

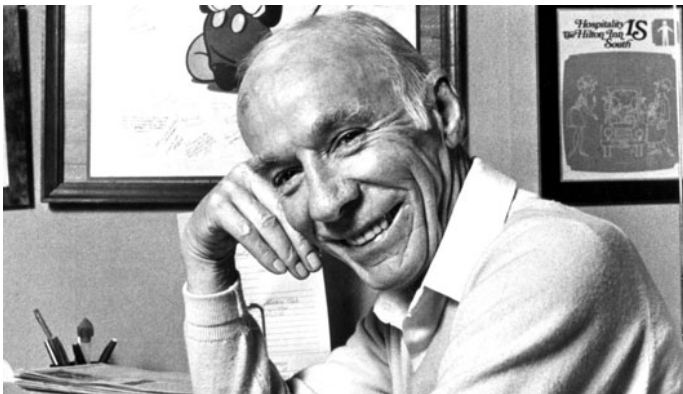
Disneyland at 60: Four Leadership Gems from the Founder of the Disney University



Please help us welcome Doug Lipp to MiceChat. You might recognize the name. Doug is a highly sought after business consultant, public speaker and author who worked for many years at the Disney University and with Disney Legend Van France (who created the Disney University and Disneyland's famous customer service principals). This is the first in a series of articles inspired by Disneyland's 60th anniversary.

"I was convinced that managers and owners could come and go, but Walt's dream would last forever."

– Van France, founder of the Disney University



When perfectly combined, time, heat and extreme pressure transform a drab blob of carbon into the sparkling gemstones revered worldwide; diamonds. Companies should be so lucky. The one-two-three punches of time, competitive pressure and heat doom far too many.

- Over time, companies can grow complacent and risk-averse. Ignoring the fundamental need to maintain people, and property, leads to organizations that are run-down ... they grow tired. Employees and customers gladly abandon these companies when competitors emerge.
- Adding heat and urgency is pressure from competitors, plus economic swings beyond anyone's control. Some owners and managers chase after slimmer and slimmer pieces of the demographic pie as more players emerge. Finding, and then holding onto, good employees is equally vexing.

Unfortunately, the corrosive results of time, competitive pressure and heat derail most. No diamonds to be found here.

That said, Disneyland is in the midst of celebrating its 60th Anniversary this year ... its "Diamond Celebration." Despite constant bombardment by the same forces plaguing so many other organizations, Disneyland has successfully evolved into a cultural icon. How do the employees and leaders at Disneyland continue bringing to life Walt's dream of being "The Happiest Place on Earth?" The answer lies in a rock-solid set of values and a crystal clear, yet adaptable, corporate culture. This foundation upon which The Magic Kingdom is built ensures the stability and resiliency that eludes many.

A Culture of Respect and Happiness: “You can’t have a happy show without a happy crew”

In 1955, Disney University founder Van France made a commitment to Walt Disney that influenced millions of Disneyland employees ... and ultimately the experience of hundreds of millions of guests. Despite the inevitable changes he knew the company would face, Van France helped shape, and then perpetuate, a corporate culture that is both steadfast and flexible. The four corporate values Van France identified, and then brought to life through his transformative employee development initiatives, form the DNA of Disney operations worldwide; each of the eleven Disney theme parks, the resorts and cruise line reflect Van’s values (Van called them circumstances).

Innovate

Support

Educate

Entertain



July 17, 2015 marks the 60th Anniversary of Disneyland’s grand opening. In the days leading up to this momentous occasion, I’ll explore in detail each of Van France’s Four Circumstances.

I encourage all readers to do more than read each posting. Please consider adding comments that:

- Add examples of how the crystal-clear values have enabled you or your company to overcome the one-two-three punches of time, competitive pressure and “heat.”
- Challenge each of Van France’s four circumstances. (Spirited debate is a vital learning component).

Let’s kick off this series with one of my favorite quotes from Van:

“The business we’re in, if we can’t have fun, how could we expect the public to have fun?”