

SPOTLIGHT ON JAKE CURNOW

FRONT OF HOUSE OPERATIONS MANAGER,
VARSITY, PERTH



Heading up Front of House at Perth's best sports entertainment venue and burger joint, Jake loves nothing more than making everyone's Varsity experience one-of-a-kind-five-star-incredible. He lives and breathes the brand values that gave him and his mates one of the best nights of their lives.

"We tried the devil wings, which are like the hottest thing on Earth! It was one of the most intense, funny and euphoric experiences. The atmosphere and the vibe was amazing. I just love creating and being a part of those moments every single day!"

You have a unique opportunity to have a positive impact on others every day, whether it's your workmates or your customers ... and that's what makes this industry so much more than a job on the way to another job.

Give us your bbq pitch. What do you do?

You could say my job is to make sure the sport's on, the music's loud, the beers are flowing (and cold), the staff are smiling, and the customers are happy. Of course, I can't be in six bars all at once, so really my job is so much more than that. It's to make sure everyone who relies on me, in every Varsity venue across Perth, has the tools, skills and support they need to do their job and kill it.

Did you always plan to work in this industry?

The ocean had always been incredibly interesting to me as a kid, so the idea of becoming a marine biologist was exciting. But at age 15-16, I really had no idea what I wanted to be and I didn't feel ready to make those big life decisions. I was a bit lost. But I soon realised that being lost was quite a cool and liberating place to be. You get to stop and notice the opportunities out there.

So, how did you get into hospitality?

I started opening up doors to see where they took me and soon worked out that what I really wanted was a wide, transferable set of skills I could take anywhere in the world and get work. The most obvious choice was bartending. I bounced around a few different venues, from cocktail bars to classic pubs. But it wasn't until I landed at Varsity that I really saw this as a career opportunity.

How would you describe yourself?

Easy to get along with and be around. I love bringing out the best in others. I'm not ego-driven. It's not all about me. I'm flexible and adaptable, reliable and supportive. And I believe in leading by example – to walk the walk before you talk the talk.

What do you love most about the industry?

When you've gone above and beyond and you see the look on someone's face having the night of their lives, or creating a memory with their friends, it's so cool to be a part of that

moment. You have a unique opportunity to have a positive impact on others every day, whether it's your workmates or your customers. That's pretty special. And that's what makes this industry so much more than a job on the way to another job. It's a career. It's something you can really get your teeth into, learn and achieve, and the journey is ridiculously enjoyable.

What's the best part of your job?

Helping people develop and seeing them grow. I've had some great mentors and managers over the years who taught me some really important lessons. Now, as I'm passing those learnings on to others, it's so good to watch them go on to absolutely nail their job.

What's your best advice for anyone starting out?

To know that the challenges you face in this industry prepare you for anything. You never know what situation you're going to be faced with, so it really enhances your problem solving, teamwork and autonomy, communication and people management skills, as well as your confidence. It gives you all the soft skills that are so necessary in life and any job. I'd also say it's important to find a brand and a workplace with the vibes and values you can really connect and align with. If you don't feel that, your job's a lot harder. When you do, it'll just feel like home, you'll fit right in, live and breathe it and it won't feel like work!

And what's next for you?

Varsity is home. I can't see myself going anywhere. My career goals align with the goals of the company. I want to continue improving on our service delivery, so our brand remains strong, and to support, train and develop the next generation of hospitality guns!

Connect with Jake on LinkedIn

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