

Rural
Grocery
Stores as
Community
Hubs





Hi! I'm Rebecca.

- Proud boomerang to Oakes, ND (pop. 1,754)
- Mom to 3 and farmer's wife
- Keynote speaker + organizational development consultant
- Founder of Growing Small Towns
- Former economic developer



I know next
to nothing
about
owning
and
operating a
rural
grocery
store.

I do know what it feels
like to live in a small
town...

And walk into (and rely
on) a rural grocery store.

And whether you realize
it or not...

Everyone walks through
your doors.



Ways You Influence

- First jobs
- Daily routines
- Awkward run-ins
- Last-minute solutions

The things I hear all
the time...

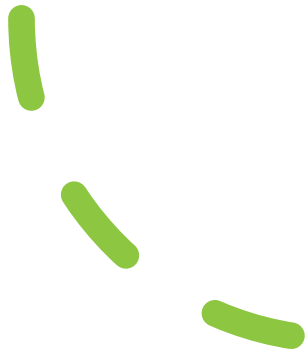




“They should just appreciate that they even have a grocery store.”



Mindset Shift # 1

- Generations are changing
 - You are not entitled to a successful business.
- 


Key Reminder #1:
**To get them to care, you have
to make your store feel like it
belongs to them.**



“It’s hard to find
good people.”



Mindset Shift #2

- How do we level up the people who already work for us?
 - What if your next great employee is already walking through our doors?
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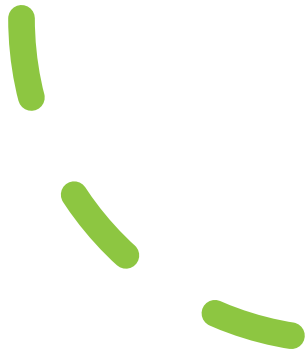
**Key Reminder #2:
Great employees aren't
“found”. They're developed.**



“We can’t compete
with the big
stores.”



Mindset Shift #3


- You're right. You can't compete on scale.
 - You were never meant to.
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Key Reminder #3:
You *can* compete on
connection.
And you can *win*.




I Know it's Hard.
Let's Try Some Stuff.

Big Idea
#1: Set the
tone...all
your store's
a stage!

- Aim for warm + connected
 - Teach proper greetings
 - Use customer names
 - Make each moment count
 - If we can see you, you're on stage!
 - Customer is everyone's job;
Be like Scheel's
- 

*People will remember
outstanding experiences.
(more than higher prices)*

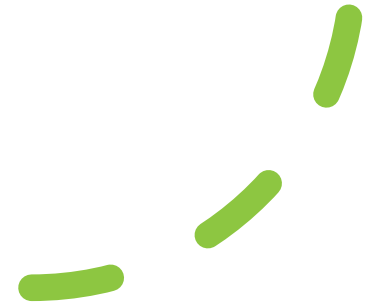
Big Idea #2:
What if you
became the
place where
people
grow?

- Let them own something (a section, display, event, or promotion)
 - Ask for their input: “What would you like to see us do?”
 - Celebrate a “Employee of the Month”
 - Mark their favorite things (bonus for recipes!)
- 

People don't stay for jobs. They stay where they're seen, valued, and feel like they belong.


Big Idea #3: Don't make the customer work so hard.

- How do you right your wrongs?
- Can you offer order requests?
- Can you offer carryout service?
- Make giving easy
- Have a local foods section



To get people to care, you have
to make your store feel like it
belongs to them.

Big Idea #4: Give Them Reasons to Come In

- Sampling days
 - Simple, fun employee or customer-suggested events (add a suggestion box)
 - Ethnic cuisine days (especially if those cultures exist in your community)
 - “Local spotlight” shelves
- 




*You don't need a big budget.
You need intention and care.*

*You're one of the last places
where people still run into
each other.*



*That's not small.
That's everything.*



*You're not just a store.
You're shaping the
way people
experience your
community.*

*And in a world where fewer and
fewer places feel human...*

that matters more than ever.

*You don't need to
change everything.*

Just pick one.
Start as soon as you get home.

Next Steps



Q & A



CONNECT WITH ME

“We help
small
communities
be places
people love
to call home”

