



A Lesson in Culture From a Family Recipe

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Have you heard the pot roast recipe fable? The story goes something like this:

A young boy and his mom decide to make their family's pot roast, using a recipe that has been in the family for years. They start by cutting off the ends of the pot roast, and the boy asks his mom: "Why do you have to cut the ends off the meat?" She said, "I don't know, it's what the recipe says to do."

They decide to call her mom to find out why you have to cut the ends off the piece of meat. Grandma also says that she didn't know why, but that it's part of the recipe. This family was fortunate enough to have her mother still alive, so they called great-grandma to ask why. And she told them, she cut the ends off the pot roast because she had a small roasting pan at the time—and it didn't fit.

This is a story of culture. During these remote work times, you can see how critical a strong culture really is!

Culture develops and grows within walls, but strong cultures live with or without walls. Culture and values are critical for helping organizations make decisions and share common goals. But, they can also inadvertently cause the organization to "go through the motions" without questioning or understanding the reasons behind a task or process.

It's important to hold on and appreciate what is foundational about your culture. But be curious enough to ask questions to continuously improve and be agile enough to adapt to changes in your environment. This allows you to keep the core of a culture (preparing and sharing a special meal with your family) while also ensuring you learn, grow, and improve on that core (don't waste the meat!).

So many organizations have a wonderful blend of team members: long tenure, brand new, fleet background, other industry backgrounds, first job, and different life experiences. Ensure you value each unique experience while learning from those insights and ideas. Our fleet industry will always be changing, and we should make sure we adapt and proactively improve as we manage change together. If the family in the fable knew the reason why the recipe called for cutting the ends off the roast, they would've known there was no need to waste those ends and simply use the right size pan.

During this pandemic, we've all had to modify our recipes to properly serve our clients, companies and drivers that may be essential and on the road. "What we have always done" just doesn't apply anymore in this world. Take advantage of this time to find a new path to drive efficiency, costs, productivity and service. That is being customer driven.

Join the conversation! Email me at ljozwiak@wheels.com.

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