

# THE 7 DEADLY SINS OF RESTAURANT MANAGEMENT

 **TouchBistro**

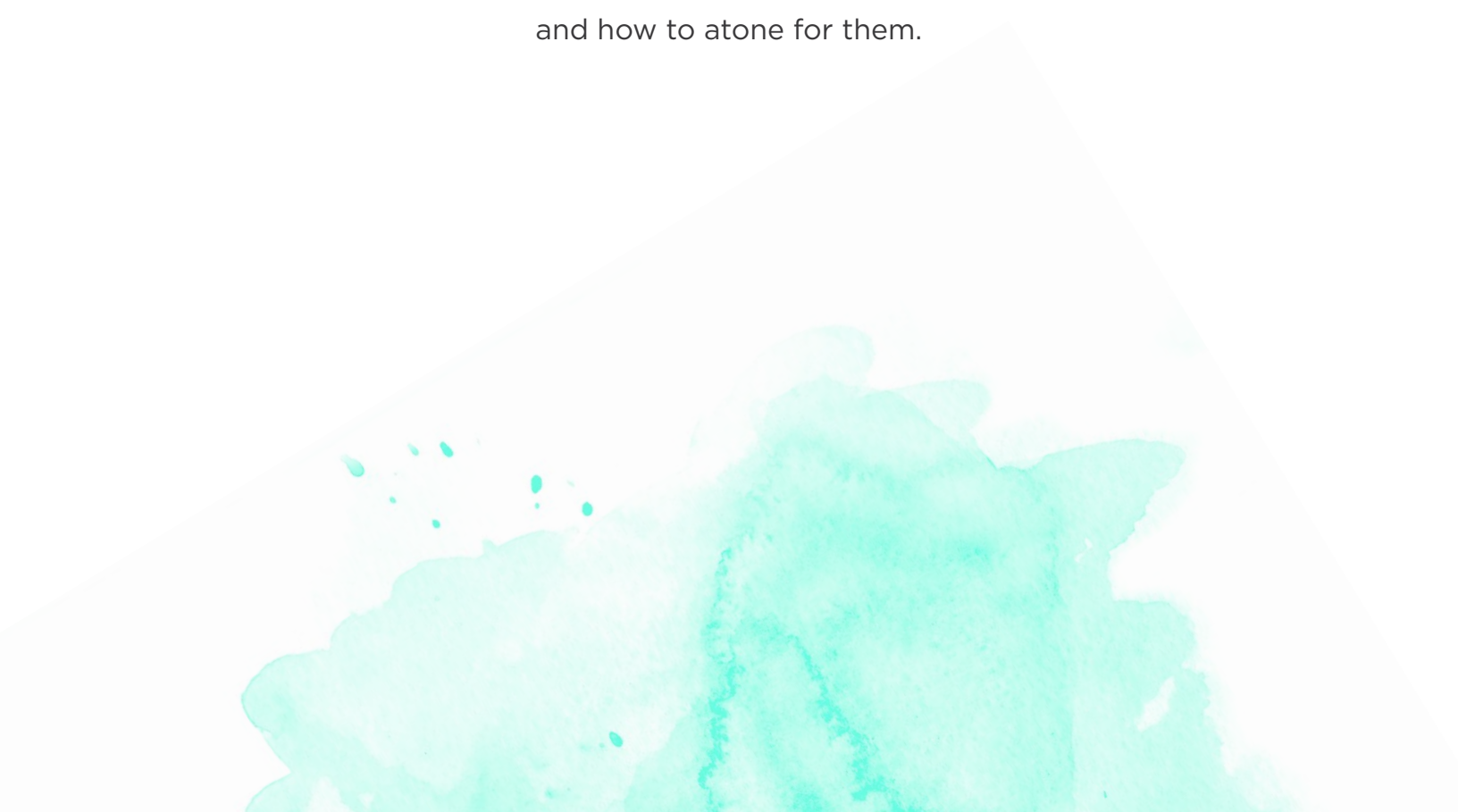




## HAVE YOU BEEN BAD?

As in every industry, there are vices and bad behaviours.

However, in the restaurant world some of these can wreak havoc on the success of a business, especially when committed by well-meaning managers. From an indifference to how garbage is handled, to fear of the future, to a temper left unchecked, these are the seven deadly sins of restaurant management - and how to atone for them.



# WASTE

## THOU SHALT NOT WASTE FOOD.

Is the bar tossing a full cup of unused limes at the end of each shift? Have you noticed customers never finish a large order of fries? Are wilted lettuces being chucked after sitting in the back of the walk-in unused?

Waste is incredibly damaging for a restaurant, as it's pretty much equal to money being thrown in the garbage. What's coming in and how it's leaving must be closely monitored and handled with the utmost efficiency. In fact, the cost of wasted food on the commercial food services industry is around \$100 billion annually. That's a lot of food - and money - in the dumpster! Though that stat might seem dismal, think of it more as a warning or a motivator: **restaurants that have implemented a waste program save money and improve their bottom line.**

### HOW TO ATONE:

#### THOU SHALT RE-EVALUATE FOOD WASTE.

The most successful restaurateurs know that controlling waste makes for a more profitable business and they walk the line of quality and profitability with precision.

The best way to reduce waste is to monitor the amount of food ordered and how it stacks up to what's being used. Keep an eye on the trash and see what items are getting tossed, then reduce the ordering to what's necessary, label and organize properly so food hiding in plain sight doesn't go bad, or find a way to recreate the waste into something useful.

At Dan Barber's 2015 pop-up WastEd, every single ingredient used was an overlooked byproduct until he rethought how it could be recreated into a new menu item. From pulp veggie burgers to pickle butts, there's creativity and money in rethinking what's being tossed.

# EGO

## THOU SHALT NOT THINK THYSELF ABOVE OTHERS.

You've heard it a hundred times, and we'll say it again: leading by example is the most important strategy managers can employ to set a positive standard with employees. You might be the top dog and have your way of doing things, but ruling with an iron fist doesn't create the kind of teamwork that a restaurant needs to run smoothly. Think about it: as a manager are you constantly out of touch, telling an overwhelmed team to do more while you chat with regulars and dish out endless tasks? If so, it's time to check your ego.

### HOW TO ATONE:

#### THOU SHALT ROLL UP THINE SLEEVES AND CHIP IN.

Know this: a good manager leads not from the top of a mountain, but as a guide climbing with the team. You have to ensure that the job gets done, and many times, this means throwing your job title to the wayside and filling in the gaps where necessary.

This could mean cleaning windows or marrying ketchup bottles, rather than retreating to the office during dead time. It could also mean hopping on the fryer, running food, or answering the phone when the rest of your staff are in the weeds. Of course, it always means having your staff's back when they're dealing with a difficult customer service situation, and having the customer's back when their dining experience is less than ideal.



# FEAR

## THOU SHALT NOT FEAR MODERNIZATION.

Are you in a state of “comfortable disorganization”? Still running on paper, cash, and a fear of change? Well, the future is here and it’s brought with it a host of tools for the modern restaurateur – endless options to make running a restaurant easier and more streamlined. So what are you waiting for? Are you afraid of the transition? Do you have an aversion to technology: a fear of over-complicating processes? If yes, then your fear is holding your restaurant, staff, and customers back from a better experience.

### HOW TO ATONE:

## THOU SHALT EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY.

Delivery apps, take-out apps, wait list apps, digital reservations, staff scheduling software, automated inventory tracking, [mobile POS](#) systems, the list goes on. New technologies can make your staff faster and more effective, your restaurant more profitable, and your guests happier.

Let the light of technology shine bright. Start with a mobile POS – a unified solution that is user friendly and easy to implement will help you overcome your fear and begin to embrace the potential and possibilities of all technology has to offer.

# FILTH

## THOU SHALT NOT BE CARELESS ABOUT CLEANING.

One bad health inspection is all it takes to close your restaurant for days - or even for good. And the worst is that it's entirely preventable. From the windows to the floors, if you can swipe a finger in dust anywhere in your restaurant, the culture of clean isn't as strong as it needs to be. Let no man leave a dish astray, a bottle sticky, or a walk-in fridge unorganized.

### HOW TO ATONE:

#### THOU SHALT KEEP EVERYTHING SPOTLESS.

All food should be prepared and served in the cleanest possible environment and it's your duty to make sure that the back of house, front of house, and all other areas from the restrooms to the office are spic and span - always.

When cleanliness is stressed as part of the culture it becomes habitual and ingrained. This makes for a more comfortable working environment, happy guests, and stress-free inspection times.

From double checking the fridge temperature to cleaning the ovens, a daily and nightly checklist that a manager signs off on is one of the best ways to ensure that no crevice goes un-dusted and no corner un-mopped. One for front of house, another for back, both checklists need to cover every nook and cranny, including restrooms, table condiments, fridges, freezers, and floors. Afterall, cleanliness is godliness in the restaurant world.



# EXCESS

## THOU SHALT NOT SQUANDER THINE OWN INVENTORY.

So you had a long shift and you want to live a little, so you have a couple of drinks on the house with your favorite regulars. Time passes and they've been so great, you might as well comp their food too. Then, at the end of the night, it's a round of shots for the staff, and you should probably take care of that walkout from earlier and the staff meals too - it was a busy night, everyone deserves it!

If your management style is Promos Gone Wild, you need to reign it in. Comping food and drinks can be useful for fixing a bad customer experience, celebrating a special occasion, or to reward staff or regulars, but being careless about costs and enjoying too many meals or drinks on the house with little regard to the consequences can land you - and the restaurant you're running - in hot water.

### HOW TO ATONE:

#### THOU SHALT CONTROL THE COMPS.

It's easy to make it a freebie with the magic comp button, but it's doing some serious damage to the bottom line and to your numbers as a manager. Even if you're a champ at keeping track, do the budgeting before and be a stickler about managing and sticking to those pre-determined comped numbers. Start with a set standard for customer complaints - like maybe a free dessert instead of a full free meal, reward staff in other ways than after work drinks, and start paying for anything you consume yourself. Having measures in place helps to create a healthier and happier bottom line.

# IGNORANCE

## THOU SHALT NOT BE STUCK IN THINE WAYS.

In the restaurant industry, ignorance manifests in many ways. Losing the drive to keep learning is one, but it can also appear as dismissing new ideas from staff, refusing to try new menu items, or staying stuck in routines that are clearly not working. If your go-to response to new suggestions is a short and quick, “no”, it’s time to ask for absolution – and start to change.

### HOW TO ATONE:

#### THOU SHALT KEEP LEARNING.

You’re only as good as your team, so read up on management styles and seek ways in which you can change. Check out blogs to get a day-to-day update on the latest conversations, benchmarks, and regulations affecting the restaurant industry, and follow a range of topics like restaurant technology, small business, food trends, and foodie culture.

You might also want to consider attending a conference. Networking and listening to keynote speakers about the latest changes, challenges and solutions affecting the industry, can motivate and inspire you. In addition to learning opportunities, conferences often showcase vendors with new technologies, products and services that could change the way you do business.

Finally, be sure to reach out to your staff and ask them what they think could be improved within the restaurant, or if they have any suggestions for you, and make sure that you hear what they have to say.

If you find yourself getting stuck in your old ways or hear yourself muttering “no” too often, stop and re-evaluate. Be open to change and embrace new ideas to grow your team and your restaurant.



# STRESS

## THOU SHALT NOT FREAK OUT AND PANIC.

There are fifteen orders up in the window and the kitchen is short-staffed, there are two servers bickering over a table, a guest complaint that needs diffusing, and a lineup out the door. Not to mention the earlier email from the owner to cut staff hours, even though the place is packed. It's the perfect recipe for a short fuse to be lit and your temper to take over.

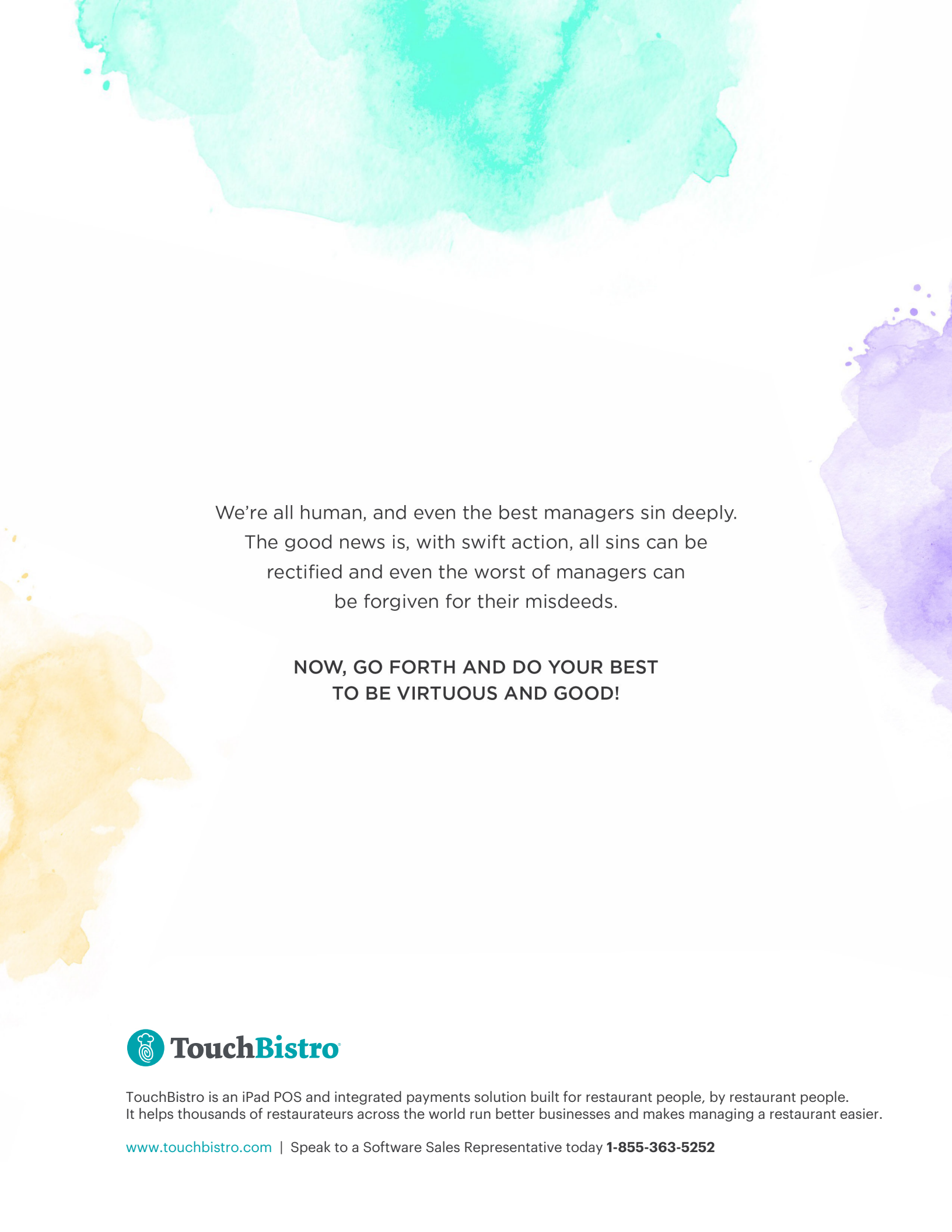
Don't let the heat get to your head. Misalignment from management to the kitchen to servers is passed on to the customer and can affect their entire experience. Your stress can trickle down and be felt throughout the restaurant as tension, and that's the last thing a paying customer on a night out wants to feel.

### HOW TO ATONE:

## THOU SHALT KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON.

The perfect manager is cool as a cucumber, taking a clear and focused stance to problems as they arise. While it may be tempting to unload when a mistake happens on a busy night, it's important to remember that you set the tone for your restaurant. Keeping a calm, cool demeanour and the ability to see each situation objectively goes a long way in keeping control and setting the mood for your staff and guests.

The key: fix the common theme behind each stressor before things get to a boiling point. Plan for problems by getting to the root of them. Find a solution to order errors with a new, more efficient POS, properly train hosts to handle a line with ease, empower your servers to own customer issues, and keep the kitchen on track by pitching in where you can. By visualizing what can go wrong and creating a go-to plan beforehand, you can take ownership, give direction, and smoothly make your way through stressful situations.



We're all human, and even the best managers sin deeply.  
The good news is, with swift action, all sins can be  
rectified and even the worst of managers can  
be forgiven for their misdeeds.

**NOW, GO FORTH AND DO YOUR BEST  
TO BE VIRTUOUS AND GOOD!**



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