evaluate the candidate's ability to interact within and outside of the restaurant.
4. Look for the "little" things. For example, did the candidate dress professionally for the interview? Nonverbal cues such as eye contact and facial expressions can also indicate a candidate's genuine interest in the position.
5. Allow job candidates time to ask you questions. This will demonstrate his or her preparedness and enthusiasm for the position.
6. If a position requires special safety knowledge, such as ServSafe certification, verify the candidate has acquired the necessary training.

7. Consider a test run. If you're hiring for a management position, give candidates an opportunity to work half days with their potential team (with pay). A test

run at the host stand, in the kitchen, or on the floor can reveal strengths and weaknesses you might not be able to gauge in conversation.

8. Prepare closing comments. Thank the candidates for their time and interest. If you are seriously considering a candidate, remind him or her of the period you've established for further contact. If you are not interested in hiring a candidate, thank him or her for coming in and, later that day, call or email to share you are not extending an offer. Providing context for your decisions can be constructive for candidates' job searches.

SOME TIPS TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE A RESTAURANT STAFF

Every day, restaurant owners/managers face time-consuming, overlapping tasks. During the hustle and bustle, leading a team of employees can be challenging. Here are three tips to help effectively manage your staff:

- 1. Implement continuous training.** Provide daily opportunities for your employees to learn new positions and skills. Not only will this empower them to expand their knowledge base, it also will help in times when you're short-staffed. An employee who has been cross-trained encourages upward movement in the industry.
- 2. Acknowledge a job well done.** Employee actions can affect the entire operation. Take time to praise excellent individual and collective staff performance, especially in the presence of coworkers. This shows that you're a supportive leader who celebrates success.
- 3. Remain organized and consistent.** To keep all managers in the loop on restaurant events, changes, and employee evolution, take notes after each shift. Tools such as logbooks can provide a consistent format for compilations.

"If our people develop faster than a competitor's people, then they're worth more."

—James M. Biggar, Chairman & CEO, Nestle Enterprises, Inc.

ASSOCIATION OF TACO JOHN'S
FRANCHISEES, INC.
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MEET STEVE GILLILAND, 2016 CONVENTION KEYNOTE SPEAKER

THE SPEAKER

Steve Gilliland is one of the most in-demand and top-rated speakers in the world. Recognized as a master storyteller and brilliant comedian, he can be heard daily on SiriusXM Radio's Laugh USA. With an appeal that transcends barriers of age, culture, and occupation—plus an interactive and entertaining style—Steve shows audiences how to open doors to success in their careers, their relationships, and their lives. As one newspaper stated, "Steve is what happens when the humor of a stand-up comic collides with the inspiration of a motivational speaker."

THE AUTHOR

In addition to his brilliant speaking career, Steve is a prolific, accomplished author, evidenced by four of his books—*Enjoy The Ride*, *Making a Difference*, *Hide Your Goat*, and *Detour*—perennially making the publisher's bestseller list and Steve being named Author of the Year. His thought-provoking writing style makes his articles a favorite with nationally prominent magazines.

THE BUSINESSMAN

Steve built a multimillion-dollar company from the ground up on the same philosophy he expounds to his audiences.

If you continually learn more about your company, your industry, your customer, and yourself, you will always be a leader. You will be purpose-driven rather than process-driven, and you will make a difference. His motto is straightforward: "If you take care of people, the business will follow." The Pittsburgh Business Times named his company one of the fastest-growing privately held companies in the region.



THE PERSON

Steve was born and raised in the Pittsburgh area, resides in North Carolina, and travels the world. He received his bachelor's degree from Grove City College (PA) and his MBA from Globe University (MN). He is a proud grandpa, devoted father of four boys, and a loving husband to his wife, Diane. Whether Steve is speaking at

an event, writing about current issues that impact people, or leading his own employees, he is not just a person who challenges people to change, he motivates them to do so.

Steve will deliver the keynote presentation on Wednesday, April 13. You'll leave with a renewed sense of enthusiasm for who you are and for what really matters! 

