

SECTION 8.2 BEING A SUCCESSFUL LEADER

In order for restaurants and foodservice operations to be successful, they must have managers who have leadership skills and qualities. Remember, good leaders are made not born. Good leaders must understand the goals, values, vision, and mission of an operation in order to successfully lead the team.

Study Questions

After studying Section 8.2, you should be able to answer the following questions:

- What are ethics and what role do they play in the restaurant and foodservice industry?
 - What are the characteristics of a leader?
 - What are the common expectations that employees have about managers?
 - What is motivation and what role does a manager play in motivating employees?
 - What is an organizational goal and why should the goal be SMART?
 - What are the purposes of vision statements and mission statements?
 - How do employees' roles and jobs impact the mission and goals?
 - What are the steps for solving a problem?
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Leadership Skills

Leadership is the ability to inspire and motivate employees to behave in accordance with the vision of an organization and to accomplish the organization's goals. Figure 8.3 shows a leader directing his or her team.

Good leaders demonstrate the following behaviors:

- **Provide direction:** Leaders communicate clearly and ensure that others know what is expected of them. One of the ways to accomplish this is to discuss roles and responsibilities, verifying that everyone understands the directions.
- **Lead consistently:** Using the organization's vision, mission, and values as checkpoints, leaders maintain the organization's standards by holding themselves and others accountable for their actions. Leaders must treat everyone fairly.
- **Influence others:** Leaders have the responsibility to earn the respect of others, which in turn enables them to encourage those they lead. Good performance, professionalism, and engaged, satisfied employees are all a result of leaders who influence through example. Leaders also build consensus through a give-and-take dialogue, considering other people's opinions to help form their own.
- **Motivate others:** The importance of communication cannot be overstated. Leaders give pep talks, ask for advice, and vocally praise people's work. They also must keep everyone informed, so that personnel know what they are supposed to be doing and how it contributes to the big picture. Finally, communication motivates people—instilling a sense of belonging by allowing them to contribute ideas.
- **Coach and develop others:** Leaders help others learn better ways to perform a task and take pride in others' success.
- **Anticipate change:** Leaders look for ways to continuously improve and for better ways to do things, understand the link between change and learning, and communicate the benefits of new processes and procedures. It is also crucial to help others to embrace the change if it is to be successful.
- **Foster teamwork:** A good team leader sees who is good at each task, helps team members improve their performances, and puts the team's goals ahead of his or her own. Ultimately, a successful team leader needs to listen, be consistent, and provide direction to bring the team together.



Figure 8.3: Leaders need to inspire and motivate employees.

[fast fact]

Did You Know...?

"The most dangerous leadership myth is that leaders are born—that there is a genetic factor to leadership. This myth asserts that people simply either have certain charismatic qualities or not. That's nonsense; in fact, the opposite is true. Leaders are made rather than born." —Warren G. Bennis

"Leaders aren't born they are made. And they are made just like anything else—through hard work. And that's the price we'll have to pay to achieve that goal, or any goal!" —Vince Lombardi

"Inventories can be managed, but people must be led." —H. Ross Perot

"Don't tell people how to do things, tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results." —George S. Patton

Interpersonal Skills

People skills are also known as **interpersonal skills**. A person who possesses good interpersonal skills is a person who can generally relate to and work well with others. There are many ways to practice people skills in the workplace:

- **Acknowledge guests:** When guests enter the restaurant or foodservice operation, it is important that employees greet them as they would a personal friend who is coming for dinner at their home. Make eye contact with guests as they enter your area of service. Welcome guests with a great smile and a genuine, enthusiastic greeting. Doing so makes the guest feel important and wanted. It is important to pay attention to guests' concerns, questions, and body language. Getting to know guests is important to the long-term success of any restaurant. Figure 8.4 shows a hostess greeting guests as they arrive at a restaurant.
- **Show empathy:** Everyone from time to time will come up against issues and challenges in life. A person with strong people skills will demonstrate empathy for the life and work challenges that everyone faces. Empathy is the act of showing understanding and sensitivity to someone else about a situation.



Figure 8.4: This hostess is showing good interpersonal skills by smiling and by welcoming incoming customers.

Successful managers know that showing understanding and sensitivity is not about accepting the issues or challenges the employee is facing, but about acknowledging that the employee is having these issues and challenges.

- **Praise others:** Think about how it feels to hear “Good job!” Everyone likes to be praised and appreciated for his or her efforts. Managers especially need to praise staff, because it helps employees feel motivated to provide the best service they can. Figure 8.5 shows a manager praising his kitchen staff for a job well done.

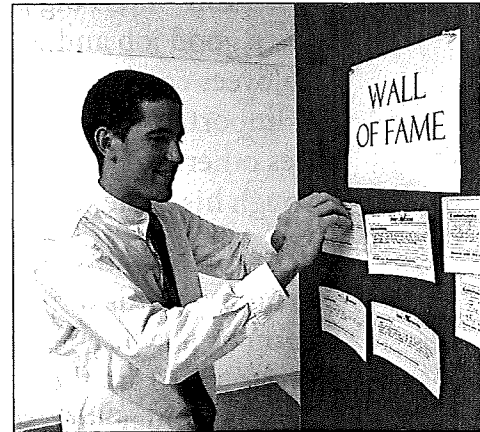


Figure 8.5: Praise and recognition motivate employees and create a good working environment.

- **Be aware of cultural differences:** As individuals in a diverse world, it is important that all employees and managers make themselves aware of the many cultural differences they may encounter with guests and coworkers. Every employee in the restaurant needs to understand that each person is unique and brings strengths and opportunities to the workforce. There may be different ways of doing things, looking at situations, levels of interaction, and appropriate behavior between cultures. Learning to accept these differences is beneficial to everyone.
- **Be ethical, approachable, and professional:** No matter what job a person holds in a restaurant or foodservice operation, every individual represents him- or herself, the team, and the image of the business. Acting with integrity and in an ethical way promotes great teamwork and encourages others to return the favor. As a manager or an employee, being open and approachable will create an operation that runs more smoothly and can head off more serious problems. For example, what seems like a small workplace complaint, for instance, “The floor in the back is a little slippery,” can turn into a much bigger problem. If ignored, it might lead to someone falling and becoming seriously injured. All employees should be aware of their actions and the impact those actions have on others.

Motivation

Motivation is comprised of the reasons why a person takes action or behaves in a certain way. A big part of leadership is keeping team members motivated to do a good job and work hard toward the team's success. Continually giving employees constructive feedback is essential. Making employees feel valued and like important players on the team keeps them motivated, which in turn influences others to be the same. A leader motivates and influences other people through his or her own actions every day with every decision.

Internal motivation is the personal drive to do the best work possible whether there are rewards or not. People who are internally motivated are seeking satisfaction or maybe a feeling of accomplishment. External motivation is when the drive comes from the desire to receive something, such as a reward or recognition for achieving results. Examples of **external motivation** are paychecks, bonuses, and health benefits.

Leaders balance focus on both types. They train and coach. They encourage others to feel good about their performance and their jobs. They set goals for themselves and other people, as well as rewards for achieving those goals. Even the recognition of personal milestones, such as celebrating a birthday or graduating from a program, is part of motivating.

Employee Expectations of Managers

Employees respond to and are more easily motivated by managers whom they respect and trust. Employees come to the workplace with expectations and hopes of working with these kinds of managers. Their expectations fall into three groups: professionalism, personal treatment, and work and task support (refer to Table 8.2).

Table 8.2: Employee Expectations of Managers	
Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate knowledge. Demonstrate leadership. Practice honesty. Practice confidentiality. Practice respect. Practice moral behavior. Practice ethics.
Personal Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice fairness. Practice consistency. Provide support. Practice empathy. Provide feedback.
Work and Task Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide clear directions. Provide tools and resources. Encourage professional growth and development. Include employees in decision-making that affects them. Provide a safe environment. Practice reasonable and rational behavior.

Professionalism

Professionalism is the combination of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors a person shows while performing a job. It includes interactions with other employees, vendors, and guests. People with high levels of professionalism are excellent performers, honest, and respectful, and they lead and serve others with integrity and fairness.

Personal Treatment

Personal treatment refers to the ways in which managers interact with staff and the value system that governs their daily conduct. Employees expect their managers to practice ethical behavior.

Work and Task Support

Employees expect to have the tools and resources they need to perform their duties. Employees also expect that a manager will provide coherent directions on what is required. An extension of these resources includes providing a safe and harassment-free work environment. Hazards and risks in the immediate workplace are always present in a restaurant or foodservice operation, and a manager needs to ensure that they are minimized for employee safety. Finally, employees need and want support for their own personal and professional

development. Creating a work environment that takes care of and meets these expectations is another critical task that managers face.

Effective managers discover ways to meet these expectations by devoting time to examining work conditions and developing strong relationships with their employees. The results that managers get from meeting these expectations are usually in direct proportion to the amount of time they allocate to them. If a manager devotes time to developing him- or herself and others and provides an encouraging work environment, motivational challenges are more likely to be minimized.

Communication with Employees

In general, most managers practice an open-door policy. Managers need to understand the importance of communication and how communication or lack thereof can affect an operation. So, they want to know what employees are thinking and feeling.

Employees need to understand that operational issues may arise that force them to communicate important information to a manager. There will be times that such information may put a manager or an employee in a position they do not want to be in, but the right decision should be made. Employees need to feel safe. They need to know that they will be able to voice their concerns without suffering any retribution.

Most of the time, managers want to have constructive and valid opinions about work tasks. They, just like the employee, want the job to be productive and fun. Managers want to hear about items that may be preventing employees from completing their daily tasks so that they can address those issues as needed. Managers must be sure to keep those lines of communication open.

Problem Solving

Successful managers recognize a problem when it occurs. Then they define it, come up with a solution, and implement that solution quickly. Problems happen in every business. Restaurants with a large number of problems are most likely having the same problems again and again because they were not solved correctly the first time. On the other hand, an operation with few problems probably solves any problems it does have accurately and quickly.

Problem solving depends on an intentional process followed in a logical sequence. Following the sequence leads to a reasonable conclusion. When management works through the **problem-solving process** correctly, the operation will not have to deal with the problem again once it has been solved. It is

therefore critical that managers follow a problem-solving model to explore all of a problem's potential causes. There are several models available. The process model presented here is a compilation of some of the most common versions. It is composed of seven major steps. Each step provides input to the next until the final phase, which calls for documenting the outcome of the process. Figure 8.6 illustrates this problem-solving model:

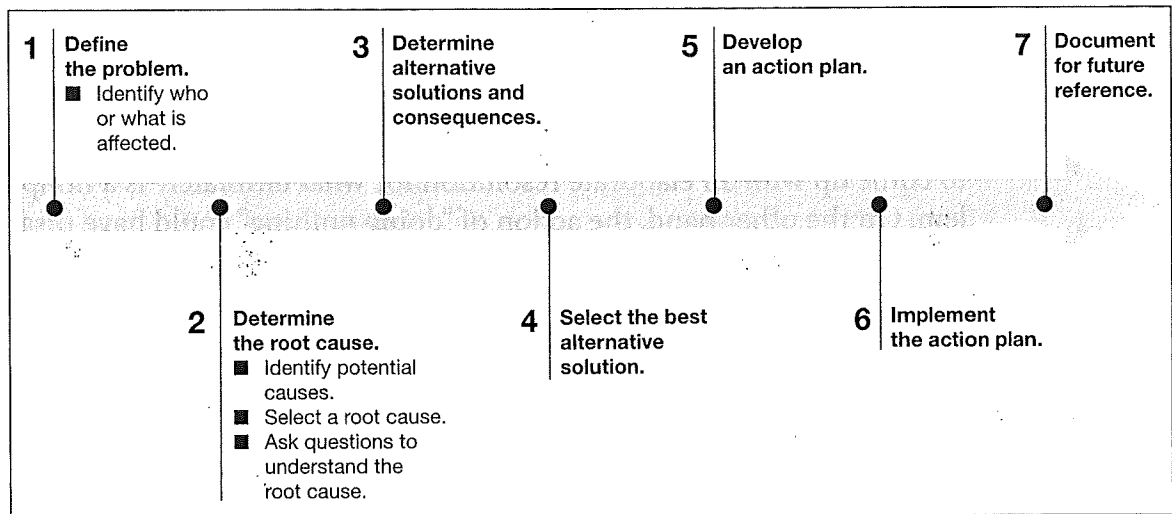


Figure 8.6: To explore all of a problem's potential causes, follow the problem-solving model.

1. **Define the problem:** Before beginning to solve a problem, the first step is to define the problem as precisely as possible. Misdiagnosing a problem will lead to a meaningless solution because it won't address the real problem. Ask numerous questions to find out exactly what is happening. Do not take a problem at its face value:
 - Identify who or what is affected. Once the problem has been defined, determine who or what is being affected by the problem. The answer to these questions could include one or more groups of people, including employees, management, owners, guests, or the public. It could also include one or more individuals within these groups and not necessarily the entire group. Asking these questions might also identify processes or systems within the restaurant that are not performing as well as they could, even though they may not be the source of, or even be affected by, the problem.
2. **Determine the root cause:** Normally, one or two sources will be the cause of a problem. The **root cause** is the action or situation that initiates the problem. Typically, root causes are system breakdowns or human errors. Restaurant and foodservice operations are made up of a series of systems, including those for purchasing, production, customer service, cash handling, cost control, scheduling, etc. Problems occur either when one of

these systems breaks down or was not designed carefully in the first place. When human error is the cause of problems, question the people affected by the problem to determine its root cause. During the investigation, probe deeply to find the real root cause of the problem, rather than just one of the contributing factors or symptoms. Be sure, however, to avoid accusations and blame when asking staff these kinds of questions.

3. **Determine alternative solutions and consequences:** An alternative is a potential solution to a problem. The list of alternative solutions should be as long as necessary. At this point, do not think about whether a solution is reasonable or workable; if it is a potential answer, put it on the list. One alternative that should always be investigated is “do nothing.” It’s possible to come up with an elaborate resolution for what ultimately is a nonproblem. On the other hand, the action of “doing nothing” could have disastrous consequences. Now that the list of alternatives is complete, analyze it for the consequences that each solution might have. These key questions should be asked for each solution:
 - What are the consequences of this action? Who will be affected by this decision and how will they be affected? Will it be a positive or negative effect?
 - Is it cost effective? Will the solution cost more than the problem? If so, is there a more reasonable approach? Can the solution be reconstructed to cost less money? All too often, management chooses a costly solution that is financially worse than the problem.
 - Is it reasonable? Investigate the complexity of the solution. Does it have a chance to succeed, or is it so complex that people will ignore it, resulting in a reoccurrence of the problem?
 - Will it close the loop? In the case of a problem caused by a system loop-hole, be sure the solution will address both the problem and the loop.
 - Will it be effective? Will the solution work? Does it have a chance? Will everyone accept it as reasonable? Remember that a solution without acceptance will not be effective.
4. **Select the best solution:** Consider the consequences of the proposed alternatives and answer the questions in the previous step to narrow the list of possible solutions. Sometimes two or three alternatives are left. If so, put the remaining options through this same scrutiny again. The problem and solution must be looked at from all angles, as though examining all six sides of a cube. Ask the tough questions and dig deep to find the correct

solution. Do not rush the process. The correct solution will result in the problem going away. The incorrect solution will result in going through the entire process again.

5. **Develop an action plan:** After choosing a solution, the next step is to develop an action plan. An action plan is a strategy of steps to carry out so that a problem does not recur. It must describe exactly what should happen, step by step. The output from the action plan might take the form of a policy addition or change, an operational addition or change, or an employee handbook addition or change.
6. **Implement the action plan:** Communicate the action plan and its outcome to all individuals involved. Those who are involved in the problem and/or solution need to understand what the solution is, why it is needed, when it will be finalized, and how it will impact them. This group might include owners, other managers, employees, guests, suppliers, or the public. Acceptance depends in part on who is affected by the problem and/or by its solution. Conduct a follow-up to find out whether the affected parties received the action plan's message and accepted the solution.
7. **Document the problem and solution for future reference:** Every restaurant and foodservice operation should have a problem/solution file. It should contain documentation, such as a report written by management describing the problem and its solution. Prior to going through the problem-solving exercise, consult this file for similar events to get some insight into solving the current dilemma. Add the current situation's report and resolution to this file to assist future managers with their problem-solving encounters. This step isn't just about filing away a problem, and not learning from it or ever looking at it again, but using the solutions to make improvements so the operation doesn't just move from problem to problem.

Table 8.3 describes a problem using the problem-solving model.