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ESPA Annual Conference Sets Sail with New Educational Additions

*The Food Network's Chef Jeff Henderson to
Illustrate the Power of Potential in Keynote Speech*

PRINCETON JUNCTION, NJ – November 7, 2011 – In a continued effort to provide its members with valuable networking and education, the Event Service Professionals Association (ESPA) (formerly ACOM), will hold its 2012 Annual Conference January 6-8, 2012 at The U.S. Grant in San Diego, California. This year's Conference theme is "Set Sail with Convention Services."

As part of its new name and brand, ESPA is offering several new additions to its Conference. ESPA has shifted forward its Conference schedule leading directly up to the PCMA Conference, enabling more meeting planners to attend its Sunday afternoon sessions which are geared toward the planner/service professional relationship. The *Ideas in Motion* session on Sunday will enable members to engage with meeting planners for a speed networking/interactive learning session. The Conference will also feature a new networking session where attendees will be able to mix and mingle with fellow members from their same region.

In addition, keynote speaker Chef Jeff Henderson, star of the Chef Jeff Project on the Food Network, will discuss his story of redemption and perseverance which will motivate attendees to dream, but also encourage them to reach their full potential. Nancy DeBrosse, vice president, association strategic account management at Experient, will also reveal the top three things keeping planners awake at night as well as the top meeting trends for 2012 and beyond in her session on January 8. Again this year, ESPA

will feature a variety of tracks dedicated to event service professionals from hotels, convention centers and convention and visitors bureaus (CVBs).

“With the launch of the new name and brand, we wanted to further elevate our conference offerings, providing dynamic speakers and sessions that truly take our networking and educational opportunities to the next level,” said Eric Blanc, CMP, ESPA President.

ESPA’s Book Club will offer attendees an opportunity to read a thought-provoking book and discuss it book club style with fellow members. Attendees will also share innovative service tools and programs through the ESPA Showcase.

The CSM of the Year Awards, hosted in partnership with *Successful Meetings* magazine, will be announced at the Conference during the Saturday luncheon on January 7. Also during the luncheon, ESPA will welcome the student recipient of the Donald S. Freeman Jr. ESPA Conference Scholarship, as well as the deserving ESPA member who will receive the third annual William H. Just CAE, CMP Memorial Award.

ESPA is proud to have the following sponsors of the event: Atlantic City Convention and Visitors Authority, Freeman and Starwood Hotels and Resorts.

For more information on ESPA and to register for its Annual Conference, visit www.espaonline.org or contact Lynn McCullough at (609) 799-3712.

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About ESPA

The Event Service Professionals Association (ESPA) (formerly the Association for Convention Operations Management) is dedicated to elevating the event and convention services profession and to preparing members, through education and networking, for their pivotal role in innovative and successful event execution. For more information, visit www.espaonline.org.