

### **Is Mediocrity the new Excellence?**

“There is a tiny pool of good restaurant managers and quality staff in South Africa to choose from” This was a statement made to me by the HR manager of one of South Africa’s more successful large restaurant franchisors.

As a result of this restaurant owners hire poor, unqualified managers who lack the management skills, experience and above all else the attitude and passion to be committed to a difficult job. This ultimately translates into inferior service, decreased profits, high staff turnover, and overall brand damage.

Many organisations can be and are profitable despite this general malaise. However, how long can any organisation enjoy long term sustainability and growth without the right people driving it?

Restaurant manager is a highly specialised, niche position that requires a very particular skill set, attitude and personality attributes. The mandatory hard skills aside, a good manager requires the right blend of personal, practical and analytical thinking and decision making styles. A manager must be able to find, develop and retain the best people and continually motivate them to perform. He/she must have the ability to plan, organize and lead a team to flawlessly execute on a daily basis. The dual responsibility of managing human and physical resources, as well as see the big picture, be empathetic, solve problems and ultimately lead his/her team to consistent excellent results are just some of the attributes required for an effective manager.

The reality for most franchisees is that very few managers are developed to this degree. Service in South Africa has reached new levels of mediocrity as a direct result of owners and industry leaders not possessing the foresight and commitment to developing its people. Most attempts at discussing or implementing strategies to address this issue are met with denial and resignation. Industry leaders and owners continue to benefit from high short term profits without investing sufficiently into talent development.

Employees, now more than ever are seeking much more than just a good pay cheque, they are seeking job fulfilment, growth and development as well. If this is not part of the package employers offer, do not expect to find or retain good people. It is a simple fact that if you do not invest in finding, developing and keeping your people, you, the restaurant owner or franchisor are doomed to continually source talent from the bottom of the barrel and produce mediocre returns with little long term sustainability.

I know of no franchise in particular that is synonymous with excellence and consistently produces exceptional service. Mediocrity has become the new excellent because no one expects anything different. An opportunity exists for someone to reset the standard and become market leaders. This will only be accomplished by investing in your greatest asset, your people.

Riaad Isaacs  
Innermetrix SA  
072 132 2487  
[riaadi@innermetrix.com](mailto:riaadi@innermetrix.com)  
[www.innermetrix.com](http://www.innermetrix.com)

Riaad managed a major franchise restaurant and now does leadership development and coaching.