

VK CAPITAL VENTURES INC.

FREE GUIDE

YOUR PERSONALITY IS YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN STRATEGY

How to Build Your Chef Brand, Source Like a Pro, and Know Exactly When to Hire

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A Note Before You Begin

I've worked long enough in training all kinds of professionals from C-Suite Executives and Directors at Google to Entrepreneurial Chefs, to know one thing: the gap between a talented employee to a fully-booked, well-compensated professional and or business owner is almost never about just skill.

It's almost always about identity. About knowing who you are as a professional — and building systems that reflect that.

That's what this guide is about. Not recipes. Not knife skills. The other stuff. The stuff culinary school didn't teach you.

By the time you finish this, you'll know your culinary personality type, understand how it shapes your sourcing habits, have a clear framework for building your professional brand, and know exactly when to hire a VA, a sous chef, or a sourcing coordinator — and when to wait.

Let's build something real.

— *Siobhan C. Skerritt*

CHAPTER 1

Why Most Chef Brands Don't Work

Here's what a generic chef brand looks like: A logo. A headshot that's two years old. A website that says 'farm-to-table' with stock photos of vegetables. An Instagram that posts when there's time. A bio that lists every restaurant you've worked at.

Sound familiar?

The problem isn't effort. It's that most chef branding is built outward-in: designed to look like what a chef is supposed to look like, rather than from the inside-out, built around who this specific chef actually is.

Hotel founders and retreat operators have told me the same thing over and over: 'We're not just hiring a cook. We're hiring a philosophy.' They want to know: How does this chef think? How do they make decisions under pressure? What do they do when the farm calls and says the tomatoes didn't come in?

Your brand needs to answer those questions before anyone ever asks them. And to do that, you need to know yourself first.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Your professional brand is not your logo or your resume. It is the answer to: 'What can I count on from you?' The clearer your answer, the easier it is for clients, hotels, and farm partners to say yes.

CHAPTER 2

The VK Culinary Personality Framework

After working with chefs, hotel food & beverage directors, and culinary entrepreneurs across Houston, Tulum, and beyond, I identified four dominant operating styles in the farm-to-table culinary world. I call them:

THE ARCHITECT | THE STORYTELLER | THE CURATOR | THE CATALYST

These are not personality boxes. They are operating modes. Most chefs have a primary and a secondary type. The goal is not to label yourself — it's to understand your natural tendencies so you can leverage your strengths and build systems to cover your gaps.

THE ARCHITECT

You are the person who arrives at a new kitchen and immediately starts mapping the workflow. You want a system for everything: ordering, prep schedules, portion sizes, waste tracking. You find chaos genuinely painful. You probably have a spreadsheet that nobody else uses.

Strength in Sourcing: You build the most reliable, documented supply chains of any type. Farm partners love your predictability. Hotels trust your consistency.

Watch Out For: Your systems can be so tight that you can't flex when a farm has a bad week. You may have perfect processes but struggle to communicate the story behind them. Don't let the SOP replace the relationship.

THE STORYTELLER

You are the chef who knows every farmer by name, their kids' names, and what cover crop they planted last fall. You can make a table of twelve feel like they're eating at someone's grandmother's house even in a 40-seat hotel restaurant. You are deeply relationship-oriented and you sell through narrative.

Strength in Sourcing: Farm relationships that others can't access. Guests who rave about the experience, not just the food. Marketing teams who love working with you.

Watch Out For: Your documentation is often thin. Ordering happens via text thread with farms you've known for years. What happens when you leave a property — does the sourcing infrastructure go with you? Build the systems to hold your relationships.

THE CURATOR

You care about one thing above everything: quality. You will drive two hours for the right breed of heritage pork. You have opinions about salinity levels in oysters. Your menus are works of art and your guests know it.

Strength in Sourcing: Highest standard of product selection. You understand flavor at a level most chefs don't. Your menus have a point of view.

Watch Out For: Your sourcing can be expensive in ways that are hard to justify to operators. You may resist compromise even when a good-enough farm product is the right business decision. Practice graceful flexibility.

THE CATALYST

You got into food because food is power. You want to change systems, support Black-owned farms, build community kitchens, eliminate food deserts. The farm-to-table movement is personal for you. You lead with mission.

Strength in Sourcing: Deep community trust. Access to farms and producers that mainstream culinary networks don't know. Ability to build coalitions and movements, not just menus.

Watch Out For: Operational sustainability. The Catalyst chef can build extraordinary things that collapse because the logistics weren't solid. Pair with an Architect or hire one. Your mission deserves infrastructure.

CHAPTER 3

Building Your Chef Brand: The 5-Part Framework

Knowing your type is the foundation. Now let's build the structure.

PART 1 — Your Brand Voice

Choose 3 adjectives that describe how you operate. Not how you want to appear — how you actually are in a kitchen, in a farm conversation, with a difficult client.

EXAMPLES BY TYPE:

Architect: Precise. Reliable. Methodical.
Storyteller: Warm. Relational. Imaginative.
Curator: Discerning. Elevated. Intentional.
Catalyst: Purposeful. Community-rooted. Bold.

PART 2 — Your Brand Promise

Complete this sentence: 'When [target client] hires me, they can count on [what specific outcome].'

This is not a marketing tagline. It is an operational commitment. Keep it honest. Keep it specific.

PART 3 — Your Origin Story

Write 3 paragraphs. Paragraph 1: Where you came from and what food meant to you. Paragraph 2: What you've built and what you've learned. Paragraph 3: What you're building now and who you're building it for.

This is the bio that goes on your Farm2Chef profile, your website, and that you speak at hotel hiring presentations.

PART 4 — Your Farm Sourcing Identity

Write one sentence that answers: What does your sourcing practice stand for?

Example: 'I source exclusively from Black and Brown-owned farms within 200 miles of the property I serve, and I build relationships that outlast any single contract.'

PART 5 — Your Visual Language

Choose 2–3 colors. Choose a font style (serif for warmth and tradition; sans-serif for modern precision). These should appear consistently on your Farm2Chef profile, your portfolio, and any materials you present to hotels or retreats.

Your visual language is not decoration. It is proof of intentionality. Hotels and retreats that operate at a high level notice the difference between a chef who thought about their presentation and one who didn't.

CHAPTER 4

The Supply Chain Personality Audit

Now that you know your type, let's audit how it's showing up in your current sourcing practice. Be honest. This is for you.

The 10-Question Audit

Score each question 1–4. 1 = Never true. 2 = Sometimes true. 3 = Usually true. 4 = Always true.

- I know the names of at least 5 farms I source from and have visited at least 2 of them.
- I have a documented ordering system that someone else could follow if I were unavailable.
- I can tell a guest or hotel operator the growing practices of each farm I use.
- My menus change with the seasons based on what my farms can actually deliver.
- I track my local spend % and can quote it roughly off the top of my head.
- I have backup farms for my top 5 ingredients.
- I have a professional bio that is current, specific, and written for hospitality clients.
- I can describe my sourcing philosophy in 3 sentences or less.
- I know when my current workload would benefit from a VA or additional team member.
- My Farm2Chef (or equivalent) workspace is updated and reflects my active farm network.

Score 35–40

You are operating as a fully branded, systems-oriented farm-to-table professional. Consider an instructor or mentor role.

Score 25–34

Solid foundation with clear growth areas. Use this guide to address your lowest-scoring questions.

Score 15–24

You have the instincts but not yet the infrastructure. The VK Certification program is your next step.

Score Below 15

You're operating on talent and relationships alone. That's a start — but it's fragile. Let's build something durable.

CHAPTER 5

When to Hire: The VK Staffing Decision Framework

One of the questions I hear most from chefs building their farm-to-table practice is: 'When do I stop doing everything myself?' The answer is both simpler and more nuanced than most people think.

The 3-Hour Rule

Track your time for one week. Write down every hour you spend on tasks that are not cooking or client-facing. At the end of the week, add it up. If any single category (ordering, documentation, scheduling, marketing, invoicing) totals more than 3 hours, that category is a candidate for delegation.

When to Hire a Virtual Assistant (VA)

HIRE A VA WHEN:

- You spend 5+ hours/week on farm communication, ordering admin, or invoicing
- Your Farm2Chef workspace is always 2+ weeks out of date
- You have clients but no documented system for onboarding them
- You are turning down work because admin is taking too much bandwidth

What a VA does for a chef: Manages Farm2Chef platform updates. Sends and follows up on farm orders. Maintains your portfolio and website. Schedules client calls. Drafts sourcing proposals from your templates.

When to Hire a Sous Chef

HIRE A SOUS CHEF WHEN:

- You have a hotel contract or multi-event calendar you cannot execute alone
- You need someone to hold your sourcing standards in your physical absence
- Your income is consistent enough to support a salary for 6+ months

When to Hire a Sourcing Coordinator

HIRE A SOURCING COORDINATOR WHEN:

- You are managing 10+ active farm relationships
- Farm logistics are consuming time that should go to menu development and clients
- You are ready to scale to multiple properties or a catering operation

The Personality-Hiring Connection

Different types need different support. Architects: you need a relationship-oriented VA who can warm up your farm communications. Storytellers: you need an Architect-type VA who will document everything you're doing informally. Curators: hire someone who matches your standards but can handle logistics without your perfectionism on every detail. Catalysts: you need an operational coordinator who believes in your mission but won't let it override the systems.

WHAT'S NEXT

Ready to Build the Full System?

This guide gave you the foundation. The VK Farm-to-Chef Operations & Sourcing Certification builds the complete structure on top of it.

In the 8–12 week Houston cohort, you'll leave with:

- A live Farm2Chef workspace with 5+ farms onboarded and 10+ AI-parsed recipes
- A full seasonal menu costed and sourced for a real hotel or retreat property
- A professional Sourcing SOP ready to hand to any employer
- A complete Chef Brand Package built on your personality type
- A VK Farm-to-Chef Certification badge and listing on the VK Job Board
- Eligibility for the Villa Kitchen Community Co-Op and Travel Villa Kitchen retreat roster

Applications for the Houston Cohort open quarterly.

Apply at vkculinary.tech | farmchefconnect.com

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