Leadership Lessons: Give Your Team Freedom

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- **The leader:** Julie Burleson, founder and CEO of the Young Chefs Academy franchise
- **Time in current position:** 11 years
- **Julie's philosophy:** "Freedom encourages creativity and builds loyalty." **(Click to tweet)**

Throughout my career, I have worked with numerous creative minds and great leaders. As the founder of Young Chefs Academy, I have studied the delicate balance between encouraging creativity and providing structure. As a franchise concept, we offer proven systems and processes that our franchisees can follow to achieve success. At the same time, we are in the ever-evolving business of developing children's culinary classes and we must also nurture creativity.

The key to harmony in our company is freedom. For example, many of our franchisees bring a wealth of creative ideas to their business. We advocate freedom for our franchisees to initiate special promotions that may be pertinent to only their community while also providing the structure through our operating systems for them to do so. We also have a tremendous corporate staff that provides ongoing guidance for our franchisees.

Having the right corporate team in place is paramount to our franchisees' success and our development. We spur creativity at the corporate level by allowing a healthy dose of freedom. This free environment is only successful when there is a strong foundation in place — and we are able to look to our system for answers. This allows our team to breathe and not be afraid to make a mistake. It allows them to seek excellence and work together to achieve the same goal. After all, our cooking curriculum evokes curiosity and provides children with a pathway to personal development and creativity. Taking a page from our lesson book means allowing freedom for our corporate staff to do the same.