3025 You Dont Have a People Problem

People Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/3025-you-dont-have-a-people-problem/

The operator who cannot keep good cast has a story about it. The labor market is tight. The generation doesn't want to work. Nobody wants to be held accountable anymore. The story is wrong — not about the conditions, but about the cause. The cause is the environment. The labor market is the same for every operator in your trade area. Some of them keep cast. Some of them don't. The difference is not the market. It is the environment.

Good people placed inside a default environment perform to the default. The same cast member who checks out in your building becomes a standout somewhere else — not because they changed, but because the environment changed. A different instruction set produced different behavior from the same person. That is [Environment As Default] operating exactly as it always does. The cast member was never the variable. The environment was.

The alternative position is that hiring is the solution — that if you find the right people, the environment stops mattering. That position produces a permanent hiring cycle. The environment absorbs every new hire and produces the same behavior the prior hire produced. Different person, same instruction set, same output. The operator hires again. Same result. The hire is not the variable. The environment is. Until the environment changes, the hiring cycle does not break.

People work is environment work first. Before the hire, before the onboarding, before the first coaching conversation — the operator examines the instruction set the building is running. What does this environment reward? What does it ignore? What does it celebrate? What does it correct? What does it let slide? If those answers don't produce the cast behavior you want, no hire fixes it. You are filling a broken mold and expecting a different shape.

Fix the environment. Define what it rewards, what it corrects, what it celebrates, what it refuses to ignore. Make those things visible, consistent, and non-negotiable. Then hire into that environment. In that order. The cast that thrives in a designed environment is a different cast than the one your default has been producing — even if it's the same people.

What changes tomorrow: before you post the next job listing, name three things your current environment rewards that you don't want it to reward. If you cannot name them, your environment is running on defaults you cannot see. Find them before you hire into them again.