



One creative kitchen

BY JENNIFER ZEGLER



Renowned Chef Charlie Baggs, founder of foodservice consulting firm Charlie Baggs Inc. (CBI), recently expanded his business with the new Innovation Center in Chicago, opening up an opportunity for companies and common folk to come and create in his kitchen. As part of his self-named company, the Innovation Center offers a unique place for Baggs and his team of chefs to create new items for companies and restaurants as well as conduct cooking classes for the masses. With a company philosophy "It's All About Flavor!" Charlie Baggs Inc. is impacting the new products arena. If you aren't familiar with CBI, you've probably tasted its work in consumer products or menu items. *Stagnito's New Products Magazine* sat down with Baggs to find out more about his creative style.

Q *Stagnito's New Products Magazine:* What is your personal background with new products?

A **Charlie Baggs:** I have been developing new products for various processes for more than seven years. I have experience with a number of manufacturing processes including retort, aseptic and dry blending. I have worked with products in just about every major category including soups, sauces, seafood, meats, produce, beverages, frozen desserts, baked goods, entrées and baby foods — an endless array of foods and ingredients.

Q *SNPM:* What is your philosophy when creating new products?

A **CB:** To establish a clear understanding of marketing, consumer targets, technological issues, cost parameters, manufacturing and packaging limitations, and preparation and storage issues all prior to development. This ensures that we, as the culinary product developers, are on the right track. Our success rate is further enhanced when we are completely prepared, due to our total immersion into a client's project.

Q *SNPM:* What is the role of the recently opened Charlie Baggs Inc. Innovation Center in Chicago?

A **CB:** The Innovation Center offers a highly creative environment. We can simulate just about any menu item or manufactured product in our test kitchen area. Additionally, we can perform multiple product presentations. The Innovation Center is specifically designed to be a high-tech educational facility where focus groups, ideation sessions and team building events can be held. Our ideation process is geared to take a concept to prototype development, so the client can leave with an actual prototype. We also offer descriptive analysis and trained panels for sensory evaluation.

Q *SNPM:* How can the Innovation Center and its staff help a company that wants to create a new product?

A **CB:** From the germ of an idea to the development of a workable product to finished dish with national account approval, the Innovation Center allows us to work with new product developers in a focused, uninterrupted atmosphere. Our staff is highly trained and can employ both culinary and food science perspectives to any project.

Q *SNPM:* How can the Innovation Center and its staff help a company that wants to create marketing support for an existing product?

A **CB:** We can prepare products to meet specific client needs. We can assist in building a company's culinary and quality brand image, too. Our chefs are well trained and have diverse experience that is shared with our clients. The Innovation Center is the perfect place for CBI to show our skills. ■

Charlie Baggs Inc. is an international foodservice consulting company specializing in marketing and support; product flavor and development; gold standard recipes; national account presentations; sensory science and marketing research. For more information on Charlie Baggs Inc. and the CBI Innovation Center, visit www.charliebaggsinc.com.