

# What Leading Brands Know About Operational Excellence — And So Should You



# TABLE OF CONTENT

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|                                               |    |
|-----------------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction                                  | 3  |
| Consumer Expectations Have Changed — Fast     | 4  |
| Shift from Reactive to Proactive Operations   | 5  |
| Move Beyond Compliance — Toward Growth        | 6  |
| Simplify Focus: Identify Your Big Rocks       | 7  |
| Root Cause Analysis Drives Results            | 8  |
| Create a Coaching Culture, Not a Policing One | 9  |
| Link Operational Metrics to Financial Impact  | 10 |
| Integrate Your Systems                        | 11 |
| Automate with Purpose                         | 12 |
| Advance Along the Operational Maturity Model  | 13 |
| Conclusion                                    | 14 |



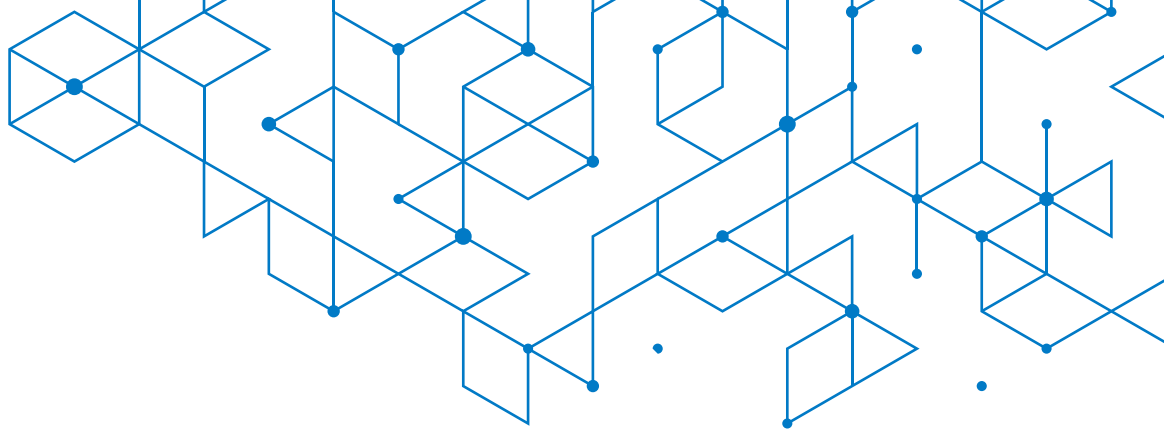


## INTRODUCTION

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In today's landscape of high customer expectations and fast-moving competition, operational excellence is no longer just a nice-to-have—it's a critical driver of business success. For multi-location businesses, the challenge is even more complex: how do you deliver consistent, high-quality experiences across every location, every time?

This ebook draws from the key insights of our recent webinar, '[Driving Operational Excellence](#).' It unpacks the top 10 lessons that leading brands are applying to move beyond reactive management and into scalable, proactive growth. Whether you're in early stages of your operations maturity journey or fine-tuning an already advanced system, this guide offers actionable strategies for every step.



## CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS HAVE CHANGED — FAST

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Today's consumers interact with brands differently than they did just five to ten years ago. They now expect tailored, seamless experiences regardless of which location they visit, with research showing 72% of customers will switch to a competitor after just one poor service experience. This shift has been accelerated by technological advancements, increased visibility through online reviews, and shifting demographics. Brands that fail to adapt to these heightened expectations quickly lose market share to competitors who offer more consistent experiences.



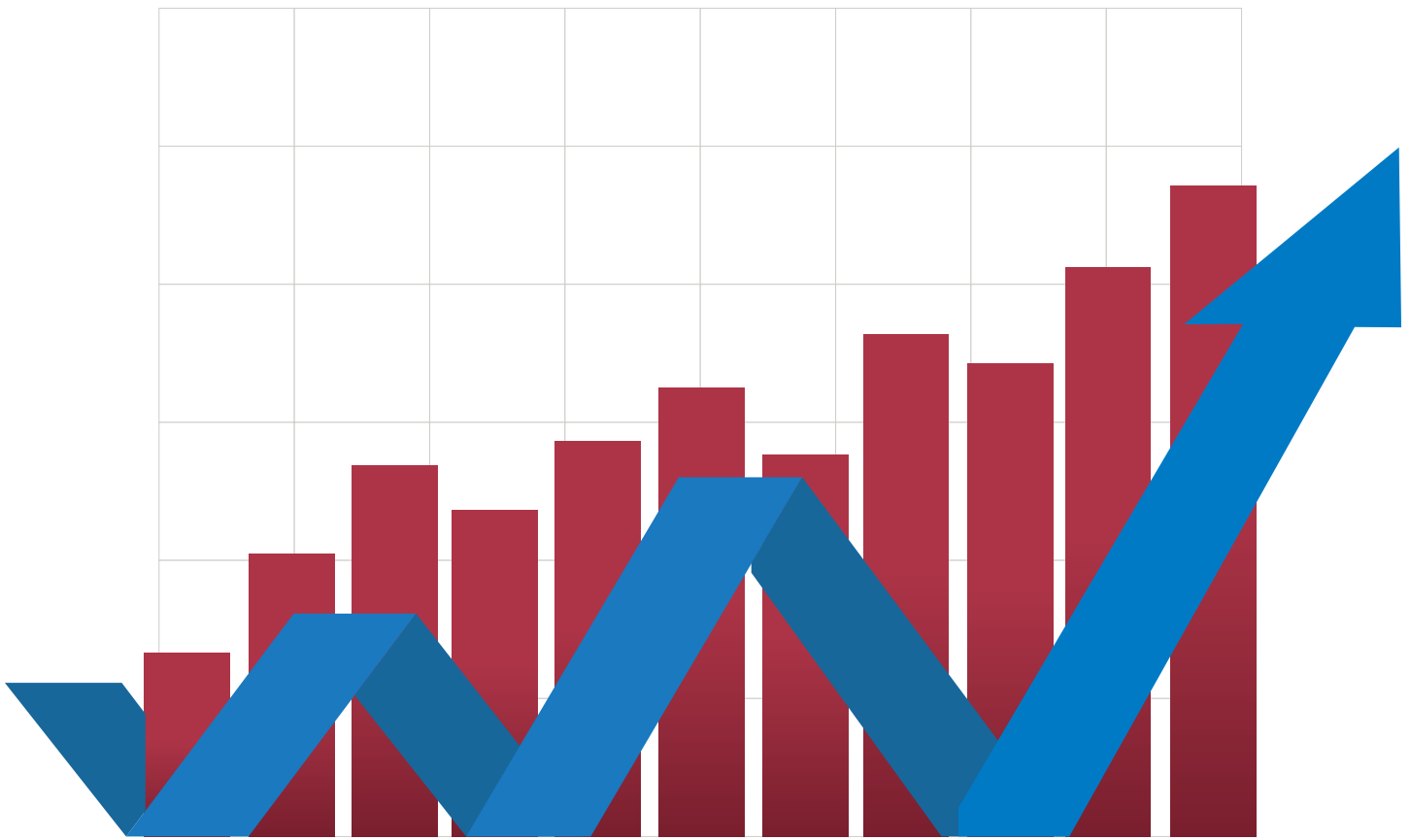
## SHIFT FROM REACTIVE TO PROACTIVE OPERATIONS

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Most multi-location businesses operate in a perpetual firefighting mode, responding to negative reviews, addressing compliance issues as they arise, and analyzing lagging indicators such as profit and loss statements or customer satisfaction scores.

Operational excellence requires flipping this approach by identifying leading indicators that predict problems before they impact guest experiences. By analyzing operational data to spot trends and potential issues, organizations can implement corrective actions proactively rather than scrambling to recover after customer disappointment has already occurred.





## **MOVE BEYOND COMPLIANCE — TOWARD GROWTH**

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Quality assurance and compliance programs are typically viewed as protective measures to avoid problems rather than drive growth. However, operational excellence should actively drive revenue growth, not just prevent revenue loss. By connecting specific operational standards to customer satisfaction and financial outcomes, organizations can transform their quality programs from cost centers into profit drivers. This shift in perspective enables brands to utilize their operational standards as strategic tools for gaining a competitive advantage.

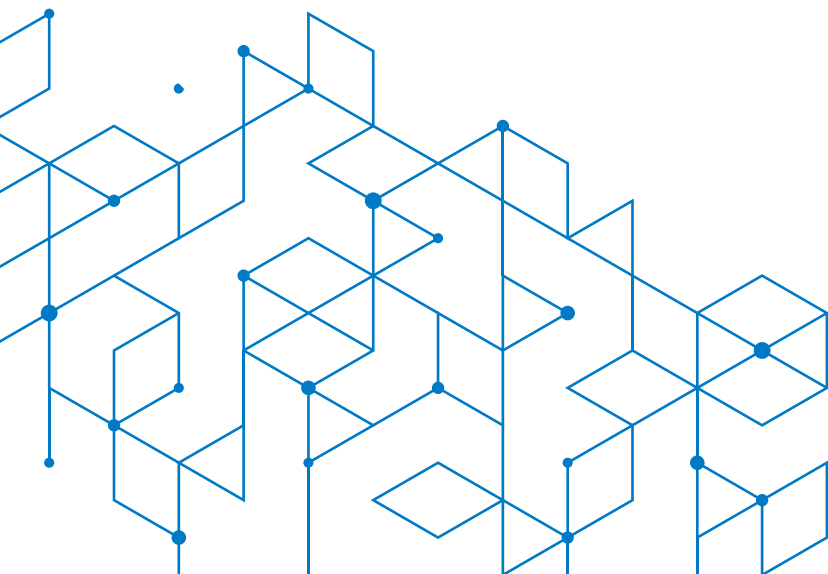
## SIMPLIFY FOCUS: IDENTIFY YOUR BIG ROCKS

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A common pitfall in operational excellence is trying to fix everything at once. The most successful brands identify three to five critical improvement areas per quarter rather than overwhelming managers with dozens of priorities.

This focused approach ensures deeper improvement in areas that matter most to customers. As Johnny Tellez emphasized, "It can't be every little nitty-bitty piece because they can't focus on everything."

By identifying your "big rocks" first and tackling them systematically before moving to the next set of priorities, you create sustainable improvement rather than surface-level fixes.





## ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS DRIVES RESULTS

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Simply identifying missed standards isn't enough. Understanding why they're missed is crucial. A Cinnabon example highlighted this perfectly: discovering that 57% of locations missed their classic roll standard was valuable, but learning that 78% of those misses were specifically due to improper frosting was actionable. This level of detailed root cause analysis allowed for targeted training and measurable improvement. Effective operational systems must be designed to capture not only what went wrong but also specifically why it went wrong, enabling precise interventions.

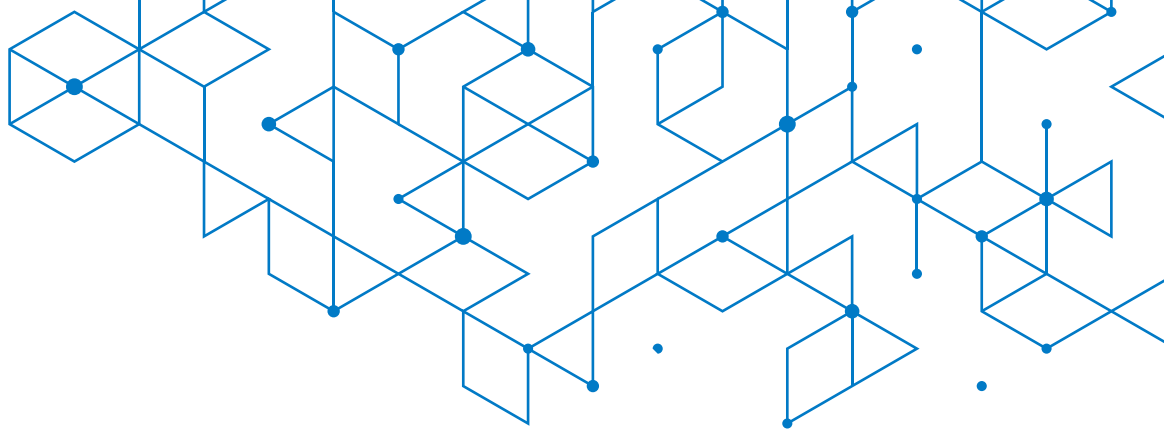
## CREATE A COACHING CULTURE, NOT A POLICING ONE

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Traditional operational reviews often feel punitive to location managers. Someone arrives with a clipboard for a few hours, marks them down for violations, and leaves them feeling demoralized. The idea is to transform this dynamic from "catching" operators doing wrong to helping them improve their performance collaboratively.

When managers see evaluations as a tool to help them succeed rather than a way to document their failures, engagement increases dramatically. This requires both technological solutions that facilitate coaching and a fundamental mindset shift throughout the organization.





## LINK OPERATIONAL METRICS TO FINANCIAL IMPACT

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Organizations implementing structured operational excellence models saw 12% to 20% year-over-year sales growth. This impressive result came from establishing clear connections between operational standards and financial outcomes. By grouping similar location types together (e.g., mall-based, street-side) and analyzing performance differences, organizations can identify exactly which operational factors drive financial success. This data-driven approach removes subjectivity and provides compelling evidence for operators about which standards truly matter to their bottom line.





## INTEGRATE YOUR SYSTEMS

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Disparate systems for training, quality assurance, customer feedback, and analytics create significant barriers to improvement. When observations from field visits can't automatically trigger relevant training modules, or when customer feedback trends can't be easily correlated with operational metrics, valuable insights are lost.

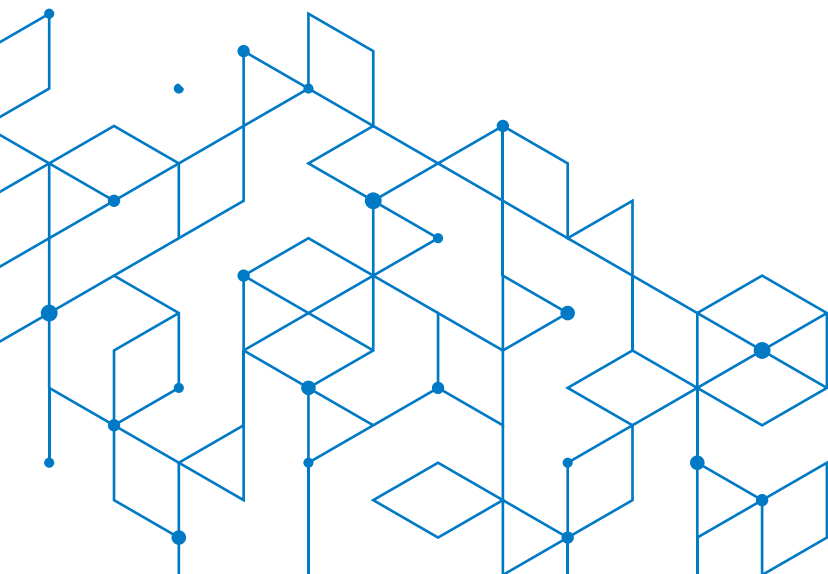
An integrated approach where all operational systems communicate provides clearer insights and faster improvement. This integration is especially crucial for general managers who lack the time to manually connect data from multiple systems into actionable insights.



## AUTOMATE WITH PURPOSE

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Simply digitizing checklists doesn't create operational excellence. True transformation occurs when systems are implemented that automatically identify patterns, trigger appropriate training, and track results over time. This automation enables field leaders to transition from clipboard-carrying inspectors to strategic coaches, focusing on performance improvement rather than documentation. By automating administrative tasks, organizations free up valuable time for the human-centered aspects of operational support that truly drive results.



# ADVANCE ALONG THE OPERATIONAL MATURITY MODEL



Organizations should assess their current position on the operational maturity journey, ranging from basic compliance activities to data-driven insights and predictive analytics. The webinar presented a clear progression from foundational elements (fundamental checklists and manual tracking) to standardization (digital tools and consistent processes) and ultimately to optimization (integrated systems and predictive insights). By understanding their current position, organizations can create a strategic roadmap for advancing their operational capabilities rather than attempting to leap directly to advanced states without building the necessary foundation.



## CONCLUSION

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### Turn Operations into Strategy

The journey toward operational excellence is continuous, requiring commitment at every level of the organization. By shifting from reactive to proactive operations, simplifying priorities, implementing root cause analysis, and fostering a coaching culture, multi-location businesses can transform their operational approach from a mere compliance exercise into a powerful engine for growth.

The most successful organizations recognize that operational excellence involves strategically driving performance through integrated systems, targeted improvements, and data-driven decision-making. As consumer expectations continue to evolve, the competitive advantage will increasingly belong to those businesses that can deliver consistent, exceptional experiences across all locations. By implementing the insights shared in this webinar, organizations can position themselves at the forefront of their industries, turning operational excellence into a sustainable competitive advantage.

To learn more about how FranConnect is helping leading multi-location brands achieve 12% to 20% year-over-year growth through operational excellence, [request a demo today](#).

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