



## **Business Basics: Five Areas To Improve**

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### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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I have been watching the relatively new television show "Restaurant Impossible". The host, Chef Robert Irvine goes into struggling businesses and within a couple of days works on five specific areas in order to attract new clientele and improve the financial situation of the owners. His plan is one that could be used for any business.

Following are the five areas of operation that he focusses on:

1. **Environment** - Chef Irvine has the support of a designer who is charged with the task of updating the restaurant so that it is open, bright and attractive. She is limited in both time and budget so has to use creativity to get the job done in order to meet the goals. An inviting environment results when colours, design and cleanliness are combined.
2. **Product** - Both quantity and quality are important as the staff are taught to use fresh ingredients and good techniques to prepare excellent food. Flexibility is required as the skills of the staff are evaluated and menu items are chosen to match them.
3. **Service** - Everything possible is done to ensure that the clients are taken care of in a timely and polite manner. This requires good organization as well as training for the staff. It is important to communicate expectations and strategies to meet them.
4. **Management** - Many of the restaurant owners did not have any formal education or experience before starting their dream business. They therefore do not take charge of things or make poor choices due to their lack of expertise. Sometimes they take shortcuts while sacrificing product quality, service or profit. As the show progresses, however, they develop confidence and learn how to provide the leadership that is necessary for success.
5. **Marketing** - Because the above areas have been handled poorly in the past, the restaurants are usually in trouble and do not have any regular clientele. As a result, an aggressive marketing plan has to be designed and operationalized quickly to attract people. This is done through signage, media or even direct contact with people in the community who are invited to taste test samples and talk about coming to the new premises.

You may not be running a restaurant or ever have an opportunity to be featured on this television show. You can, however, use the five focus areas to evaluate and improve your own business. Improvement in each of the areas will likely take more than two days to complete but will also likely improve your business so that your clients will be pleased and your profit will increase.