2075 The Construction Gap

Product Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/2075-the-construction-gap/

The most predictable problem in restaurant pre-opening is also the most ignored: construction always runs longer than expected, and the operational readiness clock doesn't pause for it.

Every week construction runs over schedule is a week you are still paying rent, carrying financing costs, and not generating revenue. At the same time, your operational calendar — the one that covers hiring, developing your cast, vendor setup, systems development, and practice service — is compressing. Those two timelines are not independent. They are running on the same clock, and most operators treat them as if they aren't.

This is where most operators make their worst trade-off. When construction runs long, they compress the operational side. They rush through development. They skip the mock service runs. They finalize vendor agreements while simultaneously trying to receive equipment and secure a certificate of occupancy. Everything that should have happened across six weeks happens in two, and the result is an opening that looks finished on the outside while being fundamentally unready on the inside.

The construction timeline belongs on the same master schedule as the operational timeline — not separate documents, not separate conversations. When one slips, you need to see immediately what it does to the other. That is not a project management concept. That is the difference between opening prepared and opening scared.

Select your general contractor at month seven alongside your architect and designer. Get the construction timeline established before the first hammer swings, and build contingency into it. Not optimism — contingency. Identify your inspectors early. Know what inspections are required, in what sequence, and approximately how long each approval window takes in your jurisdiction. The certificate of occupancy is the last gate before you open, and local building departments do not accelerate their schedules because yours is late.