



1st & Fresh Catering Launches in Philadelphia

With a focus on small businesses, 1st & Fresh transforms the at-work dining experience by promoting its 'eat well, meet well' concept; the brand rolls out in Philly and Chicago with other cities planned in 2009

PHILADELPHIA - December 9, 2008 - Philadelphia-based 1st & Fresh catering brings its flavor to more than 70 Philadelphia businesses with the launch of its boutique brand that it designed to offer easy, inspired and delicious meals to employers across the city and region. Based on its innovative "eat well, meet well" concept, 1st & Fresh promotes the philosophy that meetings should be pleasant and productive, and by bringing freshly prepared, highly customized meals and snacks to the table, employers can create more stimulating and satisfying workplaces.

"Food brings people together," says Michael Heneghan, 1st & Fresh's general manager in Philadelphia. "And the fact is that most of us spend more time at work than any place else. 1st & Fresh is helping to create enjoyable culinary *and* social experiences for businesses and employees across Philadelphia. Our research has shown that, despite the economic downturn, demand for catering services remains strong. The bottom line is that people still have to eat, and businesses small and large are finding intrinsic value, both from an efficiency and satisfaction perspective, in providing social and business meals for employees."

According to the organization Winning Workplaces, for example, close to 40 percent of its 2007 Top Small Workplaces reported offering lunch-oriented incentives to help boost employee retention or to complement a health or wellness program. Additionally, small business research conducted earlier this year by the Society for Human Resource Management and the Great Place to Work Institute found that the most successful small businesses offer a "strategic mix" of hard and soft benefits and are "creative" in the perks they offer employees, from having potlucks to providing food at company meetings.

With this in mind and with extensive culinary expertise, 1st & Fresh opened in first location in Chicago in the fall, followed by Philadelphia. Launches are also being planned in other major U.S. cities including Washington, D.C., Boston and New York. Despite 1st & Fresh's multi-city presence, it will not operate like a "chain" catering company. Each 1st & Fresh location will effectively act as an independent business run by a top executive chef, so customers can be sure they're working with a high-quality local caterer that understands their highly individual needs and tastes.

In Philadelphia, the 1st & Fresh kitchen is headed by Executive Chef Andrew Perekupka, who is dedicated to giving clients quality and personalization: "1st & Fresh offers a varied and well-rounded menu that we can customize for any taste or any occasion, whether you prefer scrambled eggs and sausage, a ham and muenster sandwich, a 'suit and thai' salad or just a cookie platter. What makes 1st & Fresh special is that all of our foods are freshly prepared and served, and we cook to taste. In fact, our goal is to provide all of the amenities of traditional catering without it feeling like - or tasting like - catered food. It's all about the freshness."

1st & Fresh's signature menu includes breakfast, lunch and snack options that can be tailored for all types of office events and parties. As Perekupka developed the menu, he incorporated both regional and seasonal flavors and he continues to add one-of-a-kind dishes.

1st & Fresh's emphasis on customization and freshness underlie its overall commitment to customer service. "Relationship building and reliability are extremely important to us," says Heneghan, explaining that customers - and particularly the point people who place the orders - are depending on 1st & Fresh to get it right, get it on time and make it look and taste good. Accentuating the 1st & Fresh experience, the caterer's professional uniformed staff delivers all meals and is available to support events.

As Heneghan puts it, "Whether you want to celebrate winning a big account or want to say thanks for a job well done at the holidays, 1st & Fresh will help you say it tastefully."

About 1st & Fresh

1st & Fresh is a boutique caterer with locations in Philadelphia and Chicago that currently serves more than 100 businesses and employs nearly 30. Founded on an “eat well, meet well” concept, 1st & Fresh believes that meetings should be as productive and pleasant as possible and that freshly prepared, highly customized meals and snacks are an effective way to promote employee satisfaction and productivity. For additional information, visit www.1st-fresh.com.