



CULINARY WITH STEWARDSHIP

COACHING & INSPIRING TOMORROW'S CULINARIANS

We are seeing a greater emphasis being placed on our food & menus – its origins, its composition and its flavor. Chefs are driving innovation and challenging consumer palates and in turn, consumers are demanding higher quality/bigger flavor at an affordable price. This convergence has seen local become mainstream, fine dining chefs go casual, food trucks become a sought after experience, the explosion of the fast-casual dining segment, upgrades in QSR and the overall shortening of the flavor trend adoption cycle.

Our value system is changing with what we currently expect and will expect from culinarians across all segments of foodservice; in regards to a shift to fresher/local/seasonal/higher quality/made from scratch foods. Foodservice workers will need to evolve to match the increased quality and base level skills for this evolution in food. Our food chain dynamics are changing.

How chefs and operators choose to adapt to these changes will reflect in their overall growth and success. Training will have to be addressed and revamped, as you look at how to effectively grow as a chef, train future culinarians & position your operation for the future. Embracing a holistic approach, encompassing focused & inspired standards & systems for coaching, are the key to growth.

Here is a “holistic toolbox” for your personal call to action, as your operation perpetually navigates the changing landscape. This terrain goes beyond cooking – it is *culinary with stewardship*.

Relationships (critical to the business model)

❖ Employees

- Inspired and valued employees can generate tremendous returns for an operation
- Be collaborative, applaud the spirit of those around you
- Employees are the cornerstone of success – making the daily deliverables possible
- Enhance the existing rather than focusing on what has been wrong; smartly moving forward vs. entrenching in the past

❖ Vendors

- Efficient sourcing of fresh, local, seasonal products
- Safety and sanitation practices, safeguards & assurances
- Quality & flavor delivery
- Consistency of quality
- Streamline distribution channels – partner local coops/opportunities with broadline or smaller regional distributors
- Fair competition and pricing

❖ Farmers

- Great food starts with the farmer, long before any ingredient touches the talented hands of a chef
- Cultivating long-term collaborative relationships
- Understanding the chef/farmer and the farmer/chef perspectives and realities
- Food with a story – your greatest communication & connection tool with consumers
- Look for ways to pay it back 360° to the farmer – IE posting their CSA information or farmers market location to guests, so guests can enjoy at home, the heirloom tomatoes they had in your restaurant summer salad
- GAP certification
- Organics

❖ Consumers/Community

- Engage
- Foster an honest & indelible relationship with your guests
- Listen to & acknowledge consumer feedback
- Integrated marketing approach

❖ Educate

- Focus on the story behind your sourcing. People connect to people, not buzzwords
- Food is about caring – demonstrate that we value people, value health through our positive actions and forward thinking food innovation & programs

❖ Communicate

- Food with a story – your greatest communication & connection tool with consumers
- Your best practices
- Your passion
- Your mission

❖ Connect

- Go beyond words – gain the trust & respect of consumers
- Cultivate and teach people a connection to their food, environment & wellness
- Active leadership role within your community

Sourcing (quality ingredients net quality output)

❖ Responsibility

- Transparency is key
- Take due diligence in researching and selecting vendor partners; be resilient – it's a journey
- Look for 3rd party certifications, to validate claims

❖ Local

- Goes beyond food – supports community infrastructure
- Promotes regional bounty
- Build firsthand relationships
- Partner with a local farmer to grow crops specifically for your operation

❖ Seasonal

- Focuses on freshness – what is at peak of ripeness
- Natural way of eating & cooking
- Strategic way of launching LTOs and menu development

❖ Sustainability

- Best practices should continually improve the soil, air and water quality; meaning the food (and all offerings) is produced in a manner, which is environmentally responsible
- Practices across the board need to be ethically responsible, not just for the treatment of animals, but for people & the community. Nothing along the production line is exploited for its creation
- Farmers also deserve to be able to make a living without subsidies, grants and other non-sustainable inputs.

❖ Regional & global cues

- Incorporate quality on trend ingredients that can re-enforce a flavor/technique or differentiate you from the competition

Training/Education (top to bottom are vested and on the same path)

- ❖ The Operation
 - Establishing best practices & standards
 - LEED certifications, where feasible
 - Green initiatives
 - Communicating from top to bottom and bottom to top
 - Address what equipment may be needed for the preparation of scratch cooking
 - Address key sanitation practices and procedures
- ❖ Staff
 - Be clear on your vision, any new changes & expectations
 - Scratch cooking, where feasible
 - Culinary fundamentals, back to basics instruction (be patient, as this will be a process)
 - Conduct culinary boot camps for training
 - Vegetable, fruit, meat, etc. identification & handling 101
 - Flavor first approach
 - Understand & embrace the brand mission
- ❖ Consumers
 - Align with your vision and messaging – consumers should know the positive steps your operation is taking
 - Actively & intelligently engage & generate educated awareness
 - It's about positively impacting people – when you connect with people there are powerful solutions
 - Food with a story – your greatest communication & connection tool with consumers

Menus (your communication tool & essence)

- ❖ Seasonal cues & implementation
- ❖ Entice & engage with menu verbiage
- ❖ Online information: sources & stories for your partner farms & artisans. Nutritionals
- ❖ Scratch cooking, where feasible
- ❖ Create excitement around FLAVOR!!!
- ❖ Craveable, indulgent healthy, wholesome food! – YES, healthy can & should taste great!!!
- ❖ Quicker menu development cycles
- ❖ Allergen awareness
- ❖ Upgrade kids offerings – break free from the status quo
- ❖ Create & serve food that people of all socioeconomic backgrounds have access to affordable, craveable wholesome food

Trends (What to disseminate)

- ❖ Staying current, while relevant with your target market/demographic
- ❖ Immerse in the world around you
- ❖ Produce actionable insights



Chef Rob Corliss is a 3x James Beard House guest chef with over 20+ years of experience across multi-disciplines that include running world class resort hotels, launching new restaurant concepts, working in top foodservice marketing agencies and currently owning his own culinary consulting company ATE. With an energizing passion for food ATE is focused on flavor innovation; with the daily goal of connecting people to their food, environment & wellness.