
Give 'em The Pickle!



Business is not what we sell, it's who we serve...



Presented by Mark Warren
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This presentation is about instilling great customer service habits in employees. It is based on the book, **Give 'Em the Pickle**, by Robert E. Farrell and Bill Perkins (1995). Please enjoy more at www.giveemthepickle.com

It is also a great DVD program of the same title, produced by Media Partners Inc. at www.MPCfilms.com, hosted by Farrell, the founder of Farrell's Restaurants and Ice Cream Parlors. Among the program's regular users is **Southwest Airlines**. It is a requirement for recurrent training for the company's flight attendants, including my brother and sister-in-law. Across the miles, and from border to border, this program is sweet, and won't leave you sour...

"Dear Mr. Farrell;

I've been coming to your restaurants for over three years. I always order a #2 hamburger and a chocolate shake. I always ask for an extra pickle and I always get one. Mind you, this has been going on once or twice a week for three years. I came into your restaurant the other day and I ordered my usual #2 hamburger and chocolate shake. I asked the young waitress for the extra pickle. I believe she was new because I hadn't seen her before. She said, "Sir, I will sell you a side of pickles for \$1.25." I told her, "No, I just want an extra slice of pickle. I always ask for it and they always give it to me. Go ask your manager." She went away and came back after speaking with the manager. The waitress looked me in the eye 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."

This is where the program begins...

What is The “Pickle”?



- In customer service, our job is to make customers happy. (internal, external, employees.)
 - It's not what we sell or make, it's who we serve!
 - Find a pickle and give it away. How?
 - Practice the 4 key principles critical to hearing those magic words: “I’ll be back”.
- Bosses: What do your people want from you? To spread *enthusiasm*, inspire *confidence* and demonstrate *integrity*.
- What makes your employees want to come back Monday morning?

When Bob Farrell read the letter, he made the official battle cry of his entire company “Give ‘em the pickle”! ***When in doubt, give ‘em the pickle.*** Spend 8 cents on a free pickle to keep a customer who might spend hundreds of dollars a year and tell everyone they know how good Farrell’s restaurant is. That’s the pickle.

Why are giving pickles important in business? Because ***customers expect good service***: it has become the standard. Giving away pickles is part of offering excellent, unmatched service that hopefully will set us apart from other similar businesses. So, what’s *your* pickle? This presentation is designed to help you create or discover yours.

Please write these down, from Marcus Buckingham (www.marcusbuckingham.com)

- Bosses – *turnover* is the enemy. Could you lower your turnover? Consider from Gallup:
 - 17% spent most of their work time
 - 42% said
 - 65% of those who leave a job,
- People like to work “in the paint” – doing work they enjoy doing and/or do well.
 - “Find what you do well and perfect it.” – from **Seven Days in Utopia**, by Dr. David Cook

Give! Add! Exceed!

- **Give** them what they want.
- **Add** your special touch.
 - Such as?
 - What's *your* pickle?
- **Exceed** their expectations.
 - Like how?
- Who can give away pickles, the company or you?
- Consider the lawn mower and the parking ticket...



First and foremost, companies offer pickles by creating an environment in which employees feel empowered to offer pickles to their customers and by creating an atmosphere where pickle-giving is cheered, encouraged and rewarded. Companies also give pickles when they offer something extra to customers as a company policy or set standards of how the customer is treated.

Pickle Stories – What's Yours?

“If there’s any one message I want to communicate it’s the importance of giving away pickles. The secret of running a good business is a willingness to “Give ‘em the pickle.” Of course, that means you have to know what a pickle is in your business.

I’ll never forget an experience I had after speaking to a group of independent garbage men. A big, burly man worked his way through the crowd, walked up to me and grabbed my hand. ‘I loved your story,’ he said. ‘I give pickles away all summer.’

Starting Lawnmowers

As he spoke I imagined garbage truck drivers giving away jars of pickles. I wondered if he understood what I was talking about.

“What’s your pickle?” I asked.

‘My boys and I start lawnmowers,’ he said.

“What do you mean?”

‘We have a system,’ he explained. ‘Whenever we see a man or woman cranking away trying to start a lawnmower, we stop our truck and help them out. Over the years we’ve learned to start every kind of lawnmower. We’ve made a lot of good friends. And we’ve added some new accounts and kept some old ones. Our pickle is starting lawnmowers.’

I shook that man’s hand and said, “That’s great. You’ve definitely got the right idea.”

Validate the Parking Ticket!

Several years ago the *Wall Street Journal* reported on an incident which occurred in Spokane, Washington. A man dressed in dirty coveralls entered a bank and asked a teller to validate his 35 cent parking ticket.

She looked at the man's unshaven face and tattered clothes and asked, "Did you do business in the bank today?"

"No, I didn't," he replied. "I had to run into the drug store next door, and they don't validate parking. I didn't bring any cash with me and hoped you'd validate my parking ticket since I have an account here."

"I'm sorry, sir," the woman replied, "but if you didn't do business in the bank today, I can't validate your parking ticket."

"Well, let's do some business then," the man said.

"Fine, what would you like me to do?" the teller asked.

"I want you to close out my account!"

Startled by his request the teller told him that wouldn't be necessary.

"No, I want my ticket validated," he insisted. "You said I had to do business in the bank to get it validated, and this is the business I want to do."

"Very well," the teller said.

She took the man's name and went to a computer to find out how much money he had in the bank. When the number appeared on the screen her face turned ashen white. She called the manager over and explained what had happened. He then approached the customer and assured him the bank would gladly validate his 35-cent parking ticket without him closing out his account.

"Close the account!" the man insisted.

A short time later he walked out of the bank with over \$1,260,000—and a validated parking ticket. He immediately walked across the street and opened an account in another bank.

Both Pickle stories taken from: **Give 'em the Pickle!** by Robert E. Farrell and Bill Perkins

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The Principles of *SACT* – “I loved your story”, he said. “I give pickles away all summer.”

- **Service** – “We start lawnmowers.”
 - Are there businesses that don’t *know how* to give pickles away?
 - Is serving others our #1 priority?
 - How can we insure that outstanding customer service always will be?
 - Exceed their expectations.
 - Have the courage to make things right for the customer.
 - Learn to *serve*.
 - Why is serving others a high calling?
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Making the customer your number one priority can be a big step (and huge paradigm shift) for some organizations. Make sure you are ready to support this concept before proceeding.

It requires empowering your team members to respond to customers needs and wants without always getting approval from management.

It may also require the organization to change certain policies and procedures (as in “we’ve spent so much time and effort doing things right that we’ve forgotten about doing the right thing”).)

The reference to serving comes from the work of Robert Greenleaf, who coined the phrase “servant leadership.” Servant-Leadership is a practical philosophy which supports people who choose to serve first, and then lead as a way of expanding service to individuals and institutions. Servant-leaders may or may not hold formal leadership positions. *Servant-leadership encourages collaboration, trust, foresight, listening, and the ethical use of power and empowerment.* (Greenleaf, *The Servant As Leader*, 1970.)

S A C T – “*Dianna, smile;*” *She said, “I am!”*”

- **Attitude** – How you *think* about the customer is how you will treat them.
 - Attitude defined:
 - A manner of acting, feeling or thinking that shows one’s disposition, opinion or mindset.
 - “Attitudes are nothing more than *habits of thoughts*, and habits can be acquired [taught]. An action repeated becomes an attitude realized.”
 - If you like the customer, they know it.
 - Like healthy relationships, a great customer service attitude is a *made* thing, not a *found* thing.
 - Outstanding customer service must be *performed*; Why?
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S A C T – “*Ordinary people, doing ordinary things, extraordinarily well.*”

- **Consistency** - People notice it – when it’s *not* there.
 - Consistency is very important to *everyone*; *get dressed, for example*.
 - Consistency defined is: “Conformity based on previous practices”.
 - “Once the customer gets the pickle, they’re going to want it every time they come back. That’s consistency”.
 - They give trust because of *what* you are, and they want their trust reaffirmed – what they want and expect.
 - 95% of upset customers will come back *if...*
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Consistency is all about giving customers what they expect – every time. And the team that works together well makes it easier to be consistent. It is important to recognize that the customer who was upset about not getting the extra pickle for free had a new set of expectations based upon the “extra touch” or outstanding service from previous encounters. Once you start giving out “pickles”, it is important that the entire team live up to the new standard – every day.

SACT – “*Sell ‘em a tank full; call them by name.*”

- **Teamwork** – “Hey, Mr. Sweeney – fill ‘er up?”
 - Looking for *new ways* to make *each other* look good.
- **Best definition – *synergy*:**
 - *The combined action of two or more substances or agencies to achieve an effect greater than that of which each is individually capable.*
 - We are stronger as individuals as we develop a linkage with other people.
- **The team is like a wheel - what happens if...**



Teamwork is a critical part of ensuring that the customer will be back. Eventually, everything we do, in some form, ends up in front of the customer. Whether you’re in the warehouse, the loading dock, at a front counter or a door greeter, in front of a class in their courthouse or behind the scenes managing the facility and caterer, what you do impacts what you do and impacts the customer. We are all interconnected. If one fails, it can affect us all. Taking care of the customer is truly a team, or synergistic effort. To succeed, we not only need to work the best we can, we must look for ways to help each other out. ***We need to look for new ways to make each other look good.***

The Importance of Teamwork – *“I can’t help but think; there’s geese.”*

- Geese flying in a ‘V’ formation, adds _____% greater flying range than if any bird were to fly alone.
 - The “flying V” takes advantage of the **lifting power** of the bird immediately in front.
- How does “lift” work?
- Teamwork is the cornerstone of great service. Remember, “I’ll be back...”



A team that works well together helps to create a customer-focused business. All parts of our team are critical in ensuring that our members and public (our customers) get what they want, get what they expect and return again and again. Teamwork is the cornerstone of great service, so remember:
Give ‘em the pickle!

Mark Warren has been the Training Coordinator and Consultant with the Texas Association of Counties in his hometown of Austin, Texas, since 2000. He assists the Association with the vision, development and delivery of training for both the internal and external customers of Texas county government. Just since 2007, Mark has traveled more than 85,000 miles across Texas and the United States delivering a training message of inspiration, motivation and new direction. His presentations revolve around leadership, interpersonal communication and relationship skills, workplace diversity and professionalism, bridging the generations and customer service excellence. After graduating from St. Edward’s University in 1977, Mark spent 23 years with the Texas Department of Public Safety, retiring in 2000 as the Assistant Commander of the Training Academy in Austin.