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5 Things You Can Do Today to Be a Better Manager

This month, as we talk about goals, don't forget that there are little things that you can do right now—without planning or preparing—to do a better job. Keep setting and working toward long-term goals, but don't forget that every day can make a difference. Here are five things you can do today—and every day—to be a better manager... and build a better team:

- **Ask for help.** It's tempting to go it alone, but asking for suggestions, assistance or ideas empowers your team members to seek out their own expertise and it makes everyone perform better while boosting morale.
- **Set an example.** If you want everyone to pitch in, you need to do so yourself. If you want people to handle conflicts effectively, you need to keep a lid on your own temper. Ask yourself what you'd like your employees to do in a situation and lead the way.
- **Take stock.** Sit back and reflect on your progress as a leader. Conduct regular employee satisfaction surveys and hold team meetings that encourage—and reward—honest feedback and innovative solutions. If you don't study your behavior, you won't know how to evaluate and improve your own performance.
- **Analyze your rules, regulations and policies.** How many of them do you really need? If you truly trusted your team members would you need fewer of them? Eliminate the rules you can and explain why certain policies are important.
- **Reward them.** It's been said a million times in management books all over the world, but the truth is one of the best ways to lead and motivate employees is to recognize their efforts. Whether it's a bonus or a small gift—or just a public affirmation of their abilities—a little praise goes a long way.

Help Servers Reduce Mistakes By Ron Yudd

When servers and front-line personnel make mistakes, it costs them dearly in gratuity... and costs your operation at least double, because things have to be made all over again. Training servers to reduce mistakes allows them to build their gratuity, while helping you generate more sales and maintain costs.

There are several things you can do to help servers reduce mistakes. The number-one thing is to make them comfortable with your menu and other services you may offer guests. Solid knowledge about your menu is the key to reducing mistakes, increasing sales and also ensuring guests come back again and again. Think about how you can implement the following in your operation:

- **Promote and reward servers for menu knowledge.** Create detailed descriptions of the menu items and quiz your staff members to see how well they know the ingredients or cooking methods. Role-play new items or specials during pre-shift meetings.
- **Help servers describe exactly what the plate presentation looks like.** If they deliver something different tableside, then the guest may feel they didn't get what they ordered.
- **Teach your servers confirmation techniques.** Have them learn the importance of confirming the order. Sometimes this is achieved by having the server repeat it back to the guest or training the server to look for nonverbal cues, such as a "nod of the head" from the guest.
- **Insist on frequent check backs.** This is the only way that potential mistakes are caught early and taken care of in a way that satisfies the guest.

First Step: Check your server's current level of menu knowledge. Have your back-of-the-house team come up with several simple questions to start off with about certain items on the menu. Use these as part of your pre-shift meetings to see how

much your service really knows about the menu.

Put It To Work

To get your operation moving forward again, it's paramount to set goals supported by well-defined, written objectives. They specify what needs to be done, how it will be measured, who will be responsible, when goals will be reached, and what the overall impact will be. They get your operation off the treadmill and back on track.

Once you have your well-written goals on paper, it's time to place them into the big picture—the [Manager's Red Book](#)—your playbook. Goals are now available for all the managers to see and be aware of. For example, if you are working on reducing meat cost but the other managers are not focused on it, they will not follow up with the staff. The staff will be confused and nothing will change. Get everyone pointed in the same direction and you will have success! Studies show that when you write your goals down, they become real, and you are six times more likely to complete the action compared to not writing them down.

*Excerpted from **Red Book Ready: Achieving Operational Excellence**, Red Book Solutions.*

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