

RO Webinar Series

Escape the Owner Bottleneck: Build a Restaurant That Runs Without You



Welcome!



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Presenter

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Sr. Director, Workforce Development



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Escape the Owner Bottleneck:
Build a Restaurant That Runs
Without You



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Escape the Owner Bottleneck: Build a Restaurant That Runs Without You

If the place only runs right when you're there, you've become the system

- ✓ Pinpoint where you're the bottleneck
- ✓ Use systems to stabilize performance
- ✓ Hand off responsibility with standards and follow through



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If something only works when you touch it, that's not leadership – that's a missing system.

You've become the system

Presence ≠ Leadership

Standards trapped in your head

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If You're Always Needed, You Are the System



Decisions wait for you



Problems escalate to you



Standards slip when you're gone

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The Hidden Cost of Being the Bottleneck

- Slower execution
- Manager hesitation
- Owner exhaustion
- Stalled business capability



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Why Owners Get Stuck in the Weeds

- Doing it yourself feels faster
- Delegation feels risky
- Standards aren't explicit
- "I'll just fix it" becomes the pattern



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When owners complain about follow-through, they often blame motivation.

But most of the time, the real issue is clarity...

- Undefined responsibility
- Overlapping authority
- Decisions with no owner



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Common Owner Bottlenecks

1. Scheduling Only Works When the Owner Touches It
2. Service Recovery Requires Owner Approval
3. Opening and Closing Standards Degrade When You're Not There
4. All Vendor Relationships Run Through the Owner
5. Training Is Owner-Dependent
6. Performance Feedback Requires the Owner
7. Inventory and Ordering Decisions Stall
8. Repairs and Maintenance Decisions Come to a Halt
9. Culture Depends on Your Presence
10. Decision-Making Confidence Is Missing



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Common Owner Bottlenecks: Opening & Closing Standards

Standards degrade when you're not there

The restaurant "feels off" on your return

Prep, cleanliness, and readiness vary by shift

No one can clearly explain what was missed



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Manager Opening/Closing Duties

System Implementation

- Have a manager implement the system from the Restaurant Owner's Office, not on the floor.
- Have a manager implement the system from the Restaurant Owner's Office, not on the floor.
- Have a manager implement the system from the Restaurant Owner's Office, not on the floor.

Download the Manager Opening Checklist

Download the Manager Closing Checklist

Pre-Shift Meetings

Communication for success!

RO español

Profit & Loss

Item	Amount	Percentage
Food Cost	28.5%	28.5%
Alcohol Cost	12.5%	12.5%
Payroll	18.5%	18.5%
Utilities	3.5%	3.5%
Insurance	2.5%	2.5%
Marketing	1.5%	1.5%
Repairs	1.5%	1.5%
Supplies	1.5%	1.5%
Other	1.5%	1.5%
Total	69.5%	69.5%

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If the place only runs right when you're there, you've become the system...

Pinpoint where you're the bottleneck

Use systems to stabilize performance

Hand off responsibility with standards & follow through

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Takeaway 1: Identify Where You Are the Bottleneck

What decisions only get made when I'm here?

What problems wait instead of being solved?

What standards only hold when I'm watching?

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Systems Are How You Scale Yourself

Same standard, every shift

Same expectations, every role

Same outcomes, without you



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What Systems Actually Replace

- Your memory
- Your constant oversight
- Your gut decisions





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If performance changes with the schedule, you don't have a people problem — you have a systems gap.



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Takeaway 2: Systems Stabilize Performance

- ✓ Procedures define what the work actually is. Not vaguely, but specifically.
- ✓ Checklists confirm that work happened.
- ✓ And rhythms — daily, weekly, monthly — ensure it keeps happening without heroics.



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You Cannot Delegate Responsibility Without Standards

- Expectations must be defined
- Outcomes must be measurable
- Authority must match responsibility



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Standard Type	Focus Area	Why It Matters
Product Standards	Food quality, portion control, plating	Ensures consistency, meets guest expectations, and supports brand integrity
Service Standards	Greeting, order accuracy, table timing	Drives guest satisfaction, repeat visits, and positive word-of-mouth
Cleanliness Standards	Dining area, restrooms, kitchen hygiene	Impacts health inspections, guest perception, and overall safety
Safety Standards	Fire safety, equipment use, food safety	Protects staff and guests, ensures legal compliance, and reduces liability
Operational Efficiency	Prep timing, station setup, ticket flow	Improves speed of service, reduces waste, and optimizes labor utilization
Employee Standards	Appearance, behavior, punctuality	Reinforces professionalism, team culture, and guest trust
Management Standards	Shift reviews, Line checks, Daily routines	Creates accountability and operational consistency
Financial Controls	Cash handling, comps/voids, inventory	Prevents loss, supports accurate reporting, and improves profitability

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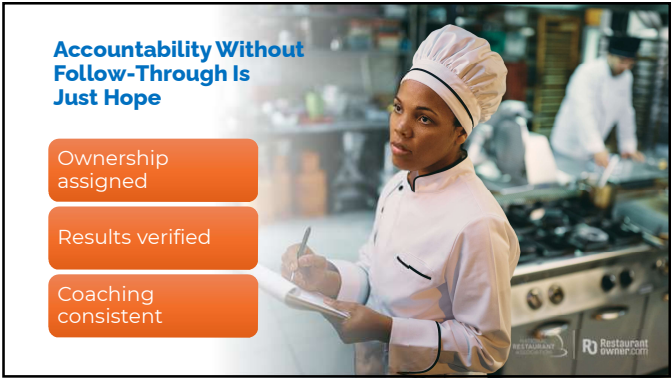
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What Freedom Actually Looks Like

- **Freedom isn't doing nothing.** It isn't being absent. And it absolutely isn't lowering standards.
- Freedom is **spending your time on higher-value work** — coaching leaders, strengthening culture, identifying risks before they become problems.
- You **move from fixing symptoms to shaping the system.** From reacting to planning. From carrying the business to guiding it.



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Manager Meetings



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✓ Identify one bottleneck

✓ Define the standard

✓ Assign and follow up

Your Action this Month



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Final Thoughts

- **You are not the system:** If the business only works when you're present, it's borrowing your effort—not operating on its own.
- **Systems create freedom:** They carry your standards when you're not there and let you lead instead of rescue.
- **Independence is built, not declared:** It comes from intentional handoffs, clear standards, and follow-through—not hope.
- **New habits only form through reinforcement:** Standards don't stick because they're written down. They stick because they're repeatedly coached, checked, and held accountable.
- **You still need the right people:** Systems don't turn the wrong people into the right ones—but they do allow good people to perform consistently without you standing over them.



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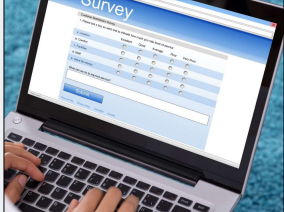


Questions? We're Ready to Answer!



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Share Your Feedback Today



Just 4 quick questions!



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Upcoming Webinar

Why Your Hiring Isn't Working – and How to Fix It

September 2, 2026
4:00 PM ET



Kelli Laube

Hospitality Trainer



Sara Bray

VP, Workforce & Business Development





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Thanks for attending!



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