

# 6 Secrets of an Engaged Kitchen Team



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**ChefHire**

**“Creating Inspired Kitchen Teams”**

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There is a growing shortage of chefs and this will only get worse in the next few years.

This means that chefs are spoilt for choice of workplace.

The kitchens who take responsibility for creating an environment of engagement will see less staff turnover, less money spent on recruitment, lower wage costs but most importantly inspired teams

So, follow these 6 steps to an engaged kitchen

## 1. Find out the unique priorities, motivations and values of your team

Every person has a unique set of values, priorities and motivations.

I'm not talking about social idealisms such as honesty or integrity, but rather the individual priorities of each team member ranked from most important to least important.

These values shape how they see the world and every decision they make is based on what they feel will give them greatest advantage over disadvantage in relation to their highest value.

So how do you know what their priorities are? Well if you look closely their life will demonstrate it. Their actions, inactions, conversations, goals and more will point you on the right path.

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Determining the values of your team may seem simple but I can promise you there is gold in knowing this.

To complete a free value determination process head to [www.drdemartini.com/values](http://www.drdemartini.com/values)

## 2. Determine their “why”

Now you know their values you should have a good understanding of each individuals ‘why’.

Why do they work in this kitchen? How is it serving their life?

It may be a shock to some people but no one is loyal to you or your business. They are only loyal to serving their own highest value.

Let me give you 2 examples.

We had a chef working for us named Jessica. Her highest value was building her knowledge in the kitchen. All though she was young she had worked at some great restaurants. She went to work for one of our clients, all though she liked the people she wasn’t feeling satisfied as she felt she wasn’t learning anything new.

The venue really liked her and offered her a lot of money to stay.

The money was more than she had ever been paid before but she moved on because she valued learning at this time in her life and left to find a more challenging kitchen.

On the other hand, we had a chef named Tom. Tom had spent his 20’s working in some great kitchens and had honed and developed his skills. It had always been his ambition to be the Head Chef of a renowned restaurant. But something changed for Tom, he had a baby. This created a shift in Tom’s values. Whereas before he had seen

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working long hours as a badge of honour, now he had a reason he wanted to be home. He left the fine dining scene for a restaurant with a higher salary and more manageable hours.

Getting to the 'why', allows us to create work environments that serve our staff, they then go on to love serving our customers.

Ask them questions about their motivations and goals both inside and outside of work.

Create an environment where the team feels comfortable to express what is important to them.

Know that if you're saying you should be doing this or should be doing that, you are projecting your own values on to them.

Expecting someone else to live inside your values and not their own is an exercise in futility.

So how do we make sure they know what is important to the business and act accordingly?

That is step 3 and 4

### **3. Look at how the mission of your business serves their why**

Ok so now you know your kitchen team's highest priority and their 'why' for coming to work.

So how do you make sure their why matches the why of your business?

Well it starts with determining the why. Some businesses have clear missions, visions and goals and others don't.

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Even if it's not an in-depth document it is wise to articulate your mission so everyone is on the same page.

Once you have determined your mission or goals communicate that to your team.

Then have each staff member write down 15 ways or more that the mission or goal is helping them fulfill their highest value.

Say for example you had a chef, and his highest value was providing a regular consistent income for his young family and you had a venue that had a goal to provide the best customer service in the area.

The chef could look at and see how the venue providing the best customer service was serving his life;

i.e. providing a great customer experience can increase sales, an increase in sales means the business is more stable and reliable, more stability in the business means greater job security, greater job security means he is more comfortable committing to pay his mortgage, etc. etc.

Don't stop at 3 or 4 benefits. Do a minimum of 15 to see a shift

## **4. Link their priorities and values to their unloved tasks**

Similar to step 3, in step 4 we are going to link the values of the team back to the goals of the business, but this time we are looking at specific tasks.

Let's say for example you had a chef who had a very high value on creating innovative and amazing food, and while you love the cooking skills of the chef you knew that if they were a little more conscious of the costings and were completing stock takes the venue could make more money.

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So, the key here is to not just look at the chef's highest value but to look at their top 3 values.

So, for example the chefs top 3 values were;

1. Being recognized as an exceptional chef
2. Learning and creating innovative new dishes
3. Socialising / meeting friends

We then take the unloved task, let's say stock taking and we ask the question, how specifically does doing the stock take help me to get recognized as an exceptional chef?

Keep answering until you have 15 answers;

i.e. stock taking will assist the venue to make more money,  
more money being made means I am meeting the needs of both the customer and the owner,  
if I am maximizing the money for the owner they may be interested in future ventures with me,  
if I can show future employers that I have an understanding of the financials and I can make them money they may be interested to partner with me,  
being a partner in my own restaurant could see me get press attention and recognition as an exceptional chef.

Don't stop until you have a minimum of 15 benefits.

Repeat this step with each of the top three values and do this for every unloved task that you determine will benefit the business.

This means you will require 45 answers for each unloved task.

This may take some time even a few weeks, but persevere as the results can be astounding

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## 5. Seek negative feedback

There is power in asking your team what they don't like about working for you.

Most people ignore this step for a simple reason, it can be painful, but this is the key to understanding the environment you are creating that will have the chefs either stay or go.

Ask your team what *don't* you like about working here?

Keep asking, you want to determine their outward frustrations, but also get a sense of the frustrations they aren't comfortable to express.

This could be potential gold for you and your venue as who knows your business better than the people working in it everyday

## 6. Air any unsaid communications

Create a work environment where people feel free to communicate.

One of the most common issues we come across is who has final say on the menu, the chef or the owner?

Sometimes chefs are focused only on the food they want to produce and the owners may be fearful it won't sell or that it doesn't fit their vision.

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Other times owners may fear changing something that has worked for a long time but the customer's expectations are changing and the chef would like to offer more modern dishes.

Whatever the issue if there is not a platform for an open dialogue where both sides can see the reasons behind the others position then an unsaid communication can fester.

Without expressing this you could disempower your team, have them feel unsatisfied in their job and in some of the worst case we have seen, actively working against the interests of the business.

*If you need help with this process please email us at [chefs@chefhire.com.au](mailto:chefs@chefhire.com.au), call 1300 CHEFHIRE (130024334473) or head to [www.chefhire.com.au](http://www.chefhire.com.au)*

