

## **TRAINING TIP – CONSISTENCY IS THE KEY**

One of the reasons the larger quick service food chains have become so successful over the years is consistency. You may not go back to some of these burger joints because of the quality of the food, or the friendly and entertaining atmosphere, but you know that you will get the same food each and every time. I recently returned to Australia for a quick trip. I only had 6 days there so, I made the most of my time. During my comings and goings, I stopped in a McDonalds several times for a quick bite on the go.

And yes, a Big Mac in Australia is assembled the same way, and pretty much tastes the same as it does in the land of the free. As it does in China, England and South Korea. That's because the system is so fine tuned that it can be replicated, time after time, store after store, country after country.

So the Consistency Principle is the key for you in your operation. From the way a particular sundae is assembled and looks from day to day, down to the amount of ounces on a cone. If a customer has a different experience each and every day, yet pays the same price through all these variations, you may find their attendance at your store will be short lived.

I served a customer in our store during the day, who stated that he paid the same price for a cone 2 nights ago and got nearly twice as much. Hmmm. I had to explain that the cone I served him was the correct size and weight, and that he got a bonus the other night. By the way, this is where name tags come in handy. "Do you remember who served you the other evening??" "Yes it was Jared"

If consistency is an issue for you in your store there may be some obvious issues at play:

1. **System.** First and foremost, do you have effective systems in place? Do you have the recipe and a measuring cup for your waffle cone mix, or does the staff make it up on the fly? Do you have an "End of the Line" photograph to illustrate what your Turtle Sundae looks like, or is it up to each employee's interpretation? Get a system and refine it.
2. **Training.** Are your staff regularly trained in the system and are they held accountable for it? Complacency is a huge deal in the food service industry. If you don't hold regular training meetings and monitor staff performance, you will find that staff will become complacent in there work ethic and quality will slip.
3. **People.** Even though you have an effective system and your staff are trained, you may find that some are generally more in tune that others. Perhaps Julie works 1 or 2 shifts a week and does not have the opportunity to learn on the job as much as Cassie who works 4 or 5 shifts a week. Take each employee on their merits as each will have strengths and weaknesses in certain areas. As we make waffle cones in our classes, I find usually 1 person out of 10 will struggle in making consistent cones. Just one of the crazy facts of life. So be patient with people. Some can clean a lot better than they are at friendly customer service.

Please make consistency a priority in your store. Its one of those principles that customers will generally not notice when you get it right, but when it becomes an issue, you will never hear the end of it.