2475 The Menu the Operator Stopped Seeing

Product Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/2475-the-menu-the-operator-stopped-seeing/

The menu item that is losing real estate — not dramatically, just slowly — never generates a complaint loud enough to trigger attention. The plate presentation that drifted from spec over six months. The portion that crept up by five percent across a hundred covers a week. The venue that aged past the Guest's expectation while the operator's eye stopped seeing it because familiarity made it invisible.

[Attention Distortion] in the Product fundamental produces a building that the operator can no longer read accurately because they have been inside it too long. The salience network flags novelty. Familiarity is the opposite of novelty. The building the operator has been in every day for three years has stopped generating the signals that produce attention — not because nothing is changing, but because the changes are gradual and the operator's perceptual system has normalized them.

[Salience Bias] explains why the product problems that get fixed are the ones that generated a loud complaint. The plate that came back. The Guest who said something. The vendor who shorted a delivery in a way that created a visible service failure. The quiet product drift — the item that stopped exciting regulars, the environment that feels slightly less special than it did, the experience that is technically correct but emotionally flat — never generates the signal that triggers attention.

[Anchoring] explains why the menu price that was set three years ago feels right even when the market has moved. The original price is the anchor. Every repricing decision is evaluated relative to it. The operator who should raise prices by $4 raises them by $2 because the anchor makes $4 feel excessive.

[Priming] explains why the operator who walks the floor looking for problems finds problems — and the operator who walks it looking for what's working finds that. Both operators are in the same building. The prime determined the read.

The Product discipline against [Attention Distortion]: bring in fresh eyes regularly. The Guest who visits for the first time sees the building the operator stopped seeing. The trusted peer who walks

the floor without being primed by the operator's current concerns sees what the familiarity filter has been hiding. The menu audit that happens on a calendar — not triggered by a complaint — catches the drift before the Guest does.