2500 The Product That Produces Conflict

Product Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/2500-the-product-that-produces-conflict/

The menu item the kitchen manager wants to keep and the operator wants to cut. The service standard the server thinks is unrealistic and the operator thinks is non-negotiable. The pricing decision the floor thinks will cost them tips and the operator thinks will protect the margin.

Every product decision produces a positions conflict in the building. The position is what each actor argues for. The interest underneath is what they are actually protecting — and the interests are almost never as far apart as the positions suggest.

The kitchen manager who wants to keep the item is not protecting a recipe. They are protecting their craft, their reputation with the staff who trained on it, or their fear that the cut signals the operator doesn't trust their judgment. The server who resists the pricing standard is not protecting their tip. They are protecting their relationship with the Guests who they know will push back — and their fear of being caught between a standard they didn't set and a Guest they have to face.

The Product discipline of [Positions vs. Interests]: before any product decision that will produce resistance, name the interest the resistance is protecting. Not to give in to the position — to address the interest as part of the implementation. The kitchen manager whose craft is acknowledged in how the cut is made will implement the cut differently than the one who experienced only the position. The server whose relationship with Guests is respected in how the pricing is introduced will present it differently than the one who was handed a new policy.

The product changes anyway. The interest addressed in how it changes determines whether the cast implements it or undermines it.