



A MEDIA PARTNERS  
LEARNING ESSENTIALS PODCAST

Give 'em the  
**PICKLE!**<sup>TM</sup>



**The customer  
service wisdom  
of Bob Farrell**



media partners

Give 'em the Pickle! © 2018 Media Partners

*Music*

**ANNOUNCER**

Welcome to Media Partners, Learning Essentials Podcast, delivering engaging content on relevant workplace topics, so you can become the best version of yourself at work.

Music

**PAMELA - PODCAST HOST**

Hello. My name is Pamela. I am your host today, and I am delighted to bring you the audio version of *Give 'em the Pickle! with Bob Farrell*, a fun, often funny, and sometimes poignant motivational film that has changed the customer service culture in thousands of organizations worldwide.

In this podcast, we're going to hear from Bob Farrell, a successful entrepreneur, and internationally-recognized expert on customer service. You may be familiar with Bob Farrell's Old-Fashioned Ice Cream Parlors. After opening his first restaurant in Seattle, he went on to expand his chain to 150 restaurants without a single failure. He credits his success to his passion for serving the customer and giving away pickles. Pickles, you might ask? Stay tuned to find out what pickles have to do with customer service excellence - as well as the four things that successful companies and successful employees do to take care of their customers. During this podcast, Bob will be speaking to us from a local restaurant as well as a conference center where he shares his story with more than 300 eager pickle givers.

Music

**BOB FARRELL - NARRATOR**

*My name is Bob Farrell and I have been very fortunate to work a lifetime in something I love doing, serving customers. For me, it was ice cream parlors. For you, maybe it's retail, healthcare, finance, etc. Whatever we do, remember our business is not what we sell, it's who we serve.*

*You and I are in the people business. We take care of people for a living. Hopefully they leave happier than when they came in. At least that's what we try for. One of the best things that ever happened to me was to get a letter from a disappointed customer.*

Typewriter typing

**BOB FARRELL - NARRATOR**

*"Dear Mr. Farrell. I've been coming to your restaurant ever since you opened. I really love the place. I love your ice cream. I love the fun. I love your hamburgers. They're the best. I love your pickles. They are the best pickle in Seattle. I always ask for an extra pickle. They always give me one. Today Mr. Farrell, I came in, had my usual, asked for an extra pickle from the young waitress. Well, I don't know where she got the idea, but she said, 'I'll have to sell you a side of pickles for 75 cents.' If that's the way you're going to run your restaurant Mr. Farrell, I'm not coming back."*

*Well, I got that letter and from an entrepreneur who was just starting on his second store, that hurt.*

Music

**PAMELA - PODCAST HOST**

Have you ever received a customer complaint? Some customers never complain. They never write a letter or send an email. They just don't come back. That letter was a gift. And, Bob saw it that way too.

**BOB FARRELL - NARRATOR**

*I wrote him a letter. I said, "Please...we still give pickles away. Don't you worry about it.... please come back." and I gave him a coupon.*

*But what happened is - and I thank him to this day - the war cry of our company became "Give 'em the Pickle!" Take care of the customer. No matter what happens in our business, you hear something going on, somebody says, well what should we do... give 'em the pickle...*

Music

**PAMELA - PODCAST HOST**

"Give 'em the Pickle!" became the rallying cry of Bob's company - impacting the way every employee treated every guest who came through their doors.

What about you? Think you have no pickles to give away? Think again. We all do.

Up next, Bob introduces the first pickle principle of excellent service. And, he shares a story about a garbage collector who gives away pickles... You heard that right: a garbage collector.

Music

**BOB FARRELL - NARRATOR**

*I talk to companies all over the world. No matter where I go, I always find that successful companies and successful employees have mastered the same four things when it comes to taking care of customers. The first thing they do is give away pickles. They make people happy.*

*In other words, they've made serving others their number one priority.*

Music

**BOB FARRELL - NARRATOR**

*I spoke to a bunch of garbage men. They brought me in to speak on customer service. I gave the talk. They gave me a big hand. They loved it. After my talk, a guy comes up and says, "Mr. Farrell, I loved your story about the pickle."*

*I said, "Well thank you."*

*He said, "We give pickles away all summer." I'm thinking, garbage truck... pickles... this guy's got it screwed up.*

*I said, "What do you mean you give pickles away?"*

*He said, "We start lawn mowers! Well my son and I - we drive around, he helps me in the summertime... and we see somebody up on their lawn cranking away, we stop the truck... go up there and we start the lawn mower for them. We can start any lawn mower ever made!"*

*I said, "You got it, that's the pickle!"*

Music

**PAMELA - PODCAST HOST**

Starting lawn mowers, double bagging, free Wi-Fi, umbrellas for an unexpected rain shower... with a little imagination, you can come up with all sorts of extra special things you can do to make your customer happy. That's your pickle! And, it's the first pickle principle: **make serving others your number one priority**.

Next, Bob shares *his* ideas on what giving away pickles might look like in other professions.

Music

**BOB FARRELL - NARRATOR**

*What's your pickle? What is that extra special thing you do to make people happy? That's your pickle. Maybe it's walking the customer to the item they're looking for instead of just pointing. Maybe it's a handwritten thank you on every order shipped out to the customer. Maybe instead of just delivering their food, patients get a menu so they can order what they want, when they want it. The trick is to find out what the customer wants and make sure they get it. That's the pickle!*

*Music*

**PAMELA - PODCAST HOST**

We all have customer stories. Some good. Some bad. Next Bob talks about a few companies that don't always do a very good job giving away pickles.

*Music*

**BOB FARRELL - NARRATOR**

*There's a lot of companies that don't know how to give pickles away. One of the worst are banks. They are the worst. Go into a bank. Eight windows, seven closed. Then they've got these ropes up. We've all been to Disneyland. We know it takes eleven minutes to get on the Mediterranean Pirate Ride.*

*I was doing business in a bank the other day; I had to sign a piece of paper. I said, "Can I have a pen. I don't have a pen and I need to sign this."*

*She said, "Yes" and she hands me a pen. On a chain. It doesn't even go where I'm going.*

*I said, "Why do you have pens on chains? "*

*She said, "People steal them."*

*I said, "So what!" and I ripped it off the wall. I've still got it. I said to her, "Put the name on the pen. Let 'em steal 'em. Use it for advertising..." I said, "For crying out loud..."*

*She's going for the phone, 911, I know it... "No, no, no, no, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. It's not your fault. I had no right yelling at you. Just tell your bank manager to have a sign made for every teller's window. And the sign reads, 'You are a thief and we know it.' "*

*Music*

**BOB FARRELL - NARRATOR**

*Customers aren't thieves. They not distractions. Customers give us everything we want. They buy our next car for us. They pay our rent. They tell us what to put on the menu. They tell us what to order next time. They tell us how to succeed. So, who are they? They're the boss. They are why we are here. Do you really think that? Because that's the second key to great customer service: **Attitude**. How you **think** about your customer is how you **treat** them. They're the boss whether they look like a boss or not.*

*Music*

**PAMELA - PODCAST HOST**

If we don't have the right attitude about our job or who we are serving, we can forget that the customer is the boss. Up next Bob shares the story of an employee who didn't recognize the boss.

*Music*

**BOB FARRELL - NARRATOR**

*My granddaughter graduates junior high. Her and about thirty-five kids saved their money, worked hard, babysat, you name it. They made enough money to fly from Portland, Oregon to New York City, Boston, Washington DC, do the historic route. First airplane ride. First time out of town. She came home. We had a little party. We made a little celebration. "Elizabeth, how was it? Did you have a good time?"*

*"Oh, Grandpa it was great!"*

*"Well, what did you like best?"*

*"Oh, the shows in New York. And then Boston was fun, walking the magic mile." And then she said, "Grandpa, do you ever travel on American Airlines?"*

*I said, "Oh, very seldom..."*

*She said, "Oh that's good; they're mean."*

*I said, "What do you mean, they're mean?"*

*She says, "Well we got off in Chicago. And we had time so we all got out and looked around. We got back on. We lost our tickets. We didn't know where we were sitting. They got really upset. I heard one of the stewardesses turn to the other young lady and say, 'Bunch of dumb brats.' "*

*But what harm can it do for a giant airline or any airline to insult a whole bunch of kids on their first flight? Some people say, 'Oh, it won't hurt anything.' No...? Her grandfather has told over 20,000 people that story.*

*For the record, that's a fine airline. They do a good job. So what was the problem? What caused over 20,000 people to hear that story? One employee. Having a bad day. With a bad attitude. That's all it takes. Never forget that you are the face of your company to every customer you come in contact with.*

## *Music*

### **PAMELA - PODCAST HOST**

A few years ago, it was unusual for a poor customer service story to reach the ears of 20,000 people. Now, of course, it's easy.

Today, a customer - the boss - has the power of Facebook, Twitter and other social media outlets. A story of one employee having a bad day can go viral, reaching thousands of potential customers in a matter of hours.

So, what can we do to make our customers happy when we're having a bad day? Bob has a few ideas.

## *Music*

### **BOB FARRELL - NARRATOR**

*We're in show business! The curtain's up. They walk into our businesses. What they see is what they get. We're in show business. I had the greatest opportunity to work in Disneyland before I opened my first restaurant. They don't hire. They cast... Let's say they needed a street sweeper and you are interviewing, they'll say, "I'd like you to play the part of a street sweeper. Now this street sweeper is a happy guy ... Can you play that?"*

*“Uh-huh, yeah.”*

*“He loves little children, loves them! Can you play that role?”*

*“Yeah, can’t wait.”*

*“He loves to answer stupid questions ALL DAY, can you play that role?”*

*“Yeah, I can play that.”*

*You see, that is what life is, I think sometimes we just have to play the role because we feel so lousy.*

*I have to admit something...a lot of you have been to Farrell’s. We used to sing happy birthday to every kid that came in on his birthday. And they lied, they came in anyway saying “It’s my birthday today!” But we didn’t care... Nobody came alone.*

*I sang happy birthday 187 times one day. Had a double shift on a Saturday, I was tired, was about ready to close. Five minutes before closing a family walks in and a little boy runs up and says, “Mr. Farrell, it’s my birthday!” I felt like saying, “Who cares!”*

*But you can’t do that. You see he doesn’t know that I worked all day and his mother and father really don’t care because this is HIS birthday...this is HIS special day... and he don’t care what MY special day is. So we sang Happy Birthday to him like we haven’t ever sang it before.*

*And your customers are the same way. They don’t care that you and your boyfriend have just had a big problem... you got problems at home... you don’t even feel good... you got a headache... you partied too much... They don’t care and they don’t want to see it. We’re in show business!*

*Music*

#### **PAMELA - PODCAST HOST**

We can’t control what happens in our day. Or the customers who come in. The calls we handle or the online chats we have to answer. But, like Diana, one of Bob’s favorite waitresses, we can choose our attitude. And, that’s the **second pickle principle**.

*Music*

#### **BOB FARRELL - NARRATOR**

*Diana, one of my favorite young ladies, she worked for me and she had a problem. I don’t know what it was but about every six, eight, or ten days she’d come in like, “Uhhg...” and I go, “Diana! Smile! Come on!”*

*She says, “I am!”*

*I say, “No you are not!”*

*She says, “Well... the people who come into this restaurant drive me nuts...”*

*I said, “Well you’re in the wrong business.”*

*“Nah, it’s just the ones that come in here.”*

*I said, "Diana, these are the same people that go anywhere."*

*She says, "Nah, they are different."*

*I said, "No, you are different. I want you to go up to every customer today as you are taking their order and I want you to say, 'I like you. I like you.' "*

*She says, "Are you crazy, I'll be arrested!"*

*I say, "No, no, don't say it out loud... think it! Just think it."*

*She says, "Oh, come on!"*

*"Try it!" I say.*

*"Okay, I'll try it."*

*So, she's working away that day and she would go by me and I would say, "Diana, are you doing it?"*

*And she says, "I'm doing it... I'm doing it..."*

*I'm not kidding, about twenty minutes later Diana was walking with a quick step, smiling, the customers were talking to her, they had a good thing going on, you could just tell by watching the crowds. And she comes up to me after the shift and says, "Mr. Farrell - you gave me every good customer today didn't you!"*

*I said, "I did not!"*

*She says, "I tripled my tips!"*

*And I said, "Yes, and your attitude was great."*

*She says, "I have to admit it. It was better."*

*Music*

#### **PAMELA - PODCAST HOST**

We've talked about the first two pickle principles: making service your number one priority by giving away pickles and the importance of choosing a positive attitude. Up next, pickle principle number three...

*Music*

#### **BOB FARRELL - NARRATOR**

*The next key to great customer service is a surprise to some people. It's not very flashy. It's not very show biz. In fact, it's only noticed when it's not there.*

*It's the secret to a good kitchen, it's the secret to your life, it's the secret to your business, it's the secret to almost everything you do: **Consistency**. You must be consistent.*

*One of the main reasons people go back to a restaurant, and most businesses, is they liked what happened last time. And when they walk in and it doesn't happen like it did last time the first thing they say, "Uh-oh, they're slipping."*

*I don't care whether you work in grocery stores, hardware stores, furnishing stores, clothing stores - Whatever it was, whether they got greeted, everybody was nice, they wrapped their packages, they really cared... They want that again, again and again. And when they don't get it they go... uh-oh - a light goes on.*

*There are no short cuts to consistency. It comes from setting high standards, practicing those standards every day, and holding those high standards as non-negotiable. It's been said that, once the customer gets the pickle, they're going to want it every time they come back. That's consistency! And it's the third key to great customer service. Whether you're out front in the spotlight, or behind the scenes. Remember, everything you do ends up in front of the customer... So do it well!*

Music

#### PAMELA - PODCAST HOST

So, how do you get it done?

How do you make service a priority at your bank, your government office, your warehouse, or your hospital? How do you consistently provide exceptional pickle service wherever you work, for every customer, every time?

That would be pickle principle number 4...

Music

#### BOB FARRELL - NARRATOR

*It takes teamwork; tremendous amount of teamwork. And I can't help thinking, this is geese...flying geese. Ever watch flying geese flying across the sky? They can fly 71% further by flying in a V-formation. Because the one up front, as he flaps those big wings, (and those are big if you've ever seen a goose), the air currents help lift the second two, and it's easier and easier and easier. Watch, get a pair of binoculars. Watch the last goose in one of those formations. He's back there like this... Nothing to do! Except, he will fly up and replace the lead goose. And that's what I call teamwork.*

*Nobody can do this alone. **Teamwork** is the fourth and final key to great customer service. The best definition for "Team" that I've ever heard went something like this:*

*"A team is a group of people who go out of their way to make each other look good."*

*I like that.*

*I remember one of my first jobs, when an old pro took me under his wing. I worked in a gas station on Long Island. It was a few years ago. Gasoline was twenty cents, and it was five for a dollar. Everybody came in and ordered a dollar's worth. The manager said, "Hey kids, I can't make any money one dollar at a time. Sell them a tankful. Call them by name."*

*Well, we didn't have any credit cards in those days so we said, "How do you call them by name?"*

*"Didn't they tell you? Oh, come here... Car pulls in. 'Give me a buck's worth, kid!'"*

*“You say, ‘Yes sir! By the way, what’s your name?’ “*

*“ ‘Sweeney.’ ”*

*“ ‘Thank you!’ Take his gas cap off, go into the office, we have white adhesive tape, rolls of it. You peel it off, we have black India ink pens. Do not smudge. You write his name - ‘Sweeney.’ You take that and you stick it inside the gas cap. Now the next time he pulls in, you reach for the ol’ gas cap, you take a little peek, and it doesn’t have to be you, it can be anybody, ‘Hey Mr. Sweeney, fill it up?’ ”*

*“ ‘Yeah kid, fill it up!’ ”*

*Did you see how that worked? The first person on the team to write the name on the gas cap helped everybody on the team give pickles away. Everybody looked good! Everybody won! That’s when it’s fun to go to work. Think about your team. Could you fly better together? Is there a better way to get the job done? A faster way? A smarter way? How can you help each other look good in front of the customers? That’s how you give away the team pickle!*

*Music*

#### **PAMELA - PODCAST HOST**

This fourth pickle principle, Teamwork, along with Service, Attitude and Consistency, proved true for Bob every day of his career serving customers. His passion for what he did day in and day out was clear to his customers *and* his employees. And he wants to share that enthusiasm for his profession with you.

*Music*

#### **BOB FARRELL - NARRATOR**

*We work in a wonderful business! Serving others is a noble profession. Day in and day out, we’re in a position to brighten somebody’s day... just a little bit. It’s my sincere belief that adds up in the world. A little smile a little kindness just a little pickle can make a big difference.*

*A couple came up and I was working the register, which I loved to do on a Saturday, I love to talk to people. A couple and a little boy. I said , “Well, how was everything?” and I trained my help, listen to people’s voices make sure they’re having a good time when they say they are because they’ll lie to you. People don’t like to complain. Well, there’s no mistake there’s a problem here. I said, “How was everything?”*

*He says, “Fine. How much is my bill?”*

*You added it up in those days. We used to add them at the register.*

*I said “Was there a problem, sir?”*

*He says, “No, forget it!”*

*I said “I don’t want to forget it, I want to fix it.”*

*He says “You can’t fix it!” and he’s spitting all over me.*

*I said “Sir, something’s wrong. I don’t want you leaving here feeling the way you do.”*

*He said, "Okay...My little boy..." He's shaking by this time and veins are sticking out. "My little boy, it's his birthday. And he never got any free sundae and they never sang to him!"*

*Now, I wondered, why didn't they say something, but some people won't. Some people don't like to complain. I said "Just a minute." I picked the boy up. I said, "Come here, son." I put him on the candy counter, we had a candy counter. "Stand right there." Went over to the fountain and I said, "Give me a sundae, quick!"*

*I don't know whose it was. I handed it to the little boy. I said, "What's your name, son?"*

*And he says, "Alex."*

*"How old are you?"*

*"Six!"*

*"Thank you."*

*I turned to the restaurant. I said, "Everybody stop eating please. Everyone please stop. Look this way! This little boy - it's his birthday today! We forgot to give him his sundae, we forgot to sing to him, and I want you to sing to him tonight like you have never sung before! His name is Alex and he's six years old!" And I led the singing.*

*I swear the Tabernacle Choir was there! They were standing on chairs, they were cheering. It was really great. And the mother, the tears were coming down, the father was about to cry, y' know?*

*Who's Alex? The boss! He came in for a free sundae. A song...But who is he? The boss!*

*Sometimes, in the end, giving pickles away means having the courage to do what it takes to make things right. Ask yourself, how would you want the problem solved? Then do it! Take care of the boss and you'll never go wrong.*

*Music*

#### **PAMELA - PODCAST HOST**

Do you treat your customers like the boss? Every customer? Every time? Do you do what it takes to make things right? Bob learned that lesson years ago. Remember that letter he received from an unhappy customer?

*Music*

#### **BOB FARRELL - NARRATOR**

*I'm at an airport, Seattle. SAS Airlines. My wife's going to Norway with her mother, father, cousins, dadada, I'm not going. I am **paying** for it but I'm not going. I have my Farrell's jacket on and the guy behind the counter looks over and says, "Oh, you work at Farrell's?"*

*"Yes, sir."*

*"I love that place. I go there all the time."*

*I said, "Thank you."*

*He said, "I wrote Mr. Farrell a letter once."*

*I said, "You're kidding, what'd you write about?"*

*He said, "Oh, it was years ago."*

*I said, "Well, I'm Mr. Farrell."*

*He said, "You're kidding!"*

*He looks at my wife's ticket. "Hey, you are Mr. Farrell!"*

*I said, "What did you write about?"*

*He said, "I wrote you about a pickle."*

*I said, "You're the guy who wrote me about the pickle? I have told thousands of people about that pickle. What do you do here at SAS?"*

*"I'm in charge of customer service."*

*I said, "No wonder you were so upset when we didn't give you the pickle!"*

*Music*

**PAMELA - PODCAST HOST**

Well, how about that? Meeting the guy who launched Bob's pickle service philosophy, which can be summed up in these four pickle principles.

*Music*

**BOB FARRELL - NARRATOR**

*Remember the keys to great customer service: First, **make serving others your top priority.** You work in a noble profession. Be proud of what you do. Second, **choose your attitude.** You're in show business, so play the part! Third, **be consistent in all you do.** Set high standards and stick to them. Finally, **commit to teamwork.** Look for ways to make each other look good. And when in doubt, give 'em the pickle!*

*Music*

**PAMELA - PODCAST HOST**

Well, that's it. We hope the message of this podcast inspires you to give away pickles and integrate the four pickle principles into your workday. Thanks for listening and don't forget to give away pickles!

*Music*

**ANNOUNCER**

Media Partners is the leading provider of original, high-quality training films and learning content. With captivating content that engages employees, you can raise awareness and change behavior. For more information about other Media Partners programs, please go to [www.mediapartners.com](http://www.mediapartners.com).