2145 The Outsourcing Trap

Product Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/2145-the-outsourcing-trap/

Here's what actually happens when you outsource your brand: you get four vendors producing four different versions of what your restaurant is supposed to be.

Your social presence says one thing. Your menu design says another. Your signage says something else entirely. And none of it sounds like you — because none of it came from you. That's not a design problem. That's an identity problem. You've handed the most valuable asset you can build to people who don't know your Guests, don't eat your food, and have never had a conversation about what makes your restaurant worth coming back to.

You cannot delegate your identity and expect it to be returned to you intact.

I worked with a multi-unit seafood operator on the East Coast who had vendors for everything. Social media vendor. Menu design vendor. Signage vendor. Photography vendor. Every brand expression his Guests touched had been produced by someone outside his organization — and he was genuinely proud of the efficiency. Good output at low unit cost. Specialists doing what specialists do.

The problem wasn't the quality of the work. The problem was that none of it sounded like the same restaurant.

When I laid out every touchpoint side by side — the menu, the social feed, the outdoor signage, the internal promotional materials — it looked like four different concepts marketed by four different agencies. Which is exactly what had happened. There was no unifying voice. No consistent standard. No single version of what this place was and what it stood for.

His Guests weren't connecting to the brand because there was no brand to connect to. There were vendors.

We pulled the brand expression in-house. Defined the standards. Established the voice. Built the templates. The investment was a fraction of what he'd been paying to have four different vendors produce four different answers to the same question. Costs went down. Coherence went up. And within two seasons, the consistency of the brand experience — not just the food, not just the service, but the full identity — was measurable in repeat Guest frequency and in the way new

Guests described the place when they sent someone there for the first time.

That's not a vendor problem. That's an ownership problem. Ownership is the fix.