

## McPHERSON AI

# Operator Diagnostic Assessment

Broad Operator Diagnostic (\$500 · 5 hours) — Written Deliverable

### SAMPLE ASSESSMENT — FICTIONAL STORE FOR ILLUSTRATION ONLY

*This sample shows the format and depth of a real McPherson AI Operator Diagnostic. “Cantina Del Sol” is a fictional store. Every finding below is the kind of finding a real assessment produces — specific, observed, and actionable whether or not you ever buy anything else from us.*

## 1. Business Context

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**Business / location:** Cantina Del Sol — single location, fast-casual taqueria, San Diego, CA

**Concept type:** Counter-service Mexican, ~\$19K weekly sales, 14 employees, owner-operated with one shift lead per daypart

**Operating window observed:** Tuesday, 10:30 AM – 3:30 PM (pre-rush prep through lunch rush and shift change)

**Primary concern entering diagnostic:** “Food cost has been creeping up for three months and I can’t tell you why.” — Owner

## 2. Diagnostic Scope

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**Selected diagnostic:** 5-hour Broad Operator Diagnostic

**What was observed:** Opening prep, line setup, lunch rush execution, register/expo flow, a produce delivery, lunch-to-afternoon shift change, and the owner’s current paperwork routine.

**Who was interviewed:** Owner (45 min), lunch shift lead (15 min), prep cook (10 min).

**What was intentionally outside scope:** POS configuration, payroll setup, menu pricing strategy, and anything requiring vendor contract review.

## 3. Operator Read

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This is a good store with a strong crew and a real regular base. The food cost problem the owner feels is not one big leak — it is four small ones that nobody is positioned to see, because each one happens in a different part of the day and none of them get written down. The store runs on the owner’s memory and the lunch lead’s habits. When both are on, the store is tight. When either is off or busy, the same three or four things slip — and the P&L is the first place anyone finds out, four to six weeks too late.

## 4. Top Operational Pain Points

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### Pain Point 1 — Produce deliveries signed without verification.

**What I observed:** The Tuesday produce delivery arrived during rush. A cook signed the invoice without counting; two cases of avocados were billed, one was on the dolly. **Why it matters:** at roughly \$60–80 per case, even one uncaught short per week is \$250–350/month in pure loss — invisible because it books as food cost, not theft or waste. **Risk if unchanged:** vendor shorts (intentional or not) continue indefinitely; no credit is ever requested. **Suggested action:** a 90-second receiving rule — count cases against the invoice before signing, photograph any discrepancy, request credit same day. This costs nothing and starts working tomorrow.

### Pain Point 2 — Lunch-to-afternoon handoff is verbal only.

**What I observed:** At 2:40 PM the lunch lead told the incoming lead three things while both were moving: carnitas pan was low, the walk-in door was sticking again, and a catering call needed a callback. By 3:15, only one of the three had landed. **Why it matters:** the store 86’d carnitas during the dinner rush two

Fridays ago — the owner mentioned it as a one-off, but the mechanism that caused it happens every single day. Risk if unchanged: repeat 86s, lost catering revenue, and maintenance issues that resurface as emergencies. Suggested action: a written three-line handoff — prep status, equipment issues, follow-ups — captured at every shift change, kept where the next shift actually starts.

### **Pain Point 3 — Opening labor is front-loaded ahead of volume.**

What I observed: four crew on the clock from 10:30, but meaningful order volume did not start until 11:40. Roughly five paid labor-hours per week sit in that gap across the week, by the owner's own schedule. Why it matters: at California QSR wages, five drifting hours is roughly \$100–120/week — \$400–500/month — hiding inside a labor percentage that still looks “close enough.” Risk if unchanged: labor drift compounds quietly; nobody re-examines a schedule that was right two years ago. Suggested action: stagger two of the four opening starts by 45–60 minutes and re-check labor pacing mid-week instead of at week's end, while the schedule can still be adjusted.

### **Pain Point 4 — End-of-night waste is estimated, never logged.**

What I observed: close-out discards (rice, beans, proteins past hold time) go in the trash with no record. The owner's food cost variance is therefore unexplainable by design — waste, portioning, and vendor shorts all blur into one number. Why it matters: you cannot fix a leak you cannot see, and right now three different leak types share one bucket. Suggested action: a dead-simple nightly waste line — item, amount, reason — takes the closer 90 seconds and turns next month's variance from a mystery into a list.

## **5. AI Support Opportunities**

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### **Where AI-driven operator support could help:**

- Capturing the daily handoff and carrying open items forward automatically so follow-ups stop living in two people's heads (directly addresses Pain Point 2).
- Mid-week labor pacing checks against sales, so the Pain Point 3 drift gets flagged Wednesday — while the schedule is still fixable — instead of discovered after payroll closes.
- Prompted receiving and waste logs (Pain Points 1 and 4), with a weekly roll-up that separates vendor shorts, waste, and portioning into their own lines.
- A weekly plain-language summary connecting the four leaks to the food cost number the owner already watches.

**Where AI should not be used yet:** Schedule rebuilding. The opening-labor fix is a one-time human decision; automating around a stale schedule would just automate the drift.

**What should stay human-owned:** Coaching the crew, vendor relationships and credit conversations, discipline, and every final operational decision. The system's job is to make sure the owner sees the right thing at the right time — not to run the store.

## **6. Recommended Next Steps**

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**Immediate no-cost actions:** Start the receiving count rule and the nightly waste line this week. Both work with a pen and a clipboard. You do not need McPherson AI for either, and I would tell you that to your face.

**Process improvements:** Stagger the two opening starts; move the handoff from verbal to written at every shift change.

**Possible McPherson AI pilot use case:** A focused deployment carrying the handoff, labor pacing, receiving, and waste workflows — with a weekly summary that ties them back to dollars. The pilot would be measured on issues caught and follow-ups carried, not promises.

## **7. Pilot Fit Assessment**

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**Fit: YES**

**Reason:** The store's leaks are visibility and follow-through problems — exactly the category a store-memory system addresses. The crew is stable and the owner is engaged, which is what a clean pilot needs.

**Recommended pilot starting point:** Shift handoff + labor pacing lane first; receiving and waste logs added in week two once the daily habit is set.

**Risks or blockers:** The owner is the bottleneck for adoption — if the daily capture doesn't survive the owner's busiest week, nothing downstream matters. Week-one design accounts for this.

## 8. No-Fit Path

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*Not applicable for this store. Where a pilot is not recommended, this section lists the process cleanup I would do first and a clean reason to revisit later — and the engagement ends there. Roughly one in three assessments should land here; an honest “not yet” is part of what you're paying for.*

## 9. Credit Window

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The full diagnostic fee (\$300 or \$500) is credited toward the \$1,000 Founder Pilot startup payment if the client moves forward within 30 days of receiving this written assessment. If not, the client keeps this assessment and the engagement ends cleanly.

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*Prepared by Blake McPherson · McPherson AI LLC · Sixteen years in restaurant operations, still on the floor every week.*