

How DE Changed My Life

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I attended DE in 2005, and at the time I was a field representative for a state league. Attending DE Training significantly prepared me to become a CEO in 2007 by showing me how to service members and the community in different ways, as well as teaching me that getting out of your comfort zone is a really good thing. I now currently serve as the Regional Director at the Illinois Credit Union League.



In my role as Regional Director, I consult and support over 50 credit unions in Illinois, and DE has changed the way I serve them. The financial institution industry has become much more business focused with the increase of regulations and complexity of services offered. DE provides a balance of our original philosophy of servicing people, but also brings that into the 21st century business world. I find myself sharing this with credit unions throughout Illinois and the system on almost a daily basis. DE reminds us not to forget our roots of serving people of modest means.

I have found that DE comes into play in a variety of ways throughout my professional career. For example, I had the opportunity to facilitate a planning session for a Community Development Credit Union (CDCU). During the planning, we discussed how to serve the community as a CDCU. We utilized the development issues as the center piece of exploring the needs of the community and how to serve it. This approach totally changed the dynamics of session and vision of the credit union moving forward. Without DE, we would not have gone down that road and turned the discussion on its head.



The DE program has allowed me to grow in more ways than one professionally, and personally. I came back from DE with so much excitement for the DE program, the industry, and the movement that it was no longer just a job to me. The exposure to other countries and their ways opened my eyes to viewing member relationship and service very differently.

I have also had the incredible opportunity to mentor in the program in 2012 and 2016, and it was such an honor. Mentoring has allowed me to share my knowledge, but also gain knowledge

from a wide variety of people that I would not have had the pleasure to meet and become lifelong friends with. In many ways, mentoring has been as great of an experience as originally going through the program in 2005 because I have a better appreciation on how to apply the lessons learned.

Perhaps the largest impact the DE Program has had on me is that I found I now have a tremendous amount of empathy for people after my experience. I understand that every person has a story and I should not judge people. Instead, I can listen to the story, learn from it, and hopefully make a positive impact on their lives or someone else in a similar situation.