BRIAN P. CONNORS, MS, CSW, CHE

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PROFILE

A high-energy, strategic, and visionary leader that believes in leading people and managing for results. I am an expert relationship builder and have a strong emphasis on strategic partnerships, project management, people development and culture. I excel at innovation, creative thinking, program development, and strategy implementation.

PROFESSIONAL & LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

MANAGING PARTNER
CONNORS DAVIS HOSPITALITY, LLC | 2003 – PRESENT

GLOBAL ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER 2024 - PRESENT

Cecilia.ai/ GKI Group (Tel Aviv, Israel) – United Stated strategic advisor for world's first interactive bartender utilizing artificial intelligence and gaining businesses valuable consumer data and creating a unique experiential marketing. United States Launch of ***Cecilia.ai 2.0 & Sommelier Cecilia.ai Fall 2024***

GLOBAL EXECUTIVE EDUCATION & TRAINING 2022 - PRESENT

- **Accelerating Leaders** - Educational program design, curriculum mapping, instructional design, and master facilitator for executive education programs for leading luxury service and hospitality brands – USA, Europe, Bahamas & Caribbean
- **Sandals Corporate University** - Sandals Resorts International - Education and leadership development program for the 10,000 employees of Sandals Resorts and Beaches Resorts

  Belize Tourism Board – Annual Hospitality Elevate Training Expo – Leadership and beverage management programing, collaboration with Belize Tourism Board and local government
- Ministry of Tourism Culinary & Beverage Center, Belize City, Belize – Design & Development Team

GLOBAL CONSULTANCY

Current Engagement 2024 – Present

- **Bacardi – North America** – Updating and relaunching the Bacardi Commercial Way national learning platform. Working directly with senior leadership and industry partners on a modern approach to sales and leadership education.

  New Wave Project: Design and launch a mobile learning platform that integrates gamification, measuring tools and artificial intelligence (AI)
- ***Royal Caribbean International & The Sommelier Company*** – Strategic advisor to senior food and beverage leadership – established working relationships with wine producers, key brokers and distributors – wine program gap analysis, fleet menu engineering, rollout strategy, strategic global sourcing, partnership expansion, beverage package analysis/strategy, educational materials development and launch strategies.

Past Engagements

- ***Alguien Dijo Mezcal? Corporation*** – leading concept development - talent acquisition strategist – food & beverage programming - financial pro forma – media & public relations strategies, operational design and project management of $15 million-dollar budget

- ***Celebrity Cruises, Royal Caribbean International*** – Concept development team (Qsine, Tuscan Grille, Murano, Michael's Club, GastroBar)

  Beverage Programming, including global training of 265 sommeliers, thousands of beverage service crew members and vendor relations/negotiations
- ***Levy Restaurant Group*** – Concept development of arena premium lounges, training and standardization through the Levy Academy
- ***wagamama, Ltd.*** – Development of United States business pro-forma, including strategic operations, procurement analysis, vendor sourcing & negotiations, sustainability strategies, beverage program design, and identification of growth opportunities
- ***Young Island Resort***, St. Vincent and the Grenadines - Strategic marketing, rebranding and content creations strategies for a luxury cottage-style resort on tropical Private Island – scope includes menu(s) revamp creating unique culinary and beverage experiences for global guests, kitchen equipment refit, and development of a modern cocktail program
- ***VH Hotels & Resorts***, Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic - Food and beverage development, including a premium "for sale" beverage program with internal marketing, beverage training curriculum, and systems development to improve operational efficiency at Gran Ventana Beach Resort, a 506-room, all-inclusive luxury resort in Playa Dorada
- ***Inland American Lodging Advisor, Inc.***, Orlando, Florida -Menu layout and design, wine program creation, recipe standardization and nutritional analysis, vendor relations, and branding for *Hilton Garden Inn* assets 150-155 room properties, in Westbury, New York and Hartford, Connecticut
- ***Alliance Hospitality Management, LLC***, Raleigh, North Carolina - Corporate training and brand development for polished-casual hotel dining outposts in *Hilton Garden Inn* assets, 150-155 room properties in Albany, New York and Raleigh, North Carolina

Additional Projects & Clients Available

FOUNDING DIRECTOR, BACARDI CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
SENIOR DIRECTOR, GLOBAL INNOVATION
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY | CHAPLIN SCHOOL OF HOSITALITY & TOURISM MANAGEMENT 2018 - 2024

- Led first-of-its-kind, dynamic partnership between Florida International University and Bacardi USA
- Manage $5 million program budget. Financial reporting with FIU Foundation
- Collaborate directly with Bacardi global senior leadership on future programming, innovation, fiscal strategic planning, including the Bacardi Innovation Fund & international expansion strategies
- Work directly with Bacardi Advocacy on cutting-edge educational initiatives and national activations
- Strategic planning with Bacardi National Account Team
- Established the first Entrepreneur-in-Residence
- Leading, coaching and mentoring a team of seven professional and collaboration with industry faculty
- Developed thirteen new approved credit bearing entrepreneurial related courses and new management major
- Cultivated Long-Term International Partnerships: *Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits, SG Ventures, TEAM Enterprises, Heineken, Lavazza Premium Coffees Corp., Filthy Foods, Riedel Crystal, Coravin, 1Huddle, Bermuda Tourism Authority & Women of the Vine & Spirits*
- Digital Learning Projects: *Future Proof, Better Bar Methods & Lavazza Barista Learning Platforms* (LMS)
- Program Development – Innovative learning space, modern curriculum design, faculty hiring, industry certification programs, strengthen partnership with Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits
- Global speaking engagements on modern education, global trends, innovation & technology (***TEDx Talk***), marketing, branding, and modern learning platforms (LMS)

AWARDS & ACCOLADES

30 Most Influential Educators in Global Hospitality (2023)
TEDx Talk "Embracing AI: Shaking My Confidence Daily" (2023)
MVP (Most Valuable Panther) Faculty Award Recipient (2022)
President's Council Real Triumphs Faculty Award Finalist (2022)
Bacardi Innovation Fund & Cecilia.ai, the first robotic bartender (2022-23, over **$117 million** earned media)

PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

- **BACARDITEACH:** On-demand digital learning platform for the hospitality industry, and others interested in learning about fine spirits and pathways to entrepreneurship. Including Micro-credentialing, industry certification, experiential learning, and upskilling (LMS) Designed & Launched with *SOBEWFF®* & FIU Chaplin School Hospitality Industry Relief Fund 2020

- **FUTURE PROOF LEARNING PLATFORM:** A modern beverage training program (LMS) that provides the foundational knowledge to excel as a beverage professional - *Future Proof Digital & Future Proof Live*

- **THE BEVERAGE ACADEMY** – Led the development and pre-launch of the community and industry driven initiative. The Beverage Academy is a source of gaining knowledge and insights from leading global beverage professionals.

- **THE COFFEE ACADEMY** – Developed the partnership for the Specialty Coffee Association certified course to be taught by Authorized SCA Trainers and Lavazza USA

- **BACARDITALKS SPEAKER SERIES** (Host): Guests Include: Pete Carr – President Bacardi North America, Elizabeth Blau – Founder & CEO Blau + Associates, Drew Nieporent - Founder of Myriad Restaurant Group, Richard Coraine - Co-Founder Union Square Hospitality Group (USHG), Master Distiller Dr. Anne Brock of Bombay Sapphire Distillery & Master Blender Ms. Stephanie Macleod of Dewar's Aberfeldy Distillery

- **2 BARSTOOLS & A KNIFE** (*Podcast Host 2020-2022 55 Episodes*): Popular Downloads Include - *Wayne Chaplin* - CEO & President, Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits, *Bailey Pryor* - Founder & CEO of The Real McCoy Rum, *Greg Lambrecht* - Coravin - Chairman and Inventor, *Pete Carr, Ryan Bibbo, & Heidi Hinkle Vargas*, Bacardi USA, *Sean O'Toole* - President at TEAM Enterprises, *Sabato Sagaria* - Apres Cru Hospitality & Master Sommelier, *Dr. Laura Catena* of the renowned Bodega Catena, *Adrian Biggs*, Director of Advocacy Bacardi & *Chris Hopkins*, Founder, Hashtag Mixology

- **WOMEN OF THE VINE & SPIRITS** – Led the inaugural Educational Membership and first Student Chapter in the United States

NATIONAL MEDIA COVERAGE

TODAY Show on NBC (National Television with Senior Correspondent Kerry Sanders)
FOX and Friends (National Television with Ainsley Earhardt, Steve Doocy & Brian Kilmeade)
Deco Drive – WSVN 7News | Miami News
NBC 6 South Florida | Miami News
CBS 4 Miami | Miami News
NBCNN (NBC News NOW)
Today Show Radio (Sirius XM)
Miami New Times

Leisure & Hospitality International
The Hospitality Mentor
Miami Ethnic Foods Examiner
The Miami Herald
Tampa Bay Times
Sun Sentinel
Sizzle Magazine
Herald-Tribune
VinePair

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, COLLEGE OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT & COLLEGE OF FOOD INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY
JOHNSON & WALES UNIVERSITY, NORTH MIAMI CAMPUS | 2007 – 2018

- Development and facilitation of curriculum in the areas of, food & beverage management, advanced food service operations management, wine foundations, oenology, brewing arts, marketing & branding, and strategic management

ACADEMIC RELATIONS & GLOBAL EDUCATOR
BANFI VINTNERS | OLD BRROKVILLE, NEW YORK | 2005 – 2007

- Acted as liaison between Banfi and leading global hospitality & culinary educational institutions

INSTRUCTOR
ORLANDO CULINARY ACADEMY | 2004 – 2005
CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL OF CULINARY ARTS | 1999 – 2003

- Created curricula and lectures on restaurant management, concept development, wine essentials, cost control, guest services, hospitality leadership, and marketing

FOOD & BEVERAGE DIRECTOR
CLARKE COOKE HOUSE | NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND |1999 – 2004

- Responsible for all food & beverage operations in multi-concept hospitality space with $13 million in annual sales. Including three dining rooms, six bars, sushi bar, raw bar and in house disco
- Developed & managed inventory systems, purchasing, vendor relations, menu development, and service team education
- Wine Spectator Award of Excellence for creation and design of beverage program

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER
UNIVERSITY CLUB OF BOSTON | BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS | 1997 - 1999

- Lead for food and beverage operations and daily management of 2000 member private city club, Project manager for $5 million restaurant and banquet facility renovation

EDUCATION

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN STRATEGIC MANAGMENT | 2005 | ROSEN COLLEGE OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT | 1997 | SCHOOL OF HOTEL ADMINISTRATION
CORNELL UNIVERSITY

ASSOCIATE OF OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE IN CULINARY ARTS | 1993 | JOHNSON & WALES UNIVERSITY

ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS

Boating, international travel, food & wine, spending time with family