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Standards of Excellence You Can't Bend On

Do you ever feel like you have more positions in your restaurant than qualified applicants to fill them? With the mobility of the average hospitality employee, it doesn't take much to send staff members looking for greener pastures should they become disgruntled with your operation. But don't let that influence the way you implement and enforce your standards of excellence. The beginning of the year is the perfect time to reiterate your company policies. Don't be afraid to ruffle some feathers—compromising your culture will only work against you in the long run.

Watch out for these common mistakes:

- Don't allow staffers to work in uniforms that wouldn't have made the cut last year. Each employee's image is a reflection of your company, and it represents a cultural statement about how your employees feel about you, themselves and the work environment. Stand firm on your uniform standards and recognize the efforts of those who positively represent your operation.
- Always apply the appropriate consequences to those who consistently arrive late or fail to show up for shifts. Compromising your policy on tardiness and no-shows is a surefire way to end up short-staffed. Stick to your guns. You may not think it's in your company's best interest to terminate an employee for these offenses, but failure to do so will deplete your ranks even further.
- Never bend on your policies regarding theft of company property. By closing your eyes to disappearing items, you jeopardize your company's assets and the valuables of your staff and guests. Once it gets out that you've retained an employee who was caught stealing, you might as well just leave the safe open.

Reflections and Resolutions: What Are YOU Willing to Do? By [Bill Marvin](#)

So here we are on the brink of another year... typically a time for reflection and resolutions. But making New Year's resolutions is a strange process. It seems like we usually ask for things that we don't have and make promises to start (or stop) doing things we should have done (or stopped doing) last year. Instead, why don't you try something different this year?

Start by asking yourself, what do you want from 2009? Higher sales? A few new restaurants? A line cook that shows up on time? Better health? More exercise? A deeper spiritual connection? More time with your family? Peace on the planet? An end to world hunger (or at least in your community)? Maybe just a little time off? Give it some thought.

Now, write down what you want... and be as specific as you can. I mean really write it down. Trust me: this process won't work if you just make it a mental exercise. Understand that there is nothing wrong with wanting these things, but once you decide—once you make your list—the important question to ask yourself is what are you prepared to do to get the results you want?

The universe rewards action. Your sales will not improve by wishing it to be so. You have to take some action. You cannot think yourself into more exercise. You have to actually make the time and do it. Family time? Schedule it and truly make it a priority. Bring peace to the planet? End hunger? All do-able, but you have to DO something... and probably something different than what you did last year.

As I am fond of saying, if you want the rewards you have to do the work. Happy New Year. Happy new life.

Put It To Work

We've all heard of the 80/20 rule: Your superstars generate the most sales and profits. Not quite sure if it's so dramatic in the restaurant industry, but the key is the "B" player. This group typically makes up about 50 percent of your crew. To run your restaurant successfully, you need to have the B players improving their performance. They can do the job, but don't always seem to perform at a high enough level.

Each day they arrive, they ask: "Who's closing tonight?" If a manager who expects little is on duty, this group gives little. If the manager on duty is one who has high standards, demands plenty but rewards and recognizes, these employees perform at the higher level. Ultimately, it's the guests who benefit. Incentivize the B player and you'll have 75 percent to 80 percent of your employees doing exactly what you want—delivering outstanding service. The others? Time to go elsewhere!

*Excerpted from **Now That's Quick Service That Sells!: The Art of Managing the Sizzle**, Red Book Solutions.*
Call 800-526-9635 to order or see more at www.RedBookSolutions.biz/F5402.html.

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