

# At Wegmans, every employee counts

Among the legions of Wegmans grocery store fans, the following tale has become legendary.

A frantic customer called a Wegmans chef, because the Thanksgiving turkey she'd bought from the store was too big for her oven. The chef rescued her by roasting it for her at the store.

And here's another one: During a sudden thunderstorm, Wegmans employees stand waiting with umbrellas at the door, to escort shoppers to their cars.

On-the-spot, creative problem-solving is something that Wegmans' team members are known for. That's because Wegmans gives its talented employees the power to meet customer needs using creativity and flair—and good judgment.

The result? The store attracts top talent and ranks on *Fortune* magazine's "Best Companies to Work For" list.

Like many companies, Wegmans talks about "treating our people like family." And those employees return the favor by passing along good feelings to customers.

In one such gesture of familial caring, Robert Wegman, son of co-founder Walter Wegman, raised everyone's salary immediately after he was named president in 1950. Skimping on salaries had been the norm. But the new leader made clear that talent was the company's top asset.

Not that salaries alone keep Wegmans' employees content.

One pastry chef, when asked why he'd left a lucrative career in the restaurant industry for a job at Wegmans, replied, "Are you kidding? All my old friends from there want to come and work here. We are doing much more creative work than I ever did in the restaurant game."

**Lesson:** Creating demand for a product or service is rarely done by a single person. Every employee counts.

— Adapted from *Demand*, Adrian J. Slywotzky.