

The Pulse

MENU REVOLUTION THE BRAIN FOOD CONCEPT COMES TO MEETINGS

BY SARAH J.F. BRALEY

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Celebrity chef Jamie Oliver is on a mission to change the way we eat -- at home, at school, in restaurants and during meetings. Our meals and snacks should be wholesome and nutritious, beautifully presented and delicious. And when the agenda calls for concentration and learning, we should eat foods that boost brainpower.



Celebrity chef and TV star Jamie Oliver has overhauled menus at Scandic Hotels.

It's a concept that's quickly gaining traction here and abroad. The so-called "brain food" movement is based on a growing body of scientific evidence that mental factors like mood, motivation and intellectual performance are powerfully influenced by diet. This has clear implications for meetings, suggesting that F&B can play a role in forwarding a group's goals and agenda.

Many hotel companies not only are buying in, but revamping their banquet menus to make it easier for meeting planners to make smart choices. Scandic Hotels, which has 160 properties throughout Northern Europe, enlisted Oliver, host of ABC-TV's Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution, to tweak its group offerings last year. "Soups with fresh, seasonal vegetables; salads with different dressings and fruit -- each menu is designed to be created by the guests to their individual taste," Oliver explains. "That encourages interactivity and communication, being together. Thus, a meeting can become even more productive."

Certain foods produce chemicals in the

body that can be building blocks for neurotransmitters, explains Andrea Sullivan, president of BrainStrength Systems, who speaks on topics relating to the complexity of our gray matter. "Neurotransmitters are keys to how we're thinking, how we're feeling."

In other words, feeding the brain well throughout the day can lead to better learning. We've all been in mid-day sessions when our focus is shot and we struggle to absorb information. Planners can help eliminate that crash by careful menu selection to improve attendee concentration, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness and ROI of the meeting. And that means rethinking breakfast, lunch and breaks.

To find out more about this intriguing topic, visit www.mcmag.com, June 2011 issue.

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In 2011, our website has had nearly 5,000 visitors! For just \$250 per year, you can have your company highlighted on the home page of Illinois' largest government meeting planners' association.

To find out more about this exciting opportunity, contact Kristen Ball at kball@ipha.com today!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we all settle down from our busy Summer, I ask that you all get more involved in our Chapter. You will never regret it. The more that you give the more you get. Nationwide SGMP membership is declining. We all have a friend or family member that knows someone who could benefit from our educational and networking meetings. Look around your workplace and ask yourself is there anyone else that could benefit from being a member of SGMP? Invite them to a luncheon and let them experience all that SGMP has to offer. There is no other organization that you can receive both top notch education and networking opportunities on a monthly basis. It only takes one member at a time to help us grow.

The Annual Silent Auction & Reception was a huge success. Almost \$2,700.00 dollars was raised in just 2 hours. I want to personally congratulate Angie Wanger and her Fundraising Committee on a great job.

As always the Board is always available to take any suggestions or comments that you would like to offer. Please go to our website at sgmp-illinois.org for our contact information.

Becky Rinozzi

President



A big Thank You to
Laurie Guest, CSP,
of Solutions Are Brewing, for her entertaining and informative session, *The Swizzle Stick Strategy*, during the September breakfast at the Hilton Springfield. Laurie provided us with a variety of ways to "beef up" our marketing in unique and fun ways. If you'd like to find out more about Laurie and her programs, visit www.solutionsarebrewing.com.

ON THE NATIONAL FRONT

SGMP is excited to announce the launch of its electronic RFP tool the **RFPconnection** on our web site! With all the tasks you prepare for your bid in an RFP, identifying meeting venues and services has just gotten easier for our government planner members. Finding the right suppliers for hotels, transportation, caterers, restaurants, and unique off-site venues on SGMP's **RFPconnection** insures that you will be sending your RFP to a potential business partner who knows the RFP process. Our goal is to make it easy for planners to connect to the wealth of resources our supplier members bring to the

table in the course of conducting government business.

The **RFPconnection** is a complimentary member service. You can find **RFPconnection** in two locations on the SGMP home page, www.sgmp.org, at the top and in the Online Suppliers Guide section. A third location is directly on the opening page of the Online Suppliers Guide.

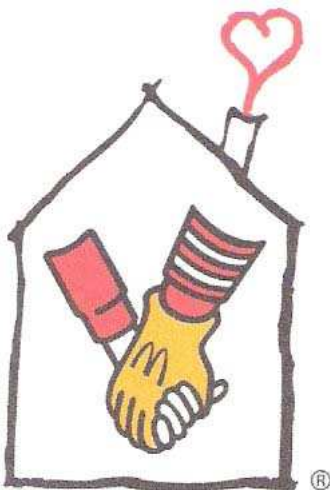
The Case for Brain Food -

Regina Baraban

Choosing healthy conference menus can be tricky. But what if you stop pushing “healthy food” and start promoting “brain food”? You can make a compelling argument for serving food that helps attendees focus, maintain energy, and learn—boosting their brain power and your meeting ROI.

Eating specific foods to produce different physiological states is a trend that will bring huge changes to meetings, says Andrea Sullivan, president of [Brain-Strength Systems](#), which provides programs for learning and performance improvement. “For a long time, we’ve focused on what we should not eat. This shift is about focusing on what we should

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COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

The Heart of Illinois Chapter is currently working with Ronald McDonald House Charities as part of its commitment to helping communities throughout Illinois.

Each month, members are asked to bring pop tabs to the luncheons and deposit them in our big Ronald McDonald House. These tabs will be delivered to the Springfield Ronald McDonald House where they will turn the tabs into cash to support the work of the House.

SGMP will also be collecting members' spare change and Wish List items during the meetings to help support the House.

For more information on how you can support the Ronald McDonald House of Central Illinois, contact Community Service Chair, Judy Elliott at jelliott@crowneplazaspringfield.com.

WISH LIST

- Lysol spray
- Soft Scrub
- Kitchen Counter Wipes

- Furniture Polish
- Shout Stain Remover
- Laundry Detergent
- Dishwasher Detergent
- Dish Soap
- Paper Plates—large & small
- Paper Napkins
- Paper Towels
- Facial Tissue
- 30 Gal & Tall Kitchen Trash Bags
- Gift cards to local grocery stores
- Groups/families to prepare meals
- New pillows
- White copy paper

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October

25th Luncheon Meeting
President Abraham Lincoln Hotel
Jamie Burns will be speaking on
Diversity

November

22nd Hilton Garden Inn, Springfield
Bill McKenzie will be speaking on
Supervision/Conflict Resolution

December

No meeting this month. Enjoy the holidays!

Visit www.sgmp-illinois.org



eat to produce desired results.”

Sullivan cites research that describes the chemical effects that various foods produce in the brain. “For example,” she says, “eggs are rich in choline, which aids healthy neurotransmission and enhances our ability to pay attention, form new memories, and make decisions.” White flour and simple sugars, however, “enter the bloodstream quickly and trigger the release of insulin, which leads to sugar highs and lows that create a neurotransmitter imbalance, causing sleepiness, inattention, and even irritability.”

Sullivan cautions that many of the brain-boosting benefits of specific foods kick in after long-term use, but she also believes that “during meetings, we can produce immediate effects from the balance of foods in each meal, and from serving certain foods. Dark chocolate has been shown to improve cognitive performance for several hours following ingestion.”

Why, then, are meeting menus typically full of sugary and high-carb foods? “Menu choices are often based on considerations such as cost and what we think people want to eat,” says Sullivan. “Cost considerations can result in meals that are high in starch and low on proteins, relaxing the brain to a state of inattention. Giving people what they want can also be a problem, because what they often want is comfort food—wonderful for de-stressing but not so great for concentration and learning.”

Try starting small. “If you minimize white flour and sugar, and lighten up lunches by balancing starches with more lean protein and vegetables,” Sullivan says, “you’ll be headed toward a meeting experience that includes energized attendees who can focus, concentrate, and learn.”

Reprinted from Association Meetings, April 2011



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