3290 Decisions Not Values

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Values don't create accountability. Decisions do.

That's the line that cuts through every values conversation in a restaurant operation. The gap between what the operator says they stand for and what they actually do is the most corrosive conflict in any cast culture.

The operator who puts "Guests come first" on the wall and then cuts the stage below what the volume requires when labor cost is running hot has created a values conflict. Not with the cast. With themselves. And the cast sees it.

They don't call it out. They don't bring it to a team meeting. But they adjust. They recalibrate their own commitment level to match what the operator actually does — not what the poster says. The standard becomes aspirational rather than operational. The culture quietly drifts toward what gets done rather than what gets stated.

Values don't survive pressure by being posted. They survive by being chosen — deliberately, repeatedly, especially when the cost is real.

The operator who holds the standard when it's inconvenient is building accountability. Every time. Not because they gave a speech about values. Because they made a decision that aligned with them when it would have been easier not to.

The decision and the conviction behind it are one communication, not two. When you announce a direction — a new service sequence, a menu change, a pricing move, a staffing decision — the cast reads your confidence as signal. An uncertain announcement produces uncertain execution. A leader who presents a decision with visible doubt has not made a decision. They have opened a negotiation. The cast will resolve that negotiation at the lowest common denominator of whoever pushes back hardest. Conviction is not arrogance and it is not performance. It is the commitment to the decision that makes execution possible. The time for doubt is before the decision. After it, the only useful posture is forward.

Create real space for disagreement before the decision is made. Demand unified execution after it. Those are two different operating modes and both are required. The kitchen manager who

thinks the new service sequence is wrong should say so — in the one-on-one, in the pre-shift, before it goes live. On the floor, during service, in front of the cast and the Guest — they run it. The operator who allows hallway debate after a decision has been announced has not made a decision. They have opened a performance with an uncertain ending. Team together means everyone gets heard before the call is made. Team apart means once the call is made, everyone executes — including the people who disagreed. That is not compliance. That is the discipline that makes the standard holdable.

That's what the cast is watching. Not the values wall. The decisions.