

How DE Changed My Life

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I attended DE Training in 2007 when it was held at Islandwood on Bainbridge Island, Washington. At the time I attended DE, I was the Chief Political Officer at SchoolsFirst FCU. The opportunities to build a nationwide network of credit union colleagues helped me learn best practices from others who are DEs. Their stories helped me in my journey to getting where I am today, the CEO at Evergreen Credit Union.

Because of attending DE, I lead my staff differently. I make sure to focus on the member (it's their money we are dealing with) but also on what it means to work for a credit union. The co-operative nature, the volunteer structure and the giving back to the community are all highlighted in my leadership style.



DE Training helped put my work into perspective, in knowing that I definitely think of members first and foremost. I think about and talk to my team about how do they want to be treated as a consumers when they do their own personal business? Can we provide that world class member service and member experience at all interactions? Asking these questions are highlights I took from the DE experience. Seeing how great many of us have it as Americans and how rough others in the world have it really said (to me) that we have to do better for our members. We have to make sure that we are making this world a better place for them by belonging to our credit union.

The impact of the DE experience has allowed me to develop my passion for the credit union movement. It's allowed me to be passionate for a cause that I can believe in and this passion for credit unions has allowed me to better understand my purpose in helping others. I have also been able to continue my involvement in the program by mentoring a DE class in 2009.

One of the best parts of becoming a DE is the building of some very good lifelong friendships! In this day and age we are all so connected with social media. I have friends that I haven't seen since kindergarten that I am friends with online today, but true friends are really my DE colleagues. Those I met in my DE program, the DE mentorship that I did, and those who have that common DE bond whom I never have actually met but have chatted with online. There is a great network of people that I can call on at any time for advice, they have been through the DE experience, they get it and they are willing to help me find an answer. There is this special bond of the DE experience that goes beyond simple networking.

I am always encouraging those who haven't gone through the DE experience to do so. If your credit union can't afford to send you, try for a scholarship to go. It's cliché to say it's life changing but it is very true... DE is a life changing experience.