

## Earhart Speaks at FAPC Marketing Workshop

STILLWATER, Okla.—An executive of a major fast food chain was one of nine presenters during the Food & Agricultural Products Center's second annual “Real World” Marketing Workshop held recently.

Randy Earhart, chairman & chief executive officer for Taco Mayo Franchise Systems, Inc., spoke to approximately 40 participants regarding his “top ten phrases to live by,” a motivational memory enhancement exercise, during the workshop.

Earhart was an original member of the founding management team for Taco Mayo in 1978. He served as the vice president and director of operations from 1978 to 1985 and company president from 1985 to 1999. He has been in his current position since 1999.

In 1999, Earhart organized an LBO with partner Kurt Dinnes and several senior management team members to purchase the majority stock from the original Founders and majority stockholders J.W. and Susan Garner.

Taco Mayo is a privately held 94 unit, \$50 million quick-service regional restaurant chain headquartered in Oklahoma City. Established in 1978, there are 29 corporate and 65 franchised restaurants operating in Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Kansas and Arkansas.

As an introduction to his presentation, Earhart told a story about his first "real life" experience in the food industry. He was a college student working behind the counter at a Mexican fast food restaurant owned by the Garners. It was an establishment that was the predecessor of Taco Mayo.

Earhart was excited to have the job and had an excellent first day. But, on his second day on the job, he slept through the majority of the lunch rush and showed up late to work. Luckily, J.W. Garner decided to give this future CEO a second chance.

Earhart discussed the importance of living by key phrases such as “Be Where You Are” and “I’ll See It When I Believe It.” He used a memory building technique to aid participants in remembering key phrases.

His fast talking, humorous style kept the listeners involved and one lucky participant received \$50 worth of coupons for remembering all the phrases in order.

He encouraged participants to improve themselves by remembering helpful ideas like “Responsibility is a Choice” and “Begin with the End in Mind.”

Earhart’s final inspirational quote was “The harder you are on yourself the easier life will be on you.”

The purpose for the marketing workshop was to help participants address marketing issues such as market identification, market research and market planning, said Jim Brooks, FAPC business planning and marketing specialist and chair of the workshop.

"The fact is a good marketing program is essential to survive and succeed in the highly competitive food-marketing arena," Brooks said. "Marketing is not just radio, television and other advertising. It's not just knocking on doors of prospective buyers and attending trade shows. It's critical for success."

Other speakers during the workshop included Mark Harsha, Harsha & Associates; Steve Long, Food Marketing Specialists; Bob Johnson, Sysco Food Services; Vince Orza, Eateries, Inc.; Del Van Horn, Advance Food Company; David Books, Shawnee Milling Co.; Gerald Cockerham, Associated Wholesale Grocers; and Lee Ann Potter, Oklahoma Restaurant Association.

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