

What's Your Training Plan? Learn from 'Disney U'

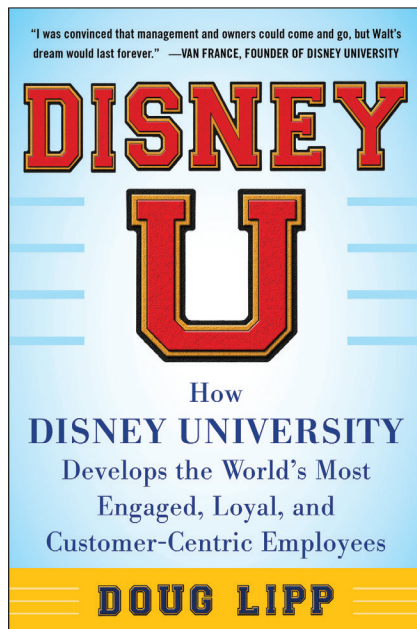
Ken Thoreson on March 24, 2013

As a sales manager, one of your responsibilities is to develop your sales team's professionalism. After reading *Doug Lipp's Disney U: How the Disney University Develops the World's Most Engaged, Loyal, and Customer Centric Employees*, you will come away with a notebook filled with ideas to improve your employee development. Lipp lived the Disney U experience and gives us the inside stories that back up the results.

The book provides you insights into the genius of Walt Disney, but also the other people in the organization who brought their vision and dedication to make Disney U an exciting and valuable part of the Disney organization. Each chapter breaks down various subjects with excellent summaries that you can turn into action steps for your own organization. While reading the book I picked up the various "mantras" that drove the development of Disney U. For example:

- "Management must be diligent or the show [customer experience] will deteriorate."
- "Management must be diligent or the cast [employees] will deteriorate."

The interesting aspect is the impact Disney U had on the entire organization; it is looked upon by management not as a training department but an element of the organization that impacts the culture, operations and performance. The chapter "Capture Hearts and Minds" mentioned four questions that relate to a focus on the entire organization:



- Is innovation encouraged?
- Is organizational support found at every level?
- Is employee education valued and non-negotiable?
- Is entertainment incorporated into training and education initiatives?

"My basic story is about the two men laying bricks," says Van Johnson, the person responsible for building and leading Disney U, in the opening of the chapter titled "The Language of Success."

"When asked what he is doing, one man says, 'I'm laying bricks.' The other man performing the same task says, 'I'm building a cathedral.'"

Johnson went on: "I have found that most people want to be involved in something greater than just being paid for a job."

The question is, what are you doing to not only train people on your products/services but to truly build a team that excels in all aspects of representing your firm? Ask me for a copy of "Building Belief" for a few ideas.