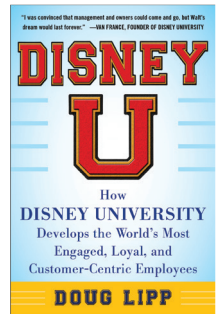


CIO INSIGHT.

12 Management Lessons From Disney U

By Dennis McCafferty | 05-06-2013



It started in 1923 as the Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio. Ninety years later, it dominates as one of the largest media companies and entertainment businesses in the world. Disney's vast holdings include ABC, Marvel Entertainment, Pixar, Lucasfilm and, of course, the top sports TV network presence with ESPN.

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1 Teachable Moments
Walt Disney was known to say, "Laughter is no enemy to learning." Training sessions, as a result, combine humor and entertainment to increase the message's impact.

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2 Well Schooled
Lesson plans are simple, actionable and supported organization-wide, from park workers to the CEO.

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3 Balanced Equation
Disney believes that strong corporate values make as much impact in engaging employees as incentives like gift and cash bonuses.

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Balanced Equation Disney believes that strong corporate values make as much impact in engaging employees as incentives like gift and cash bonuses.

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4 Buddy System
Disney has workers "shadow" each other for a day or week so they gain appreciation for what others in the company do.

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Yet, Disney's workplace culture—as opposed to its acquisitions—are equally impactful in defining the company. And much of this culture is honed by its leaders at what's known as Disney U, a global training enterprise first launched in 1955. The recent book, *Disney U: How Disney University Develops the World's Most Engaged, Loyal, and Customer-Centric Employees* (McGraw-Hill), provides an insightful, insider's view of the Disney U story.

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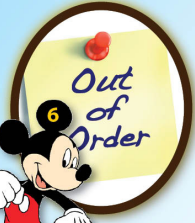


5 Customer Facing
When interacting with customers, Snow White and other employees aren't allowed to have a bad day. (Privately, however, venting is fine.)

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6 The Last Detail
Employees are taught that everything matters—that even a single out-of-order ride at a huge park isn't acceptable.

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7 Garbage Time
Disney promotes an "Everyone picks up the trash" culture. No one is above doing any job.

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8 Personal Touch
Guests are never simply referred to as "attendance numbers" or "per capita units." The human element is never lost.

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Author Doug Lipp helped create the first international version of the training program. (He and his wife, Pam, met as cast members at Disneyland at Anaheim, Calif., in the early 1980s.) The following 12 best practices promoted at Disney U demonstrate how the organization combines attention to detail, corporate values and the fun factor to develop fully engaged employees who are determined to deliver a superior customer experience. The Lipps now run G. Doug Lipp and Associates, a consultancy specializing in customer service, leadership, change management and global competitiveness.

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9 Makeover Moment
Workers receive formal training on how to turn an unhappy customer into a loyal fan.

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10 Unleashed Creativity
All employees are encouraged to pursue a "Mickey Mouse" breakthrough—an innovation that sets a lasting standard.

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11 Flexible Thinking
Individual units have the freedom to adjust corporate policies to accommodate the local culture and environment.

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12 Community Connections
Volunteer efforts are designed as employee leadership and team building opportunities.

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