

DAMON L. SMITH

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CAREER SUMMARY

A Senior Executive of Canadian & International, Restaurant & Casino Operations with over 30 years' experience providing customer service training, product development expertise and operations management within the hospitality industry. A strong record of accomplishment for driving company performance through the implementation of training and operational solutions, aligned to the business vision. A respected leader with a talent for inspiring teams to achieve their highest potential. Experience in both corporate, franchise and consulting environments.

Key Areas of Expertise Include:

- Restaurant Operations - Full Service & QSR
- High Performance Team Development
- Training Program Design and Delivery
- Culinary innovation, Supply chain & QA
- Business Performance Improvement
- Driving Strong Financial & KPI Results

CAREER HISTORY

Margaritaville Caribbean Group (Relocation to Jamaica) September 2024 - March 2025 **DIRECTOR OF FOOD & BEVERAGE**

Reporting to the Vice President of Operations; accountable for all food & Beverage within the airport operations spanning over 27 locations of QSR and Full-service restaurants

- Lead and manage the daily business activities, ensuring efficient service, quality products, and exceptional guest experiences
- P&Ls analyzed on Monthly Basis & Coached Managers with financial tools to strengthen controllable costs and improve Operating Profit.
- Monitored sales data, and budgets to drive cost control, profitability, and operational efficiency. Developed and implemented cost control measures to reduce theft and wastage
- Restructured the leadership team to provide more hands-on strength to ensure that all peak times were correctly staffed and monitored. Provided ongoing training and coaching to develop the overall team.
- Developed and implemented promotional strategies, Server sales programs to help drive revenue and team member incentive programs to build team morale.
- Re-enforced established policies, procedures, and best practices to continue to enhance operations while ensuring compliance with company standards
- Involved and supported Supply Chain to ensure that all international franchised food products were consistently available within the market.

Woodbine Entertainment Group June 2019 - April 2024 **SR. DIRECTOR / HEAD OF FOOD & BEVERAGE**

Reporting to the Vice President of Operations; accountable for all food & Beverage for Woodbine Resort & Mohawk Park - Racetrack, Casino & Hotel / Theatre operations, grossing over \$55M in revenue

- Lead and develop an effective Racing & Gaming Hospitality Team that always strives for "Winning" guest experiences and to provide leadership, mentorship, and direction to Sr. Managers in the various operating departments (Racing, Gaming, Culinary, Warehouse/Receiving and Administration).
- Collaborating with the property development teams and designers in the planning of the \$90M Woodbine Gaming expansion project.

- Department lead on developing of annual goals and objectives for Racing & Gaming Hospitality Departments at both properties, ensuring that they are in line with the corporate strategy and financial objectives.
- Ensure effective planning, development, and delivery of a range of existing and new restaurant concept, revenue streams, programs, and initiatives to maximize profitability and the achievement of departmental/personal stretch goals.
- Provided a direct focus & leadership on departmental cost controls. implemented a new F&B inventory system that help lower the overall cost of goods by 10%, while always looking for opportunities to grow revenues and enhance guest experiences by adapting service standards.
- Created an environment that supported the Food & Beverage Leaders through effective communication, detailed Business Planning and implementation of tools that supported the highest level of restaurant operations and consistency across both properties.
- Increased guest experience scores for entire department by 50% through the introduction of a series of programs including a "Focus of the Week" Guest experience program, engaged Shift Meeting training & coaching & shift performance reviews. These programs ensured that all managers and team members were guest focused and equipped to create the perfect guest experience every time.
- Actively recruiting teams that are energetic, driven and focused on enhancing operational execution and growing the business.
- Participation of all union negotiations and liaises with People Experience Department in the interpretation and application of applicable collective agreement and employment and labor laws.
- Implemented a new 3rd party food safety program that increased the department from 80% to 95% within 3 months.
- Analyzing of financial statements on a bi-weekly & Monthly Basis & Coached Managers with financial tools to strengthen controllable costs and improving Operating Profit.

Shoeless Joes Sports Grill**December 2015 - May 2019****REGIONAL BUSINESS MANAGER - WESTERN ONTARIO & WESTERN CANADA**

Reporting to the Director of Franchise Operations; accountable for training and operations for 10 franchised restaurants across Toronto and Western Canada, grossing over \$30M in revenue

- With extensive knowledge of New Market Expansion, was tasked to lead 2 out of province restaurants in Saskatoon & Edmonton
- Since Saskatoon & Edmonton were new markets for Shoeless Joes without Brand exposure. I spent considerable time in both markets driving local store marketing and assisting the Franchise group with solid community base businesses.
- Created an environment that supported the Franchise community through effective communication, detailed Business Planning and implementation of tools that supported the highest level of restaurant operations and consistency across the region.
- Increased guest experience scores for entire region by 40% to well above the Company average through the introduction of a series of programs including a "Focus of the Week" Guest experience program, Shift Meeting training & coaching & shift performance reviews. These programs ensured that all managers and team members were guest focused and equipped to create the perfect guest experience every time.
- Actively recruited teams that were energetic, driven and focused on enhancing operational execution and growing the business.
- Conducted Business Reviews on a quarterly basis to identify performance gaps and implemented coaching & training, resulting in above 90% for food safety and above 95% for Brand Standard adherence.

- Analyzed P&Ls on a Monthly Basis & Coached Franchisee's with financial tools to strengthen controllable costs and improve Operating Profit.

QUIZNOS INTERNATIONAL**May 2012 - November 2015****DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL CULINARY INNOVATION & QA / FRANCHISE BUSINESS CONSULTANT**

Reporting to the President, International; accountable for all culinary development, Quality Assurance & Operations, covering 43 Markets around the world.

- Provided Master Franchisees with Culinary Innovation, QA and Operations support by completing a market Immersion and customizing the menu based on the flavor profiles within the country / Region and providing guidance on their operations
- Travel to international markets once a month to provide support to the Master Franchisees.
- Involved with International Supply Chain to ensure that food products are available in all markets around the world.
- Worked with international Food Suppliers and provided guidance on matching the Quiznos customized Sauces, Dairy, Breads & Protein's. Depending on the raw products. Sometimes needed to re-design the ingredient deck to provide an acceptable Spec product.
- Approved all food products (sauces, Proteins, Breads) sent from Vendors from around the world to ensure the Quiznos quality is upheld.
- Provided QA support to our Master Franchisees, by providing coaching and training on the development of a QA programs.
- Conducted QA audits on Vendor/ production Run's to ensure the product meets the company's expectations
- Previously oversaw 27 stores within Ontario as a Franchise Consultant and was offered the position of Director of Operations & Director of Culinary
- Raised the Eco sure audit results by 10% within my region by working with the Franchisees and improving the Service and food preparation of products - Region currently at 93%
- Provided Business Planning advice to franchisees by reviewing P&L's and breakeven audits to ensure that the business is financially sound and to prevent and overspending on Food costs, operations costs, and fixed costs.

THE CHILDREN'S PLACE**March 2011 - March 2012****DISTRICT MANAGER**

Reporting to the Zone VP of Canada, accountable for 12 high volume Children's Place stores across Toronto, grossing over \$25M in revenue.

- Created and maintained a diverse, high-performing store management team through consistent selection, development, and motivation.
- Provided coaching, mentoring and overall direction of accountabilities to meet District and Regional goals. Raised the conversion over 30% within 2 Months of taking the district over.
- Fostered a selling culture throughout the district thereby ensuring a positive customer experience through training and coaching of the management team. Ensuring that all stores are providing sales associate coaching on every shift to meet and exceed their transaction target goals.
- Trained and developed two Senior Store Managers to take over a District Manager position within the organization.

LIMITED BRANDS CANADA, Toronto, ON**February 2010 -March 2011****DISTRICT MANAGER**

Reporting to the Regional Director of Canada. Accountable for 12 high volume La Senza stores across Toronto, grossing over \$20M in revenue.

- Led the store teams to exceed sales/payroll budgets by coaching the teams on selling techniques and increasing the level of customer service within the stores which increased the conversion results by 5%
- Cultivated an environment of open communication with the store teams which allowed the whole team to feel comfortable to share insights to their business and greatly help the team to be one team
- Developed two Store managers to be ready for a District manager's role and promoted three assistant managers to Store managers within the district.

CARA OPERATIONS LIMITED, Toronto, ON**March 2008 - February 2010****REGIONAL SALES MANAGER - SWISS CHALET BRAND**

Reporting to the Director of Operations, accountable for training and operations for 14 Corporate and Franchised restaurants across Toronto and Newfoundland, grossing over \$38M in revenue. Managed 14 General Managers with a total staff of approximately 700.

- Created an environment that supported the company brand and direction through effective communication, removal of barriers and implementation of tools that supported the highest level of restaurant operations and consistency across the region.
- Grew Newfoundland revenue 22% by shifting focus from "back operations" to frontline "Guest Experience".
- Increased guest experience scores for entire region by 30-40% to well above the Company average through the introduction of a series of measures including a "Focus of the Week" program, training, coaching, and mentoring. These measures ensured all managers and associates were guest focused and equipped to create the perfect guest experience every time.
- Led the seamless launch of two new locations and provided complete operational training. Exceeded sales targets from Day 1, minimized wastage through effective management practices and ensured lower labour costs. Actively recruited teams that were energetic, driven and focused on enhancing operational execution and growing the business.
- Raised performance of all locations within the region: Two locations won the countrywide Missing Items contest, and one location won the Presidents Club Award for outstanding performance across a range of measures including Guest Experience, Steritech scores, H&S, and Missing Items.
- Conducted training and development needs assessments to identify performance gaps and implemented training of Health and Safety, resulting in a 92% food safety score by Steritech.

FREEMANGROUP SOLUTIONS, Dallas, TX**February 2007 - March 2008**

Freeman Group offers an entirely integrated consulting service, providing a comprehensive range of customer service solutions to the hospitality/travel industry worldwide.

DIRECTOR OF TRAINING / CARIBBEAN OPERATIONS

As part of the Executive team, accountable for developing close partnerships with Caribbean Governments to ensure that the full benefits of Freeman Group's extensive FOH & BOH training programs were effectively delivered. Senior Management contact for Project Directors and Trainers.

- Developed and nurtured strong relationships with Government clients, recognizing cultural differences, building trust, and generating public support for Government spending through conducting effective press conferences.
- Led a benchmarking exercise to compare the performance of several Islands. Consulted with clients e.g., Cayman Islands Department of Tourism, to assess training needs and designed and facilitated

customized behavioural and technical training programs that resulted in significantly higher standards of service. Behavioural benchmarks rose 30% and technical, 20%.

- Managed multiple projects including assessing client needs, preparing project overviews, critical paths, and set-up arrangements with clients. Monitored and controlled all agreed project costs and maintained regular communication with both clients and project teams to review progress, schedules and problems/concerns resulting in smooth, well-executed projects.
- Customized and designed performance manuals (SOP's) for Restaurants, Hotels, Airlines and Government employees, ensuring consistency of standards across the Islands.
- Ensured all Mystery Shopper/measurement services were implemented in accordance with company standards and delivered as agreed in client contract.

PIZZA PIZZA LTD., Toronto, ON**October 2000 - February 2007****PRODUCT INNOVATIONS AND TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**

Reporting to the VP of Purchasing, accountable for transforming the business from a delivery-based operation to a "dine-in guest experience". Following success of this transformation, promoted to dual role as Product Developer and Training Manager responsible for new product development

- Led brand product development with the executive team. Designed a range of new chicken products, Pizza recipes and developed non-proofing dough formulas.
- Purchased all existing and new food & paper products & negotiated with existing suppliers
- Developed and worked with food suppliers on new menu items for a new chicken concept resulting in \$10,000 to \$15,000 additional revenue per week.
- Developed and implemented/facilitated an 8-week franchise program focused on building a true business partnership with franchisees. Transformed the delivery-focused operation into a "guest experience" concept resulting in significant improvements in customer service skills, increased synergies, and consistency of approach across the brand.
- Designed and delivered training on all new equipment, food products & safety, new concepts and service to the training centre and restaurants that resulted in improved consistency and quality of service. Programs were delivered using a variety of instructional methods and were supported by new SOP manuals used as ongoing reference tools.

S.I.R CORP, Toronto, ON**March 1994 - October 2000****CORPORATE MANAGER OF TRAINING (Canyon Creek and Armadillo restaurant concepts)**

A series of positions, rapidly progressing to General Manager before promotion to Corporate Manager of Training. Reporting to the Concept Director, accountable for recruiting and providing in-store training for new restaurant openings. Responsible for the development and delivery of technical, behavioural and management training programs and materials.

- Drove performance improvement by conducting training and development needs assessments to identify performance gaps and implemented effective training solutions.
- Pioneered a highly successful Canyon Creek training program as part of two new restaurant openings. The restaurants opened one month ahead of schedule with higher-than-average levels of service for the brand. Program was subsequently rolled out across the country.
- Designed and delivered "Train the Trainer" courses to new and existing managers thereby improving managers training skills, achieving more cost-effective training, lower turnover, and higher revenues.

HILTON HOTELS WOLDWIDE, London, UK**January 1990 - March 1994****CHEF DE CUISINE**

Worked in various departments within the 5-star Hotel, from the Banquette department that served thousands of meals to the prestigious fine dining French cuisine restaurant located on the roof of the hotel. Had the opportunity to work with very talented Head chefs from around the world

EDUCATION**Westminster University, London, UK**

Professional Cookery / Professional Chef's Papers
Food and Beverage Management & B-Tec Hotel Management
Royal Institute of Public Health and Hygiene
HACCP Certified

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

First Nations University, 2024– Indigenous Awareness training / Reconciliation Education

The Freeman Group, Dallas, USA, 2007

Foundations Workshop Certification - Train the Trainer
Promises Pillars Certification – Behavioural Skills
ITS – 11-day Instructional Techniques Workshop – Facilitation, Workshop Design & Development

M.I.R. Communications, 1999 – Effective Communication, Effective Team Building