

AMY M SMITH

Amy Smith brings a different flavor to her work through a unique combination of a passion for great food, talent in translating this love of food into on-brand craveable menu items and solid business acumen. Her kitchen experience spans fine dining, casual dining, fast food, and food manufacturing. Just as the menus she's developed, Amy's professional path has been an evolution.

Smith found that her passion was not in spreadsheets but in hospitality while studying accounting at Wittenberg University. After receiving her bachelor of arts in business, she pursued a career in restaurants working in the front of the house. To her, the team in the kitchen always seemed to be having more fun and it was the major league baseball strike of 1994 that gave Smith the opportunity to work in a kitchen. The strike meant that the restaurant at Jacobs Field where she was employed would close for the season and a friend offered her a position as a prep cook at the Marriott Downtown Cleveland.

Starting in banquets and working her way up to supervising the restaurant and banquet kitchens, Smith learned how to run a kitchen, develop a team and read a p&l, but not how to cook. In order to learn the fundamentals of cooking, she enrolled at the Culinary Institute of America. She made the most of her time in Hyde Park, staging at Union Square Café, completing two externships, first at M&M Mars, then Chez Panisse and representing the CIA at the Food & Wine Festival in Aspen. Smith graduated top of her class and remained on campus as a Fellow, then as a tester, developer and editor of recipes for cookbooks published by the Culinary Institute of America.

Starting in 2001, Amy leveraged her new knowledge of menu innovation, development, and project management in an R&D Chef role with Pret a Manager. In 2004, she moved to Nashville to work for Logan's Roadhouse as Director of Product Development leading food and beverage innovation. Her overhaul of the appetizer menu won Menu Master's "Best Menu Revamp" the following year.

Smith re-crossed the Mason Dixon Line in 2013, this time headed to Minneapolis to lead the culinary innovation team at Buffalo Wild Wings. One of the highlights has been working on SauceLab, B-Dubs limited time wing sauces. Since 2014, the team has launched more than 30 sauces that range from Blue Moon BBQ, to Strawberry Sriracha to Scorpion Rum with a focus on bold, on-trend flavors.

Smith is currently on the board of the International Corporate Chefs Association. She shares her passion for food and cooking as a volunteer for Open Arms of Minnesota and also Cooking Matters® Minnesota.