April 10, 2020

Dear

The catering industry is the essence of celebration, joy, and hope as families come together to celebrate life’s milestones while providing a living for millions of hard-working people. The International Caterers Association (ICA) is comprised of family-owned businesses employing millions of team members across the world. These businesses are part of every community and contribute heavily to the health of the economy and provide careers for every age group and stage of life.

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The COVID-19 pandemic has decimated the catering industry in a matter of weeks as more cities, states, and countries are instituting limited gatherings and social interactions for the safety of public health. The aftermath of this pandemic is something these companies, owners, and staff will live with for the rest of their lives.

As our businesses navigate these unchartered waters, it is important that all members of the industry, including media and marketing outlets, work together and provide our current and future clients with messaging that is hopeful, productive, and positive. We are in this crisis together with our clients and embrace our professional duty to provide them the best outcomes possible in this incredibly challenging social and economic environment.

ICA members are doing everything in their power to reschedule and not permanently cancel events. In many instances they continue to provide food to communities, hospitals and those on the front line fighting this pandemic.

**Being part of the industry, ICA is asking you for the following assistance to help lessen the impact of COVID-19 not only to businesses, but to the individuals whose lives will be impacted.**

* Temporarily stop allowing wedding couples to post reviews. Both Google and even Yelp (!) have stopped allowing reviews altogether or have stopped allowing negative reviews related to COVID-19.
* Create valuable content on your social media, which could include:
	+ Venues
	+ Web features
	+ Catering industry leaders
* Continue positive communication with couples as the situation evolves

Don't be afraid of a weekday. Selecting a weekday insures venue and vendor availability. Most couples have spent over a year planning their weddings. Many couples are choosing to move their wedding date to a weekday to keep the entire plan with their venue, photographer, and entertainment intact so that their special day comes together in the way they had originally imagined.

**We can all work together in making *“Weekdays are for Weddings.”***

Since your part of the industry provides a valuable service to the wedding community, it is only natural that we look to you to be the leader in providing information and hope for those couples that may have been impacted at any stage of their planning process.

While this situation is unprecedented, the role of venues in making lifelong memories for you and your guests has not changed. Your positive leadership and messaging will help a community of caterers, venues, vendors, and staff. We must work together to show a united front and we need your help telling our story of resilience and commitment to our clients.

Remember we are all in this together! For our companies to thrive, we need to be in business to advertise. Please act now to help protect the industry and your clients.

Our industry is traditionally a very close-knit community and in times like this we come together more than ever. It is important we have your support and leadership in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Paula Kreuzburg Jeffrey Selden
Executive Director President
International Caterers Association International Caterers Association

Board of Directors
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