

## **SUCCESS STRATEGIES**

There is a strategy and tool that virtually guarantees your success on any hospitality team. It is a simple but not often seen tool. It's not commonly seen because frankly; it's really hard.

### **High Standards**

The simple truth is that most companies don't even achieve that. It's difficult; it requires a culture that worships excellence. In the best companies, it filters down from the CEO who is like a super hero. It becomes part of company DNA, they hire and train and breed for it.

Team members with consistently high standards are a precious resource. The statement that these individuals make with their level of execution never goes unnoticed for very long. They are highly valued and they never have a problem finding work or getting promoted. And when you are operating at that level, everyone knows it and sees it. You just can't fake it for very long.

For Shift Leaders and Managers, High Standards are an absolute necessary component for career success.

Most of us in the Hospitality industry become an army of one; you work each day and your job satisfaction and income correlate with the effort that you put in. Sometimes your efforts get diminished by circumstance and difficult situations. And that very moment, standing in the breach, is where your standards make all the difference. It is a conscious decision, every time and it defines you; in the dining room or in the dish room

Of course, the best operations are products of a strong team effort but we are strictly talking about just you and your execution, your effort, your results, your success. When you raise your standards and keep them high, people are going to want to be on your Team.

### **Did I mention that it is difficult?**

You cannot talk about Standards without talking about consistency. If you think that you can turn on standards when you need them; you can't. Claiming High Standards only when you think you need them is just being average. Someone once said that standards are what you do when no one is looking.

It's late and you are closing. The boss has gone home and there is only one table in the restaurant. Are those French Fries hot and crisp? Is the late-night service just as good as the 8:00 pm prime-time service?

It is a career-long discipline and it will permeate everything that you do, as you master it. At work, you are the things that you do. Every plate or drink that you prepare, mix, cook or serve is a statement of your standards. Every closing duty, every recipe execution, every dish that you garnish has your standards stamp on it for everyone to see.

## **There is only one standard.**

I watched the CEO of a national restaurant chain speak with the General Manager of a store on a visit. The store had good sales and good numbers. That GM's store was clean on the surface but not really deep clean. It had hurriedly been cleaned up prior to the visit of the CEO and you could see that. The CEO complimented him on his sales and numbers and then he told that GM that he needed to get his store clean, really clean. Store cleanliness was something that all of us knew was never to be compromised. The CEO told him that there is "only one standard in this company". The GM would get another visit from a Vice President in two weeks. The store needed to be really clean and kept that way. The GM's job was on the line.

Pretty severe, I suppose, but no one who worked for that company including the GM of that store, found it unreasonable or unfair. We all knew; there was only one acceptable standard. We were very proud of that because we knew that we were working for a company that honest and transparent.

## **Get immunized.**

Your standards of excellence are an immunization. Of course, really successful leaders will want you on their team but even the rookie leaders will want you because you make them look good. Your high standards will make you the player that every leader wants on his team and every team member wants to work with you because things always go well when you are on. And you make every shift a better place to be.

And all of that means is that when you are executing at a high level consistently, you need to be working for a company and with Leaders with standards that are even higher than yours. Those are places and people who will challenge you, recognize you and reward you. Those are the leaders who will develop you and give you opportunities. Those are the places where you deserve to work, where success is the rule and not an occasion.

## **The take-aways**

- Don't proclaim how high your standards are; don't rub anyone's nose in the dirt. Choosing High Standards of execution means that you will have a lot of decisions to make, all day long. Focus on those decisions.
- You are competing only with yourself. Measure your performance against the manual, the recipe, the procedure. Sending out those cold French fries? Others can take the short-cut; you can't.
- It takes conditioning, just like any other skill. Just don't accept mediocrity in yourself because that is a disease that can permanently infect you.
- This is not about making the job easier. As a matter of fact, in the beginning, it will make your job immensely more difficult. When High Standards are your habit, it gets easier because other team members are raising their standards.
- Don't allow yourself to find reasons why not: *"If you really want to do something you'll find a way. If you don't, you'll find an excuse."* Jim Rohn.