

The Diagnostic Card

Eight questions. Five minutes. Six domains. One clear picture.

How to use this card

Answer each question honestly — not how your venue runs on its best day, but on a normal one. Circle the option that most closely describes what actually happens. The pattern your answers produce across the six domains tells you where your design problems live.

Q1 THROUGHPUT

When your operation is at full capacity, where does it slow down first?

- Front of house — service slows, guests wait, staff scramble
- The pass or kitchen — food timing breaks under volume
- Rostering — always short somewhere when it matters
- Nowhere obvious — but we can feel the pressure building everywhere

Q2 THROUGHPUT

When a single unplanned absence hits your team, what happens to the service?

- We cover it without the guest noticing — the system absorbs it
- Someone doubles up and we get through it — but it costs us
- One person's absence changes the whole day
- We've stopped counting — it happens so often we've normalised it

Q3 DEFAULTS

When something goes wrong mid-service and you're not available, what happens?

- The team handles it — there's a protocol and they use it
- Someone senior steps in — same person every time
- It gets managed but inconsistently — depends who's on
- It usually escalates until I'm involved

Q4 DEFAULTS

How would you describe the last 20 minutes before service begins?

- Calm and deliberate — everyone knows their role, space is ready
- Busy but functional — we get there
- Rushed — finishing setup when the first guests arrive
- Chaotic — prep discipline is our biggest unsolved problem

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Q5 PEOPLE LOAD

Is there one person whose absence would immediately and materially affect service quality?

- No — the system is built so no single person is irreplaceable Yes — and it's not me
- Yes — and it is me Yes — and there is more than one of them

Q6 OPERATIONAL MEMORY

When a problem repeats in your operation — the same thing going wrong twice — what happens?

- We identify the design cause and change the system so it can't repeat We debrief, agree on a fix, but rarely follow through
- We deal with it each time it happens and move on We've stopped debriefing — there's no time and nothing seems to stick

Q7 CALM INDEX

On a normal trading day — not a crisis — how would you describe the energy in your operation?

- Calm and deliberate — the system runs and I can work on the business Busy but managed — it works, but requires constant attention
- Reactive — responding all day rather than executing a plan On the edge — one unexpected thing and the day changes character

Q8 CALM INDEX

When did you last finish a service and feel it ran exactly as you designed it to run?

- Recently — this is a regular experience Occasionally — maybe once or twice a month
- Rarely — I can remember specific instances but they're unusual I'm not sure we have a design — we have a routine that mostly holds

FREE — 30 MINUTES

Not sure what your answers mean? We'll read them with you.

Bring your completed card to a free 30-minute consultation with the Food Game Media team. We'll walk through your pattern together, tell you exactly where your design problems are concentrated, and give you a clear picture of what calm would look like in your specific operation. No pitch. No obligation. Just an honest read of what the card is telling you.

Book your free consultation:

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