

THE OPERATOR'S PLAYBOOK

Five-Volume Operating System for the Independent Restaurant

A Complete Reference

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WHAT IT IS

The Operator's Playbook is a five-volume operating system for the independent restaurant. Each volume covers one fundamental of the business — not as a concept, not as a theory, but as a working discipline with mechanisms, instruments, failure modes, and field application.

The five fundamentals are Perspective, Product, People, Performance, and Profit. They are not chapters in a single book because they are not interchangeable. Each one is a complete domain of the operator's job. Each one has its own body of work, its own failure patterns, its own tools. Together they constitute the complete picture of what it takes to run an independent restaurant successfully — not occasionally, not when the conditions are right, but consistently, by design, every shift.

The system is built to be used in the operation, not read on a couch. Each volume is a physical binder — designed to be written in, flagged, tabbed, folded back, and returned to when the problem it addresses is live. You are never working all five fundamentals simultaneously at the same depth. You are always deeper in one than the others. The physical format matches the reality of how an operator actually works.

THE FIVE FUNDAMENTALS

PERSPECTIVE

How you see the business determines every decision downstream of it.

If the read is wrong, every decision built on it is wrong. Perspective is the first fundamental because it is the precondition for every other piece of work. The operator who cannot see their operation accurately — who has learned what to stop seeing, who reads from the dashboard instead of the stage — is building on a foundation that was never solid.

PRODUCT

The Guest Experience is the product. Everything else is the system that produces it.

Your food is the medium. Your product is what the Guest experiences from the moment they consider you to the moment they decide whether to come back. Every item on your menu, every touchpoint in the experience, every standard the cast holds — all of it is product design, whether you designed it or not.

PEOPLE

The cast you build determines the experience you deliver.

You cannot produce genuine hospitality through a cast that is managed rather than developed. The people in your building are not variables to be managed within acceptable parameters. They are the experience. Who they are, how they were hired, how they were developed, and what they believe about the work they are doing — all of it shows up in the Guest's experience every shift.

PERFORMANCE

What gets measured gets managed. What gets led gets results.

Performance is the discipline of running the operation correctly at the shift level — every shift, not just when the operator is present. The systems, the read, the accountability structure, the shift leadership behavior — all of it either holds the standard or it doesn't. Performance is where the other three fundamentals get tested in real time.

PROFIT

Profit is the score. Perspective is the game.

Profit is not the goal — it is the result of getting the other four fundamentals right. The operator who chases profit without building the foundation for it is managing symptoms. The operator who builds the foundation produces profit as a consequence of doing the work correctly. Profit is the financial architecture that funds doing it again.

TWO WAYS TO USE THE SYSTEM

The Linear Read

Open Volume 1 — Perspective at section 1.0 and read forward. The developmental arc builds the capacity. Each volume builds on the one before it. The operator who reads all five volumes front to back develops a complete operating system — the full picture of what the business requires and the discipline to act on it. The Fieldbook is the companion that lets you apply each section to your own operation as you go.

The Fieldbook-First Entry

Open the Fieldbook for the fundamental where your operation is breaking down right now. Do the work the Fieldbook requires. Follow the cross-references into the Playbook where the framework lives. Over time, the work pulls you through the entire Playbook — not as a reading exercise but as a working one. The learning compounds through lived application, not just absorbed content.

Neither entry point is wrong. Both produce the same result over time. The system meets you where you are and builds the framework through use.

WHAT EACH VOLUME CONTAINS

The Operator's Playbook Binder

- The mechanisms — named patterns, failure modes, and operating principles that govern that domain
- The instruments — specific tools, questions, disciplines, and diagnostics for real-time reading and action
- The field application — what this looks like on the stage, in the pre-shift, in the management meeting, in the P&L review
- The failure profile — what the operator running this fundamental incorrectly looks like, sounds like, and produces over time

The Operator's Fieldbook Binder

- Outcome-based architecture — organized around the problem the operator is trying to solve, not by section number
- Cross-references to the corresponding Playbook sections for every instrument and diagnostic
- Working space for the operator's own numbers, observations, and action plans
- Milestone checkpoints that mark progress from current state to intended outcome

Every volume ships as two physical 3-ring binders. The Playbook teaches the framework. The Fieldbook is where you do the work.

PRICING & AVAILABILITY

Individual Volumes — \$79.99 each (shipping included, continental U.S.):

- Volume 1 — Perspective: Ships August 1, 2026
 - Volume 2 — Product: Ships September 1, 2026
 - Volume 3 — People: Ships October 1, 2026
 - Volume 4 — Performance: Ships November 1, 2026
 - Volume 5 — Profit: Ships December 1, 2026
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Complete Five-Volume Set — \$349.99 (shipping included, continental U.S.):

- All five Playbook binders and all five Fieldbook binders
 - The Introduction — ships with every first order
 - Ships complete: December 1, 2026
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For international orders and bulk/group pricing, contact Jeffrey directly at Jeffrey@JeffreySummers.com

HOW TO PRE-ORDER

Pre-order is available now at jeffreysummers.com/the-operators-playbook/how-to-pre-order/

Payment is processed securely through GoDaddy Payments. Individual volumes and the complete set are available for pre-order. Orders ship within 24 hours of production completion. Tracking information is provided at the time of shipment.

For bulk and group orders — equipping a management team, multiple locations, or a training program — contact Jeffrey directly before ordering. Bulk pricing is available and is discussed on a case-by-case basis.

All transactions are covered by the 100% Effective Guarantee. Full terms at jeffreysummers.com/the-100-effective-guarantee/

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Jeffrey Summers is a restaurant operations consultant with 44 years of experience across every category of independent restaurant operation. He has opened 34 restaurants, coached 158 multi-unit managers, and worked with thousands of operators across every market type and concept size. The Operator's Playbook is the first complete documentation of the operating system he has been building and refining since 1982.

His consulting practice — Summers Hospitality Group — works with independent restaurant operators through onsite diagnostic reviews, coaching, consulting, and leadership development programs.

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