3085 The Family Hire

People Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/3085-the-family-hire/

I've hired mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, cousins, brothers and sisters. Some of the best hires I've ever seen came as a pair. Some of the worst did too.

The relationship is irrelevant. That's the point.

Most operators walk into a family hire already decided. Either they're excited — it's someone they trust, someone they know, someone who comes pre-vouched. Or they're skeptical — they've seen the drama, the favoritism accusations, the complications when it goes wrong. Both reactions are the same mistake. You've let the relationship make the decision before you've evaluated the person.

A family hire is a hire. Same standard. Same interview. Same three questions. Same expectations on day one and every day after. The fact that someone shares a last name or a bloodline with a current employee doesn't change what the job requires or what your culture demands. It doesn't earn them a lower bar. It doesn't earn them a higher one either.

I don't walk into any hire with an overarching presumption — positive or negative. I walk in with a standard. The standard doesn't have a carve-out for family.

When the Restaurant Becomes Personal

I met my first two wives in the restaurant business. And before anyone makes the joke — yes, I know what it looks like. Two for two. I'm aware. For the record, I met my last wife on the internet and we've been together for over 25 years. So draw your own conclusions.

But here's the point: you cannot put people together for ungodly hours under pressure and expect human feelings to stay out of it. It's going to happen. The question isn't whether it does. The question is what you do about it when it does.

Most operators reach for a blanket policy. No relationships between staff. Sign here. I hate blanket policies. They're written for the worst-case scenario and applied to every situation regardless of context. They protect the operator from having to make a judgment call — and judgment calls are exactly what leadership requires.

My standard is simple. What happens between two adults outside of work is not my business. What happens on my floor is. The moment a personal relationship starts affecting performance, team dynamics, or the Guest experience — the tension bleeds into a shift, the favoritism shows up in scheduling, the breakup turns into a distraction — that's when it becomes an operational issue. And I address the operational issue. Not the relationship.

You manage what shows up at work. Everything else is none of your business.