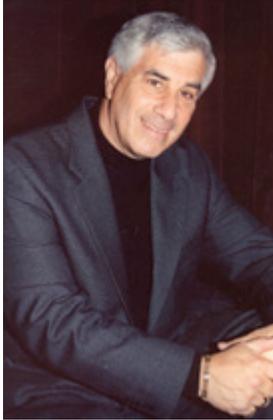


Ira Blumenthal



Referred to as the **food industry's "Renaissance Man,"** Ira Blumenthal is the president of **CO-OPPORTUNITIES, Inc.**, an Atlanta-based consulting company that has **counseled world class clients** such as Coca-Cola, Nestle, Kroger, McDonald's, Harrah's, Albertson's, TGI Friday's, United Artists, Disney, Sara Lee, Wal*Mart, Fairmont Hotels, Marriott, Circle K, Darden, Brinker, Compass, Trump, Sodexo, 7-Eleven, Aramark, etc... in areas such as branding, strategic alliances, change management, re-invention, blending "high tech and high touch" marketing and more. **He has consulted to 150 of the top 200 restaurant chains in the U.S.**

Highly respected as a **food industry visionary,** Ira received one of the industry's highest honors as its recipient of "**The Key Person Award**" (IFMA) as well as the NRA's "**President's Award.**" His list of food industry honors and awards are many. He has also been **featured and quoted** in most food industry publications (**foodservice AND retail**), and media sources such as "**The Wall Street Journal,**" "**USA Today,**" "**BrandWeek,**" "**People,**" CNN, "**Entrepreneur**" and others... These media sources have used Ira as a **food industry**

subject matter expert... as well as seeking his opinions, insight and quotations on food industry business development.

Before founding his company, **CO-OPPORTUNITIES,** Ira was a top marketing executive at The Sara Lee Corporation and later served as President of Rymer Foods, a NYSE company he led to quantum leap growth from \$90-million to over \$250-million in three-plus years.

He is a **published author** of **Ready, Blame, Fire!** and the nationally acclaimed **Managing Brand You**...the recipient of the coveted "**George Washington Honor Medal For Literary Excellence**" (Freedoms Foundation)...and has served as **visiting university instructor** at both **The Foodservice Institute** (The University of Notre Dame) and **The Food Industry Institute** (Michigan State). Ira was also the inaugural "**Executive in Residence**" at **Georgia State University's School of Hospitality.**

A food industry leader, Ira created the first restaurant-branded food court in an American supermarket, **The Supreme Court** (Kansas City) which was honored by "Supermarket News" as one of the "**Top 100 Visionary Supermarket Initiatives In the Century**"... Ira founded the food industry's "**Branding Institute**"... is credited as a pioneer of "**home meal replacement**" and "**meal solutions**"... and is a national leader in helping restaurants and manufacturers extend their brands into alternative distribution channels (i.e. Colleges, Airports, Stadiums, Casinos, etc.)... Ira also led in the conversion of over a dozen foodservice brands into retail consumer packages... He is a frequent **SPEAKER** and **EDUCATOR** on food, foodservice, retail and restaurant related issues. Now **delivering over 40 speeches annually.** Ira has served as the "opener" for notables such as President George Bush (Sr.), General Colin Powell, Tommy Lasorda, Bob Dole, Lech Walesa, Dr. Henry Kissinger and others...and has lectured, as well as consulted, on five continents to the supermarket, as well as restaurant, industry. He has delivered nearly 2000 speeches to audiences numbering over 1-million people.

Serving as the catalyst and strategist working for **The Coca-Cola Company** and **The National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation** in their shared commitment to making foodservice an important "*industry of choice,*" Ira is the co-founder and former **Executive Director** of the **Resource Center For Workforce Solutions.** He is also the architect of the **NACS CAFÉ (Center for Achieving Foodservice Excellence),** an educational institute operated by the **National Association of Convenience Stores** (NACS) in an alliance Ira developed with Georgia State University, Coca-Cola, Georgia Pacific, Ecolab, McLane Foods, Anheuser-Busch and Kraft. He was the founder and "managing director" of **The Restaurant Industry Executive Council** sponsored by The National Restaurant Association and The Women's Foodservice Forum. This group is comprised of the CEO's (CEO's only, no substitutions) of the top 35 grossing restaurant chains in the U.S. They are focused on protecting the economic vitality of the restaurant business. Ira is also a key advisor and closing speaker (2016, 2017) for the **Global Restaurant Leadership Conference,** a history-making event held in Dubai.

On a personal note, Ira is a tireless community activist and youth coach (coached both state and national championship teams). He was a highly acclaimed collegiate athlete and also competed internationally. Early in his career, Ira coached Football and Lacrosse at Towson University. Originally from New York, Ira lives in Atlanta, GA with his red-head Missouri bride, Kim. He is the father of two daughters, three sons and has seven grandchildren. He and Kim are avid hikers and recently started their piece-by-piece trek of The Appalachian Trail. Ira's two favorite quotations are "**The true measure of a man is how many lifetimes he can cram into one...**" and "**The two most important days in your life are the day you were born and the day you found out why.**"