

for immediate release
NEWS

March 2, 2010

Executive Office

206 Riffel Rd.

Wooster, OH

44691-8588

Phone: 330/345-2333

Fax: 330/345-0808



Manhattan Office

1107 Hylton Heights Rd.

Manhattan, KS

66502-2822

Phone: 785/539-0123

Fax: 785/539-2883

Japan Office

Japan Business Center

WBG Marive East 14F

Nakase 2-6 Mihama-ku

Chiba-shi, Chiba 261-7114

Japan

Ph.: 011/81-43-297-3363

Fax: 011/81-43-297-3374

www.

certifiedangusbeef

.com

Laura Nelson, Industry Information Specialist, LNelson@certifiedangusbeef.com
Certified Angus Beef LLC (330) 345-2333

Photo available at: http://www.cabpartners.com/news/photos/J_Doherty.jpg
Or, contact us for more photo options from Doherty's actual presentation

Manage with leadership from pasture to plate

Chef shares culinary insights with cattlemen

Good help can be hard to find. Ranch managers and owners often think they are the only ones who can get the work done right, but that concern is not unique to cattle country.

Chef John Doherty, who was the youngest executive chef at New York City's esteemed Waldorf=Astoria, has cooked for more presidents and dignitaries than any other chef in the United States. The hotel's empire includes nearly 1,500 guest rooms, three restaurants, 24-hour-a-day room service, banquet halls and about 150 culinarians, all who reported to Doherty throughout his 23 years as executive chef.

He certainly didn't start at the top, but applied commitment to excellence and basic leadership skills to become an icon in the culinary world. Doherty spoke in January at Cattlemen's College in San Antonio, where he addressed issues common to chef and cattleman alike: finding good help, building a team and creating success in business by bringing out the best. As it turns out, the management issues faced by the chefs who serve beef are spot on with the folks who raise it.

"The reality that we are faced with is a very poor economy, our expenses are up, we have to cut back on payroll, we have to expect more from people – and we get frustrated that we're not getting more from people," Doherty said. Sound familiar?

He served leadership tips like a three-course meal, with foodservice experiences that relate to the ranch.

First course: create a vision

"The No. 1, most important part of leading people is to create a vision," Doherty said. "You have to create a vision for your company, for who you are and for what you want to be recognized at."

He didn't mean creating a vision of what that east corral could look like if only you had the time to re-build. It's bigger than that. For example, his vision was of "a kitchen that put out absolutely delicious food every single time, a kitchen that was pristine and all its members were part of an inspired team." It was a mission of change, and it took nearly a quarter century to accomplish.

“Working without purpose is meaningless,” Doherty said. “People get excited about what they’re doing when there is purpose behind it, and you only have purpose when you know what the vision is.”

Second course: don’t do it alone

“We have to build a knowledge-based team,” he said. “It’s about knowledge, training and feeding people so they can work passionately.”

For years, Doherty interviewed chefs, inquiring about their cooking skills and training. Then he realized, “I can teach people how to cook – I want to know how people make decisions. I want to hire people that can make a good decision and are not afraid of change.”

They also have to fully buy into the organization’s vision. Sharing and exemplifying that vision with your employees is a key to having a driven workforce, he said. That’s just what he did.

“I told them what my vision was and that I wanted them to be a part of it,” Doherty said. “I promised them I would help them grow in their careers and make this a happy place to work, but I needed them to participate and play the game.”

Third course: tap into expertise

At the age of 23 Doherty was unwillingly promoted to *sous* chef, an assistant to the chef *de cuisine*, next in line to executive chef. Despite protestations that he was not ready, he was promoted anyway.

“I had to go out and tell these people who were my father’s age that what they were doing wasn’t good enough,” he recalled. That would go over about as well as a son telling his dad how to sort cattle on his first day back from college, and Doherty knew it. The young chef had to take a different route.

“I had to take the approach of, ‘Frank, I know we’ve done it like this for a hundred years, and that’s fine, but it’s time for a change. Do you think it would work if we did this? If we try this, how would you do it?’ That way, I was tapping in to his expertise and knowledge, and I got him to be a part of the process. When workers have a stake in the game, they aren’t going to let it fail.”

It’s important to outline your vision and then ask, “How you are going to get there?” he said. They reply with satisfaction: “You have people who are so proud they were able to tell the boss everything they know and how they’re going to do it. On my team, I no longer had to manage them; I inspired them to be their own managers.”

END