



Aloha from Western Candy Conference!



Save the Date! March 16 - 20, 2016
WesternCandyConference.org
The Lodge at Torrey Pines

Western Candy Conference: *Successful formula for industry innovation*



BY SARA CLAIR
Chairman Western Candy Conference 2015
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Blend one part Aloha spirit and two parts tradition. Mix with equal measures of confectionery manufacturers and suppliers of the finest ingredients, innovative packaging and state-of-the-art equipment. The resulting product was the 2015 Western Candy Conference in Maui, Hawaii.

This 82nd annual meeting convened key decision-makers of private and public companies to build knowledge, strengthen business relationships and provide the magic for our members to grow confectionery, gift and snack brands.

Keith Sakamoto, president of Hawaiian Host Inc, welcomed attendees with his top ten lessons from this global macadamia company. Chocolate and Cocoa Sustainability panelists Peter Blommer of Blommer Chocolate, Gary Guittard of Guittard Chocolate and David Mitchell of Barry Callebaut offered their perspectives on industry development, cacao farming, and fermentation advancements in equatorial regions while Moderator Pierson Clair, ceo and vice chairman of Brown & Haley led the hour-long Q&A.

John Downs, ceo of the National Confectioners Association, offered critical updates on the NCA's strategic national policy direction. Attendees were also briefed on Asia Pacific demographic and economic trends, commodity hedging, commerce in the islands, and The Confectionery Foundation's career programs for college students.

Packaging Innovations panelists Brad Smith of Utah PaperBox, John Simpson of The RevereGroup, Bill Copeland of Professional Image, and Patrick Murnane of the Murnane Companies focused their discussion

on sustainability, material inventions, and new design capabilities. Reginald Nelson of Jelly Belly Candy Co. served as moderator.

During the Supplier Tabletop, senior executives, buyers, research and development formulators, and marketing professionals discussed and evaluated sophisticated product advancements and brand-developing strategies.

Culinary events included our members' confection creativity show as well as undersea-themed chocolate showpieces produced by University of Hawaii Maui College chefs-in-training. Blommer, Barry Callebaut and Guittard generously provided the chocolate.

Top level sponsors were invited to an executive breakout session on data breach mitigation and cyber security.

Whale migration excursion, conference dinner with Grammy nominee Willie K and rooftop star-gazing tours, annual golf tournament, and Saturday awards finale provided excellent networking opportunities for members and families.

Western Candy Conference's focus on business relationships delivers an enduring formula to build strong brands, encourage innovation, and inspire the continued growth and sustainability of our remarkable industry.

Save the Date for our 83rd annual Western Candy Conference: March 16-20, 2016
The Lodge at Torrey Pines in La Jolla, California.

Become a Western Candy Conference member:
www.westerncandyconference.org