

BOSTON

COHORT

2022



Welcome to the Main Street Strong Accelerator

2022 Boston Cohort!

We believe that our communities thrive when there is equal access to opportunity for small business owners. The Main Street Strong Accelerator aims to increase access to restaurant education to stabilize, adapt, and grow small businesses, like your own.

The Boston Cohort is a localized 8-week program designed to take you through the Accelerator curriculum with interactive sessions and assignments, while hearing from some of the top local chefs and entrepreneurs. Throughout this cohort you will gain access to a suite of diverse resources and support including:

Guidance through the 8-week interactive Accelerator curriculum

One-on-one advising from industry experts

\$20,000 grants to each participating restaurant

Free merchandising and marketing from DoorDash

Familiarize yourself with your Boston Cohort speakers and fellow participants throughout this guide:

[Participants](#)

[Speakers](#)

[Local Resources & Organizations](#)



Boston Cohort Schedule

January – March 2022

Mondays from 3–4PM ET:

Live Cohort Discussions

You'll hear from the industry leaders and local entrepreneurs listed in the [speaker\(s\)](#) section of this booklet. *Weekly assignments and discussion topics will be due in following the live discussion.*

Wednesdays from 3–4PM ET:

Open Group Office Hours

Weekly [speaker\(s\)](#) will address questions raised or submitted in the live discussion and provide more of their thoughts and perspectives on the week's topic.

Wednesdays from 4–5PM ET:

Optional 1:1 Office Hours

Participants can sign up weekly for 20-minute slots with speakers to seek individual business guidance or advice.

Quick Links:

[MoodleCloud](#) (Online Learning Platform)

[1:1 Office Hours Sign Up](#)

Contact: accelerator@doordash.com



Live Discussion

Topics and Speakers

Week 1, January 31

Find Your Niche and Build Your Brand

Speakers: Aquila Kentish & Haley Fortier



Week 2, February 7

Build a Financial Roadmap and Access Capital

Speaker: Luis Ramos



Week 3, February 14

Licenses, Permits, and All Things Legal

Speakers: Colin Roy & Partners from Goodwin NBI



Week 4, February 21

Hiring and Employee Relations

Speakers: Demetrious Russel & Anna Foster



Week 5, February 28

Create the Right Menu

Speaker: Douglass Williams



Week 6, March 7

Get the Word Out – Marketing Like a Pro

Speaker: Lisa Flores



Week 7, March 14

Scale Your Business

Speakers: David Michelson & Aquila Kentish



Week 8, March 21

Graduation

Speakers: Andy Husbands & Demetrious Russell



PARTICIPANTS



Baheja Rostami

Ariana Restaurant →

Baheja Rostami comes from a big family with many wonderful, strong women who love to cook and know their way around the kitchen. They taught her to cook at a young age and she has loved cooking since. In 2010, she opened Ariana Restaurant, which serves cuisine from Afghanistan, with her husband. To Baheja, the restaurant represents her background, her country, and most of all, Afghanistan's hospitable culture. When you are in her restaurant, you are a guest in her home. In this way, Ariana serves not only Afghani food, but a little culture too.



Marcia Satchell

Blue Mountain Jamaican Restaurant →

Marcia Satchell is a graduate of Northeastern University and holds a MBA from Chadron State University. She has been cooking since she was ten years old. It was her grandmother that taught her the art of cooking. She was able to pursue her dream by opening Blue Mountain Jamaican Restaurant in Boston where she serves various Jamaican, American, vegetarian, and vegan dishes. To Marcia, watching the joy on customers' faces and receiving their positive feedback makes it all worth every moment spent prepping and cooking. She is excited to be a part of the restaurant industry, changing the way people eat by giving her customers choices.



Chieha Chleuh

Bon Appetit Crêperie →

Cheiha “Mimi” Chleuh is the Owner of Bon Appetit Crêperie, a stall in the Boston Public Market, which she runs with the help of her twin daughters, Salma and Samira. They opened in July 2018. The family moved to East Boston ten years ago from Timbuktu in Mali, the West African country and former French colony. Mimi has always been a passionate and excellent home cook. Her vision for Bon Appetit Crêperie is to be the McDonald’s for crepes. Prior to starting Bon Appetit Crêperie, Mimi was a Teacher at Harvard University in the African Languages Department.



Khalid Karroumi

Bravo Pizza

Khalid Karroumi worked with and around food for many years before deciding to start his own halal pizza restaurant. He enjoys donating food to local churches, mosques, police departments, schools, and sports teams.



Fiex Thevenin & Denise Omarde

Cafe Juice Up →

Denise O'Marde and Fiex B. Thevenin are the owners and operators of Cafe Juice Up in Mattapan, Massachusetts. Both of Caribbean descent, Denise is from Antigua & Barbuda, and Fiex is from Haïti. Though they had experience in various fields, they had never worked in the food and restaurant industry before opening their juice bar together in 2019. They are proud to serve affordable and nutritious alternatives to the presently available food in their community. They hope to help people get a quick, convenient, and tasty daily fruit and vegetable serving!



Wendy Issokson

Chill on Park →

Wendy and Alan Issokson had the idea for Chill on Park during the summer of 2014 and they worked hard to make it a reality. Chill on Park is a gathering place in the heart of Field's Corner, Dorchester. It is a neighborhood destination where adults and children can come together to enjoy locally made ice cream, coffee, smoothies, pastries, and more. Wendy is committed to creating an environment that customers and their families will want to return to again and again. They are passionate about their desserts and coffee, and pride themselves on bringing great quality, value, and service to the customer experience.



Joseph Spagnuolo-Kazonis

Cini's →

After a rough start in life, Joseph Spagnuolo-Kazonis decided to turn things around. He made a promise to himself to be self-sufficient and successful. And he decided to do it by opening a restaurant serving the classic Italian food he grew up eating with his family – but with a modern twist. He'd been missing his grandmother's arancinis and decided he could make his own. In Italian culture, food is in the center of all get-togethers and Joseph hopes to make those get-togethers flavorful and full of happy memories for all who dine at Cini's.



Chris Thigpen

Corner Café →

When Chris Thigpen purchased Corner Cafe Newton right before the pandemic, he'd never worked in the restaurant industry. Corner Cafe Newton is a small breakfast and lunch spot – a true neighborhood joint. Chris knows most of his patrons on a first-name basis and exhibits work from local artists on the walls. During slow months of quarantine, Chris started a free meal campaign for local students who relied on school lunches for food. He is proud to have pulled through the pandemic and is ready to focus on growth and scaling to full potential.



Yasonia Lubin & Ashley Lubin

Décolleté Juicery →

Both Yasonia and Ashley Lubin have backgrounds in and passions for health and fitness. Yasonia has been a certified Health Coach for a number of years and Ashley has worked diligently in the sales field for close to 20 years. When the couple introduced juicing and smoothies into their everyday lives, they noticed a profound impact. So they opened Décolleté Juicery, first a truck and now a brick-and-mortar space, hoping to promote health and wellness and inspire other would-be entrepreneurs in their community.



Erin Bashllari & Khadija Bashllari

Donut Villa Diner →

Born in Albania in 1987, Erin Bashllari moved to the US in 2000 where he peeled potatoes at his uncle's diner as a prep cook, studied nursing, and eventually became both manager of the diner and an emergency room nurse. But he always wanted to open his own diner. In 2017, Erin took a hiatus from nursing and purchased what is now Donut Villa Diner in Malden. Khadija Bashllari is the Senior Manager of Programs and Strategic Alliances at Moderna Therapeutics. Her background is in business consulting and she has worked all over the world. With Khadija's help, Erin recently opened a second location in Cambridge.



Bruce Sabokrooh & Tatiana Sabokrooh

Gyroscope and Sprout →

Bruce and Tatiana Sabokrooh, husband and wife, loved going to different restaurants to try different types of food and analyze the pros and cons of different businesses. This hobby, as well as their passion for healthy comfort food, gave them the idea to open their own restaurant and give the best they could to their customers. It has been a great, if challenging journey. They learned a lot on the way that made them stronger.



Huseyin Kocaman

Inbound Pizza →

Huseyin Kocaman moved to the US from Turkey 20 years ago. He decided to open a restaurant because he believes that being a small business owner is one of the best ways to connect with a community and that food is a great way to build connections and start conversations. He enjoys getting to know his diverse customers and donating pizzas to local events and hospitals. Inbound Pizza serves a combination of Middle Eastern and American classics like pizza, kebabs, shawarma, and subs.



Eddie Oscar Garcia Jr. & Ana Celia Ribeiro

La Catrina →

In April 2018, two months after Eddie Oscar Garcia Jr. and Ana Celia Ribeiro got married, they jumped into the idea of buying a restaurant. Eddie loves to cook, Ana Celia has experience in business management, and they both enjoy big gatherings of family and friends. Of course that wasn't all they needed, but they were determined to start their hospitality entrepreneurship. Today, La Catrina is a local business cooking up traditional and street-style Mexican food with a Caribbean twist – and with love. The restaurant does not use plastic, and is committed to become more sustainable every day.



Morad Bouzidi & Desislava Mihaylova

Mo'Rockin Fusion →

Morad Bouzidi's love for cooking stems from his childhood growing up in Morocco, helping his mother in the kitchen. He moved to the U.S. in his 20s and worked at a number of fine dining restaurants in Atlantic City and Boston, but he always wanted to have a business of his own. He knew that the kind of food he liked to cook was unique (and delicious), so he decided to test the market by opening a food truck. The early days were tough because the American market wasn't familiar with Moroccan food, but Morad persisted, eventually attracting a steady food truck and catering customer base. Morad is trying to grow the business despite pandemic difficulties. He has now opened a restaurant stall in Boston Public Market and his next goal is to get a brick and mortar restaurant of his own.



Phouthanome (Joy) Phoubaykham

Neighborhood Kitchen →

Phouthanome (Joy) Phoubaykham is a first generation immigrant whose family came from Laos. She began working in restaurants when she was 13 and started dreaming of owning one shortly after. She started off as a server, then worked in many different positions in the restaurant business. This experience has helped her along the way. She enjoys cooking and eating. Neighborhood Kitchen serves a fusion of Asian and Caribbean cuisines and aims to provide its community with a safe space where many cultures can enjoy variety and flavor. During the pandemic, Neighborhood Kitchen provided lunches to food-insecure children and provided food to nurses and medical staff.



Tracy Chang

PAGU →

Tracy Chang is the chef and owner of PAGU, a Japanese tapas restaurant in Cambridge. She is an alum of Boston College, Le Cordon Bleu in Paris, and the James Beard Foundation Bootcamp for Policy & Change. Chang was a 2020 James Beard Best Chef Northeast nominee and a 2020 Star Chefs Rising Stars Game Changer. During Covid-19, she co-founded Off Their Plate, which serves meals to healthcare workers in Covid-19 wards while providing economic relief to restaurant employees and Project Restore Us, which employs restaurant workers to pack groceries for essential worker families in high-covid, low-income neighborhoods. Through food and service, PAGU aims to celebrate family, friends, innovation, and creativity.



Adilai Shadike & Aishanjiang Kuerban
Silk Road Uyghur Cuisine →

Adilai Shadike and Aishanjiang Kuerban are partners in running Silk Road Uyghur Cuisine. Silk Road is the only Uyghur restaurant in Massachusetts. It opened 5 years ago and has never been closed for a single day since. Part of the mission of the restaurant is to raise awareness about the persecution of the Uyghur people in Western China by the Chinese government and to teach Americans about Uyghur culture – to build a bridge between Uyghurs and Americans.



**MAIN ST
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 ACCELERATOR**



SPEAKERS



January 24, Kickoff
Orientation

March 21, Week 8
Graduation

Andy Husbands

Chef/Owner and Pitmaster of the Smoke Shop BBQ

Andy Husbands is the award-winning chef, author and Pitmaster behind the Smoke Shop BBQ, Boston's acclaimed barbecue restaurants, and three-time winner of *Boston Magazine's* "Best Barbecue" in 2018, 2019 and 2021, as well as *The Improper Bostonian's* "Boston's Best" Award for "Best Barbecue." Currently with five locations in Cambridge's Kendall Square & Harvard Square, Boston's Seaport District, Somerville's Assembly Row, and most recently Hub Hall at TD Garden, Husbands is "smoking" the competition. With a career spanning nearly 30 years in the restaurant industry, Husbands serves as one of the city's most celebrated culinary leaders and a foremost authority on regional Barbecue and live-fire cooking in New England.

A long-time passion project for Husbands, the Smoke Shop is a culmination of his nearly two decades on the competitive barbecue circuit, showcasing his modern approach to slow-cooked, competition-style barbecue, which Husbands dubs as "City 'Q'". His first exposure to the craft of BBQ was while working as a Chef under James Beard Award-winning Chef Chris Schlesinger at East Coast Grill. Husbands is the co-founder of internationally recognized team, IQUE BBQ, which became the first Non-Southern BBQ Team to win the Grand Champion title at the Jack Daniel's 2009 World Championship Invitational Barbecue in Tennessee. They additionally took home first place in the brisket category at the Kansas City American Royal World Series of Barbecue in 2007, and more than 35 Kansas City Barbeque Society grand championships. His journey competing with the award-winning team was featured in *The Wall Street Journal's* August 2018 piece, "The Yankees Who Brought Science to the BBQ World". Husbands is also the co-author of six coveted cookbooks, including *The Smoke Shop's Backyard BBQ: How to Eat, Drink, and Party like a Pitmaster*, *Wicked Good Burgers*, *Wicked Good Barbecue*, *Grill to Perfection*, *The Fearless Chef*, and *Pitmaster: Recipes, Techniques & Barbecue Wisdom*, awarded "Book of the Year" by *National Barbecue News* in 2017.

Hailed "Boston's Meat Maven" by *The Boston Globe*, Husbands has appeared on CBS *This Morning*, Food Network, *FOX & Friends*, Cooking Channel's *Burgers, Brew & 'Que*, and most recently, as a celebrity guest judge on Season 1 and 2 of Food Network Canada's *Fire Masters*.

Deeply rooted in the community, Husbands passionately drives awareness for Share Our Strength, the nation's leading childhood hunger relief organization, serving as honorary chair of its annual Taste of the Nation fundraiser. He is also a Vice President of the Massachusetts Restaurant Association, for which he was honored as MRA's Chef of the Year in 2014, as well as a Rodman Celebration Restaurant Chair and avid volunteer at local women's shelter, Rosie's Place.



Anna Foster

Business Advisor, Consultant & Author

Anna Foster works with organizations on overall business consulting and strategy, with a strong competence in the areas of Business Development, Business Growth, Networking, Diversity & Inclusion and Advancement of Women.

She is the Founder of several businesses, including A Maven's World Lifestyle Brand, the global Maven Women's Conference, which is the largest conference for Women Of Color in New England and Culture Solutions, a DEI recruiting and retention firm. Anna's philosophy about life and business is that no one should feel constrained by obstacles or borders.

Building on her annual conferences for professional women each year, in 2018, Foster expanded the Maven Women's Conference nationwide with conferences in Tampa, Hartford, Washington, DC and London; connecting with 1000s of Women.

Anna is a Certified Life & Business Coach and Certified Behavioral Analyst Trainer. She Co-Founded ALL TOGETHER NOW, by and for entrepreneurs and The Women's Dinner Group for professional women of color. In addition, she leads the 1500+ member meetup of the Boston Fashion community for creatives. These companies build success from a diversity and inclusion commitment in various and holistic ways.

Prior to founding A Maven's World, Anna owned and operated several businesses in various industries. This experience has fueled Anna with the passion to assist entrepreneurs and professionals to live their best life and gain success by living authentically. Several years ago, Anna set out to create a world in which people who are facing obstacles and encountering challenges can feel safe instead of scared, empowered instead of defeated, and be rewarded instead of rejected.

Anna's work has earned her various awards and recognitions. Get Konnected listed her as one of Boston's Most Impactful Black Women in 2021. She is the recipient of the Ignatius Foundation Sapphire Award and three state-level honors: 2016 from the Governor of Massachusetts, and two-consecutives honors in 2016 and 2017 from the House of Representatives.

Anna serves on the Small Business Advisory Board and the Women's Network Board for the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce. Additionally, she serves on the College of Arts & Science Board, the Women In Leadership (WIL) Board and is part of the Management and Entrepreneurship Advisory Group for Suffolk University.

Anna is the author of *The Entrepreneur's Guide & Workbook: For Mindful, Happy & Intentional Living*, a compact guide and workbook. She holds a B.A. in Business Management from Suffolk University and a Juris Doctorate degree from Suffolk University Law School. Anna is married, has two children and an energetic pup, named Nas.



January 31, Week 1

Find Your Niche and Build Your Brand

March 14, Week 7

Scale Your Business

Aquila Kentish

Chef, Educator, Speaker, and Hospitality Professional

Growing up in Boston's Roxbury neighborhood poised me to go out into the world, confident and strong with a will to succeed at whatever I do because I came in this world with nothing to lose. I grew up with a family that loved, nurtured, and believed in me. Growing up, food was at the center of many of my favorite childhood memories, and from a young age I always knew I was destined to be a chef!

For years, I have been building, growing, learning, rising and striving in the food industry. I have been well known for building the brand and business that is Jamaica Mi Hungry along with my friend turned family, Ernie; it has been a beautiful journey! I consider Jamaica Mi Hungry to be my first child. I adopted her, nourished her, and helped her grow! There were many stumbles along the way and lessons learned, and through it all it's an amazing feeling to watch that baby soar and grow into her own personality.

One of my greatest joys along the way has been my ability to serve in a helpful role to those seeking inspiration, help, advice on getting started or scaling their food businesses, and encouraging others to see and have a larger vision for themselves.

After giving birth to my daughter, falling in love with being a mommy, and taking a step back from the hustle and grind that come along with running food trucks and restaurants – I finally decided to own that role of being of service to those looking for guidance and growth opportunities and be intentional about it. I started working directly with youth, entrepreneurs and those aspiring there to sharing my knowledge, skills, and passion for upward movement. I began with a mission to give others a taste of the lessons that have guided me, and it's growing from there!

February 14, Week 3

Licenses, Permits, and All Things Legal



Christina Lewis

Partner, Goodwin

Christina Lewis is a partner in Goodwin’s Employment practice, representing employers in all facets of their relationships with employees and across a range of industries. Ms. Lewis helps clients negotiate and draft employment agreements, employment policies, affirmative action plans and separation agreements. She also advises on employment issues including employee discipline, leaves of absences, terminations, internal investigations, wage-and-hour compliance, privacy issues and reductions-in-force.

In addition, Ms. Lewis is a seasoned employment litigator, having managed dozens of significant cases involving some of the most difficult issues facing employers today. Ms. Lewis has successfully defended employers in cases involving wage-and-hour class action claims, non-compete/non-solicitation and trade secret litigation, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), unfair labor practices, and affirmative action, among others. She also handles discrimination, harassment and wrongful termination cases nationwide, in both state and federal court and in state and federal agencies.

Additionally, Ms. Lewis conducts seminars and training programs on a variety of employment topics, including discrimination prevention, and is a certified trainer in both fair employment practices and sexual harassment prevention by the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD).

Prior to joining Goodwin, Ms. Lewis was a partner at Hinckley Allen & Snyder LLP, where she was the Vice Chair of the Litigation Practice Group and Practice Group Leader of the Labor & Employment Group.



February 14, Week 3

Licenses, Permits, and All Things Legal

Colin Roy

The Director of Facility, Commonwealth Kitchen

Colin Roy has been working in the culinary industry for 12 years and has worked a variety of different jobs, including running a food truck for 4 years. Currently, he is The Director of Facility at Commonwealth Kitchen, where he is in charge of onboarding and training new food businesses in food safety and proper food handling and production.

January 24, Kickoff
Orientation



Cheryl Straughter
Chef & Co-Owner, Soleil Boston

Cheryl Straughter had a 10-year run with Keith's Place, a popular Grove Hall eatery that she opened in 1996 to bring sit-down meals to the neighborhood. Following that venture, Straughter began a 12-year odyssey that has in many ways brought her back to where she started.

After closing Keith's Place, she enrolled in Johnson and Wales University's culinary arts program, learning the intricacies of cooking and food preparation. She went on to work as a recruiter for the school. When her mother developed advanced Alzheimer's disease, she returned to Boston to take care of her, while taking classes nights at Simmons College, where she earned a master's of social work. Next, she worked for three-and-a-half years at Future Chefs, a nonprofit that uses food service training to help teens gain academic and professional skills.

When Straughter learned last year that one of the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building's restaurant spaces, then occupied by Tasty Burger, was soon to be vacant, she jumped at the opportunity. In opening Soleil in the Bolling Building, Straughter is returning both to the food business and to Nubian Square, a commercial district that figured prominently in her childhood.



March 14, Week 7
Scale Your Business

David Michelson

Business Consultant, Coach & Author

David Michelson is a business consultant, coach, and author. He is a results driven, senior executive experienced in the design and implementation of business strategy focused on profitable growth.

Most recently he was the Chief Operating Officer at the Ironside Group, a data and analytics consulting firm. He is a retired Principal from Deloitte's Strategy & Operations Group where he helped clients grow with confidence.

David has over twenty-five years experience in helping clients create winning business strategies and developing the capabilities required to make them successful. He has consulted nationally and internationally and has significant experience across multiple industries.

Prior to joining Deloitte David led the global business transformation group at Tata Consultancy Services and spent thirteen years with CSC where he held a number of senior positions in their consulting, systems integration, and outsourcing businesses.

David is a frequent speaker on transformational change and his written work can be found at occamsedge.com. He holds a BA (Hons) in Business from the University of Central Lancashire, England.

February 21, Week 4
Hiring and Employee Relations

March 21, Week 8
Graduation



Demetriouse L. Russell

Chief Executive Officer, Venn Diagram Partners, LLC

Demetriouse Russell declares his personal brand as being relatable, accessible, and curious. His personal motto is “I own 100% of my failure, but only a fraction of my success.” Demetriouse hails from Cabrini Green Chicago and grew up in Newton, MA. His dream as a child was to play in the NBA. He used that dream as fuel to get an education and pursue a career in banking, private equity, non-profit leadership, executive education, management consulting, and entrepreneurship.

Demetriouse has earned a seat in the C-Suite as a trusted advisor to senior-level executives and board of directors on issues related to leadership development, diversity, equity and inclusion, and executive coaching. Using Venn Diagram Partners as his vehicle, he specializes in taking leaders and organizations on a DEI journey of becoming more equitable and inclusive by helping them to understand the connection between organizational goals, shared values, and high-performance in the workplace and marketplace. His mission is to help individuals feel like they belong and can belong authentically. He has helped scores of leaders become self-aware on their path to modeling how to lead across differences while achieving results.

He attended Middlebury College and graduated from Morehouse College where earned a BA in History, magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Alpha Theta. He also attended the London School of Economics during his junior year on a prestigious Luard Morse Fellowship sponsored by the English-Speaking Union. He was a Rhodes Scholar candidate. He received his MBA from Harvard Business School where he focused on private equity and entrepreneurship.

Demetriouse embraces the motto “to whom much is given, much is required.” He serves on several boards including UNCF New England Leadership Council, Advisory Board of The Base of Chicago, Boston Harbor Now Board of Trustees, School and Main Institute and Harvard Business School Association of Boston Board of Governors. He also serves on the Investment Committee of the Business Equity Fund’s initiative to bridge the wealth gap in Greater Boston by investing in Black and Latinx owned businesses in collaboration with The Boston Foundation. He believes in paying-it-forward by mentoring young adults, especially from underexposed backgrounds.

He has been featured on CNBC, interviewed in Forbes.com on *The Right Way to be a Mentor* and in the book *Women, Minorities, & Other Extraordinary People, a New Path for Workforce Diversity* by Dr. Barbara Adams.

Demetriouse is the proud father of 3 boys and 2 girls who teach him about parenting each and every day. He loves basketball, music, long walks, and being available for his beloved fraternity, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Incorporated where he is a Double Life Member and Phi Nu Pi Awardee for his outstanding service to the Boston Alumni Chapter.



February 28, Week 5
Create the Right Menu

Douglass Williams

Chef/Owner, MIDA

Born and raised in Atlantic City, New Jersey, Douglass Williams was, in a way, destined for the hospitality industry. With parents who loved to cook – and subsequently met at a restaurant where they both worked – Williams was taught to make scrambled eggs with a wooden spoon at just four years of age. In high school, he was drawn to the kitchen in home economics class, started his first restaurant job, and watched the Bocuse d’Or at just fifteen. It wasn’t, however, until he was forced to truly understand food that a real passion developed. At seventeen, following surgery for Crohn’s disease and fueled by a newfound interest in wellness, Williams learned about cooking using clean foods and whole produce, which led him to enroll in culinary school.

Joining the myriad of grads at local casino kitchens, Williams got his feet wet but wasn’t satisfied. After spotting award-winning Chef Michael Schlow in an ad for cooking school, his drive was ignited, and he spent the next six months calling Radius in search of a job. Persistence paid off, and he got what he calls a life-altering experience, a position at the critically-acclaimed Boston restaurant where he honed his skills for the next 2.5 years.

When another well-regarded chef announced his next project, Williams jumped at the chance to expand his repertoire. He joined the opening team at Coppa in 2010 as a pasta cook, crediting Jamie Bissonnette as a huge inspiration to this day.

A year later, in search of culinary exploration, Williams traveled through Southeast Asia for three months. In Bangkok he cooked with Lat Phonchaiya, “Queen of Curry,” and then worked at an entirely sustainable resort in Chumphon. There, he shared his pasta-making skills and in turn learned how to knead rice dough for confections and traditional applications. Before returning home, a two-week getaway to Sardinia included training to make culurgiones, the island’s traditional ravioli.

Landing back in New York, Williams joined Chef Paul Liebrandt at Michelin-starred Corton. For two years, he continued to develop his knowledge base as chef de partie, focusing on meat, saucing, and plating. Then, at Liebrandt’s recommendation, Williams continued on to join the team at Akrame, another Michelin-starred restaurant, in Paris, where he found the inspiration to open his own restaurant.

Two years later, Williams opened MIDA, an Italian influenced neighborhood restaurant, in Boston’s South End. Nowadays, Williams’ portfolio has expanded to include an additional location of MIDA, MIDA Newton, to go along with a burgeoning pizza restaurant in APIZZA. Williams has additional plans on the horizon, with multiple restaurant projects expected to open over the next few years.

January 31, Week 1

Find Your Niche and Build Your Brand



Haley Fortier

Owner & Operator, haley.henry wine bar & nathálie wine bar

Haley Fortier brings over 15+ years of hospitality industry experience to the business. She opened haley.henry wine bar in August of 2016, in the heart of Downtown Crossing and rapidly received acclaim from both local and national press, winning both "Best of Boston" and "Best Wine Bar" in the first year of operation. She was recently named one of Food & Wine magazine's "2019 Sommeliers of the Year" and in 2019 and 2020 haley.henry wine bar was a semifinalist in the James Beard Award category of "Outstanding Wine Program"; one of the most prestigious award recognitions in the industry.

In 2018, Fortier opened nathálie wine bar, located two blocks away from Fenway Park. It received honors in its first year as Imbibe Magazines, "Wine Bar of the Year" in 2019. Nathálie wine bar focuses on small production, female made wines from across the globe.



February 14, Week 3

Licenses, Permits, and All Things Legal

Jason Goldfarb

Associate, Goodwin

Jason Goldfarb is an associate in the firm's Technology group. Mr. Goldfarb works with emerging growth companies throughout their corporate lifecycle, from formation to exit, and the venture capital and strategic investors that finance those companies. His representations span a variety of industries, including digital media, 3D printing, fintech, healthcare tech, mobile applications, enterprise software, and biotech. He joined Goodwin in 2017.

Mr. Goldfarb is an instructor of "Forming and Financing a Start-Up Business," a semester-long course at the Boston University School of Law. He has also served as a mentor for the MIT \$100K Business Plan Competition.

While in law school, Mr. Goldfarb served as Managing Editor of the Journal of National Security Law & Policy, and worked as an intern at National Public Radio, Inc. and at the U.S. Attorney's Office's National Security Division in Washington, D.C..

February 14, Week 3

Licenses, Permits, and All Things Legal



Kimberly Ginsburg
Senior Attorney, Goodwin

Kimberly Ginsburg is a senior attorney in Goodwin’s Business Law Department and a member of its Real Estate Industry group. She joined the firm in 2018. Ms. Ginsburg represents landlords, tenants, developers, and investors in all aspects of commercial real estate leasing transactions across all asset classes, including office, retail, industrial, and mixed-use properties. She is also involved in Goodwin’s PropTech initiative – focused on supporting the intersection of Real Estate and Technology through collaboration across the two practice areas – and in the firm’s Artificial Intelligence initiative.

Prior to joining Goodwin, Ms. Ginsburg was senior counsel at Holland & Knight LLP in Miami, where she represented institutional and private clients in all aspects of commercial real estate transactions and development permitting, including acquisitions, dispositions, and the negotiation and preparation of all types of commercial real estate agreements, including, without limitation, construction and development agreements, purchase and sale agreements, and commercial real estate loan documentation. Ms. Ginsburg also has experience conducting land use and zoning due diligence, and obtaining development permitting and entitlements for a wide variety of development projects.



March 7, Week 6

Get the Word Out – Marketing Like a Pro

Lisa Flores

Founder & President, Society for Event Planners: Restaurant Venues

Lisa Flores has been an integral part of the success of the Columbus Hospitality Group for over 17 years. A Texas native, Lisa moved to Boston to attend Boston University where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Management and a concentration in International Management. She was hired as a hostess at Mistral in June 2001, and was soon promoted to Reservations Manager in 2003, after impressing General Manager Mark D'Alessandro and Chef/Owner Jamie Mammano with her dedication to hospitality.

In 2004, Lisa was promoted again to Special Events Manager for Mistral's private dining room, le Salon du Mistral. As Events Manager, she planned and executed all private events as well as full restaurant buyouts. Her commitment to consistency and her ability to make guests feel at home has enabled her to produce successful events for Mistral's clientele for many years. In 2008, Lisa was promoted to Director of Sales and Marketing, and spearheaded marketing campaigns for the opening of all additional properties in the Columbus Hospitality Group. Today, this includes Mistral, Teatro, Sorellina, Moo, L'Andana, and Ostra restaurants as well as the Inn at St. Botolph and XV Beacon Hotel. She continues to plan private events and restaurant buyouts for Mistral, Ostra, Teatro and Sorellina while managing all marketing campaigns, media relations, and branding for CHG.

Recognizing the need for a more formal network for event planners within the restaurant industry, Lisa founded the Society for Event Planners: Restaurant Venues (SERV) in 2016. SERV is an organization of private event managers that hosts quarterly panel discussions focusing on topics such as the value of private events in the restaurant's bottom line, hospitality marketing, public relations and more. It quickly caught the attention of dozens of top restaurateurs and planners in and around Boston, as well as publications such as The Boston Globe and Boston Common Magazine. SERV aims to provide a network for people in the industry to learn from each other and grow their businesses, and Lisa hopes to continue its success in the years to come.

February 7, Week 2
*Build A Financial Roadmap
and Access Capital*



Luis Ramos

Director of Business Advising, Accion Opportunity Fund

Luis Ramos joined Accion Opportunity Fund as the Director of Business Advising in 2020. Throughout his career, Ramos has helped individuals in the United States and Central America build and grow their businesses by providing direct mentoring opportunities and educational resources to scale up the businesses he has worked with. He has more than eight years of experience mentoring entrepreneurs, building teams and creating the processes needed to launch successful businesses. He has been involved in the ideation for new business ideas, concepts, products, financing and marketing opportunities for more than 1,000 businesses.

For the past three years, he worked at Mission Economic Development Agency in San Francisco, where he advised hundreds of businesses on developing formal business plans and operating agreements to either start a business or enable steps and timeline for the expansion of existing businesses. Earlier in his career, he worked for New York Business Development Corporation and also for LiftFund in Texas in small business advisory roles. In addition, he has his own consulting practice to help entrepreneurs launch their businesses. He has a Master of International Affairs and Economics from the Bush School of Government and Public Service in College Station, Texas and a Bachelor of Arts in International Business from Texas A&M University. He is fluent in Spanish and will be relocating to his native Texas from the Bay Area in the spring.

LOCAL RESOURCES & ORGANIZATIONS



Black Economic Council of Massachusetts →

BECMA's mission is to advance the economic well-being of Black businesses, organizations, and residents in Massachusetts through advocacy, business and leadership development, and strategic partnerships.

BECMA is committed to strengthening Black political power in Massachusetts through exemplary thought leadership, informing legislation and policy, and leveraging coalitions and partnerships. The Policy and Public Affairs team partners with community advocates to push for local, state, and federal policies that promote and grow economic opportunities for Black businesses, organizations, and people throughout the Commonwealth.



Center for Women & Enterprise →

The Center for Women & Enterprise believes that lifting up women benefits everyone. That is why, for more than 25 years, they have been helping aspiring women entrepreneurs and business owners to launch and grow their business by meeting them where they are and providing greater access to the resources, tools, and support they need to achieve business success. Because when we empower women to succeed economically, they are better positioned to support themselves, their families and the communities around them.



CITY of BOSTON


City of Boston Main Streets

The network of 20 independent nonprofit Main Streets organizations exists across Boston. Main Streets use a comprehensive revitalization approach. We want to create, build, and sustain healthy commercial districts. The City of Boston Main Streets is focused on providing resources and support to enable neighborhood business growth, with an emphasis on local, resident-owned businesses, specifically those that are minority-owned, immigrant-owned, and women-owned businesses



Commonwealth Kitchen

CommonWealth Kitchen believes in the power of inclusive entrepreneurship to change the world. They prove every day what is possible when leveling the playing field: talented, passionate entrepreneurs prosper and move society to be more equitable and just. Their powerful network shares a passion for people, a hunger for equity, and a love of food. Together, we are unstoppable. Commonwealth Kitchen's commitment to business owners is available through a wide variety of programs to support all kinds of food businesses throughout their lifespan with our organization.

The logo for the Foundation for Business Equity is a black circle containing the text "foundation for business equity" in white, lowercase letters. The word "foundation" is on the top line, "for" is smaller and centered below it, "business" is on the second line, and "equity" is on the third line. To the left of the circle are two horizontal yellow bars.

foundation
for business
equity

The Foundation for Business Equity →

The Foundation for Business Equity EXISTS so that Black and Latinx entrepreneurs reach their full growth potential. The MISSION is to build collaborative ecosystems and programs that remove structural barriers. The WORK is to identify, invest in and expand approaches that will foster an environment of support, inclusion and growth for Black and Latinx businesses. The PARTNERS include the Black and Latinx businesses, the private sector, foundations, banks, civic organizations, business leaders and those committed to helping businesses of color thrive. The STRATEGIES are focused on strengthening the ecosystem to accelerate enterprise revenue and job creation for Black and Latinx businesses.

The logo for The MRA (Massachusetts Restaurant Association) is a black circle containing the text "The MRA" in white, with a fork and spoon icon to the right of "MRA". Below this, it says "Massachusetts Restaurant Association" and "Access • Influence • Protection". To the right of the circle are two horizontal yellow bars.

The MRA
Massachusetts Restaurant Association
Access • Influence • Protection

Massachusetts Restaurant Association →

The MRA provides access, influence and protection to restaurant professionals allowing for the ultimate opportunity to lead thriving businesses.

One out of every ten employees in Massachusetts are employed directly in or in supporting industries of the restaurant industry, an undeniable driving force in the state's economy. The MRA is the voice of expertise for the restaurant industry in Massachusetts manned with a powerful team of advocates with an impressive reputation. Known as the definitive voice of the state's restaurant and hospitality industry in city halls and the state Capitol.



NFIB

NFIB is the voice of small business, advocating on behalf of America's small and independent business owners. NFIB is nonprofit, nonpartisan, and member-driven. Since its founding in 1943, NFIB has been exclusively dedicated to small and independent businesses, and remains so today.

For over 75 years, NFIB has had an ear to the ground on what's happening in Washington, D.C., and the state capitals. That puts NFIB at the forefront of advocating on today's most pressing small business issues, such as taxes, healthcare, and regulations.

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