3650 The Rungs

People Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/3650-the-rungs/

The loudest pushback in restaurant operations is not about food cost or labor percentage or Guest experience. It is about affordability.

"I'm the chief cook and bottle washer. I don't have money for a kitchen manager or a front lead or anything else."

That is the loudest version. But it is not one objection — it is five different objections wearing the same costume. The pushback changes shape at every rung of the operator's development. The bandwidths underneath it do not.

Four bandwidths. Every operator at every rung is constrained by some mix of these four. The mix changes by rung. The four do not.

[Money] — what the P&L can absorb in labor cost.

[Time] — what hours the operator has left to train, develop, or step back.

[Trust] — what the operator believes can be handed to someone else without breaking. Two sub-issues, both development problems: [Competence] — developing the team's skill so they earn the trust; [Ego] — developing the operator's own capacity to give the trust once it is earned. Both directions are work the operator has to do. The team has to grow into it. The operator has to grow out of needing to be the only one who has it.

[Systems] — what holds the operation up when the operator is not holding it up themselves.

The [Future State] lens runs through every rung. Not a fifth bandwidth — a way of thinking applied across all four. The question, in its general form: what does this look like eighteen months from now if I do not change the negative circumstance I am allowing to exist? And what do I need to do today to prepare for where I am going, not just manage where I am?

The operator who never runs the [Future State] question stays at the rung they are on. The work today is shaped by the rung being climbed toward, not the rung being stood on.

Five rungs. Each one has its own pushback, its own bandwidth mix, its own failure modes, and its own climb requirements.