Blogging Basics to Boost Your Business

By Jill Nussinow, MS, RD

Last year I sat in a room of about 150 food professionals listening to a talk about blogging. I’d been blogging for just over a year and hoped to learn something new. What I discovered was that very few attendees were blogging. I was surprised. And when I heard the comments about why people were not blogging, I was amazed.

The short list of why people didn’t blog included:

- It’s hard to do and too hard to set up.
- It will take too much time.
- There’s no pay off.
- It’s expensive.

Here I’ll share my blogging experience, along with a couple of other Registered Dietitians (RDs), in our roles as blogging myth busters.

I started my blog (which stands for web log) with no special online or blogging skills. I do, though, know how to write, which is essential if you want to blog and really enjoy it. My lack of tech know-how precluded my doing anything with my Web site. I heard that blogging helps increase Google rankings and it’s true. Every blog post is like updating a web page. To me, it seemed like an easy way to satisfy my desire to write and boost my web-presence.

DBC member Rebecca Scritchfield, a dietetic intern, says, “I started blogging in early 2007 when I was a communications graduate student at Johns Hopkins University. Our instructor required us to blog twice a week about our reading assignments and related technology news. After the class, I changed to blogging about food and nutrition and I never looked back.” (http://www.rebeccascritchfield.com)

Choosing a Platform

Martha McKittrick, RD, CDE, blogs as an adjunct to her Web site and as a way to get more information onto the web. Since she lacked technical expertise she hired fellow RD Nadine Fischer to set up her blog (http://www.citigirlbites.com) on Wordpress. McKittrick wanted a blog that would incorporate video and that’s what Fischer suggested.

Scritchfield, who is tech-savvy, also went with Wordpress. I, on the other hand, used Blogger (blogspot http://www.theveggiequeen.blogspot.com) because it was something that I

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Before I begin my year long odyssey, I would like to profusely thank Maureen Leugers for her leadership this past year. Maureen was instrumental in developing the team concept which will be continued this year. I would also like to thank all members of the amazing 2007-2008 Executive Committee. They are an extremely talented group and DBC is fortunate to have their commitment, professionalism and insight.

Here’s a review of what the Teams are working on for 2008-2009:

- The Marketing Team is busy revamping the Web site and implementing ADA’s new corporate identity program for marketing collateral, the new DBC showcase exhibit, the Web site and all the FNCE events.

- The Education Team is collaborating with the Nutrition Education for the Public practice group to sponsor a Webinar this Fall on Nutrient Rich Foods. They will still offer the monthly educational tele-conferences through the Foodservice Coaching Group. Don’t let the name fool you as the educational offerings cover much more than just foodservice.

- The Membership Team has recruited nine Regional Networking Coordinators who will be offering various networking opportunities throughout the US. Refer to the Web site (www.dbconline.org) for upcoming events.

- The Sponsorship Team is busy seeking corporate and individual financial support to fund these exciting educational, marketing and membership events. Without the generosity of our sponsors, these programs and opportunities would not be possible.

As always, we have several fantastic events planned for FNCE 2008, so mark your calendars now!

SAVE THE DATES FOR FNCE CHICAGO 2008:

Saturday, October 25 • 6:30 PM
DBC’s Networking Reception at the Chicago Firehouse Restaurant, 1401 S. Michigan Ave. This historic venue is just six blocks away from McCormick Place Convention Center. Entertainment and fantastic food will be offered for $35.

Sunday, October 26 • 8:30 AM
“Live Like You Mean It” The fantastic speaking duo of Ken Wasco and Ellyn Luros-Elson, RD will take you on a journey through the process of creating a meaningful, fulfilling and happier life--one worthy of legacy building.

10:00 AM “From Practitioner to Manager: Developing Your Leadership Profile”
Jean Caton, MS, MBA, RD and Mary Cluskey, PhD, RD will help you develop your management and leadership image and skills that will enhance your opportunities for advancement and lead to a more personally fulfilling and financially rewarding career.

Monday, October 27 • 10:30 AM – 1:00 PM
DPG Showcase. Stop by our new exhibit booth to meet the Movers and Shakers in our dynamic practice group!

Tuesday, October 28 • 6:45 AM – 8:00 AM
DBC’s Networking Breakfast. Join us at the Hyatt Regency on Wacker Drive to network with dietitians in media, manufacturing, industry consulting, foodservice distribution, and many more out-of-the-RD box opportunities.

If you register for both the breakfast and the reception, the cost is $50 to members.

We would love to hear from the DBC membership about other events, information or opportunities that you would like to see happening this year. Please contact me at lisapoggas@centura.org or the DBC office, Barb Pyper at dbc@quidnunc.net.

We look forward to meeting your needs this year. Hope to see you in Chicago this October.
Keri Glassman, MS, RD, CDN, is President of KKG Body Fuel, Inc., a nutrition counseling and consulting practice, and the founder and president of KeriBar, a nutrition snack bar company. Keri received her M.S. in clinical nutrition from New York University. She has received extensive coverage and has appeared in various media, including Marie Claire, Glamour, Shape, Men’s Journal, Self, Cookie, Fitness, Life & Style, US Weekly, Men’s Fitness, WebMD, Oxygen, Today, and the Early Show. She is a regular contributor to NY1 and Fox News Channel. Keri resides in New York City with her husband, Brett, and their children, Rex and Maizy.

In our world of many energy bars, why does KeriBar rise to the top?
KeriBars are real, whole food, all natural and vegan. They are what I consider a “perfect” snack wrapped up in a bar. Portion controlled calories (not too many and not too few either) and an excellent proportion of nutrients - fiber, protein and healthy fats.

How did you come up with this idea and formulation?
KeriBars were originally developed for my clients who needed the perfect “on-the-go” snack. I always tell my clients to choose real food when possible (i.e. a small apple and natural peanut butter). However, there are times, it’s just not possible! Although there were many bars on the market none were the right proportion of nutrients and still tasted good! I originally worked with a chef who I told what I ingredients I wanted, then I re-formulated the recipe to improve the nutrient profile. Next, my sister in law perfected it in her kitchen!

Where are your bars available?
Online, www.nutritiouslife.com, as well as select nationwide health food stores such as GNC.

What advice would you offer a dietitian wanting to get into this business?
Go for it! Lay out a plan and tackle a few things on the “to do” list a day.

Solutions from the Foodservice Institute of America

Are you reaching your customers? Are your services becoming experiences that are authentic? Are they authentic enough to realize increased revenue?
Foodservice Institute of America FIA (www.fia-us.org) will host the third in the FIA Advantage Series, Connecting the Resources: Authenticity, Mass Customization & Revenue. This solution-oriented program will focus on connecting the resources between authenticity, mass customization and revenue. The morning will feature a speaker who will bring expertise and speaking flair to define what mass customization is, give real life industry examples and practices, describe how to apply mass customization to a business or service and show how capitalizing on authenticity and mass customization can help improve their bottom line. The afternoon part of our program will be consist of a moderator and panelists that will explore the idea of mass customization and marketing in the various aspects of the industry from information technology, culinary arts, equipment and food manufacturers. Individuals will share their ideas on how they created a differentiated, value-added product or service and developed a game plan to connect all the dots for success in-operation, business or services. This program will be held at Rush University Medical Center, Searle Conference Center, Chicago, Illinois on August 12, 2008. For more information call (609) 645-3131 or visit online http://www.fia-us.org/news_events/Symposium.shtml
What are some of your daily duties and responsibilities as a Nutrition Consultant?
It truly depends on which day we are talking about! Monday through Wednesday one can find me in the New York City area working as Production Assistant to Ellie Krieger, MS, RD, the Food Network’s TV Host of “Healthy Appetite”. Those responsibilities include assisting with nutrition research, recipe development/modifications, and nutritional analysis of recipes for “Healthy Appetite”. I also write consumer-friendly sidebars and tips for the scripts of the show. I also attend nutrition-related media events that correlate with new products, brands, and emerging research. The second half of the week, I consult in three different nursing home facilities in northern New Jersey, where my responsibilities include assessing residents' nutritional status, as well as providing them with nutrition education.

Do you have a “typical” workday?
No, and I actually prefer it that way. My job is not a typical 9-5. Since I work as a consultant in the nursing homes, I can make my own hours, which is a great privilege. When I work with Ellie, each week is a different project, which means a different schedule. Sometimes we are in the studio shooting the show, other times we are in the office doing research, and still others we are cooking up delicious recipes.

You work with Harvest Eating. What is Harvest Eating and what are some of your activities with this client?
As described from the Web site, “Harvest Eating, created by Chef Keith Snow, is not a fad diet. It’s a lifestyle of cooking and eating using methods that have been practiced for centuries all over the globe.”

“The approach is simple: Buy foods that are fresh and in season; then prepare them using whole, natural ingredients produced by farmers, not chemists.”

I am currently involved as one of the on-air nutrition experts for their television show, which is set to debut sometime next year. I am also involved with their new Web site, which will be launching with updated features like Harvest Eating University, where I will be contributing articles, tips, recipes, and a forum to interact with people visiting the site. I also work on nutritional analysis for the recipes used on the Web site and the show.

How did you get involved with Harvest Eating?
Networking! A colleague threw my name out there for this opportunity. She thought it would be a great chance for me to practice my writing and media skills. I am very grateful for her referral.

Do you have plans for future shows?
Right now the show’s debut is to be announced. Once it launches, they will see what the feedback is and how well it is received by viewers before producing more episodes. We will have to see where this winding road takes me…. but I would love to become more involved!

Describe the progression of your career. What path led you to the development of your outstanding Web site?
When I graduated from my internship, I began working in long-term care. I covered a maternity leave, and since then I have been consulting in many different facilities in northern New Jersey. In the fall of 2006, I began working with Ellie. Little did I know, I was about to step foot into the fast-paced, unpredictable media world! My job with Ellie really sparked my creativity, leading to the development of my Web site. I thought, “If other successful Registered Dietitians (RD’s) can have a website, why can’t I?” Sometimes you just have to “fake it till you make it.” You need to promote and market yourself so that people begin to notice you, then you impress them with your skills.

What was the one thing that surprised you the most about dietetics and its role in the business world?
When I graduated, the most surprising thing to me was the sheer fact that all of these business and media positions even existed! When I finished my internship in 2006, my preceptors and teachers were still drilling into our heads, “Get your clinical experience first.” Although I did go on to do long term care first, I am a firm believer that it is not necessary. You can practically develop your own career in this field if you are creative enough.

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Teams and team performance is a topic of keen interest to me. However, the term ‘dysfunction’, which appeared in the title of this book, initially dissuaded my interest in purchasing it. I noticed, though, that the book appeared repeatedly on the business best-seller lists and this fact piqued my curiosity. So when I came across a copy at my church book sale, for a mere $1.00, I purchased it. Despite my aversion to the title, a quick perusal informed me why it was indeed a best-seller. Put simply, the book is an easy read containing simple, practical advice about improving team performance.

Roughly two-thirds of the book is dedicated to a fable about an imaginary team and its new leader named Kathryn. Reading this section was somewhat predictable and dragged on at times. It did, however, set the scene for the second part of the book; the team improvement model. The author lays out the strength of this model, which lies in its simplicity.

Lencioni describes the five team dysfunctions; the implications of these problems and a brief description for improvement. He also includes a fifteen-question diagnostic tool for a quick team assessment. The author depicts the dysfunctions in a triangle with Absence of Trust as the base and foundation issue and Inattention to Results as the triangle apex. Fear of Conflict, Lack of Commitment, and Avoidance of Accountability completes the model.

One disagreement I have is with the author’s preference for the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) as a tool. In my experience I have found this tool to be of limited value. However, some type of assessment is valuable and offers common language to discuss various personality styles and its impact on team performance.

The author emphasizes the importance of the team leader. Kathryn was depicted with courage, determination, selflessness and a commitment to results. Although Lencioni says leading effective teams “…comes down to the practice of a small set of principles over a long time…” he is quick to add that a significant amount of time, investment is required.

This is a book worth reading if you want to yield better results from any team you lead.

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It's no secret that the field of nutrition is a magnet for misinformation. Registered Dietitians (RDs) usually compete with an overwhelming crowd of nutrition communicators, from professionals who should know better — MDs, PhDs — to self-appointed experts who deliberately or ignorantly push gross misinformation. Yet RDs also are often ignored, misunderstood and even scorned when it comes to consideration as go-to authorities in nutrition. No hard feelings, right?

The gap in communication between the snake-oil salesman and degree dietitians comes down to “the sale.” Media outlets — newspapers, TV, magazines — exist for one purpose: to sell ads. “You’re all going to DIE! Details at 11:00!” sells more ads than “Eat a balanced diet every day of fruits, vegetables and whole grains.” It’s high time RDs elbowed our way to the front of the crowd.

Here are seven steps to help bridge the Media-RD communication gap.

1) Be more actively involved with the media. You’re the expert. When you read, see or hear something utterly ludicrous or just inadvertently misleading, get on the phone and call. When you reach the editor or producer, state your name, establish your credentials, and state your case: “I’d like to elaborate on information in your report that could be misconstrued.” By the way, e-mail is nowhere near as effective for this as a personal call.

2) Keep the initial contact to 20 seconds and hit the “Three Cs”: be cheerful, be concise, be confident. Use low-tech language. Emphasize the important points.

3) Know your facts. This might seem banal, but there are a few nutrition and health myths out there some RDs have been guilty of promoting. How much do you really know about sugar and hyperactivity? Dietary sodium and hypertension? Dietary cholesterol and heart disease? Delving into the science of the topic might yield surprises. Find them before they find you.

4) When communicating a nutrition and health issue to the press, focus on the P-A-R formula: Problem-Answer-Result. Give a real sense of “how-to.” Think: How can the reader/viewer apply your information to his/her day-to-day life? Combined with the above Three Cs, this will help you distill your message into those sound bites the media love so well.

5) When you are approached by a journalist writing or producing a nutrition story, ask what their background is for the piece and if they have any science credentials. If not, ask if someone with science credentials will vet the story. If not, offer to do it yourself or recommend expert sources for the journalist to contact.

6) Diplomatically extract the right to approve your quote prior to publication or release of the story. Don’t worry, this is common practice. Remember, it’s not just your name but your credentials that will be on the chopping block if you’re misquoted or misedited.

7) Avoid being cornered for an interview for which you’re unprepared. Journalists always are on a deadline and that deadline is always “yesterday.” It’s OK to say “no thanks.” You might not be a part of the solution that way, but at least you won’t end up being a part of the problem.

David Feder, RD, is director of S/F/B Communications Group, a cooperative of food and nutrition experts providing writing, editing and consulting services for print, online, PR and broadcast communications. He can be reached at sfb-communications@earthlink.net or 847.478.5398.
could do on my own and I liked their choice of templates. Typepad is yet another good choice. It seems that any platform is manageable if you spend time studying it. If you choose not to do that, you can hire someone or take a class with experts such as The Blogsquad (http://www.blogsquad.biz).

**Why Blog? Does it bring business?**

McKittrick says, “The major reason that I wanted a blog was to increase my visibility in hopes of increasing my business by obtaining new private clients, getting magazines interested in publishing some of my posts, the potential to get paid advertising and to show enough of a readership to get a book published.”

Blogging has made me more visible on the internet. One day a friend was looking up mushroom hunting, and since I’d just written a blog post, my name and blog came up on the first page. But blogging takes a bit of dedication. Posting at least three times a week is a good idea. And daily is even better. Some people make a career out of it. Non-RD, Hungry Girl, Lisa Lillien, posts daily at http://www.hungrygirl.com and just had her book titled, Hungry Girl: Recipes and Survival Strategies for Guilt-Free Eating in the Real World published. I saw it at Costco which means that she has built a large enough national audience to sell many thousands of copies of her book.

**Blogging has made me more visible on the internet.**

Blogging can bring a form of notoriety which may lead to business, but it’s often hard to attribute blogging directly to increases in business.

**Joining In and Building Community**

A blog is a great way to interact with an audience for your particular specialty. It’s also a wonderful way to meet other people. I actually met Scritchfield online through her blog (and her DBC listserve postings). You can join forces with like-minded RDs and share posts. It keeps you from having to always come up with content. You can also interview other RDs, use news items, which Scritchfield is very good at, ask colleagues if you can use their posts, and more.

Scritchfield says, “Blogging also gives me a chance to learn from others. I have met some interesting people who have helped shape my opinion or offered another way of looking at an issue. I think those encounters have helped my growth and development too. We are always learning, especially when it comes to food, nutrition and behavior.”

If you’re not yet blogging, look around for blogs that you like. If you already blog, check out successful blogs or blog more often. But don’t spend too long doing so, or you won’t likely get your work done.

To sum it up, Rebecca Scritchfield says it well, “Anyone who wants to blog can do it. If you are trying to break in to writing, I think starting out with blogging is a logical first step. You’ll never really know what blogging can do for you unless you try.” Blog on!

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The Hispanic population in the United States increased 1.4 million to reach 45.5 million on July 1, 2007 which translates into 15 percent of the estimated total of 301.6 million. The recent statistics on National and States estimates by race, Hispanic origin, sex, and age released by the U.S. Census Bureau shows the Hispanic population has exceeded 500,000 in sixteen states. This increasing population is not exempt from the same health challenges America is facing today. Actually, they have the highest incidence of overweight/obesity. The overweight and obesity epidemic in America is disproportionately severe in Hispanic communities with three out of four Hispanic Americans reported as overweight or obese. Teaching healthy habits among Hispanic Americans requires an understanding and sensitivity to their culture, beliefs, activities, food consumption patterns and preparation methods. The following cultural tips are designed to assist dietitians in providing culturally sensitive information that will positively impact desired goals of specific Hispanic audiences.

**Hispanic Cultural Competency**

**Embrace Differences:** Try not to be judgmental, but instead embrace and accept differences.

**The touch** - Latin Americans generally have a smaller personal space. Friendly physical contact such as touching the arm is welcome after initial rapport is established.

**Maintaining eye contact is valued** - Poor eye contact can be viewed as a sign of disrespect.

**Provide respect** - Many Latinos have strong notions of social hierarchy, clear authoritarian/dependency social roles and a high regard for expert knowledge, thus they may expect the care provider to be very directive and assertive. They want clear evidence that the provider is genuinely concerned about them personally and they want to be treated with much love and dignity.

**Build trust** - Use surnames and title (e.g. Mr. & Mrs.) for the first meeting, and at all times for the elderly, rather than given names. This simple sign of respect will facilitate trust, a key factor in gaining acceptance for new dietary and lifestyle behaviors.

**Know the differences** - Hispanics are not a homogeneous group so it’s important to identify the cultural background. Customize recommendations and interventions for each Hispanic audience.

Assess the level of acculturation to mainstream American dietary practices. More acculturated individuals may need more help in selecting a variety of healthful foods, while the less acculturated, Spanish-speaking, may need more assistance with modifying traditional dishes for healthier alternatives.

Determine the client’s primary language spoken in the home as well as reading and writing language and proficiency. Latinos may be bilingual, speak Spanish only, or speak English only. Be aware that although Spanish-speaking, some may not read or write Spanish.

If Spanish-speaking only, utilize Spanish educational materials to facilitate your instruction. Develop your own or use existing publications from other health and professional organizations, Hispanic groups or food manufacturers.

Adapt the Spanish U.S. Food Guide Pyramid to include culturally relevant foods and customs.

It’s a family affair – Involve and gain support of family members, especially those that cook regular meals. The family unit (including extended members) is the single most important social unit in the life of Hispanics, thus strong family support systems can be enlisted in their care.

**Who’s the boss** - Consider gender differences and male dominance when working with Latino families. If both the husband and wife are present during the consultation there may be a tendency for the male to speak and make decisions for the woman.

Support and stimulate the preservation of positive food practices related to

"Know the different Latino cuisines - Understand and appreciate different flavor systems."

By Sylvia Melendez-Klinger, MS, RD, LDN, CPT and Maria Alamo, MPH, RD, LDN
traditional health beliefs and dietary customs; the traditional Latin American diet is high in fiber, relies mainly on vegetable proteins rather than animal fats and increased consumption of vegetables and fruits high in vitamins A and C is common.

Encourage the consumption of familiar and culturally acceptable healthy foods.

Know the different Latino cuisines - Understand and appreciate different flavor systems — there is no one Latino cuisine. Become familiar with the traditional foods, herbs and spices of the sub-cultural group you are working with and learn specific terminology in order to recommend healthier versions.

Clients may not divulge secret family recipes, but you can explore and shop at bodegas (neighborhood ethnic stores) to identify the “Latin pantry” or buy and cook dishes from authentic cookbooks, or dine out at authentic restaurants.

Use visual aids - Use food models, pictures and actual food labels during the instruction. Remember to include typical mixed dishes – guisados (stews) are common. Emphasize portion control by asking them to measure the amount of food typically consumed and then demonstrating the recommended amount of that food as a comparison. Encourage the concept of grains/tubers (root vegetables), vegetables and fruits as the main course with lean meats, such as fish, skinless chicken breast, lean red meats and pork loin, as the accompaniment.

Variety - Encourage versatility by raising awareness of the full range of food choices available. Increase their knowledge of healthy food selections from the typical American fare, especially whole grains.

Demonstrate - Conduct cooking and tasting demos of modified tasty and healthy traditional recipes in the Latino community where they congregate: churches, recreation centers, parks or schools.

Bursting nutrition myths - Dispel food and diet myths and misconceptions. For example, some Hispanics may avoid dairy products because of perceived or real lactose intolerance limiting their calcium intake, when in reality gradually increasing intake of lactose-containing foods may improve tolerance to lactose.

Exercising is not customary. The “full-figured” woman is considered attractive and healthy. Help is needed, especially Latinas, to understand the benefits of physical activity in terms of overall healthy body, mind and spirit.

Some Latinos see illness divided into “hot” or “cold” and food selections and treatments vary accordingly. This is particularly important in pregnancy, a “hot” condition where “hot” foods are believed to upset the stomach. Obtain detailed information about the client’s hot and cold food practices as customs vary widely.

Be aware of folk remedies. The use of folk or traditional healers, Curanderos/ Yerberos, is typical primarily of immigrant segments of the Latino population. Question the use of teas, powders, herbs, as well as vitamins and minerals and assess potential nutrient and drug interactions. Explore neighborhood Botanicas, folk pharmacies that carry curative herbs and ask how they are used.

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As healthcare professionals, we know obesity is a worldwide health issue. With more than 58 million Americans and 4.7 million American youths overweight, we all need to get on board and do our part to combat this crisis. Schools are a great venue to implement health promotion. Use and share these grant opportunities, programs and books listed with your clients and colleagues to help work toward the goal of healthier students!

**PRESIDENT’S COUNCIL ON PHYSICAL FITNESS AND SPORTS’ NATIONAL FITNESS CHALLENGE:** A program that encourages Americans to make being active part of their everyday lives. More information can be found at [www.fitness.gov/home_pres_chall.htm](http://www.fitness.gov/home_pres_chall.htm).

**LOVE YOUR VEGGIES™ NATIONWIDE SCHOOL LUNCH CAMPAIGN:** Helps schools implement federally mandated Local Wellness Policy and increases access to, and consumption of, fresh fruits and vegetables among young students. The grant is sponsored by the makers of Hidden Valley Salad Dressings in cooperation with the School Nutrition Association, Produce For Better Health Foundation, Alliance for a Healthier Generation and Weekly Reader (who provides nutrition education kits) and provided 51 $10,000 grant in May 2008. More information about the grant and its availability can be found at [www.LoveYourVeggiesGrants.org](http://www.LoveYourVeggiesGrants.org).

**THE JARED FOUNDATION SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM:** The Jared Foundation, an organization founded by Jared Fogle, the Subway Guy, helps fight childhood obesity and will offer $20,000 grants to help schools implement the 2004 federally mandated Local Wellness Policy. For more information, visit [www.jaredfoundation.org/school_admins](http://www.jaredfoundation.org/school_admins).

**“HENRY AND THE HIDDEN VEGGIE GARDEN” BOOK:** A book geared toward children ages 7 to 10 that tells the story of a boy named Henry, who after an eye-opening couple of days on a farm begins to see what he’s been missing by not eating veggies. The book is available for purchase at [www.LoveYourVeggiesGrants.org](http://www.LoveYourVeggiesGrants.org) until September 2008.

— Jennifer Seyler, MS, RD, is an account supervisor at Current Lifestyle Marketing, a public relations agency that specializes in food and beverage clients. She can be reached at jseylemnutrition@hotmail.com or 312-929-0507.
Member Service Alert: The Nuts & Bolts of How to Become a Dietitian in Business and Communications

“The Nuts and Bolts of How to Become a Dietitian in Business and Communications” is a turnkey presentation, as well as member service and tool, that was created by DBC member, Erin DeSimone, MS, RD for our membership. This powerpoint is available to any DBC member to share at national, state or regional meetings to encourage other food and nutrition professionals to consider alternative career paths.

Session Description
Gone are the days when dietitians were faced with only two career options coming out of school or an internship program – the foodservice route or the clinical pathway. With nutrition remaining a hot topic in the current environment, dietitians today have seemingly endless opportunities to build their dream career – they just need the right tools. “The Nuts & Bolts of How to Become a Dietitian in Business and Communications” provides a list of skills needed to open up new career doors and reviews various options and opportunities that lie within the field of nutrition business and communications.

Session Objectives:
- Explain the skill set needed to enter the field of business and communications
- Describe the different types of career paths within the field of business and communications
- Identify at least five things dietitians can do today to become a dietitian in business and communications tomorrow

The presentation was a highlight at both the Ohio (ODA) and Texas Dietetic Association (TDA) meetings this past year. The session received 1.0 CPEUs. Rayona Baker, RD, LD presented at ODA and Hope Hale, MS, RD, CD presented to TDA. Both states received excellent participation and feedback from the information presented.

“I was pleased to share key skill sets and career paths available to dietitians entering the field of business and communications. The audience included students, new graduates, and dietitians looking to expand career options,” states Hope, who is a past Chair of DBC. “This was a great occasion to share the broad spectrum of career paths dietitians may explore. I shared life experiences of dietitians in business and communications, plus steps to ensure success. The feedback received confirmed that dietitians are looking for guidance to expand their career options and create opportunities in diverse business settings. I recommend presenting this powerful tool to student associations, regional and state dietetic associations, and affiliate associations of the American Dietetic Association.”

If you would like to schedule “The Nuts & Bolts of How to Become a Dietitian in Business and Communications” presentation in your state for 2009, contact Rayona Baker, RD, LD, DBC Communications Marketing Chair at rayona.baker@gfs.com or 502-215-1046.
What are some of the issues facing dietitians in business in today’s work environment?
I think the lack of business education in our undergraduate studies definitely holds us back when being considered for some of these industry positions. We need to supplement our science-based background with classes like marketing, money management, business 101 and journalism, as most of the PR, marketing, and writing positions require a background in these areas.

In our ever-changing field, what changes do you predict in dietetics over the next few years, specifically, in business and industry?
Over the next few years, I hope the educational requirements for RD’s change to incorporate more business-oriented classes. Our background should not just be science based. In order to be more marketable in this industry, we need more classes such as those previously mentioned.

What do you see as the biggest challenge to dietitians who are just beginning their careers and want to work in the area of business and communications?
I think the lack of experience in the business and industry field is one of the biggest challenges. I suggest doing volunteer work for your local newspapers or applying for media internships. Something to keep in mind is, at times, it helps to take a step back in order to move forward.

What advice can you offer to new dietitians who chose business and as their career path?
My advice to new RD’s going into this field is to make sure you network. The way I landed most of my jobs is through networking. Talk to successful RD’s and get their advice and opinions. Email is also a great, quick way to communicate with colleagues. These personal connections may open doors to future opportunities in the industry. Don’t limit yourself!

Elisabeth D’Alto resides in the NJ/NYC Metro Area. You can check out her website at www.elisabethrd.com or contact her at ElisabethRD@gmail.com.
DBC Movers and Shakers  
*Column by Jill Parker, MS, RD/LD, Contributing Editor, DBC Dimensions*

**Liz Marr, MS, RD • Longmont, CO**

Liz Marr, MS, RD, is principal and co-owner of Marr Barr in Longmont, Colorado (www.marrbarr.com). Co-founded in 2000 by Marr and Amy Barr (also an RD), Marr Barr is an independent, strategic communications firm specializing in food, nutrition, health and wellness, lifestyle, agriculture, environment and sustainability. Clients range from global Fortune 500 companies to international and national trade organizations to local entrepreneurial ventures and non-profits. Recently, Liz was elected as chair-elect of the Food and Culinary Professionals DPG and was appointed to the Boulder County Food and Ag Policy Council. Liz is certainly keeping herself busy!

**Linda Eck Mills, MBA, RD, LDN, FADA • Bernville, PA**

Linda Eck Mills, MBA, RD, LDN, FADA, owner of Dynamic Communication Services, was the author of *From Local Chow to Green Machines: ADA Members Are Turning Foodservice into Eco-Friendly Operations* in the January/February issue of ADA Times. Linda’s interview for *Business Plan 2.0: Putting Technology to Work* appeared in the February issue of JADA and the May Supplement to JADA. She is a contributor to the recently released textbook *Nutrition: Real People, Real Choices* by Susan Hewlings and Denis Medeiros. Linda also has 2 submissions in *Trainer’s Warehouse Book of Games* from Pfeiffer Publishing that was released in April by Trainer’s Warehouse. Keep it up Linda!

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