

## Is Training the Core to Disney's Sustainability?

By Joseph Dager | Jun 13, 2013

Business901 Podcast features Doug Lipp, a world-renowned speaker and acclaimed expert on customer service, leadership, change management and global competitiveness. Doug recently published a book, *Disney U: How Disney University Develops the World's Most Engaged, Loyal, and Customer-Centric Employees*.

I have always been intrigued about the consistency and sustainability of Disney. Several excerpts from the podcast:

**Joe:** What I'm amazed about Disney is the sustainability of it. Does sustainability go back to training?

**Doug:**

Yes, in fact, one of the things that really resonated with me in doing this research and in looking at the organization culture that Walt Disney and Van France and so many people created was it's about the culture that leads to the training that leads to the sustainability. You keep pulling back the layers of this onion and you start to see. What amazes me Joe is how many of my clients and my consulting business will say: "Well, gosh, you were head of the training team at Disney University and if we have all those fancy characters and all the names and all the fame and legacy, we'll have no problem getting people to our programs and doing what we teach them in class". Then I say: "No, that's not it at all". It is about capturing people's minds and hearts and it is so much more than putting a fancy name on a building and calling it the so-and-so University or calling it a training program or something. What I've come to realize even more after my Disney career, Joe, is that the culture of education and the value placed on education and learning in Disney is one of the precursors to the success of the Disney University and as you mentioned that sustainability.

**Joe:** Is the Disney Way a process?

**Doug:**

It is absolutely a process. It is a mindset, really, and the Disney way, that philosophy is really found in the phrase the Walt Disney started and everybody in the Disney Organization knows and it is called "Plusing the Show." Walt would say: "We have to keep plusing our show, if we ever lose them, meaning the guests, it will take us 10 years to get them back." Constantly improving, not only the processes, but also the people. Naturally, what is the beauty of this sustainability, you mentioned earlier, is certainly the University is about the on-boarding of new hires and training of supervisors and the soft skills that equally important is what they are teaching in the University is alive and well in the operation's side of the business. Both the operations people and the training people are singing from the same sheet of music, which is so unusual in so many organizations.

Doug Lipp helped create the first international version of the Disney University, in Japan at Tokyo Disneyland, and then led the training team of the Disney University at the corporate headquarters of The Walt Disney Company, The Walt Disney Studios. He mentored under a number of Disney University visionaries, including the Disney University founder, Van France. Lipp consults with numerous Fortune 100 corporations and travels the world speaking about the lessons he learned at the Disney University.

