2785 The Product Change That Keeps Reverting

Product Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/2785-the-product-change-that-keeps-reverting/

The menu item that was cut and keeps coming back. The plate spec that was tightened and keeps drifting. The service standard that was raised and keeps reverting to the previous level. The experience design that was built and keeps being bypassed when the shift gets busy.

Every product change in a restaurant eventually meets [Change Resistance] — not from the cast's bad intentions but from the gravity of what was comfortable before. The kitchen that has been plating a dish one way for two years will revert to that way under pressure unless the change was designed to hold.

Loss Aversion is the primary mechanism. The cook who has to unlearn a technique does not experience the new technique as a gain. They experience the loss of the mastery they had. The server who has to introduce a menu change to a regular Guest does not experience it as an improvement. They experience the anticipated friction of the conversation. Both will default to the familiar under pressure unless the operator designed the change to feel like less of a loss.

The Product discipline of [Change Resistance]: make the new standard easier to execute than the old one — not just better, easier. The change that requires more effort than the familiar default will be bypassed when the shift gets hard. The change that requires less effort will sustain itself.

Quick wins in the Product context: the first Guest who responds positively to the new plate. The first kitchen pass that runs cleaner with the new spec. The first service interaction where the new standard produced a visible Guest reaction. Name it. Share it. Make the early evidence visible to the cast before the gravity of the familiar pulls them back.