



— MASTER YOUR —  
**EXCELLENCE**  
2022 NACE EXPERIENCE CONFERENCE



# **BEO Improv**

## **Dr. Aurora Dawn Benton**

Founder, Astrapto LLC

## **Molly Crouch**

Director of Sustainability, Sodexo Live!



# The Journey to YES



WHY DO WE NEED TO  
***RETHINK?***



WHAT'S WRONG WITH  
OUR CURRENT  
THINKING?



HOW CAN WE ***RETHINK?***

## What's the problem?

- We copy and paste because it's efficient.
- We're on auto-pilot.
- We have muscle memory.
- We take the path of least resistance.



## What's the problem?

- We don't question the status quo.
- We don't want to rock the boat.
- We see innovation as "more work."
- We lack empathy.

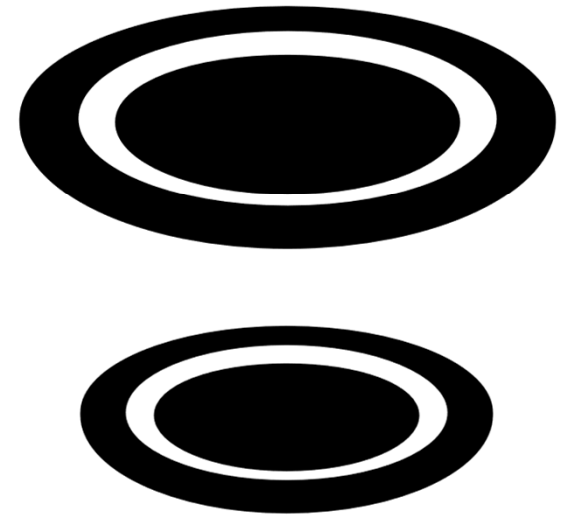






The Challenge: How could we have recovered this food for donation?

Suggestion: Less sandwiches at a time, with smaller platters (lower “fill rate”)





Labor costs would be too high for more frequent (and long) walks back to the kitchen

NO.

*By the way, the venue was under construction and it was a LONG walk to the kitchen.*



# YES, AND...

What if we put the sandwiches in containers so they can be preserved for safety?

(let's momentarily suspend the materials waste conversation and hope we can work compostables into the conversation in here too!)



The aesthetics  
wouldn't look good  
and the client would  
not like that



NO.

*By the way, I was the client and  
no one bothered asking me.*



# YES, AND



What if we had a smaller serving tray with a bottom that was a lid to the tray underneath so when sandwiches run low just remove the top?

***We have a winner!***

## Scenario 1: The Ask

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- Plated lunch for 1000
- Organizer requests pre-set entrée (salad with protein), beverage, bread and butter, dessert
- Between education sessions, quick turnaround!



# Scenario 1: The Offer

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- We will pre-set a percentage and be ready to go with the rest
- We will make the food, only holding it back to prevent waste and donate excess
- Planner is nervous and resistant to a less than 100% tables pre-set



Audience: What's going on here? Fears? Goals? Needs? Attitudes? Assumptions? Why is "no" the natural thing to say?



WHAT'S WRONG WITH OUR  
CURRENT THINKING?

# Scenario 1: The Problem

Waste potential = No shows X

10 oz glasses of water with ice with  
paper lids

10 oz glasses of iced tea

1.2 pieces of bread

2 pats of butter

Salad with protein (choice of  
seafood or vegan)

Mini cakes

The noise and inconvenience of setting  
additional tables





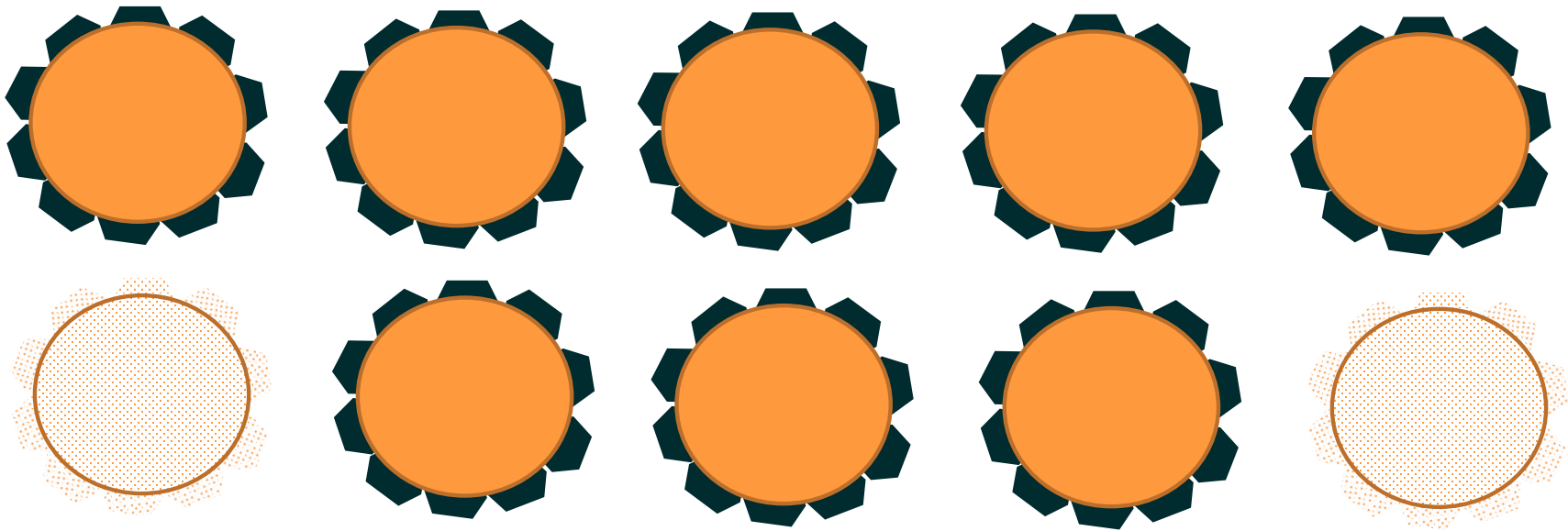
Audience: What could we do differently? From catering side? From planner side? What innovations or alternatives are there?



HOW CAN WE ***RETHINK?***

# Scenario 1: The Compromise

Preset 80%, reserved tables in back (20%). Only pre-set beverages, butter, bread.



# Scenario 1: The Impact (less pre-set option)

	90% pre-set	80% pre-set	70% pre-set
Gallons of water saved (plus energy to make ice) (plus water not needed to wash unused plates)	16	32	64
Meals to the community	100	200	300
Food & labor costs (bread, butter, lemon, dessert)	\$600	\$1200	\$1800
Unhappy / unfed attendees	0	0	0

In most venues, this would have gone to landfill as plate waste. In some venues, it would be composted.



## Scenario 1: The Service Style Solution

Given quick turnaround, grab and go. More material waste, but fully recoverable unused boxes.





We can't run  
out of food!

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Meals for the community!



Select service styles and setup scenarios that maximize food recoverable for donation



# Scenario 1: The Data Solution

- What's the show history?
- What's the guarantee? What numbers came in from morning registration? (Will planner share this?)
- Did planner ask attendees if joining meal function?
- What are the demographics of the attendees? (to determine likelihood of pre-set items consumption or grab-n-go preferences)

## Scenario 2: The Ask

Planner asks for a wellness focused breakfast buffet and attendee education with big screen TVs showing wellness tips and nutritional value of menu





## Scenario 2: The Offer

- Quiche with local, pasture-raised bacon
- A bowl of bacon near the cheese quiche
- Printed out and laminated special education and nutrition signage on the buffet



Audience: what's going on here? Fears?  
Goals? Needs? Attitudes? Assumptions?



WHAT'S WRONG WITH OUR  
CURRENT THINKING?

## Scenario 2: The Problem

- Planner and Chef both have sustainability values, but they are not aligning
- Attendees want a heavier breakfast; demographics inclined to meat and starchy breakfast
- The BIG bowl of bacon ends up being more wasteful
- Printed signs are too small to read = create waste (not recyclable) and miss the education objective



Audience: what could we do differently? From catering side? From planner side? What innovations or alternatives are there?



HOW CAN WE **RETHINK?**

# Scenario 2: The Compromise

- Compromise: 3 large screen displays spread throughout (not at each buffet) with QR codes leading to event app
- One larger printed sign on each buffet with QR code or on seating table signage.



# Scenario 2: The Service Style Solution

Alternative service style: Concessions / food truck – three very different styles to accommodate different.



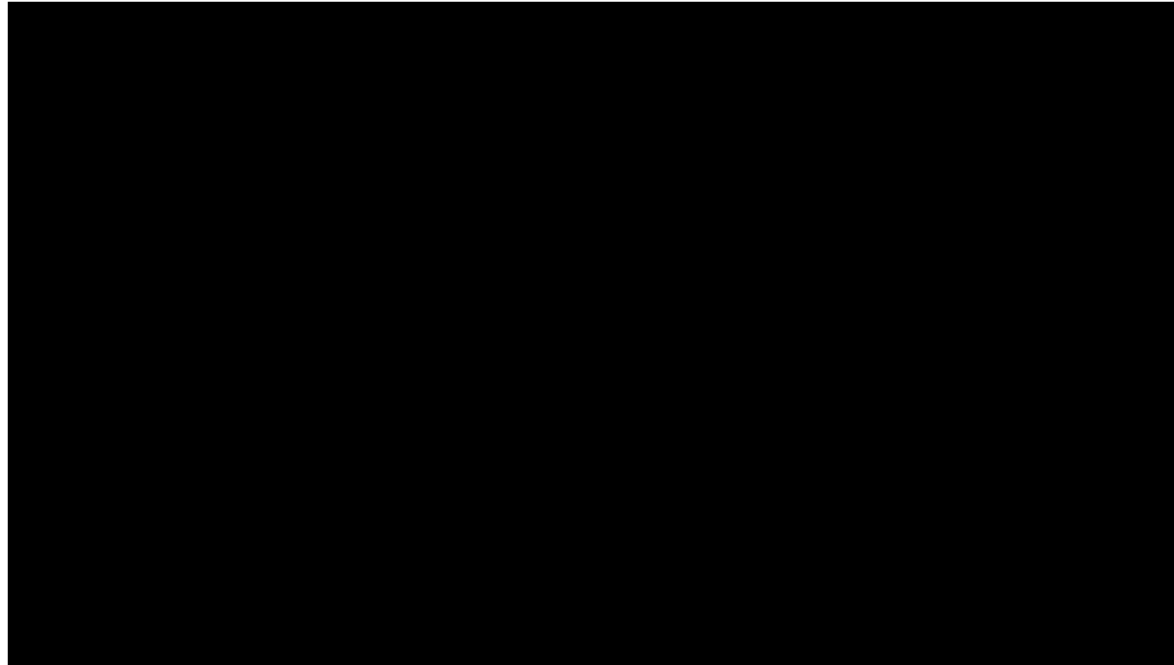
# Scenario 2: The Design Solutions

- What is the overall F&B strategy for the group? What should this breakfast set the tone for? Is there a purpose for plant-based? (obviously, it's great for people and planet, but justify the design more holistically)
- Is there a session during breakfast? Is there an activity or other elements that tie in the health angle?
- Is breakfast *expected* by this group?  
What do they really expect and want?
- Is this the first day? Second day? Last day?



# Scenario 2: The Potential Impact

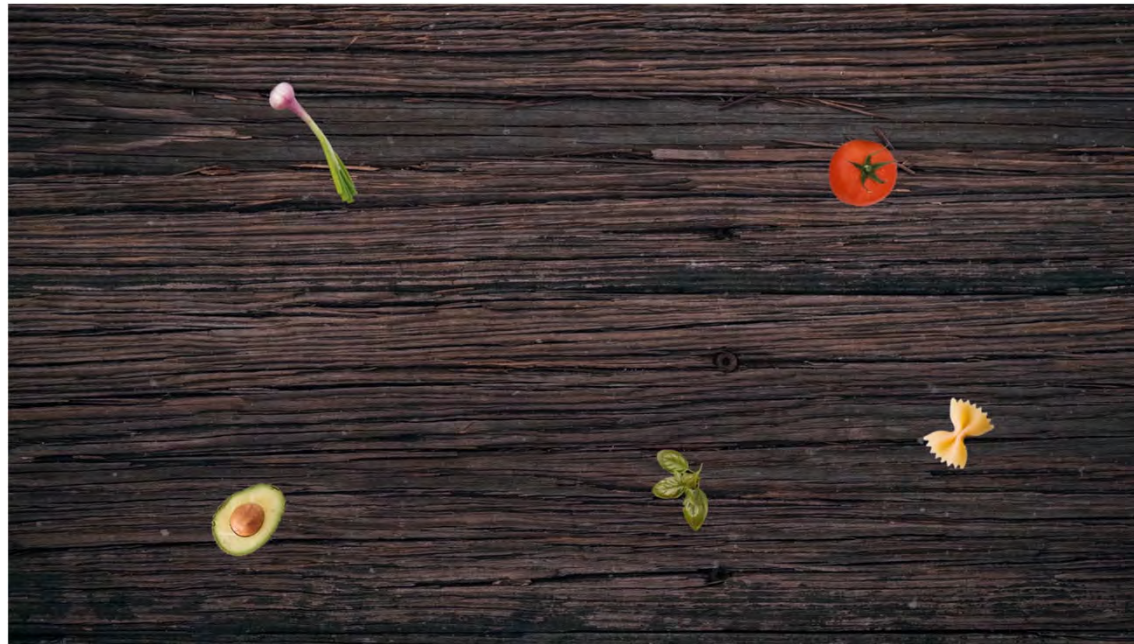
- ✓ Attendee education on wellness and local ingredients
- ✓ Greater ability to accommodate and inform about allergens and food sources

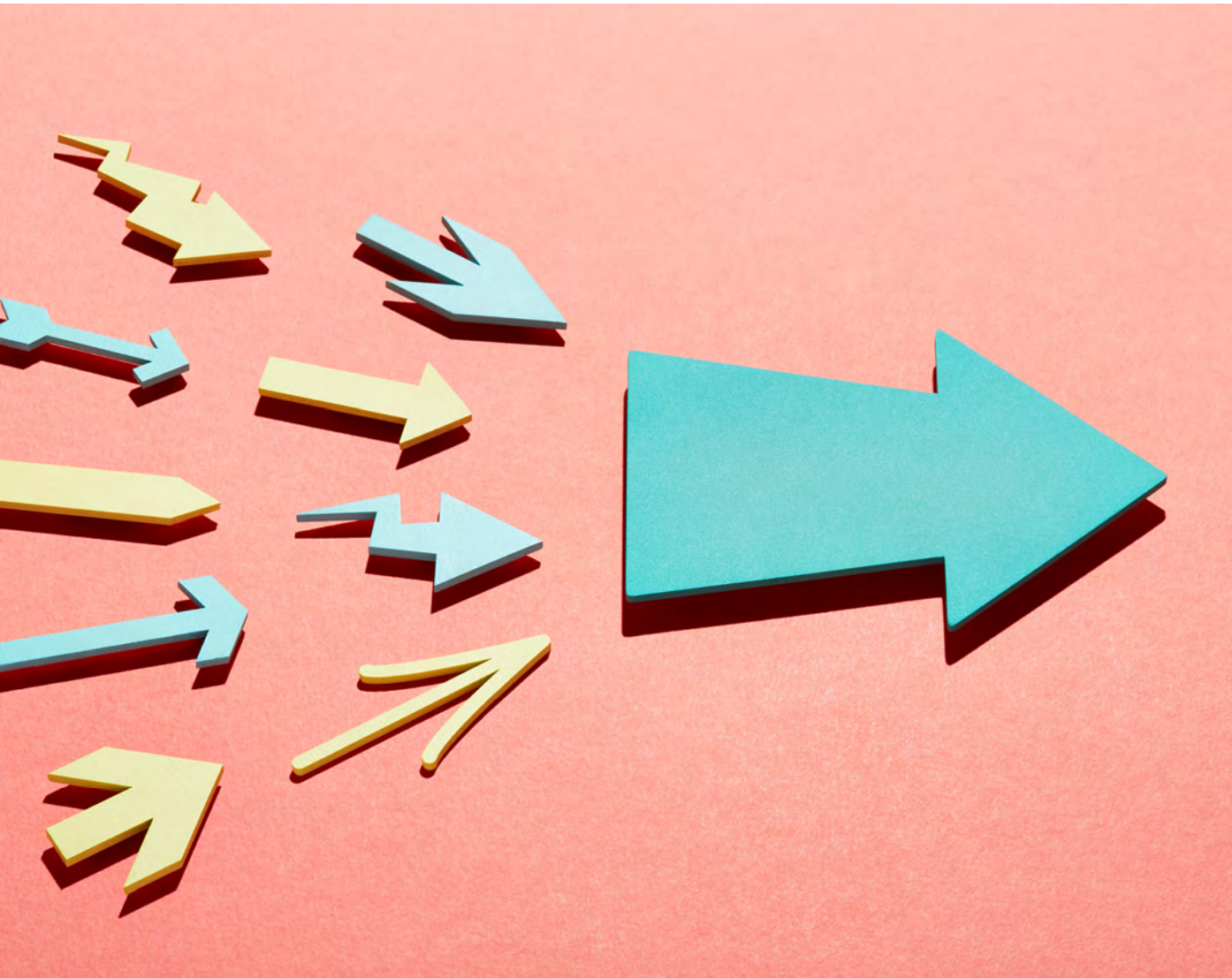




# Scenario 2: The Potential Impact

- ✓ High levels of engagement, able to brand and promote, tell impact stories
- ✓ Less waste: guests get what they want and not what they didn't expect





## Now it's your turn!

- Share with your neighbor a scenario where you are trying to drive positive impact but there is resistance.
- Brainstorm how to solve the problem, or find compromise, or convince others.

# Scenario 3: The Ask

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Client asks for bagels,  
bread, and other  
breakfast pastries



## Scenario 3: The Offer

- Biscuits instead of bagels (we're in the SOUTH!)
- If bagels are required, offer smaller portions, fewer stations

... OR

- Just do what the client asks without consulting on best practices or impacts

# Scenario 3: The Problem

- Portion sizes
- Excessive math on overages
- Not conducive to wellness (not brain food)
- Not great as a donation (low nutrition value)



# Scenario 3: The *Bigger* Problem

Not just a bagel problem –  
significant waste in  
pastry category



## Scenario 3: The *Other* Problems

- Toasters (power, labor, bottlenecks)
- All the topping waste



# Scenario 3: The Solution

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- Rewrite the menu! Don't make it standard.
- Resize the bagel.
- Upselling more appealing options.
- Sometimes the solution is simple!





# Scenario 3: The Impact

- This really happened!
- Staff felt like someone heard them.
- The numbers were powerful.
- Don't be afraid to face facts, make changes, move on.





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***RETHINK?***



WHAT'S WRONG WITH  
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THINKING?



HOW CAN WE ***RETHINK?***



## What's wrong with our current thinking?

- Copy / paste approach
- Too easy to say “no!”
- Details are missing that really matter
- Food as commodity rather than strategy
- Price over purpose



## BEO IMPROV

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- ✓ Innovate from the beginning
- ✓ Be willing to say yes
- ✓ Suspend judgment
- ✓ Compromise is okay
- ✓ Prioritize impact

# Thank you!

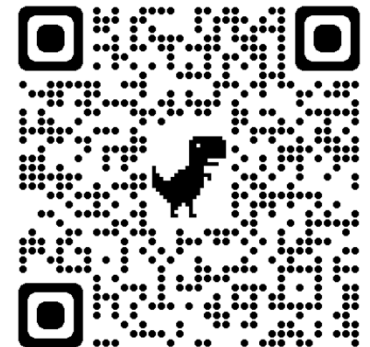
Dr. Aurora Dawn Benton  
Founder,  
Astrapto LLC  
[aurora@astrapto.com](mailto:aurora@astrapto.com)

Connect on LinkedIn:



Molly Crouch  
Corporate Director of  
Sustainability  
Sodexo Live!  
[Molly.Crouch@sodexo.com](mailto:Molly.Crouch@sodexo.com)

Connect on LinkedIn:





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