

IAB Member Spotlight

Erin Umberger

Five years ago, I took on the role as the Virginia K12 Segment Specialist for Affinity Group Virginia and have loved every minute of learning and supporting school nutrition in our beautiful and diverse state. I currently reside in my hometown of Charlottesville. I have worked for over 20 years in all aspects of commercial restaurant business, as well as a few years in sales with Sysco VA. During that time, I also earned a BS degree from James Madison University. I truly appreciate everyone in the School Nutrition field working towards our simple goal to feed our children healthy and delicious meals that will build all our futures.



Inside Industry



Vinny Giacinto
Industry Chair

INDUSTRY ADVISORY BOARD (IAB)

The SNA-VA Industry Advisory Board met on October 23rd for the first time this new SNA calendar year. The Board had not met since June so there was a lot to discuss. Among the topics were: membership updates, updating the website with more user friendly information for industry members, and how to make our conferences more efficient and impactful for all participants.

OTHER UPDATES

- Thank you to our **15 new Platinum Industry Members**. This was new category added this year and we had 15 (YTD) increase the level from Gold to Platinum.
- It's **not too late to become an industry member** or support a sponsorship opportunity for state conference. If you are interested in becoming a partner of SNA-VA or to learn more, please visit <http://wordpress.sna-va.org/home/industry-info/>
- We are always **seeking and accepting applications for new members for the IAB**. If you are interested, please visit the Industry Info tab on our website!
- If you have any ideas or suggestions that can improve industry sponsorship of SNA-VA, please feel free to contact me to share your comments.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TESTING PRODUCT TO CREATE GOOD BID SPECS

Last issue, I wrote about the importance of writing good bid specs in order to secure the best pricing and products possible. These are achieved by having specific items in mind, a detailed description, accurate volume/usage and listing similar or "like" items. In order to get there, a simple way is to conduct product testing and student surveys in order to write the best specs. Here are some tips to do so:

- **SIDE BY SIDE TESTING:** Take a potential new product you are thinking of adding and test against a "similar" item you are menuing now. Keep the product name and description anonymous so the students give their honest feedback
- **CREATE A SURVEY:** Be sure the students have an avenue to record their preferences and comments. Don't just take "word of mouth" comments.
- **RECORD RESULTS:** Be sure to take those result and tally them and "grade" them. There could be a lot of response forms that seem "overwhelming" to complete, but this is the most important part. It will give you a wide overview of what the kids like and desire to see on their menus which will ultimately lead to increased participation.