

what would you con...

CASE 3.3

Andy's Recipe

Andy Garafallo owns an Italian restaurant that sits in the middle of a cornfield near a large Midwestern city. On the restaurant's far wall is an elaborate mural of the canals of Venice. A gondola hangs on the opposite wall, up by the ceiling. Along another wall is a row of real potted lemon trees. "My ancestors are from Sicily," says Andy. "In fact, I can remember seeing my grandfather take a bite out of a lemon, just like the ones hanging on those trees."

Andy is very confident about his approach to this restaurant, and he should be, because the restaurant is celebrating its 25th anniversary. "I'm darned sure of what I want to do. I'm not trying different fads to get people to come here. People come here because they know they will get great food. They also want to support someone with whom they can

connect. This is my approach. Nothing more, nothing less." Although other restaurants have folded, Andy seems to have found a recipe for success.

Since opening his restaurant, Andy has had a number of managers. Currently, he has three: Kelly, Danielle, and Patrick. Kelly is a kitchen (food prep) manager who is known as very honest and dependable. She loves her work, and is efficient, good with ordering, and good with preparation. Andy really likes Kelly but is frustrated with her because she has such difficulty getting along with the salespeople, delivery people, and waitstaff.

Danielle, who works out front in the restaurant, has been with Andy the longest, 6 years. Danielle likes working at Garafallo's—she lives and breathes the place. She fully buys into Andy's approach of putting customers first. In fact, Andy says she has a knack for knowing what customers need even before they ask. Although she is very hospitable, Andy says she is lousy with numbers. She just doesn't seem to catch on to that side of the business.

Patrick, who has been with Andy for 4 years, usually works out front but can work in the kitchen as well. Although Patrick has a strong work ethic and is great with numbers, he is weak on the people side. For some reason, Patrick treats customers as if they are faceless, coming across as very unemotional. In addition, Patrick tends to approach problems with an either-or perspective. This has gotten him into trouble on more than one occasion. Andy wishes that Patrick would learn to lighten up. "He's a good manager, but he needs to recognize that some things just aren't that important," says Andy.

Andy's approach to his managers is that of a teacher and coach. He is always trying to help them improve. He sees part of his responsibility as teaching them every aspect of the restaurant business. Andy's stated goal is that he wants his managers to be "A" players when they leave his business to take on jobs elsewhere. Helping people to become the best they can be is Andy's goal for his restaurant employees.

Although Andy works 12 hours a day, he spends little time analyzing the numbers. He does not think about ways to improve his profit margin by cutting corners, raising an item price here, or cutting quality there. Andy says, "It's like this: The other night I got a call from someone who said they wanted to come in with a group and wondered if they could bring along a cake. I said 'yes' with one stipulation. . . . I get a piece! Well the people came and spent a lot of money. Then they told me that they had actually wanted to go to another restaurant but the other place would not allow them to bring in their own cake." Andy believes very strongly in his approach. "You get business by being what you should be." Compared with other restaurants, his restaurant is doing quite well. Although many places are happy to net 5%–7% profit, Andy's Italian restaurant nets 30% profit, year in and year out.

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Questions

1. What accounts for Andy's success in the restaurant business?
2. From a skills perspective, how would you describe the three managers, Kelly, Danielle, and Patrick? What does each of them need to do to improve his or her skills?
3. How would you describe Andy's competencies? Does Andy's leadership suggest that one does not need all three skills in order to be effective?