

# Jim Bedard III, President Of Buffalo Hotel Supply Receives 2006 Circle Of Excellence Award

It may seem that Jim Bedard III was destined to work in the food service industry. After all, his grandfather started Buffalo Hotel Supply Company in 1938, and his father and his two sisters both work in the business.

But when Bedard graduated from college, he chose banking and financial services marketing rather than the family business, and spent the next 20 years work-

home," Bedard reflected. "There are a handful of employees that were here when I was in high school."

Much has changed at Buffalo Hotel Supply since Bedard was in high school. The company has grown from 15 employees to 75 employees. The company now has four locations, with facilities in Albany, Rochester and Buffalo, as well as a custom millwork

"We can offer a turnkey package to an owner or developer," Bedard said. "We can supply everything from the front of the house to the back of the house in a food service operation, including the lighting, carpet, custom mill work, supplies, furniture and heavy equipment in the kitchen. We can do the whole package ourselves."

Buffalo Hotel Supply's client list includes many prestigious companies, including General Mills, General Motors, Rochester Institute of Technology and Niagara University.

Bedard said that he has learned

that many of the basic tenets that he learned in banking apply equally in the food service industry.

"Whether you are selling bank accounts or widgets or tongs, regardless of what industry you're in, the same skills are needed," he said. "The one challenge in the food service equipment industry is the thin profit margin. This is a very, very competitive industry."

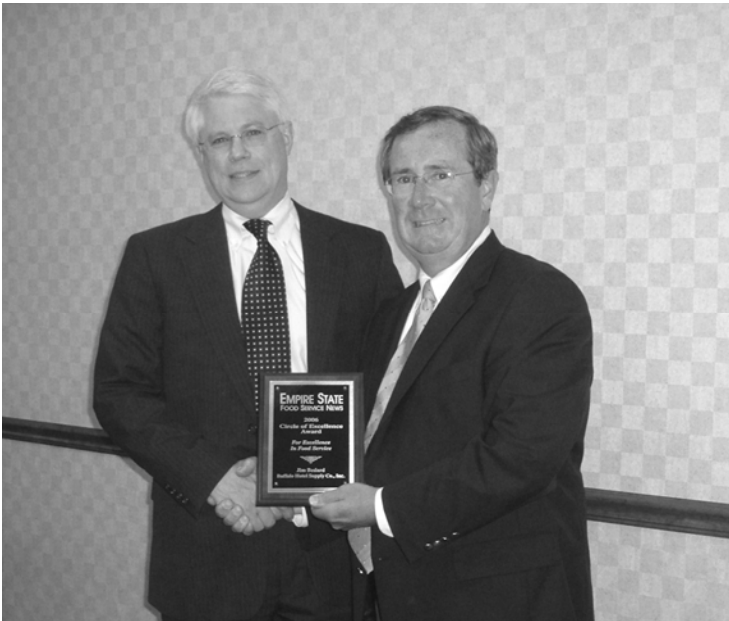
In addition to a diversified product line, Bedard also pointed to Buffalo Hotel Supply's people as a key factor in the company's longevity and success.

"I would put our people up

against almost any other dealer in terms of experience," he said. "You need knowledgeable people to help the customer properly plan... It's the people that make it enjoyable and differentiate us from our competitors."

He said his experience at Buffalo Hotel Supply has also been personally rewarding.

"Some people say, 'once a banker, always a banker.' I don't believe that...I've really enhanced my abilities and skills by working in a different industry for ten years. Now I'm not the banker guy; I guess now I'm the food service guy."



Steve Griffin, publisher of Empire Food Service News (left), recently presented the 2006 Circle Of Excellence Award to Jim Bedard III, president of Buffalo Hotel Supply.

ing in that field. It was not until 1996 that fate drew him back to the company with which he had spent many of his formative years.

"My father had just lost two key people to untimely deaths," Bedard recalled. "At the time, I was looking to work for a smaller company. I had been in corporate banking for 20 years and was a vice president, but I knew the bank might be sold at any time and all the staff positions shifted out of town. I wanted to stay in Buffalo."

Putting his marketing and management skills to work, Bedard came on board with Buffalo Hotel Supply Company as vice president of operations and was named president in 2000.

"It's kind of like coming

facility in Orchard Park, which opened in 1997. The company's financial picture has changed significantly as well.

"My father, who still works a full work week, joined the firm in 1946 working with my grandfather and grandmother," Bedard pointed out. "At the time, they were doing \$38,000 in sales and now our annual sales are \$20 million."

Although Bedard's grandfather started Buffalo Hotel Supply with an eye toward providing the food service industry with linens and place settings, the company now offers a full range of food service products. The business provides everything from trash receptacles and cash registers to interior design work for restaurants, kitchens and other facilities.

New York School Nutrition Association congratulates Jim and Buffalo Hotel Supply on its continued success.

--Carol Beebe, executive director, NYSNA

We are proud to salute  
**JIM BEDARD**  
Buffalo Hotel Supply  
*Circle of Excellence Award Recipient.*

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