



## Sample Speech

*The following imaginary speech was developed to demonstrate how the framing research might be incorporated into a routine opportunity to engage local business leaders in a conversation about the importance of food systems and effective reforms. Please note that facts, references, and names included in this speech are for sample purposes only, not for citation.*

**Introduction:** On behalf of the Springfield Chamber of Commerce, I'd like to introduce one of our newest members, Benjamin Wilson, head chef and owner of Ben's Table. Mr. Wilson grew up here, but left about 20 years ago to study in Paris and work in leading restaurants in New York, Rome, and Las Vegas, among other places. He came back to his roots two years ago to create a new kind of restaurant experience in his own hometown. After two years, his restaurant continues to be a huge success, getting rave reviews and requiring reservations weeks in advance. Mr. Wilson has been kind enough to speak with us today about his business philosophy and ideas for helping our community prosper. Please join me in welcoming Mr. Wilson.

**Speech:** Thank you so much for welcoming me here today, and thank you to the town for being so supportive of Ben's Table over the past two years. We would not be where we are today without the help that so many of you offered in those early days.

I've only become a business person relatively recently, so I don't know that I have a complete business philosophy, but I do have a philosophy as a chef that is inseparable from my life philosophy. I remember the moment I decided to become a chef. I was about seven years old. It was a beautiful summer day, and my mother woke me up early to pick peaches from the trees in our yard. "Today is the day, and we have to start early so the peaches are at their best!" she sang as she shook me awake. As the sun rose in the sky, we picked only the ripest, most perfect peaches for the pie we baked together that day. It was the most delicious taste I had ever experienced and I told my mother she was the best cook in the world. Every day I am reminded of her response. She said, "No sweetheart. My pie is only as good as God's peaches."

We treat food as though it is a commodity – all broccoli is alike, all tomatoes are the same, it doesn't matter which chicken you put in your pot. But food is not a typical commodity; the way food is produced has an enormous effect on the quality and nutritional value of that food. The "how" matters. That peach pie my mother made

Help people understand that food production matters; connect production with quality. Get them thinking about HOW food is produced rather than consumer dietary choices.

was wonderful because the peaches were grown the way nature intended – no pesticides or chemical fertilizers, and ripening on the tree, not in a truck while it travels 1000 miles across the country.

Introduce Simplifying Model; convey that these are recent changes, and that society is affected.

Too often food is viewed as just a way to fill one's belly, to satisfy one's hunger. That is a mistake, and a costly one for our society. Food is much more than that. It is how we nourish our bodies. Over the last generation, our food system has changed dramatically and in ways that damage our health and environment. The way we produce food today has changed radically, and now has the power to alter the foundations of life as we know it, almost by accident. Farming chemicals like pesticides and weed-killer are permanently altering our soil and water. Genetic engineering is changing the nature of the plants and animals we eat. And mile-long fishing nets are dragging the ocean floor and altering ecosystems. We need to retake control of this runaway food system before it does more damage to the foundations we depend on. And our ability to get this system under control will affect our children, our grandchildren, our workforce, and our health and competitiveness as a nation. There's a lot at stake in how our food is grown.

Make clear that change is possible. Use examples of successes.

My goal in starting Ben's Table was to prove to communities like this one that it doesn't need to be this way. We don't have to have food laden with pesticides, hormones and antibiotics. We don't have to eat unripe fruits and vegetables shipped from 1500 miles away. We can do better. And doing better requires the same kind of ingenuity, community planning and public and private resources that you all use in innovating your own business sectors.

Long before I opened the restaurant to guests, I traveled the local area finding farmers and food producers who make food the way nature intended. I found out that there are lots of local food producers making natural foods, but many of them were struggling to find customers who would pay a fair price for high-quality food. They don't have an outlet for their products in a system that stresses the largest quantity at the lowest price.

I worked with local food producers to develop a plan for how we could deliver the highest quality, most nutritious food possible, in a way that protected our health and environment, the foundations of life on which we depend. That meant, for example, developing seasonal menus to take advantage of in-season fruits and vegetables. But it also meant procuring funding for a greenhouse so that we could extend the growing season in this climate.

Put progress on the side of food system reform.

As you know, we've been very successful at Ben's Table. Our menu is based on foods produced within 150 miles by farmers who use natural methods that protect the foundations of life on which we depend: our soil, water and air. Plus, our food is harvested the day we serve it, so it is served at its highest nutritional content. Ben's Table has shown it is possible. Now it is time to extend the benefits beyond the restaurant.

As I said a moment ago, there are a number of local food producers within 150 miles of our town who produce food responsibly, but they lack an outlet for their products in

Suggest specific policy solutions; include a call to action as citizens, not consumers.

today's commodity-based system. I propose that we create a farmer's supermarket – a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week store featuring local food producers. That would provide local food producers with a reliable outlet and a consistent customer base for their products. It would allow them a fair chance to compete. It would give our town's citizens a way to directly support the local economy while making a vote for a more responsible, sustainable food system. This organization has the business expertise to develop a workable plan, and the clout to convince the city council to provide a location for an indoor market. The people in this room have the power to make this change happen.

Remind people that this is about the future, the legacy we leave the next generation.

Think about the way food penetrates every aspect of our lives and ask yourselves if we are doing now what we should be doing for the long-term good of our community, and our country. We expect our food system to produce what we need now and for generations to come, but it is becoming increasingly clear that decisions are being made in food production that will affect the food system far into the future. Short-term decisions have long-term consequences that our children will inherit. We can make changes now that will ensure we have a stable, healthy food system for our children and grandchildren. And when we do that, we ensure a better future for the businesses you steward, and for the community as a whole. Will you join me in making these responsible changes for our future?