

II. A TALE OF TWO RESTAURANTS⁴⁴

Tim Kelley founded Kelley's Seafood Restaurant about 15 years ago. The restaurant is very profitable because of its excellent quality of food, but lately it has been having problems with consistency because

of numerous suppliers. The restaurant operations are divided into front-end (servers) and back-end (kitchen). The kitchen has Post-It notes to boost employee morale, employees are cross-trained in all

areas, and the kitchen staff continually seeks improvements in cooking. Servers, however, have few perks and minimal wages, and turnover is a bit of a problem. Tim's primary criterion for selecting servers is their ability to show up on time. Little communication takes place between the front-end and back-end operations, other than fulfilling orders. Tim makes sure that the servers refer any complaints to him immediately.

The restaurant uses no automation because Tim believes it would get in the way of customers' special requests. "This is the way we've done it for the past 15 years and how we will continue to do it," was his response to a suggestion of using a computerized system to speed up orders and eliminate delays. Tim formerly held staff meetings regularly, but recently he went from one each week to one every five or six months. Most of his time is spent focusing on negative behavior, and he can often be heard to say, "You can't find good people anymore."

Jim's SteakHouse is a family-owned restaurant in the same state. Jim uses only the freshest meats and ingredients from the best suppliers and gives extra-large portions of food to customers so they feel they are getting their money's worth. Jim pays his

cooks high wages to attract high-quality employees. Servers get 70 percent of tips, bussers 20 percent, and the kitchen staff 10 percent to foster teamwork. Many new hires come from referrals from current employees. Jim interviews all potential employees and asks them many pointed questions relating to courtesy, responsibility, and creativity. The restaurant sponsors bowling nights, golf outings, picnics, and holiday parties for its employees. At Jim's, birthday customers receive a free dinner; children are welcomed with balloons, candy, and crayons; and sports fans are entertained with big screen TVs. Jim walks around and constantly solicits customer feedback. Jim visits many other restaurants to study their operations and learn new techniques. As a result of these visits, Jim installed computers to schedule reservations and enter orders to the kitchen.

Discussion Questions

1. Contrast these two restaurants from the perspective of TQ. How do they exhibit or not exhibit the fundamental principles of TQ?
2. What advice would you recommend to the owners?