

SPRING  
2018

**SUCCESS!**

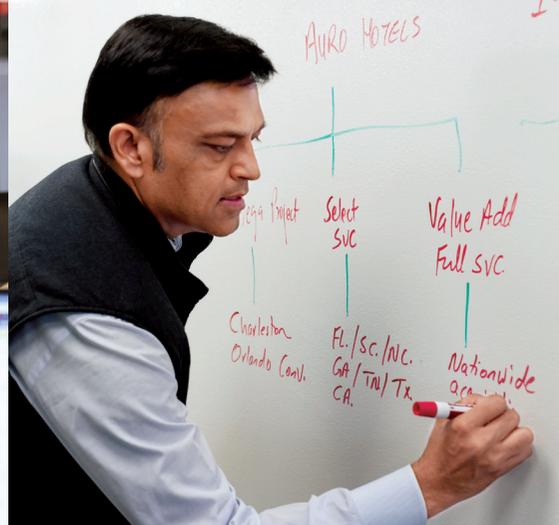
AWARDS



**CHRIS HENRY '10**

*CEO, Chairman and Co-founder,  
Majestic Hospitality Group*

A dozen alumni discuss how they've found success — and the ways Johnson & Wales contributed to their ascent.





# • SPENCERS •



## MICHAEL LEVINE '12

*B.S. Food Service Entrepreneurship  
CEO, Global Food Solutions  
Hauppauge, New York*

**“I believe that if you do the right things, no matter what business you’re in, you’re going to succeed.”**

**B**ig ideas can start simply. When he was still a JWU student, Michael Levine '12 decided to engineer a better muffin, replacing corn syrup and trans fats with whole grains, real fruit and zero artificial flavors.

Fast-forward to 2018: As CEO of Global Food Solutions, Levine oversees a growing line of wholesome, sustainable food products served in more than 5,000 schools.

And that humble muffin served as a major catalyst, he explains: “When I left school, there were lots of changes happening in the food industry.” The Department of Agriculture was working on sweeping upgrades to school lunch program nutrition standards that, if enacted, would “wipe the slate clean” and force new buying decisions — “it wouldn’t matter if you were General Mills, or if you were me.” So Levine and his team made a calculated decision to align their product formulations to the new standards, incorporating at least 51 percent whole grains.

To go after New York City schools, they also needed to be cost-competitive. “That’s when it all started to piece together,” says Levine. “We sourced a New York-based manufacturer and a company to print the packaging. We found a trucking company. And when we did that, we presented the program to [the school board]. And we were able to do it at a more competitive price point than other people in the industry.”

Not only did the muffin become a bestseller, “it built our credibility, and we started focusing on building our brands,” says Levine.

Today, Global Food Solutions has 24 manufacturing plants around the country packing specific goods for various markets. Levine now spends as much time vetting production facilities and conducting food safety audits as he does developing products: “The number one thing we focus on is quality control.”

In 2017, Global Food Solutions was listed as one of “America’s Fastest Growing Private Companies” by *Inc.*, and Levine was inducted into *Forbes*’ “30 under 30” in the Food & Drink category. Despite the accolades, he’s not one to rest on his laurels: “I believe that if you do the right things, no matter what business you’re in, you’re going to succeed. Good things are going to happen because you’re planting more seeds — and more potential is more opportunity.”

*~ Andrea Feldman*



# JOHNSON & WALES UNIVERSITY

8 Abbott Park Place, Providence, RI 02903

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*Denver Campus in bloom*

