

GREAT STORIES MEANT TO INSPIRE GREATNESS IN YOUR COMPANY

SPARK GREATNESS THROUGH EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS!



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INTRODUCTION

I am sure every business has great stories. These are not to compare us, or say how great we are, but to spark something. To remind you of some things I may have shared, and maybe it can spark you to something incredible.

I have been told all my life how creative I am. How I think outside the box. How I only use the box to stand on to reach the stars. I don't disagree with many of these statements, but here is what I know.

All of us have inside us unique strengths, and the more we use those, the stronger we get.

I tell my people if on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the best, if we have one leader that is a 5 and one leader that is an 8 where do we focus our time? We concentrate it on the 8. Why the 8? Because if we focus on the 5, we may be able to get them to a 7, but if we focus on the 8, we can get a 10. Focus on both, but start with the 8, get them to a 10, then work on the others. My point is, work to your strengths. Improve the other areas but take your strengths to new heights.

Many of my ideas are ideas I have stolen from other companies or operators. I am just going to share with you some things we have done. Please take these and destroy them. Tear them apart and use them for what you do. The goal at the end is that your leaders, your team, your guests are raving fans of your brand.

We have had a lot of fun doing these things over the years, please enjoy them and steal all our ideas.

If you want customers to be raving fans of your brand, you need to enable your team to be raving fans of the guests.



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GIVE YOUR PEOPLE THE TOOLS FOR SUCCESS.

A young mom came into the store to pick up food for her daughter. It was a kids night, so it was particularly busy that evening. The woman did not hear the team member call her name for her food and was slightly irritated. She felt the young woman helping her was short with her. Our marketing director at the time went over to talk to the woman. The woman was very short with her explaining her food was late, she is a single mom, rarely comes due to financial constraints of eating out, and they had to get home to take care of her sibling. Our marketing director had a pleasant conversation with her explaining she knew what it was like and asked her to allow her to bless her. She grabbed food for the mother and two children and added cookies. The exchange completely changed the mom's attitude. She was so grateful and even apologized saying she was sorry shouldn't have lashed out. She again explained she was a single mom didn't have a lot of money to eat out. That inexpensive meal and connection made her day.

One of our lobby personnel, Deanne has been with us 14 years. She will look and listen for opportunities to have a party on us. Literally. More than once we have walked out into the lobby, and she has an area all set up for some of our guests including tablecloths, balloons and free food. It's not surprising to us that when her birthday comes around our guests make sure she has a party in our lobby as well.

We have a leader that works every morning, and if he comes in, and there is a line more than three people deep, he will wash his hands, take out the food, and then take something to compliment their order even when the wait was not excessive. He wants them to feel important.

Show them what to look for. Sometimes opportunities to bless need to be sought out.

Once there was a date mix up on a very large order for a church that routinely orders catering from us. They did not have services that evening, and we had a lot of fresh food we had to decide what to do with. The easy thing would have been to just toss it. Instead, the team looked for and sought out an opportunity. We called various youth groups that Wednesday night asking if they would like free meals. They could not believe we offered them the food and on top of it, we delivered it to them.

I came from a restaurant where NOTHING was ever given away to a customer. So when I started working for Chick-fil-A it was indeed a culture shock. I was told from the first day that my job was to make every guest who enters the door happy by the time they leave. What does that mean to you, I asked. That means if the food is not the quality of what the guest was expecting then replace it.



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If the guest made a mistake and ordered the wrong item then provide them with the right item free of charge.

If a guest gets to the drive-thru window or front counter had has forgotten their credit card/cash, give them the food, let them know the price and tell them to pay us the next time they come in. I have to say that was mind-blowing.

What happened to the business theory that we are here to make a profit or no money no food? I quickly learned that the Chick-fil-A way is very different. And, in spite of this extraordinary attitude, Arthur had grown every store he had ever owned. He inspired loyalty to the brand and had a tremendous impact on the community. One final thing, before you think that no one ever comes back in to pay for their previous order you would be wrong. It is a frequent occurrence for someone to come to the front counter and tell us that they had forgotten their wallet on their previous visit and they then give us the money for that order. Believe it or not!

We empower our people with the ability to give away food at their discretion.

However, if we see a teenage boy "blessing" the same young lady each day, we will have a discussion with him. (its not meant as a hookup tool)

Look for the needs of your guests whatever it may be. Ignoring needs is easy, but companies that look for ways to meet them get rewarded beyond measure.

There was a young child battling cancer. We decided to help but dying all of his cows pink and starting a fundraiser for her. We raised tons of money, included the community and had a great time. Unofficially, I think we broke all kinds of Chick-fil-A protocol dying the cows pink, but it was the right thing to do. That young lady comes in every week so we can see her smiling face.

If they forget their wallet and are humiliated, the Team Member will bless them with their meal. We train our team specifically to state. "It happens to all of us; it's on me today" Oddly, a number of guests come back to pay for it later. Of course, we deny it.

When you create an atmosphere of generosity, it bleeds over to others.

We had an event at our store, a kids event. It was all about local hero's! We invited local Fire, police, and EMSA. The intention was to connect our guests with police and firefighters. What we saw was amazing. There was a young girl with special needs who wanted to speak to a woman police officer. Her mother was shocked as she was terrified of strangers but asked her mother if she could hug her. The two women became friends and often frequented our Kids Nights. We were blessed to have witnessed the story between the young girl, Bella and the police officer. We purchased a small trophy for the young girl - a Hero Award.



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We asked the police officer to present it to her. It was one of the best events we ever had! Not a dry eye in the house! All for a small \$7 trophy we made a considerable impact on this young girl and all of the families.

I understand Truett Cathy once said that "it's not about the chicken sandwich. It is about the guest experience." That simple statement set the direction for our culture. You can get a chicken sandwich all over town (of course not as good). So having a chicken sandwich on the menu is not what makes us unique. It is the experience that goes with that chicken sandwich that makes the difference. Are we still focused on food quality, taste, freshness, etc.? Of course. That is what you do from our head. The rest is what you do from your heart. That makes the difference.



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FACEBOOK- FRIEND OR FOE

We are living in a new day. There was a time if someone received poor service they might tell a couple of people who might tell a couple of people. However, today, when someone gets poor service, they post it on their Facebook, and all 20,000 friends of theirs know about it. Then if they liked it they repost it and all their 5000 friends know about it. The information goes fast and far.

On the surface, it seems like this is our foe. Unfortunately, it doesn't look like things are going to change any time soon, or ever so how do we change foe to friend? Since everyone is going to make a mistake from time to time, it can't be about being perfect. What if, as Paul Harvey and old journalist used to say, "And now the rest of the story". What if there is a rest of the story when we make mistakes. As part of our culture, we are committed to making Raving Fans.

So here's a crazy thought. When we mess up an order, instead of just apologizing, what if you found out where that guest is (work, home, shopping, etc.) and you correct the order and deliver it to them. Well, what if they are back at work? Great! Can you imagine how surprised the guest will be when you offer to bring them their corrected order? In addition, can you imagine how shocked all of the co-workers will be when you come walking in to make that delivery? Now it's not just one person posting the rest of the story on Facebook; it is also all of the co-workers say, "You are not going to believe what just happened. Chick-fil-A just delivered a person's lunch that had been messed up. Right here to the office."

I'm not saying to mess up so that you can wow people. However, when it happens think of how to make it right that will surprise and delight them. Turn the foe into a friend.

If you want your team to be raving fans of the guests, how are your leaders being raving fans of your team?

Examples start at the top; leaders need to show our team the example of what to do on a regular basis.

Know what makes them tick!

We survey all our team. Its something that gets passed out to all the new Team Members. There is a little QR code that they go to answer what their favorite things are. Whats your favorite movie, whats your favorite snack, what is your favorite restaurant. (many times it's not even us.) We use that later to appreciate them. Whether it be birthdays, awards, an employee of the month, or just random acts of kindness. It gives us an opportunity to praise them. Most of the time they forget we did that, then they are shocked when we show up with thier favorites.



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Employee of the month, we purchase all their favorites from the survey and gift them some Chick-fil-A swag. We did some research, and have made connections with the leadership in our school district. If they go to our local school district, we crash their classroom with the bag and a trophy. We can make more emotional connections with them they will never forget. We can show up with the swag filled with their favorites and show our appreciation. As you can imagine, that impact that took less than 15 min (once your systems are in place)but it is better than just a gift card from a local restaurant or gas card and some birthday cake. Especially in this day and age, you can imagine how many snap chat feeds we ended up on? Do you think they shared it? You bet they did!

During one of school classroom crashes, Arthur brought some free milkshake cards and gave them to the employee so she could gift them to her friends. Now that's an impact! Arthur spoke with her a couple of days later and asked if it embarrassed her. She said oh yeah, but, it was a good embarrassment!

When you are making emotional connections with your team, it might take a little investigating to see what is allowed. Because in this situation not every school is going to let you come in.

However, we made investments in our school and connected with the leadership. We asked the critical question, what can't we do? How will you make it look? For us to show up with a bag pack full of Chick-fil-A swag you know that's small and concise that they can put in their locker. It's not distracting, all day, maybe for a few minutes but other than that you know it's a good thing and we're doing it in front of their friends and the school you know loves it, so it's really about the school system. It's really knowing your community to enable you to be able to do that.

One of our leaders at the mall had a birthday coming up. Loraine sent a flyer around to the entire mall that said today is Christine's birthday. Come and sing happy birthday to her between 11-2 Pm and you will get a free meal. If you just tell her Happy Birthday, you get a free Chick-fil-A sandwich! So all day long I see people singing Happy Birthday to me in the mall. Even when I went out the door, I had a guy stop me at six o'clock and say you're Christine I want to sing you happy birthday, I'm like you can't get the free meal it's over. No, I just want to sing to you! I had one guy who came and got down on one knee like he was going to propose to me and sang Happy Birthday to me. It was awesome, it was super embarrassing at the time, but it was remarkable!



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PEOPLE DON'T CARE HOW MUCH YOU KNOW UNTIL THEY KNOW HOW MUCH YOU CARE!

LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO BLESS YOUR TEAM. ITS EASY TO TURN YOUR BACK ON A NEED, SO MANY PEOPLE DO IT, It's COMMON. WANT TO BE AN UNCOMMON PLACE TO WORK? MAKE IT DIFFERENT!

"I was going through a separation and had fallen ill. I posted on FB that I was sick, and asked if anyone wanted to cook for me in a joking tone. Next thing I know, someone shows up at the door. Arthur went shopping for me and purchased groceries for my son and me. It was very kind of him to help me through that rough patch, I don't currently work for him, but that example of generosity is something I will never forget."

Look for ways to invest in others.

I have worked for Arthur for going on five years in May. I have watched his team bless so many people. From providing food to money to just their time. He at one point would hold meetings for his team, they could sign up for monthly mentor sessions. If they wanted help with school, work, or just life skills. He has held fundraisers for people, and nonprofits alike.

Our restaurant has a library of books, and when Team Members read them and do a small report on it, they give us a \$25 bonus. They do this because they feel it is their job to help their team grow.

Once an employee came to Arthur because she had got a loan with a boyfriend on a new truck. Since that time she broke up with him, and he was not holding up his end of the bargain, so the truck was in default, and her credit was going down as well. She was in tears on what to do. Arthur offered to steal the car for her, and store it in his garage until she could turn it back into the dealership. That night after close Arthur took her keys and "stole the truck back."

Arthur has a 1969 Shelby GT 500. It is one of a kind replica he had. It was his dream car that he had built. One of his teenagers commented to him about how cool it is, he reached into his pocket, tossed him the keys and said take it for a spin around the parking lot. That employee could not keep the smile off his face, he tells this story to other members of his team regularly.



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Another time, an employee commented about wanting it for the prom, to everyone's surprise, Arthur said "your job is to ask" the answer is always no until you ask. Jokingly the team member asked to use it for prom, and Arthur turned around and helped make the prom one that he will never forget.

Your team will emulate exactly at the front of the house with what you are doing for them in the back of the house.

If you want them to touch the community, show them how.

In 2010 when we were setting the record for the worlds largest sweet tea, we continually looked for ways to involve the team and the community. We did this multiple ways. We created a 92lb tea bag, unfortunately once that thing got wet it was about 400lbs with the water it absorbed. We had to use multiple strong men to help pull it out of the 9-foot tall cup.

Then we utilized another ½ dozen guys to pour the 3200 lbs of sugar into the tea. Finally, when we needed to get the ice into the iced tea, we set up a 30 person assembly line of giant blocks of ice that included two giant Eat more chicken cows to pass the ice to the cup. When it was all said and done we had dozens of people that were able to say they were a part of creating the Worlds Largest Lemonade. Is this a story they will share? You bet!!

My favorite memory is when we went out into the community in Joplin, and we took teams out there after the tornado. In fact we did this in Sand Springs Oklahoma as well. After the tornados, our team would gather some volunteers and head out. Looking for an opportunity to bless people with food, water, and maybe a little help. Again, looking for where we can serve.

It's amazing what happens when you slow down long enough to look for opportunities to make an emotional connection.

Chick-fil-A is in the community. They are always in The Tulsa Christmas Parade.

So this young couple had this baby, and they were stressed trying to figure out how to get the baby to the car because it was pouring. Dad wanted to make a run for it; mom wanted to wait it out. You could see the water coming in, and this poor baby's going to drown in that stupid stroller. We just walked over and gave them our umbrella; we were drowned rats anyway! He didn't want to take it but when he finally agreed he wanted my name and number to get the umbrella back to us. It is amazing how the smallest gestures make such an impact on people. He did finally take the umbrella.



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We have a couple that comes in every day and we made a big deal about their birthdays and their anniversary. They come in every day, six times a week and have for years,, and so just overtime we got to know them and we make them feel like they are our family, everyone knows their name, and they know all of the team's names. We are just as much their family as their family is.

If you want your leaders to be raving fans of you, what are you doing worthy of them being a raving fan of you?



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EVERYTHING RISES AND FALLS ON LEADERSHIP.

If you're not doing it for your leaders, they will find someone that will.

I started working for Chick-fil-A in June and was there for about six months as the Christmas season neared, which was the first Christmas that my ex-husband and I were separated. It was a rough time for my family, but Arthur and his team generously organized a Christmas for my children. I will never forget the feeling I had at that moment because I had only been there for six months and was already receiving such an outpouring of love and support. I have told this story many times and expressed to others that working at Chick-fil-A is not just a job, it is a family.

I was pregnant with my daughter, Sophia. One of the team members was getting married after the ceremony was over, Arthur approached me and handed me a Wal-Mart gift card. I did not think much of it because it was a Wal-Mart gift card, but I was appreciative of the kind gesture. I was on my way home and needed to stop for gas, and as I inserted the card into the slot, I realized how much money was on the gift card. Arthur had given me a \$500 Wal-Mart gift card! The normal reaction one would have is to freak out, but I was pregnant, so my hormones got the best of me, and I bawled into a whole mess right there at the gas station. To this day, I still get emotional thinking about it because what boss gives their employee a \$500 gift card? I remember him saying something about the baby coming and that he wanted to do this for me. His gesture to help me was incredibly touching, and I am still grateful to this day. I was able to get everything I needed for the baby, and it felt like I was able to start over.

Our operator loves making everything HUGE! It was one of our leaders birthdays. Shera has been working for him for over 13 years, and she loves popcorn. So Arthur purchased a six-foot bag of popcorn and brought it in. He wanted to put all the popcorn in her car, but she's kind of a neat freak and likes her car detailed, so he decided it was in his best interest just to hand it to her.

Sometimes our generous acts touch other lives as well.

My son Victor started working for Chick-fil-A Woodland Hills Mall, he is also a great student and in band. I am a single mother, and we often worked pretty hard at a lot of events to raise money for it. On one particular event, Victor was riding on the bus, Arthur was also there with his son. Arthur approached my son and thanked him for doing such a great job. He gave my son \$60 and told him how much he appreciated him, and to spend it on him, not on bills, but do something special. What Arthur did not know was this.



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My son was asked to join leadership and had decided it was too much and didn't do it. After the experience with Arthur, he worked hard to go through the leadership training and is now in leadership at his store. He has also talked about pursuing his dream to become a pediatrician.

Around Valentine's Day, we had hired three new male leaders. Our General Manager had to purchase flowers for our restaurant. He decided to pick up about seven bundles of roses ran by a store and picked up some vases. He created arrangements for the team leaders wives. They were blown away; you did it for our wives? He was shocked at the impact it made on them being as he thought it was such a small gesture.

In reality, this was our team that was working hard on Valentines day to serve our guests, this absolutely made them and their spouses feel important.

We all loved the cookouts, volleyball and paint ball games. We often talk about how Arthur invests in our lives and shows appreciation by all of the actives he creates for us. He often rents out movies for just us! Recently during Christmas he rented out Laser Tag, bought pizza and gave us Christmas presents. Spending downtime with out co-workers was nice.

I loved getting my birthday bag. It was nice because sure it had Chick-fil-A items in it but also all of my favorite snacks and drinks. I had forgotten all about the survey we filled out at the beginning. I thought, how did he know that I loved Taki's!

Arthur made giant Easter eggs out of paper mache for his managers and filled them full with so much candy, money, and stash.

I think a lot of creating culture has to do with the leadership and their level that they are emotionally invested in their employees, they are listening to their employees and being intentional to spend some time with them. Working side-by-side with another employee on a cash register or doing dishes is a great way to create culture.

Arthur is a family man. Family is first and foremost in his life which means it is the same for his Team members and Leaders. Letting them go home because there is a crisis at home, even if it means you have to stay late is a way to create culture. I remember several instances where they sent people home and still paid them for their full shift because they were having family problems or health problems. Many times he paid people their full bonus, even if they had not earned them, because it was the holidays, or because money was tight. And these were substantial bonuses, not just fifty or a hundred bucks. Which ultimately came out of his pocket.

I don't know if Arthur does this on purpose or he's just doing it to butter me up. But my dad has to go to Hopkins a lot, and I have to take him. When I go and I still work he'll call and before we start any conversation about work, he asks how everything is going.



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DON'T KEEP UP WITH THE COMPETITION

One thing I have learned during my many years with Chick-fil-A is we don't try to keep up with the competition. When it is all about focusing on your competition, it's all about being at least a little better than them. We don't try to keep up with the competition. It is our focus to keep surpassing ourselves.

I was amazed that we have fresh flowers on the table of a quick service restaurant. Who would ever expect that? The answer is no one until we started doing it. Since then I have noticed several of our competitors now have flowers on their tables.

We keep hosts and hostesses in the lobby during our rush hours. Their job is to simply serve our guests. That includes refreshing beverages, remove trays when the guests are finished with their meals. We also deliver the meals to the tables for our dine-in guests (Using their name since we take the time to ask.)

Fortunately or unfortunately, our competitors have not adopted many of these items into their cultures. They see how much it costs and doesn't see the payoff. They are focused on the transaction today and not the other ten transactions that will happen with that guest if they become a raving fan.



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DON'T THINK YOU HAVE ARRIVED

Complacency is one of the biggest enemies there is. What is that next step? We continue to look at the best stores in the chain. What are they doing right? What do we need to implement? What are the other stores in retail doing? A clock is right 2x per day!

Go to them and look for things you can apply to your business.

Remember: Each of us are gifted with different strengths. Being great for you will not be the same as being great like our stores. It can look totally different and it should. If you are not where you want to be, look for those you need to surround yourselves with and connect with them.



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