

# Building Diversity in Hospitality Industry

BY ERIKA COHEN

Success in business is all about connections, and **Goodwin and Associates Hospitality Services LLC** uses its nationwide network to help companies recruit and retain staff and customers.

The Concord-based firm provides recruiting, exit interviews and mystery shopper services for the hospitality

industry. It recently launched two new Web sites, *DiversityinHospitality.com* and *WomeninHopsitality.com*, dedicated to helping the industry increase its employee diversity. The sites include job listings, discussion boards, articles, a resume database and information about educational opportunities.

"In hospitality, it can be an old boys' network," says Eric Goodwin, president of Goodwin and Associates. "There is not necessarily a clear path for [diversity and women clients] to move into executive-level positions."

Goodwin and Associates began developing the two Web sites a year ago to fill a void Goodwin says he saw in the industry—a place where employers and potential employees in the hospitality industry could network, search and post jobs. The sites augment the company's managerial-level recruitment services.



The company also contracted with social-networking giant Facebook to make its new hospitality sites accessible via Facebook applications. Those with Facebook accounts can use Facebook applications to search for others in the industry, join discussion boards, share recipes and tips, and search for jobs. For instance, a pastry chef could share sales leads, ideas, videos of themselves cooking, and recipes with colleagues and potential

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employers through Facebook.

"This is more of a movement and a concept that we want to promote in order to encourage diversity and women in the industry," says Brian Calderone, director of sales and marketing for Goodwin & Associates. He says the aim is to eventually attract 100,000 unique visitors a year to the



two sites. Goodwin says the hospitality industry employs more than 8.8 million people worldwide and will require 1.6 million new workers in the next decade just to keep up with demand.

Currently, three out of five restaurant owners are women or minorities, according to the National Restaurant Association, and the **NH Lodging and Restaurant Association** says more women are getting into the field in NH though the Association did not have more specific NH data.

Goodwin and Associates, which started in 1999, now has more than 600 clients, including major corporations like **Bertucci's**, **Ninety Nine Restaurants** and **Panera Bread**. Granite State clients include **The Barley House** in Concord; Hay Creek Hospitality, which owns

**The Centennial Hotel in Concord** and **The Wolfeboro Inn** in Wolfeboro; **Jesse's Steaks, Seafood and Tavern**

in Hanover; and **The Weathervane Seafood Restaurants** statewide. Overall business has grown about 45 percent for each of the past four years.

The company has 22 offices from NH to Florida and a total of 28 employees, five of them recent

hires. Besides the corporate offices in Concord, most are one- or two-person operations. Goodwin says those offices set the company apart by providing face-to-face services instead of having one central location, which he says is more traditional in the industry.

New Hampshire clients account for about 7 percent of the company's recruiting business and 30 percent of its mystery shopper business.

Since the company arrived in NH, Goodwin has watched more and more chain restaurants and hotels enter the state. That has forced independent outlets to raise the bar on wages and bonuses, he says. But despite the increase in chains, Goodwin says NH has a very healthy mix of corporate and independent hospitality operations.