

Taco Bell's "Bold Future" Transformation



The business need

Taco Bell leaders saw a need to seriously examine the way it operated its restaurants – the operating system and processes, management capability, and organizational culture. They needed significant change at every level to increase restaurant revenue. The senior team concluded that Taco Bell needed to “define the whole” – the way its system should work. However, in many ways, they didn’t have a system, but more of a “task approach.” They realized they weren’t defining and building the business system, including processes and behaviors needed to drive consistent results across the enterprise.

In addition, their management approach was lacking in belief in its people. Leaders assumed that people weren’t accountable. The area coach was the ultimate checker, not a process manager or capability builder. Area coaches weren’t contributing value to the restaurant or to the Restaurant General Managers, or RGMs. In the Taco Bell culture, failure is not an option, so their default was to force, manipulate, and fake to get results. This had become the dark side of its achievement culture.

The solution

Taco Bell’s Chief People Officer, Connie Colao, and Chief Operating Officer, Rob Savage, had worked with Root in the past. They led this engagement, as the transformation required HR and Operations to work together. Ultimately, Frank Tucker, VP of HR, and his team led the execution of the future state, renamed The Bold Future, throughout the organization.

The project began with the Senior Operations Team creating an honest assessment of current reality and determining ground rules and behaviors for the senior team and ultimately for the entire organization. Root conducted interviews with franchisees and people at all levels to inform both states.

The conclusions of were to clarify, simplify, and integrate operations at the corporate level before sharing new processes with the field; to move from task management to coaching; to focus on RGMs as leaders; and changing the system to enable RGMs to be effective coach-players. Root facilitated Taco Bell’s leadership in candid conversations to engage the franchise community to take performance to the next level. The goal was to create a single integrated view – “One System” – to move business performance forward.

Next, the message needed to reach all field and store management to engage them in the Bold Future strategy. At a “One System” conference, company and franchise field leaders explored the current state and future state of the business through a Strategic *Learning Map*® experience. The goals were to communicate how everyone contributed to the current state, frame the picture for the future, and generate excitement about creating this together.





A session for restaurants related to this work was also created. Called Delivering the Taco Bell Promise, this session detailed the roles and responsibilities for Team Members, Managers in Charge, RGMs, and Above Restaurant Leaders (ARLs) so restaurant teams could fully understand and act on the new roles to support the strategy. To sustain the Bold Future Strategy, the ARLs had to make a significant shift. They needed to improve their servant leadership and coaching skills, with the focus on driving sustainable results with their teams. Root created two experiences focused on servant leadership: How to Visit a Restaurant with Heart, and Area Coach as a Servant Leader. These included dialogue, card activities, and games to practice new skills. The Area Coach role was redefined so the key behaviors needed to sustain the Bold Future were clear. The role was designed so coaching would result in meeting the metrics and would enable Area Coaches to prioritize daily and weekly activities.

To build the skills needed at all levels to support the Bold Future, Root partnered with Taco Bell to create a visual and video session focused on Coaching with Accountability. Taco Bell created detailed “Success Routines” for Area Coaches and RGMs. These books detailed roles, activities, and templates for facilitating planning and coaching. Taco Bell also created a session for restaurants related to this work called Delivering the Taco Bell Promise. This detailed the roles and responsibilities for Team Members, Managers in Charge, RGMs, and ARLs so restaurant teams could fully deploy the new roles to support the strategy.

Taco Bell leaders felt that Bold Future and the Root partnership made a great impact – not only the business, but also on the thousands of restaurant and field leaders across the country.

The current process for assessing how a restaurant is doing on operations and customer service wasn't driving desired business outcomes. Together, Root and Taco Bell created a card deck with supporting visuals that were used to discuss the current state, the new system, and how it connected with the Bold Future. Taco Bell created several videos that showcased the new system in action.

Results

Taco Bell saw much improvement by looking at its business as a system. Taco Bell leadership also used engagement in the process and capability as cornerstones to shift its culture and further boost its performance. In responses from the field, it was clear that leadership really understood what it was like to be an RGM and an ARL. Everyone was excited about the Bold Future and ready to do their part to make it happen. ARLs felt empowered to change how they operated to drive these goals. Field leaders began to engage their teams using the current and future state visuals. RGMs were also excited about their role in the strategy and were ready to sign up for the changes.

Taco Bell continues to be the best-performing Yum! Brand. Taco Bell leaders felt that Bold Future and the Root partnership made a great impact – not only the business, but also on the thousands of restaurant and field leaders across the country.

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About Root

Root is a strategy execution company that helps organizations engage people as a catalyst for change using a proven framework that consistently achieves clarity, ownership, and results.



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