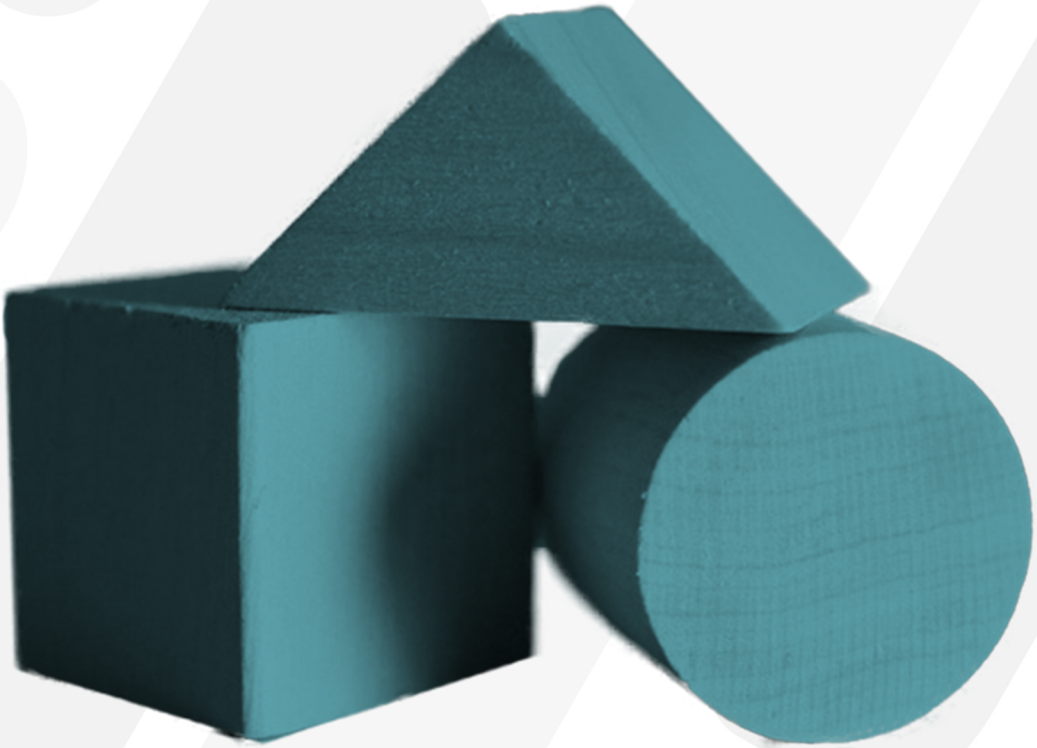
The Catering Institute™

Going back to the basics always works.

A Catering Institute Original Essay,
By Erle Dardick, Founder & CEO



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Going back to the basics always works.

I find it so interesting that when a business is in decline, and cost cutting continues to be one of the main initiatives, the fear that is cultivated for the surviving members of the team is overbearing. Devastating, scary and quite frightening, really. Emotions run high, work is piled on, and projects are under-resourced. And that leaves one to wonder, is anything getting done?

When you walk down the hallowed halls of the buildings that were once filled with entrepreneurial spirit, the culture of growth and a true belief system, what energy do you feel lurking within the walls?

For me, it is sad to see the ghosts on the walls of so many great companies that have failed, or are failing, due to internal and external pressures. Do the words and images remind you of a growing culture? One that had direction, hope and prospects for the future?

As I walk down some of these halls, you can sense the mission statement that was once so proudly displayed on the walls during the building years that are now just empty words in this time of decline. Nobody even reads the words anymore. They are just an invisible part of the background noise. The words are not relevant, not being lived. The management teams have stopped walking the talk. They have simply focused on short-term share price, with no sense of any real higher purpose. It's not their fault really because they too are just trying to feed their families. They are people too who are forced to abandon suffering markets in an effort to focus on new growth opportunities elsewhere.

On the positive side, I can tell you that there are companies trying hard to fix themselves. They have come out of declining years with new leadership dedicated to righting the ship. Even so, the battle is uphill, as the future remains uncertain. But hasn't it always been uncertain? Isn't that just the way it is? After all, nothing good can last just as nothing bad can last. It is forever changing.

So why is it that instead of setting market trends, we accept that the economy is bad and that there is nothing we can do about it. So, we show up to work, hoping it will change on its own, or even worse, we think the new leadership will know what to do. They don't know what to do! When a business is sick, it is sick. To bring it back to health, you have to change it; and quickly.

I urge you to listen to the voices of the ghosts in your halls. That is where your answers are. Hidden in the hearts and minds of the ones that were there before you.

Our company ancestors have seen it all. They too rode the wild roller coaster of business. So, honor them. Tomorrow when you go to work, try and connect to your company ancestors. Ask THEM the hard questions.

I promise you they will tell you the answers. All you have to do is ask. Read the old signs, the aging clippings and the wins and milestones that were celebrated over the years. Also, make sure you refer to their failures because there is a lot to learn there. Reconnect with the culture, passion and spirit. Try to connect to the "early days". Go back to the basics. It always works. Just look at the great brands that are succeeding today. Behind each of them is a great entrepreneurial leader. For them, there never was a recession. For them, it was just a time of change, just like any other day at work.

Now is the time for change. To get smarter, more committed, retrenched. How else do we maneuver through the mired complexities?

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About The Catering Institute

The Catering Institute is the world's leading educator in takeout, delivery and catering, providing training, certification and consulting to restaurant operators and their teams.

The Catering Institute is a private, independent academic institution. Led by founder and CEO Erle Dardick, the faculty at the Catering Institute is passionate about helping brands excel at feeding their customers where they Live, Work & Play™.

Learn more:
www.cateringinstitute.com

About Erle Dardick

Erle Dardick is a 20-year catering veteran, business turn-around expert and author, best known for helping multi-unit restaurant executives create successful catering revenue channels. Erle founded both MonkeyMedia Software and The Catering Institute. He also authored "Get Catering and Grow Sales! A Strategic Perspective for The Multi-Unit Restaurant Executive."

Get Catering and Grow Sales!™

A Strategic Perspective for the Multi-Unit Restaurant Executive

by **Erle Dardick**

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As Partners in Education, MonkeyMedia Software, PepsiCo Foodservice, and Catering Insights work with the Catering Institute, to help restaurant operators grow sales and increase profits by educating them to become experts at feeding their customers where They Live, Work and Play™.

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