

Opening Remarks

**Eat, Drink and Be Savvy: The Food and Beverage Beat**

April 7, 2004

**NBC "TODAY SHOW" - Phil Lempert, supermarketguru.com editor and syndicated radio host**

Thank you and I want to thank all of you because there's a lot of you in this audience that I've worked with for years, spoken to, met and you have me in your hand. You either help me or you really hurt me. And I've got to tell you that it's really a few of you who have gone out of their way to make our jobs, and I speak for all of us, fabulous. You get it. You understand what it is that we need.

And you also understand what it is that we don't need. I don't need you to tell me about my grandfather's dairy farm. I don't need you to tell me that you watch the Today Show every day, nobody watches the Today Show every day for three hours, you can't and have a life. Don't tell me that you've got this fabulous, terrific new product and don't really know all that much about it so that when I ask you the question you can't answer it. Don't tell me you have another new low-carb product on the market, I agree but for a different reason, because what'll happen is I'll actually go on TV and tell the world how you're cheating so that's not a good thing. Make sure that your products are labeled properly.

For example I'll talk about low-carb: There is no regulation for low-carb. First question that I ask any of you when you call me to pitch a low-carb product is "Is it labeled low-carb?" and very gleefully you say, "Yes!" And very gleefully I say, "That's illegal!" And you say, "I didn't know that, I'll get back to you."

I travel about 200,000 miles a year. I live both here in New York as well as in Santa Monica. I get probably 150 emails a day. I do read all of them or someone in my office will. I'll forward them to them. I don't need you to send an email to me at PLempert@supermarketguru.com, Phil.Lempert@nbc.com or PLempert@aol.com or countless other emails I have, it sort of tells me that you don't know what you're doing if I have to get the same email in five or six different email boxes. If it's for the Today Show: Phil.Lempert@nbc.com, if it's for anything else that I do, please

PLempert@supermarketguru.com. And also, ten seconds after you've emailed me don't waste the phone call, "Did you get my email?" If you send me a fax I really don't need you to call and you don't either because most fax machines in this country will verify a receipt so I don't need that. And especially if you send me a FedEx package I definitely don't need you to call and say "Did you get my FedEx package?"

We also do not take any press trips. Yes we do take products and lots of them. What I want and what we do is test products feverishly, please don't send me a little sample that's this big. When we write about something or if I bring it on the air I want to know the product. And again, we do hits and misses. We will say when a product is sensational and we also say when a product is terrible.

You might have noticed that about a month ago we redesigned the Today Show website.

If you haven't, check it out it's today.msnbc.com. Now every Wednesday is "Food Wednesday", and we write a lead story on "Food Wednesday". I have a Q&A column.

We have new products, our same new products hits and misses that appear both in *Progressive Grocer* and on *eDiets* and on *SupermarketGuru* now appear on the Today Show website as well. And also a new feature that we started called "Steal This Recipe",

where we started it thinking it would be once a month then twice a month now it's every week, where basically we take a signature dish from a famous restaurant we re-do it, we list what it would cost at the restaurant if you bought it for dinner, what it would cost if you bought the ingredients at home, step-by-step, and we have received so far about 500 emails from restaurants who want to be part of it. They are obviously top-of-the-list and probably about 1500 emails from consumers who have said, "Would you steal this recipe from such-and-such a restaurant," and that's fabulous. We show a picture of the chef of the restaurant, we show a picture of the dish and we have the restaurant information and a link there as well.

So, in recap: thank you. I like talking to you when you call, please don't bore me, though, with not knowing what it is that we do. We get a lot of great ideas from you, there's no question about it. Please don't call me and say, "What are you working on?" because neither of us have enough time to tell you probably the 50 things that are in the hopper.

We have an enormous output. If you check out [SupermarketGuru.com](http://SupermarketGuru.com) you'll see that we update daily: lots of food and health, lots of new products, "Steal This Recipe" and all of that translates to what we do on radio as well as what we do on the Today Show and our other venues.

I'll be here, happy to answer your questions one-on-one, love your business cards, I'll be happy to give you mine as well. Thank you.