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## Disney University Avoids the 4 Employee Development Traps, Do You? By Doug Lipp

*“Marketing is the time and money you spend to get people in the door. Training is the investment you make to get guests to come back and cast members to stay; it creates loyalty.”*

*– Jim Cora, retired chairman, Disneyland International*

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Yet ...

The word “Training” has a nauseating effect on most employees. Why? Because most organizations don’t enjoy the four vital ingredients of success that drive the Disney University.

What is the secret behind the success of Disney’s world famous employee development organization, the Disney University? Why are its training programs valued, and well attended? How does Disney University create employee development programs that avoid the dreaded training trap of being viewed as a “necessary evil,” or worse ... “nauseating?”

The Disney University owes its 50-plus years of success to the following four organizational values:

- 1) Innovate:** Leaders must be innovative and comfortable with risk.
- 2) Support:** Leaders must provide overt, enthusiastic and sustained support; be cheerleaders of training.
- 3) Educate:** Employee education and development must be woven into organizational culture.
- 4) Entertain:** Training, ranging from the front lines to the executive suite, must be entertaining, engaging and memorable ... not boring and forgettable.

The wild ride on the economic roller-coaster quickly gets out of control when any one of these four values is jettisoned and excuses start flying. Absent any one of these four values, training and development initiatives are destined for failure. Which of these four values does your organization enjoy? Which need to be strengthened?

Van France, founder of the Disney University, was determined to keep Walt Disney’s dream of creating The Happiest Place on Earth alive.

When excuses started flying, he challenged many Disney executives:

“The budget has become the scapegoat for every possible negative action and rejection of any suggestion for improving things. It is the coward’s way out of any problem. Budgets might be tight, creativity is free.”

Excerpt from: [Disney U: How Disney University Develops the World’s Most Engaged, Loyal and Customer-Centric Employees.](#)

Doug Lipp helped create the first international version of the Disney University, at Tokyo Disneyland and then led the Disney University Training team at the corporate headquarters of The Walt Disney Company, The Walt Disney Studios. Lipp consults his global clientele on a wide range of leadership issues. [www.douglipp.com](http://www.douglipp.com)

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