



Targeted Training Tools that Drive Revenue

## The Shift: How to Plan It, Lead It, Make It Pay

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The last 3 years have grooved subtle yet seismic shifts in the systems, design, and processes of the foodservice industry. Back-of-the-house technology integration, energy-saving kitchen equipment design, service auditing via interactive voice response, throughput efficiencies, cost-based and revenue-driven labor scheduling, drive-through speed improvements, and payment systems (moving from counter to kiosk) have affected our industry dramatically. These new-found efficiencies are mining incremental profits from a historically inefficient industry. But improving systems, design and processes does not mean that you simultaneously improve *operations*. So I find it puzzling that little—if any—time, money, or resources have also been invested into understanding and improving the efficiencies of the most critical aspect of “operations”: managing and leading The Shift.

Your building, systems, menu and equipment make up the physical plant and body in which you “do” business. The Shift combines people, leadership and execution to bring both your business to life and life to your business. Every critical strategy or tactic related to running a profitable foodservice operation—service, selling, hiring, retention, scheduling, purchasing, marketing, training, food safety, teamwork—evolves from abstraction to action (or inaction) during The Shift. The greatest food and beverage menu in the world is nothing more than paper if it isn’t assembled, merchandised and consumed during The Shift. The best-conceived systems, policies and procedures are merely words in a training manual if not executed during The Shift. Your current Limited Time Offer (LTO) evolves from purchasing and planning to success or failure during The Shift. Even our common financial barometer—the P&L—reflects Shift execution. “Success isn’t measured by reading a Profit & Loss statement,” says Scott Roekle, Director of Operations for the Supple Restaurant Group in Oshkosh, Wis. “That’s a history document. You make or lose money by what happens—or doesn’t happen—during the Shift.”

How do *your* managers approach each shift? Do they let it happen, or plan it through? Leave it to chance or lead it by choice? Do they even know what a great shift looks like beforehand, or is it something they recognize only after it’s over? How much time do you spend at manager meetings dissecting the architecture of a revenue-generating Shift? Your answer may well explain why your customer counts and sales or up, down, or flat in this competitive world. Smart operators are beginning to keenly assess and document what their best unit managers do before, during, and after a profitable “opening”, “mid” or



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“closing” Shift. Because what you don’t know can hurt you.

Our company (Sullivision.com) recently completed detailed video, audio and written interviews with 120 high-performing General Managers from a variety of chain and independent foodservice operations. We supplied 25 of them with recordable MP3 players and asked them to keep an audio diary of seven days of shifts, detailing what they did before, during and after both successful and unsuccessful ones. If you’d like to see video clips of some of these all-star GMs sharing some of their insights, visit our products page at [www.sullivision.com](http://www.sullivision.com) and check out **The Shift** DVD icon. In the meantime, here’s some specific behavior they identified that adds up to a primer of best practices relative to Shift Leadership:

#### Before Each Shift:

- Complete and review paperwork
- Review the log book entries from the last shift
- Have a focus for that shift and a plan to communicate it
- Review labor schedule. Note rookie-to-vet ratio and who’s here, who’s not.
- Facility Walkabout with a key team member both inside and outside the restaurant
- Food safety, security and sanitation line checks
- Anticipate how weather, special events, etc. will affect traffic, labor, and inventory
- Energize the Team, set goals together, Have Fun
- Pre-Shift Meeting with each department

#### During the Shift

- Make sure you have your Aces in their Places
- Aid and abet service-giving (be the customer advocate)
- Food safety and sanitation
- Don’ t get stuck in any one position
- Spread Energy and Hospitality/Have Fun
- Manage Labor
- Make certain the menu is being merchandised
- Find coach-able moments with all team members
- Stay Out of the Weeds
- Keep food flowing from the kitchen and customers flowing to the tables from the foyer (or through the drive-through lane)
- See through the customer lens

#### After the Shift

- Keep the energy high
- Conduct 30 second post-shift meetings as you cut staff



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- Recognize performers and performance
- Keep customer focus sharp (especially as it slows down)
- Set up the next shift for success
- Stay vigilant about safety and sanitation
- Write down key learnings in log book for next manager

Yep, shifts happen. Anybody can “run” one. But profitable shifts (in which both the external and internal customers benefit) are planned, managed and led by focused leaders. Every shift has its own tempo, rhythm and surprises, to be sure. But if you win the battle of The Shift everyday, your monthly P&L will never be an unpleasant surprise.

**Jim Sullivan is the CEO of Sullivision.com and a popular speaker at foodservice manager conferences worldwide. This article is based on his best-selling 60 minute DVD called The Shift: How to Plan It, Lead It, Make it Pay. Order it by calling 920.830.3915 anytime. Mention iCare and get a 10 % discount.**