



Are You Ready for the Holidays? Test ALL Your Systems

By Ron Yudd


As the busy holidays approach, one of the areas that often gets shoved aside is checking up on the cost control and security systems you have in place. Periodically, they really need to be checked to see if they are actually working. In our 200 Points of Profit inspections, we often find operators that are very proud of the controls that they have in place, but look at us funny when we ask them when was the last time the controls were actually tested. Without fanfare, ALL the systems you have in place for security, key control, cash handling and product flow should be tested and evaluated.

Take a look at the following to help you get started:

- **Try to break into your operation.** Don't actually break in, you may not have enough bail money to get out, but you know exactly what we are recommending here... test the security system and all the external entrances and exits.
- **Pull banks periodically during a**

shift. What is actually being done at the POS? Close monitoring is the only way to find out.

- **Check the actual closing inventory periodically** by selecting random items to count/confirm.
- **Review your closing and opening procedures.** Check back-door security, last guest-out procedure, bank drops, and employee escorts to cars, etc.
- **Test walk-in and storeroom security.** How do you issue products into production... who, what, when and how?

Getting Started: Schedule a review of all the systems you currently have in place. Select a food item and walk it through the house to see the steps it takes from back door to guest table. Note the last time all your systems were tested by yourself, your managers or even an outside company. Create a schedule for testing, review and then upgrade or adjust as you work your way through the process. 

Wanna Fight?

Not too many people want to argue, disagree or openly oppose the views of their teammates or boss. Yet, it's often those opposing views that can bring about productive and positive change that can lead to stronger teams, improved service, and higher sales.

Unfortunately, there's a fine line between constructive and destructive conflict. It's a manager's job to effectively manage conflict within a team by addressing conflicts early to avoid conflict escalation. Escalation is common, and is characterized by accusations, gossiping, threats, taking sides and, ultimately, a weakening of a healthy team's bond.


To stop escalation from happening, managers must recognize both the positions and interests of the people involved. A position is a decision people make about what they want. Interests represent the "why" behind people wanting what they want.

For example, a kitchen manager announces a new procedure to the team for submitting special requests. This is

a position. Her decision is probably based on her interests – "why" she wants the new procedure, such as to save the line time or minimize waste.


She is surprised when she announces the new procedure and meets significant resistance from servers. All they hear is that they're going to have to learn something new that will take up more of their time. Their position is based on their interests of minimizing their confusion and avoiding change.

Finding a common ground and resolving the conflict requires the manager to uncover interests of the servers that the new procedure will serve. Will the new procedure make special requests come up faster? If so, the servers' interest of serving their guests quickly may change their position on the idea.

Conflict arises because the conflicting team members have either positions or interests or both that simply do not agree. Positions maintain the conflict. Your power to resolve conflict is found in the interests. 

Put It To Work

Over the years, the traditional pomp and circumstance that goes along with selling and serving wine has come to work against it in sales. Sure, at fine-dining establishments bottled wine sales are still the norm, but in more casual restaurants people are often too intimidated by wine's sometimes ostentatious traditions.

If you're having trouble getting all your servers on board to sell wine, try training just a few instead. One chain has one server be the "wine patrol" for the shift. Typically the operation's wine expert, this server isn't assigned a regular section, but moves through tables with an open bottle of a featured wine and several inverted glasses. As guests review their menus, they're offered a complimentary taste. If there's an interest, wine patrol describes the wine and menu items it complements – and answers questions about other wines on the list. After the tasting, those who request a full glass are served right away. If a bottle is ordered, the wine patrol is the one to fetch, open and pour, saving other servers time while earning big tips! 

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