

Tackling Time: A Guide for Whitbread Restaurant Managers who want to deliver 'Serving up Great Memories' through 'The Main Ingredient'

One of the biggest challenges facing Whitbread Restaurant Managers is finding the time to engage with the implementation of 'Serving up Great Memories' and making it a central part of 'business as usual'. Your role in delivering 'The Main Ingredient' is fundamental and the impact that you can have is invaluable. Creating a plan and putting it into place will demand focus and quite possibly an evolutionary change in how you spend your time.

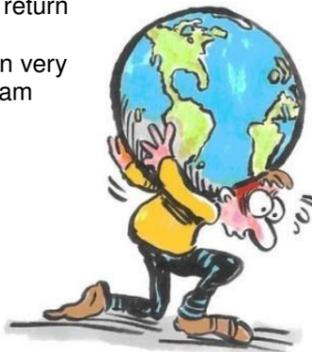
Here are some ideas that might help:

- **Be clear about your own attitude towards 'Serving up Great Memories' and 'The Main Ingredient'**

If you think that the main focus of your role is to have team members who are able and willing to 'Serve up Great Memories' and that this will help you to run your restaurant better and deliver the Recipe for Success, then you are much more likely to focus on the attitudes, behaviours and skills of your team – recognising that it is through **your** focus on **their** performance that will deliver the results the business requires.

- **Be clear about the payback that you will get from enabling your team to be willing and able to 'Serve up Great Memories'...**

- What can you do that will give you the biggest return on your time investment?
- Do you need to work with specific colleagues in very focused areas or more generally across the team to address their development?
- Is it worth working with specific individuals first, so that you can leave them to do things that you would normally do, freeing up more of your own time for strategic planning and tactical coaching?



Don't carry the whole world on your shoulders!

ACTION: Why not ask for a face-to-face meeting with your ROM to discuss 'The Main Ingredient' and to go through your Manager's Manifesto. Outline how you believe its implementation will help you to run your business better.

A good starting point might be to talk through a SWOT analysis of your ideas, outlining the benefits of doing them compared with the cost and missed opportunity of not being able to get around to them.

Your ROM will be able to explore your manifesto and give you the encouragement and support that you will need to spend your time doing things differently. They will also be able to coach you to think about who and what to focus on, help you to keep things in perspective and make sure your plan is realistic. Try to identify all of the blocks or barriers to success and work out potential solutions together.

Urgent versus Important

- People tend to do things which they feel are **urgent** – things that have a deadline by when they must be completed. The closer the deadline, the more urgent the task feels.
- People also do things which they hold to be **important** – things that are high in their priorities.

Whitbread Restaurant Managers are very good at dealing with the 'here and now' of day-to-day trading and inevitably your business will be driven by the urgent:

"The customer is here *right now* ... This table needs to be cleared *immediately*, this guest needs to be seated *straight away*, that table needs to be checked *before they finish* their main course..."

Sometimes it is hard to see that stepping back from the frontline **NOW** to do something that will have an impact in the longer term is a worthwhile investment of your time.

Thinking (and talking) this through will help important tasks to rise in your priorities. It is useful to realise that in order to spend time on doing the thing that is now high in our priorities, something else has to be delayed, or not done at all.

As a Manager, you don't have time to do everything and so you must focus on the things that you most need to do to move your business forward and to be effective.

This is called prioritisation – if you don't do these things, who will?

For most Whitbread Restaurant Managers, opening the Restaurant (on time), serving customers (quickly and to standard), working towards an all green win card, (doing well in audits) are all urgent, here-and-now, deadline driven activities – which means they tend to get done.

However, success also depends on doing less obvious longer term tasks as well – it is no good to say that we can't get around to 'people development' because we are too busy, being busy!

To be truly effective, you need to be just as skilled at being proactive, as you are at being reactive.

Proactive planning means thinking through the things that need to be done that will help you to move the business forward in the medium and long term and then recognising that the time to get started on those things is **today**.

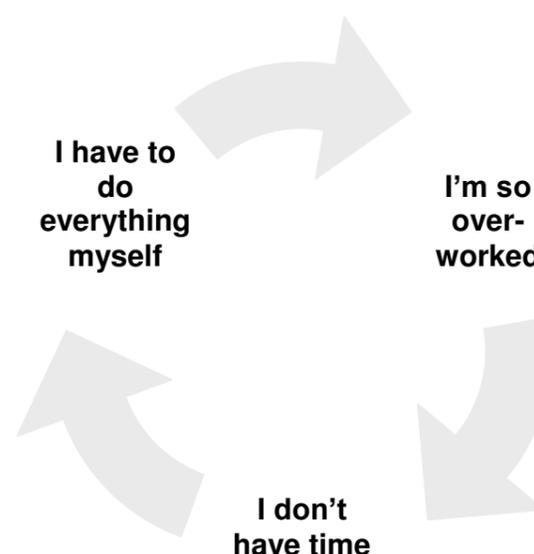
This means that they must be a part of your plan, for this day, this week, this month and this year.

"Failing to plan is planning to fail!"

Mark Barnes

Break the Circle – A focus on development and coaching is really all about delegating

"I don't have the time to develop my team."



Developing individuals and coaching them to success takes time, but the 'pain will be worth the gain' when your staff develop in skill and independence.

Top Tips: Making time for development

Of course it is impossible to 'make time' – it is a scare resource and can only be spent once... but like money you can spend it wisely or frivolously, you can save it, you can reallocate it and you can invest it so that you get a return on your investment at a later date.

Your time is valuable and as you will already know there are some things in your Restaurant which only you, the General Manager, can do.

You must spend your time on those things – or they simply won't get done.

Get other people to do the things that they can do and if they can't do them yet – coach them so that they can in future!

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After 'The Main Ingredient' Workshop and after every shift, take time to plan:

- Evaluate the risks of implementing 'The Main Ingredient' against the potential benefits. Be proactive. Develop a Manager's Manifesto and get started with your team.
- Good planning for tomorrow begins today

Make more use of focused 'Management by Walking About' (MBWA) and at the end of every shift, take a few minutes to review how it went.

Enjoy your own and the team's successes and think through what you want your management team to work on with the team. Help them to create a plan of what they need to do and record what you want to follow-up and check on.

- This will provide two great benefits:

- **Firstly:** you can now 'take off your working head' and leave it in the Restaurant in the sure knowledge that (all things being equal) you know what has to be done tomorrow. This will help you to 'switch off' overnight and focus on the other things in life that are important to you.
- **Secondly:** When you next arrive on shift, you will already have a personal plan, which sits alongside the Restaurant's plan.

As you prepare to start every shift, review your plan and if necessary, change it.

Having a plan gives you power. Because you have a plan, you can manage the change by comparing what you intended to do with what you actually have to do. This means that you can make better and 'live' decisions about how you spend your time, focusing on the most important tasks in the certainty that if you do not do something it is because you chose not to do it. **This is called prioritisation!**



Generate Time in your Business:

Which tasks, responsibilities or decisions that rely on you could be delegated as coaching or development assignments to one of your team or colleagues?

Having a 1:1 conversation with them will help you both to identify tasks that they think they can or would like to take on. Delegating some of these would give you a huge 'pay-off' in terms of saving your own time in the long term.

- Push at your own comfort zone:

- What are the functional tasks that you enjoy doing the most?
- Have you kept these for yourself, when they should have been delegated or shared amongst the team a long time ago?
- What are the functional tasks that you enjoy doing the least?
- Might one of your Managers enjoy doing some of the things which you find boring or mundane?

Things which for you are no longer a challenge might well be a stretch for them.

- Don't confuse being busy or being efficient with being effective:

Efficiency deals with quantity, effectiveness focuses on value and high return.

There is no point in efficiently doing the wrong things!

- Share your knowledge:

- What are the things in your business that you are particularly good at?
- Would any of your team benefit from being coached to acquire some of these competencies too? (How can you be released for promotion if your personal skills and knowledge are irreplaceable?)

- Use coaching to fill the gaps:

- What are the things in the business that you are less good at?

There must surely be some tasks which your team could do better or faster than you can. Remember, coaching is just a form of delegation. Coach your people to take on new tasks and watch them grow!



Time Management Top Tips:

- Identify your Prime Times:

- When during the day or the week is your energy highest?

Fill this time with the most demanding and high value / high return tasks that you have to do. Use low energy times for the quick, easy, less valuable tasks that you need to deliver.

- Use the 'Salami technique':

If you haven't got time to tackle a whole task in one go, break it down into several bite-size chunks, taking the completion of each slice as a victory. Schedule when you will take the next bite. Chopping the Salami into more digestible pieces will make it easier to find time to eat a piece every day – giving a real sense of progress. Often, it is only when you look back that you realise just how far you have come.

- Stop saying 'Yes', if you want to say 'No':

It's tough, but the more you give, the more people will try and take. Decide what you are committed to delivering and focus on delivering those things.

- Use 'Chat To' lists:

Take one piece of paper per key colleague and put their name at the top. As things occur to you, make a list of what you need to talk with them about and encourage them to do the same for you. This means that you will disturb each other with random ideas less frequently and when you have a 1:1, you will both have an agenda – a rolling list of things that you want to raise or follow-up on.

Using this method, you will be less likely to forget things; your conversations will be more structured and more focused on your shared agendas.

More ideas that can help you to develop your own and your teams Time Management can be found in:

Time to Think by Mark Barnes ISBN 9 781852 525385