2810 Is The Design Still Differentiated

Product Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/2810-is-the-design-still-differentiated/

The experience design that differentiated the concept at opening is not guaranteed to differentiate it five years later. The category learns. Competitors observe what is working and approximate it. The Guest's expectations rise as the category floor rises. The design that felt distinctive when the market had not seen it yet becomes familiar when the market has seen it everywhere.

The [Competitive Value Read] applied to Product asks one question on a continuous basis: is what we built still differentiated, or has the category caught up? The answer requires looking outward — visiting competitors, reading the market, understanding what the Guest experiences in every alternative they consider before choosing this operation. The operator who has not looked outward in twelve months does not know the answer. They know what they built. They do not know what the market now also has.

The alternative position is that great execution of a strong design is sufficient — that the operation which holds its standard does not need to monitor the competition because quality speaks for itself. That position is true until the competitor who has been watching closes the gap. Then quality is parity, not differentiation. The Guest who cannot tell the difference between two operations at the same price point does not have loyalty — they have convenience. Convenience goes to whoever is closer, cheaper, or faster on any given Tuesday.

Product design under [Competitive Value Read] is not a one-time achievement. It is a continuous audit of whether the design still produces the differentiation it was built to produce — and a continuous investment in the elements of the design that competitors cannot easily replicate.

What Changes Tomorrow: Name the one element of your product that your nearest competitor cannot reproduce in the next six months. If you cannot name it, your differentiation may already be parity. That element is what the [Competitive Value Read] is protecting. Build more of it.