3630 The Internal Network

People Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/3630-the-internal-network/

The second resource available to every independent operator is already inside the building.

Your team is not a collection of people who fill roles. Your team is a collection of whole people — with educations, skills, interests, and capabilities that extend well beyond the position they currently hold. The operator who sees only the role sees only a fraction of the resource.

The art student waiting your tables is your designer if you hire with your eyes open. The accounting student on the line is a financial resource if you build the relationship. The hospitality professional who took your server position because they needed flexibility after a career change has experience your operation can use — if you take the time to know who you hired.

This is not an argument for exploiting your cast. It is an argument for seeing them fully. The operator who knows what their people are capable of beyond the role they're paying them to fill has a different kind of team than the one who processes them as labor units. They have a multi-disciplinary resource that cost nothing extra to build, because it was built at the point of hire.

Hire talented people. That principle is in the People Fundamental. Its full implication is here: talent is not role-specific. When you hire talented people, you are hiring the whole person. And the whole person brings more to your operation than the job description ever anticipated.

Both the external network and the internal one share the same requirement: the relationship has to be real.

A professional contact who doesn't know your business or your operating reality is not a resource. They are a starting point. The value of the network is not in the accumulation of names. It is in the depth of the relationships those names represent.

Your attorney knows your lease. Your accountant has seen three years of your P&L. Your banker understands your seasonality. Your team knows the operation from the inside in a way no outside advisor ever fully can.

That depth of relationship is built over time, with intention, through genuine investment in the people on both sides of it. It cannot be manufactured at the moment of need. It has to already exist.

The operators who navigate the hardest moments in this business are almost never the ones who had the most money or the most talent. They are the ones who had the right people around them before the moment arrived.