

Alameda Connects & Alameda Corridor Business Improvement District



**Ability for
Small Business
Sustainability**

2019 SMALL BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT

#SOENGAGED2019

**Abrusci's Fire & Vine- Employee Sustainability
Marvin Williams**

Employee Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Abrusci's Fire & Vine- Urban Italian
Full Service Urban Italian Cuisine, Wood Fire Pizza,
Gluten Free Friendly, Craft Bar, Happy Happy Hour, Catering
2200 Youngfield St, Lakewood, CO 80215
303.232.2424

We strive to carry on the traditions of the former Abrusci's Italian with our community oriented setting and display of homemade recipes with fresh ingredients. We are committed to providing a culture that promotes hospitality, friendship and family. Our establishment also offers professional growth, innovative compensation and creative opportunities for our team. We believe this leads to a commitment to providing a fresh, delicious menu and 6-Star hospitality for our guests.

Employee Sustainability

HOW WE BEGAN

- **2000** *Applewood natives Jeff & Steve Progar open Abrusci's Italian Ristorante in Wheat Ridge*
- **2010** *Opened Abrusci's Cherry Creek till 2012*
- **2013** *Steve Progar- the man behind the menu, hung up his chef coat to pursue life outside the restaurant business*
- **2015** *Abrusci's became the first restaurant to adopt a non-tipping policy that offers all employees a living wage*
- **2017** *With a newly built, more modern yet rustic building, Abrusci's moves 10 blocks south to Lakewood and changes the name to Abrusci's Fire & Wine. Menu expands to include more American fare*
- **2018** *Abrusci's Fire & Wine changes name to Abrusci's Fire & Vine in response to a Fire + Wine in Glen Ellyn, Illinois receiving too many reservations that were not showing up*

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NON-TIPPING DECISION

- **State Of The Restaurant In 2014**
High Turnover / Lackluster Sales / Employee Tension
- **How To Hire And Keep Exceptional Employees**
Hire: What do we look for in an employee
Keep: What keeps an employee- Culture / Money / Benefits / Hours
- **How To Reduce Pay Discrepancy Between FOH And BOH Employees**
FOH- Constant Pay Raises: Yearly Minimum Wage / Menu Price
BOH- Constant Pay Without Raises
- **The Negative Effect of Tipping**
Fairness, discrimination, uncertainty, divided tips, server bias
- **How To Offer Living Wage For All Employees And Remove Tipping**
What is a Living Wage?
- **How To Create A Culture Of Hospitality Rather Than Hostility**
FOH/BOH Tensions due to: Pay / Workload / Culture

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STEPS TAKEN

- **Pay For FOH And BOH**
Current vs Expectation vs Fair & Reasonable
- **Define Living Wage**
Maintain a normal standard of living, Create Stability and Budget Ability
- **Benefits To Offer**
PTO, Bonuses, Incentives, Health
- **Culture Change**
Start at the top, motivate the bottom, meet in the middle
- **Transition From Tipping to Non-Tipping**
Educate staff & customers
- **Hire Non-Tipping Employees**
HQ- Hospitality Quotient 51% (Danny Meyer).
Kindness & Optimism / Empathy / Integrity
Work Ethic / Intellectual Curiosity / Self-Awareness
- **Transition**
Buy in, Train, Execute

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LESSONS LEARNED

- **Money Isn't Everything**
Only a part of the equation
- **Culture of Professionalism & Mutual Respect Is Everything**
Culture makes or breaks a business
Who made the rule?
- **Not Everyone Agrees With You**
Customer & employee pushbacks are good
We are not forcing anyone to eat or work here
- **Change Is Hard, Perseverance Is Harder**
Believe, commit, stay the course
- **People Are People, No Matter What They Say**
Consistent daily nurturing of the culture
- **Ever Evolving**
Be willing to change the change

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- **Decide If Non-Tipping Is Right For You**
What is your goal?
Do you believe tipping is wrong?
- **What Culture Do You Want**
Want vs reality, can they be the same?
- **Be Willing To Lose People**
Industry Turnover as well as Non-Tipping transition turnover
- **Be Committed For The Long Haul**
Stick with the plan and don't be afraid to tweak it
- **Believe In It Daily- Live It**
Be contagious

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