

Executive Director Report | Aug 6, 2016

Good morning PSE members, delegates, leaders and honored guests.

Another special welcome and hello to our First Timers!

Today marks the 8th time I have had the distinct honor to speak at Convention. In fact, Kennewick is where I first addressed the delegates as Executive Director in 2009. I've had the privilege of addressing this convention a total of 12 times.

Thank you for giving me that opportunity...

Every year I look forward to seeing everyone at Convention. I enjoy this view of looking out at all of you – nearly 600 faces. You should see what I see! It's a beautiful sight, truly.

Each year, I look forward to the opportunity of speaking a message of hope and challenging us all to be greater. Every year, I attempt to focus my thoughts on drawing your attention to what I believe demands our most attention.

Today is no different.

As your Executive Director, I'm extremely proud of PSE's representation and advocacy on behalf of our members. We excel in representing thousands of women and men in the workplace, at the bargaining table, with grievances.

As a result, our work is benefiting tens of thousands of families and households, giving them higher standards of living and increased quality of life.

We're also second-to-none in our advocacy of educational support employees in Olympia and also in Washington, D.C. I think Doug's presentation proved that.

So much of the funding that ends up in school and university campuses comes directly from our political advocacy.

Congratulations and THANK YOU to all who contribute to these successes!

We can point to victory after victory after victory. Our record and our reputation within the public education sector is stellar. And in the world of politics is solid.

Yet...

Ladies and gentlemen, if you remember nothing else today, hear this:

These wins are not enough...

That's right. Wins like these are not enough. They are not enough for me. They shouldn't be enough for you. And they most definitely are not enough for the 30,000 members of this union.

Beyond our traditional representation and advocacy, we have to do MORE to meet the FULL EXPECTATIONS of the people who pay us dues every month.

We simply have to do more because you DESERVE more!

Member Experience

Today, I want to speak to you about building a deeper, more meaningful PSE Member Experience. You are all familiar with customer service in the business world, which determines your customer experience. Most successful companies in America have intentional customer service strategies.

This is no different. Unions should do this too!

Think back to when you were a new employee of your school district or university.

- How did you feel about your introduction to PSE?
- What was the moment where you felt personally invested and committed to PSE?
- When did you decide to make that individual commitment that brought you here today?
- Who helped you and who encouraged you along the way?

These are the kinds of questions we must start asking ourselves for our Union to survive and thrive.

When we are faced with the prospect of voluntary union membership – note that I did not say “***IF*** we are faced with voluntary membership.”

When Right to Work happens, when membership in PSE is completely voluntary, the key variable of whether someone chooses to join or to remain in PSE will be how RICH their EXPERIENCE is in the union and how STRONG their CONNECTION is to others.

My vision of the member experience begins with the notion that our members’ needs – YOUR NEEDS and your expectations have evolved and they are going to continue to evolve.

This union needs to evolve with all of you. Here’s what I’m talking about...

Today’s Situation

We know that even if we are meeting members’ expectations in a broad sense, it doesn’t necessarily mean it will gain us their LOYALTY. We know loyalty isn’t enough considering the environment we face. We must do more. We have to EXCEED expectations in every way.

Studies have shown that at least 50% of a membership connection is emotional. Too often people in the union world disconnect with the members because we lose that emotional relationship.

Now, whoever thought you'd ever hear ME give a speech about emotions?

Well, I'm here to tell you that connections and emotions matter. They go hand in hand.

I believe strongly that PSE MUST move aggressively to strengthen connections amongst ALL of our members – not just those dedicated few who show up for chapter meetings.

APATHY is our enemy. Apathy directly results because of the disconnect with thousands of educational support professionals all across this state.

On the other hand, **AFFINITY** is the antidote. Affinity is that genuine feeling of connection, relationship, belonging.

Now, PSE does better than most when it comes to active engagement of our members. We have active leadership structures in 228 local chapters across the state. Each of these chapters have many “go-to” people to get things done at the District or University level.

But we can do better.

Here's how I believe we will start to do better.

DISCOVERY

Building up our Member Experience work starts with DISCOVERY.

This is the time where we ask LOTS of QUESTIONS, like:

- Who are our members?
- What do you want?
- What do you need?
- What do you value?
- What do you think of PSE?
- What UN-MET challenges are you facing?

We can no longer assume we know what our members want, we have to ask. And we have to ask repeatedly.

Some of this discovery work has already started. Over the past year, hundreds of you have taken our online member and leader surveys. Dozens more have participated in smaller focus group research sessions.

We are beginning to discover a whole new perspective on our work, and it's exciting.

As we continue to ask these questions, all of us have to be open to hearing new ideas, understanding new roles for the union to play. And most important, we have to be open to hear criticism about what we've been doing wrong, what we're not even doing, or how we could do some things better.

This process involves active listening to all members...to meet them where they are...to understand what they want and need...and to keep them connected, following through.

We had a TEAM leadership conference a few weeks back, and we asked some of these questions. We had a great discussion.

That was just the tip of the iceberg. Just like here today, the delegates in this room make up only a small fraction of this membership. We've got a lot more work to do to reach out to EVERYONE.

We're not going to figure all this discovery out in one day or in one week. We will build pit stops along our route to make sure we are re-discovering our members' needs.

CLARITY

CLARITY is the next step. Once we discover and listen to what members want, we must pause so that we gain some perspective on all the input that we receive.

We will connect similar comments and suggestions into cohesive conclusions.

We will make sure that we identify gaps between the current member experience and what is desired. What are our members expecting from their union membership that we are not providing? This is critical for our survival.

Clarifying needs and identifying gaps is making it possible for us to begin providing specific information to our chapter leaders. This Fall we will roll out a new

channel of information so our chapter leaders are better informed and better equipped to lead.

A major component of the Design stage is drawing a Member Journey Map. Someone described this map recently as *“New Hire to Life Member.”*

You don’t get from one point to the other overnight. It’s not that simple. It’s not that instantaneous. This process – this Member Journey – actually takes years. And there are so many important moments and steps and learning that takes place.

We need to clearly identify this member journey within PSE. Everyone must be able to understand and appreciate what it takes to get involved, to advance, to be challenged, and to grow.

I want to talk about this Member Journey for just a moment. Every one of us has a Member Journey from the day we were hired to what lead us here. It’s unique and it’s different.

Mine included being a 20 year member myself. What I find amazing is along each individual journey, we all intersect here together this weekend.

That means something to me. Because now we’re going to take off and we’re going to go out on our individual journeys once again. So we met here, we intersected, we took care of some business.

I want you to think real clearly for just a few moments here. I want you to think about your individual journey.

If at some point in your journey, you had a staff member that encouraged you, that inspired you, that dragged you to a meeting, that played any part of your membership journey in this union, any part, I want you to raise your hand. I want you to stand.

I want you to look around, ladies and gentlemen, and I want you to notice the impact that your staff has on this union, and I want you to give them a huge round of applause.

Staff is so critically important to this organization. We need to acknowledge that on a regular basis. Thank you for that.

IMPLEMENT

As you heard from Mary Howes, and those of you who have already turned out as Member Organizers, we have already begun to IMPLEMENT the Member Experience. But we need everyone to join this team.

To be successful, we MUST provide adequate resources to these efforts. Thanks to the leadership of this Board, we are very fortunate that we have some resources on hand to improve the Member Experience. We will also need to re-arrange PRIORITIES to give this effort the attention it deserves.

EVALUATE

The Final step in this process is to EVALUATE how we are doing. Again, this means going back and asking questions. Listening yet again. The Voice of the Member will always be present.

We will adjust our strategies based on what we hear, providing real-time, effective channels for members to provide feedback on their member experience.

To give you some idea of what the outcomes of the member experience could look like, many ideas were put forward at the TEAM Conference, such as:

- More staff development courses
- Retirement planning and other financial-related seminars
- Comprehensive customer-service strategies that promote positive interactions in all aspects of the union
- Additional membership benefits, including perhaps some exclusive insurance products like vision or dental. Vacation clock hour trainings.

These are some great ideas to get us all thinking about the specific niche or corner of the market that PSE can command.

Together, we will build a powerful and profound PSE Member Experience. I am excited for what that experience will become and how it will value the tremendous women and men of this union.

I want to acknowledge your Board of Directors for their commitment and enthusiasm to the PSE Member Experience.

We are the front line of a changing economy, and changing landscape. But we're not sitting by.

We are marching forward, charting the course that will benefit all PSE members, and Washington's students.

Because of your individual commitment, our union is highly respected, reliable and a strong voice for working families.

As we align this great organization with the needs and wants of our membership, we will create something powerful; we will re-awaken our union, making us more modern and relevant.

With our Belong & Be Strong efforts earlier this year, it took us 21 days to connect with 10% of our membership. **Just 21 Days!**

Connecting with our entire 30,000 membership is doable! Our members DESERVE this. Not just to make the union stronger, although it will do that too.

I challenge you to work together with all members, our Board of Directors, and our staff in creating a Member

Experience that will ensure all members feel as personally invested and committed as you do.

Our union needs ALL of you to be in. We need you to double down on your commitment to moving our union forward—where all members belong and all members are strong. And all members have an experience that is worthy of the work you all put in.

Let me make this abundantly clear:

Creating a remarkable member experience is not about responding to the threat of Friedrichs or Right to Work, although that has to be taken into account.

The PSE Member Experience is primarily about you as members getting what you want and what you need from your union.

YOU DESERVE THAT!

You deserve that.

Thank you very much.