



A WIN FOR EVERYONE!

By: Jeff Ingram, ARC Resorts, LLC

February 7th and 8th found the largest attendance ever for an ARDA – WIN conference gathered at the UCF Rosen College of Hospitality campus in Orlando. Over 150 people enjoyed the program that kicked off Thursday with a reception sponsored by Customer Count.

The evolution of this group is extraordinary. Originally the acronym WIN stood for Women In the Industry. However, after the adoption of the organization into ARDA as a permanent committee, the group was refocused with new initiative goals while remaining focused on gender-based opportunities:

- advocate, educate, and connect members by fostering personal and professional growth through a core focus on education and networking
- Gain real-world knowledge of industry basics and stay on top of new developments and the latest trends.
- Connect with other industry professionals.
- Get access to the industry's library of educational and professional development tools.
- Enjoy networking opportunities and access to business training.

The day was packed full of content. Fiona Downing, ARDA-WIN chairperson and Senior VP of RCI, opened the sharing her career progression while focusing on the challenges many women encounter. Terri Shultz, the “top mouse” at Disney Vacation Club provided an insightful journey through her life with ideas on how to recognize opportunity in order to seize it. Understanding the type of energy we all demonstrate was an academic view at how to understand how we are perceived in both business and in our personal lives. Mentoring multi-generational and cultural topics were addressed on how everyone needs to be aware of the difference in both interactions and communication styles. Technology leaders discussed how their professional careers in a male-dominated discipline prove that anyone can perform in any area.

Philanthropy plays a prominent role of all WIN events. Harbor House of Central Florida provided information regarding their charter to provide a safe haven for women and families victimized by domestic abuse. The raffle tickets sold during the event raised over \$4,000 for Harbor House.

If you have never attended a WIN-Wednesday event in your area or the annual conference, you are strongly suggested to do so. This organization is not just for women, it is for anyone that embraces the diversity in the workplace.