

# SB2: Regional Hospitality and Tourism

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On Thursday, March 20, *SRQ* magazine hosted the fourth event in its 2013-14 series of SB2 breakfast symposiums on regional collaboration in the hospitality and tourism industry. This gathering of top regional leaders throughout Sarasota and Manatee County generated synergies on efforts both counties are making to support our hospitality and tourism industry. During the discussion, panelists shared their insight on a substantial mix of topics, including the steps our local universities are taking to prepare the next generation of hospitality professionals in our area; what it will take to increase our meeting and convention business; and, attracting visitors to our area for the diversity of offerings that extends far beyond our beaches. The audience received a collaborative mix of perspectives from panelists **Cihan Cobanoglu, Jeffrey Mayers, and Damien O’Riordan.**

Two of our panelists provided some great feedback on the event:

*“As the number of visitors continues to increase, it is imperative that we are prepared for the future. The SB2 Regional Hospitality and Tourism Symposium provided the forum to discuss the challenges that will be faced in the future and stimulated productive conversation regarding the steps that can be taken to influence the changes that will be necessary for our community moving forward.”*

**Jeffrey H. Mayers, General Manager of Resort at Longboat Key Club**

*“Being part of a Distinguished Panel at SB2 gave me the great joy of knowing that the future strategies of the lodging industry are bright in Sarasota and Manatee Counties. I am proud to be the Dean of College of Hospitality and Technology Leadership in this area, educating the future leaders of hospitality who will stay here and contribute to the economy for years to come. The industry’s support has been amazing and it is an integral piece of education.”*

**Cihan Cobanoglu, Professor & Dean of College of Hospitality and Technology Leadership, University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee**

The kickoff for the SB2 Bradenton series will be held on **Thursday, April 30, 2014 from 5:30-7:00 pm at The Powel Crosley Mansion**. The topic for this event is: **Arts and Culture As Economic Drivers**. The next SB2 event in the 2013-14 series will be hosted in Sarasota on the topic of **Regional Conservation and the Environment**. The event takes place on **Thursday, May 15, 2014 at The Francis (7:30am-9:00am)**. Tickets for both events are \$35/person and can be purchased online at [SROSB2.com](http://SROSB2.com) (<http://srqsb2.com/>) (ticket price includes food and beverages). For sponsorship opportunities contact Ashley Grant at 941-780-2008 x204 or [Ashley.Grant@srqmediagroup.com](mailto:Ashley.Grant@srqmediagroup.com) (<mailto:Ashley.Grant@srqmediagroup.com>). We look forward to seeing you there!

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