



The Pickle Principle

How 'Going the Extra Mile' Can Benefit Your Organization

Ever heard of The Pickle Principle? The phrase was coined by a restaurant entrepreneur named Bob Ferrell. It's about doing what it takes to make things right.

According to Ferrell, he was inspired to create the Pickle Principle after receiving a customer letter:

Dear Mr. Farrell,

I've been coming to your restaurant for over three years. I always order a hamburger and a chocolate shake. I always ask for an extra pickle and I always get one.

I came into your restaurant the other day and ordered the usual. I believe the waitress was new because I hadn't seen her before. She said, "Sir, I can sell you a

side of pickles for \$1.25." I told her, "No, I just want one extra pickle. I always ask for it and they always give it to me. Go ask your manager."

She came back after speaking to the manager and said, "I'll sell you a pickle for a nickel."

Mr. Farrell, I told her what to do with her pickle, hamburger and milkshake. I'm not coming back to your restaurant, if that's the way you're going to run it.

Ferrell wrote a letter of apology, enclosed a card for a free sundae and invited him to return. He also made 'Give 'em the pickle' the company motto.

With the new year just kicking off, it's a great time for Labor organizations to step back and ask themselves if they are going the extra mile to serve their members, strengthen operations and enhance growth.

Here are three ideas to 'Give 'em the pickle' and help your organization in 2021:

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1. Think Inside Out

Your organization won't go an extra foot, much less an extra mile, unless goals are communicated internally before you begin to try to implement initiatives externally.

Mike Snowden, Labor Market Division President at Bank of Labor, shared the following story of how he communicated the importance of teamwork when the Labor Market Development team was first formed:

In the early days of the Labor Market division, I talked to our Business Development Officers about working as a team to help Labor organization's reach their goals vs. focusing only on their personal business goals. I explained that I would rate team members helping other team members more highly than an individual simply accomplishing their own goals. I also promised them that what we accomplish as a team will out-perform anything an individual could accomplish. When the team becomes the 'ladder to success', there is no limit to the help we can provide organized Labor and the Bank.

Having a process to recognize and reward associates who successfully meet group and individual goals and standards can further encourage buy-in.

2. Be a Matchmaker

Do you 'know people who know people'? Would some of those acquaintances be a good resource or connection for an affiliate, council leader or a community member? Make introductions!

Bank of Labor Business Development Officer, Tori Letson, shared a story of

an introduction she made between the Business Manager of an Alabama Building Trades organization and a local developer interested in refurbishing a historic building in Birmingham. Since being introduced, the new acquaintances have been exploring multiple project partnerships that will be beneficial to Labor and the local economy.

Because Letson regularly attends city council meetings she stays abreast of local development needs and news and was able to help provide a mutually beneficial introduction to two organizations.

Speaking of council meetings, that leads to Tip #3...

3. Stay Informed

You've heard it before, and you'll hear it again. Knowledge is power. Make sure your organization's leadership is actively attending or supporting local government and community meetings.

We're busy, we're stressed – but taking a few hours every month to participate in local and regional events that have a direct or indirect impact on your organizational goals pays off. Not every moment of every meeting, gathering or activity will bear fruit, but you'll get to know the people and issues that matter to your community – and impact your organization.

So, why not take a moment to ask yourself and your leadership if you're skimping on the 'extra pickle' or are you doing just that little bit more that can help the Labor movement and its members grow and thrive?

