# 096 Different Is Better Than Better

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It's tempting to look at a competitor and convince yourself you could do it better. More care. More attention. More of yourself. And maybe you could.

But here's the uncomfortable truth: you'll care more, and the market probably won't notice.

If your strategy is "better burgers than the place down the street," you're competing on a dimension most Guests can barely perceive. They're not running blind taste tests. What they're doing is choosing between experiences — and when two experiences look and feel the same, they default to convenience, price, or habit. You lose on all three if you're the newer, less established option trying to be a slightly better version of the same thing.

Consider the alternative. Instead of doing the same thing better, what if you turned the question upside down? What if you did it differently in a way that's more meaningful to the Guest?

Everyone in this industry is trying to solve the same problems: get Guests through the door, give them a good experience, bring them back. The operators who win aren't the ones with the best solution to a common problem. They're the ones who redefine the problem entirely. They don't ask "how do we serve food faster?" They ask "what if speed isn't what our Guest actually wants?" That's next-practice thinking. Not optimization. Reimagination.

The independent operator has a structural advantage here: you can move faster, pivot harder, and commit more deeply to a specific identity than any chain or franchise ever could. A 200-unit brand can't customize. They can't respond to a local market shift in real time. They can't make a kitchen-level decision that changes the Guest experience tomorrow. You can.

That's not a limitation of being small. That's the single greatest advantage you have. Use it.

## What Changes Tomorrow

Stop competing on 'better' tomorrow — better burger, better service — and instead redefine the problem your Guest is actually solving by choosing you. Your structural advantage as an independent is speed and flexibility a chain can't match. Use it on one decision this week.