



**911 CHEF ERIC**  
Restaurant Consulting

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# RESTAURANT MANAGER LEADERSHIP CHECKLIST

A Practical Leadership, Accountability,  
Operations & Profitability Toolkit for Restaurant Managers

**Strong restaurant managers improve:**

Employee Retention • Guest Satisfaction • Operational Consistency • Profitability

This toolkit gives you the systems, scorecards, and frameworks to lead at a higher level.

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## SECTION 1 | Daily Leadership Checklist

### Why Daily Consistency Matters

Complete this checklist every shift. Consistent daily execution is what separates average managers from operators who build teams that perform without constant supervision.

### Leadership & Presence

#### ■ Arrive 15–30 minutes before your shift begins

Review the floor plan, reservations, staffing, and any issues from the previous shift before the team arrives.

#### ■ Conduct a pre-shift team meeting

Cover daily specials, guest counts, VIPs, staffing updates, and one key focus for the shift.

#### ■ Set the tone from the first interaction

Your energy sets the team's energy — greet your team, make eye contact, project calm confidence.

#### ■ Lead the floor, not the back office

Managers who disappear into the office lose control of the guest experience. Be visible during peak hours.

### Communication

#### ■ Review and respond to all team communications

Check messages, emails, or team apps and respond to anything requiring manager action.

#### ■ Brief FOH and BOH leadership separately

Align both sides on priorities, timing expectations, and any menu or service changes.

#### ■ Debrief each station or section before service ends

Brief verbal check-ins let you catch problems before they compound.

### Team Accountability

#### ■ Verify all staff have clocked in and are in uniform

Uniform standards reflect brand standards. Address non-compliance immediately, not at shift end.

#### ■ Assign opening/closing duties and confirm completion

Use a signed checklist — verbal confirmation is not accountability.

#### ■ Address performance issues the same day they occur

Delayed feedback loses impact. A 60-second coaching moment is more effective than a formal write-up weeks later.

#### ■ Recognize one team member publicly each shift

Recognition is free and powerful. Catch people doing things right.

### Guest Experience

#### ■ Touch 100% of tables within the first 5 minutes of seating

Proactive visits catch problems before guests mention them on review sites.

#### ■ Monitor wait times and communicate delays proactively

A guest who is informed waits; an ignored guest complains.

**■ Review any guest complaints or incidents in real time**

Empower your team to resolve issues; oversee the resolution personally when possible.

**■ Read online reviews from the previous 24 hours**

Same-day awareness allows for rapid course correction with staff.

**Operations & Safety****■ Complete opening and closing safety walkthroughs**

Check equipment, temperature logs, cleanliness standards, and exit compliance.

**■ Verify prep levels are on track before service**

Running out of featured items during a shift is an operational failure, not a supply issue.

**■ Check equipment function and report issues immediately**

A broken walk-in discovered at 5 PM costs far more than one caught at 10 AM.

**Financial Awareness****■ Review previous day's sales and covers**

Know your numbers daily. Track trends, not just totals.

**■ Monitor daily labor % against budget**

Labor is your most controllable cost. Real-time awareness prevents week-end surprises.

**■ Log any waste, comps, or voids with documented reason**

Undocumented comps distort your P&L; and create a culture of unaccountability.

## SECTION 2 | Weekly Management Review

### Weekly Rhythm = Operational Control

Schedule a dedicated 60–90 minute block each week — ideally Monday or Tuesday — to review the prior week's performance and prepare your team for the week ahead. Weekly reviews prevent reactive management.

### Team Development & Training

- Review training progress for all employees on probation or development plans
- Identify at least one skill gap to address in this week's pre-shift meetings
- Check in 1-on-1 with at least two team members (rotate weekly)
- Review any disciplinary actions and confirm follow-up steps

### Employee Performance

- Review attendance records — identify habitual lates or absences
- Evaluate server sales averages — is upselling occurring consistently?
- Review any guest complaints tied to specific team members
- Confirm schedule is posted with enough lead time (minimum 72 hours)

### Guest Feedback Review

- Compile all online reviews (Google, Yelp, TripAdvisor) from the past 7 days
- Identify recurring positive themes — reinforce these with the team
- Identify recurring complaints — assign a corrective action owner
- Review comment card or feedback form data if applicable

### Operational Audit

- Walk every station with fresh eyes — identify cleanliness or maintenance issues
- Review opening and closing checklist completion rates
- Check equipment logs for any unreported issues
- Verify FIFO and labeling compliance in all storage areas
- Review any health, safety, or liability incidents from the previous week

### Labor Management

- Compare actual labor % to budgeted labor %
- Review overtime hours — identify if overtime was operationally justified
- Evaluate scheduling efficiency relative to sales volume
- Confirm all punch corrections were reviewed and approved

### Food Cost Awareness

- Review weekly food cost report against budget
- Audit top 5 high-cost items for portion compliance
- Review waste log — identify items with consistent waste
- Check invoice accuracy — confirm received quantities match invoiced quantities
- Review any menu items with low sales velocity relative to food cost

### Profitability Monitoring

- Compare this week's sales to same week prior year (or last period)
- Review average check — is it trending up, flat, or down?
- Calculate weekly prime cost (food cost % + labor %) and compare to target
- Identify top 3 actions to improve profitability next week

## SECTION 3 | Monthly Leadership Self-Assessment

### Instructions

Rate yourself honestly from 1–5 for each competency. 1 = Rarely demonstrated | 3 = Sometimes | 5 = Consistently and effectively. The goal is honest self-awareness, not a perfect score.

### Leadership & Presence

| Competency  | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I lead by example and set a professional standard my team respects              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am consistent in my behavior regardless of how busy or stressful the shift is | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I communicate a clear vision and direction for my team                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Communication

| Competency   | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I provide clear, timely information to both FOH and BOH teams  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I listen actively before responding in difficult conversations | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I communicate expectations in writing where appropriate        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Accountability

| Competency   | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I address underperformance promptly and directly               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I follow through consistently on commitments I make to my team | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I document performance issues accurately and fairly            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Financial Management

| Competency  | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I review daily/weekly financial reports and understand the data | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I take corrective action when labor or food cost exceeds budget | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I can explain our prime cost and its impact on profitability | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

### Team Development

| Competency   | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I actively coach team members to improve their skills                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I identify high-potential team members and create growth opportunities   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I give specific, actionable feedback regularly — not just during reviews | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Decision Making & Problem Solving

| Competency  | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I make confident decisions under pressure without seeking constant approval | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I involve the right people before making decisions that affect the team     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I analyze problems systematically rather than reacting emotionally          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Strategic Thinking

| Competency   | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I think about the guest experience from arrival to departure         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I proactively identify operational risks before they become problems | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I align my team's daily work to the restaurant's broader goals       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Score Interpretation

| Score    | Rating               | Recommended Action                              |
|----------|----------------------|---|
| 40–50    | Exceptional Leader   | Focus on mentoring others and strategic growth  |
| 30–39    | Strong Performer     | Identify 1–2 areas for deliberate development   |
| 20–29    | Developing Manager   | Build a 90-day improvement plan (see Section 6) |
| Below 20 | Improvement Required | Seek coaching support immediately               |

Total possible score: 105 points (21 items × 5)

## SECTION 4 | Restaurant KPI Scorecard

### Why KPIs Matter

Track these KPIs weekly and monthly. What you measure, you manage. Managers who review KPIs regularly make faster, more confident decisions than those who rely on gut feel alone.

| KPI                         | Benchmark           | This Week | This Month | Notes |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Total Sales (\$)            | Per budget          |           |            |       |
| Sales vs. Prior Period      | + Growth            |           |            |       |
| Average Check (\$)          | Per concept target  |           |            |       |
| Guest Count / Covers        | Per projection      |           |            |       |
| Food Cost %                 | 28–32%              |           |            |       |
| Beverage Cost %             | 18–24%              |           |            |       |
| Labor Cost % (FOH)          | 30–35%              |           |            |       |
| Labor Cost % (BOH)          | 28–34%              |           |            |       |
| Prime Cost %                | 55–65%              |           |            |       |
| Waste / Comps (\$)          | Minimize / document |           |            |       |
| Guest Satisfaction Score    | 4.0+ / 5.0          |           |            |       |
| Online Review Rating        | 4.2+ stars          |           |            |       |
| Employee Turnover (monthly) | < 5%                |           |            |       |
| Table Turn Time (min)       | Per concept target  |           |            |       |

*Tip: Print this page and post it in the manager's office. Review at every weekly management meeting.*

## SECTION 5 | Common Restaurant Leadership Mistakes

Even experienced managers fall into these patterns. Recognizing them is the first step to correcting them.

### Poor Communication

Assuming your team knows what you expect is one of the most costly management mistakes in hospitality. When standards are not communicated consistently, team members fill the gap with their own interpretation — which rarely matches yours.

#### Solution

Solution: Use pre-shift briefings every single shift. Repeat standards in writing through posted SOPs. Communicate changes 24–48 hours in advance whenever possible.

### Avoiding Difficult Conversations

Managers who delay addressing performance issues create a culture where mediocrity is tolerated. Your top performers notice when poor performance goes unaddressed — and it affects their engagement.

#### Solution

Solution: Address issues within 24 hours of occurrence. Use a private, structured format: describe the behavior, explain the impact, agree on the expectation going forward.

### Micromanagement

Hovering over every detail signals distrust, kills team initiative, and creates manager burnout. If you are doing someone else's job, who is doing yours?

#### Solution

Solution: Define clear standards, train to those standards, and then let your team execute. Coach outcomes, not every action. Reserve your energy for high-impact decisions.

### Weak Accountability Systems

Verbal instructions without documentation, deadlines, or follow-up are not accountability — they are suggestions. Accountability requires a system, not just intentions.

#### Solution

Solution: Every assigned task needs an owner, a deadline, and a check-in point. Use written shift checklists. Follow up on every open item from your weekly review.

### Ignoring KPIs Until Month-End

Waiting for month-end financial reports to identify cost issues is like reading a post-mortem. By the time you see a problem in a monthly P&L, you have already paid for it.

#### Solution

Solution: Review daily sales, labor, and waste reports every single day. A manager who catches a 2% labor variance on Wednesday can correct it. One who finds it on the 30th cannot.

### Lack of Coaching & Development

Managers who only evaluate rather than develop create stagnant teams with high turnover. Your team stays when they feel they are growing.

#### Solution

Solution: Schedule 1-on-1 conversations monthly. Identify each team member's next skill goal. Promote from within whenever possible — it is your most powerful retention tool.

### Reactive Management

Spending your entire shift putting out fires is a symptom of a system failure, not a busyness badge. Reactive managers are always behind; proactive managers anticipate.

#### Solution

Solution: Complete your opening walkthrough before service. Brief your team on potential challenges before they happen. Reserve 30 minutes of administrative time daily for planning.

### Failure to Develop Future Leaders

If your restaurant cannot run without you for 48 hours, you have not built a team — you have built a dependency. This limits your advancement and your restaurant's scalability.

#### Solution

Solution: Identify one or two high-potential team members per year. Give them increasing responsibility. Document your own role so knowledge can be transferred.

## SECTION 6 | 90-Day Leadership Improvement Plan

### How to Use This Worksheet

Use the results from your Monthly Self-Assessment (Section 3) to complete this worksheet. Commit to 2–3 focused improvements over 90 days. Sustained, focused effort in a few areas produces more results than scattered effort across many.

Manager Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Review Date (90 days): \_\_\_\_\_

**1. My Top 3 Leadership Strengths (from Section 3)**

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**2. My Top 3 Leadership Improvement Opportunities**

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### 3. Specific Action Steps

| Improvement Area | Specific Action | By When | Success Measure |
|------------------|-----------------|---------|-----------------|
| 1.               |                 |         |                 |
| 2.               |                 |         |                 |
| 3.               |                 |         |                 |

**4. Resources or Support I Need (training, mentorship, tools, coaching)**

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|                            |        |        |        |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Accountability Checkpoints | 30-Day | 60-Day | 90-Day |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|

|                                     |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Am I executing my action steps?     | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Am I seeing measurable improvement? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not yet <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not yet <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not yet <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do I need to adjust my plan?        | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>      | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>      | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>      |

## SECTION 7 | Additional Resources

Chef Eric Arrouze provides hands-on consulting, coaching, and training for independent restaurants, multi-unit operations, and hospitality groups across Canada and internationally.

### Restaurant Consulting

Strategic operational consulting to improve systems, reduce costs, and increase profitability.

<https://911cheferic.com/restaurant-consultant-vancouver/>

### Restaurant Cost Control & Profitability

Proven systems to control food cost, labor, and prime cost for long-term profitability.

<https://911cheferic.com/restaurant-consultant-vancouver/restaurant-costing-profitability/>

### Restaurant Coaching (Vancouver)

Hands-on coaching for Vancouver-area restaurants focused on real operational results.

<https://911cheferic.com/restaurant-coaching-vancouver/>

### Restaurant Cost Control & Profitability

Proven systems to bring food cost, labor, and prime cost in line with benchmarks.

<https://911cheferic.com/restaurant-consultant-vancouver/restaurant-costing-profitability/>

### Menu Engineering

Data-driven menu analysis to maximize revenue per cover and reduce food cost.

<https://911cheferic.com/restaurant-consultant-vancouver/restaurant-menu-engineering/>

### Free Restaurant Consultation

Book a complimentary consultation to discuss your specific operational challenges.

<https://911cheferic.com/free-restaurant-consultation/>

### Online Culinary School

Professional culinary training available online for your team.

<https://onlineculinaryschool.net/>

# Need Help Developing Stronger Restaurant Leaders?

This checklist gives you the framework. But real, lasting transformation in your restaurant requires more than a document — it requires targeted coaching, accountability, and expert guidance tailored to your specific operation.

## Reduced Turnover

Build a team that stays, grows, and performs.

## Stronger Accountability

Create systems where standards are held consistently.

## Higher Profitability

Control costs, improve check averages, maximize revenue.

## Better Culture

Lead a team that is engaged, motivated, and proud.

## Operational Consistency

Deliver the same guest experience every shift, every day.

## Leadership Confidence

Make decisions faster and lead with clarity and conviction.

## Book a Free Restaurant Consultation

[911cheferic.com/free-restaurant-consultation](https://911cheferic.com/free-restaurant-consultation)

Schedule a complimentary 30-minute consultation to identify leadership gaps, operational challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

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