

## SPECTRA'S WENTZELL SEES ROOM FOR GROWTH IN MLS

John Wentzell has completed his first 100 days on the job as president of Spectra's venue management and food service and hospitality groups. In an interview with SportsBusiness Journal facilities writer Don Muret, the veteran facility operator discussed the loss of NFL business, opportunities for growth, and the future of live entertainment.

- *What are your impressions of Spectra?*

WENTZELL: Let's face it, this was a unique opportunity for me. You know my background [20 years at Delaware North], being in venue management and with teams. I also spent quality time leading a food, hospitality and retail company. The ability to merge those two together in one significant leadership role was the right fit.

- *Where do you see the firm's strengths and weaknesses?*

WENTZELL: For a company like ours that has grown as quickly as we have, we have some growing pains as you might expect. We've moved a number of people from within around, so at some point, you need to re-establish the bullpen. Just assimilating and making sure we're doing right by all of our clients. The strength side is we have a great core team. It's a compelling story in the integrated services we provide and the ability for us to bring all those together for a client. It creates an opportunity to produce incremental profits and cost efficiencies.

- *Spectra lost a signature account last year in University of Phoenix Stadium. How do you make up for that key piece of business, given there are just [seven] NFL stadiums run by third-party management?*

WENTZELL: It is a very finite number of opportunities when you're talking about any major league properties. Then it comes down to when deals are up and available, and is it a situation where they're entertaining third parties. We're absolutely in play for those, but at the same time, business goes on. It's an ebb and flow in the contract space. Overall, we've got a pretty good overall retention rate, north of 90 percent.

- *Where are the opportunities for growth on the food side?*

WENTZELL: If you look at just volume, it will continue to be outside the MLB/NHL/NBA type of space, but that doesn't mean we won't be in that space from time to time. MLS is an area where we have a base [with three food accounts] and I see that expanding for sure. We feel like we have a great story to tell there and we're going to build on that. We have some real strong client relationships.

- *Spectra ticketing, the old Paciolan, dominates the college space. Do you see continued growth in that area?*

WENTZELL: The trend of collegiate venues, whether it's football stadiums or indoor facilities, has advanced to the point where they now have a more sophisticated premium seating environment and are adding alcohol sales to the mix. It makes it a much more viable opportunity for a company like Spectra Food and Hospitality to make a real play and to work with them. We see the relationships from a ticketing standpoint as a stepping-off point with many major college programs. I think it's a market that's ripe for a lot of incremental business.

- *Feld Entertainment's shutdown of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus surprised some, but many arena managers were not surprised by the decision. Where do you see the future of live entertainment headed in this space?*

WENTZELL: It's an evolution. I think what we're seeing is a continued retooling [of family shows], but I don't think we'll see it disappear. I think Feld in its own right, with Nitro Circus, is coming up with content to backfill traditional touring dates. Think back to when there used to be Ice Capades and Ice Follies and the circus, and that was it. Then it changed into the evolution of a variety of shows brought on by kids TV show content. Now you see movie content facilitating development of compelling product for family entertainment. I think it will seek its own level and it will be fine.