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By David Hughes/Tribune-Star | Jan 31, 2018

FORMER DISNEY TRAINER TALKS ABOUT DOING THINGS 'RIGHT'

Sprinkling in a spot-on impersonation of Donald Duck, Doug Lipp talked about how Disney University trained its employees to treat each other and its theme-park visitors with respect during an Indiana State University Speaker Series presentation Wednesday night inside Tilson Auditorium.

The former head of training at Disney U. (located near Orlando, Florida), Lipp passionately discussed ways that organizations can strengthen their corporate cultures, boost business performance and have fun while doing it.

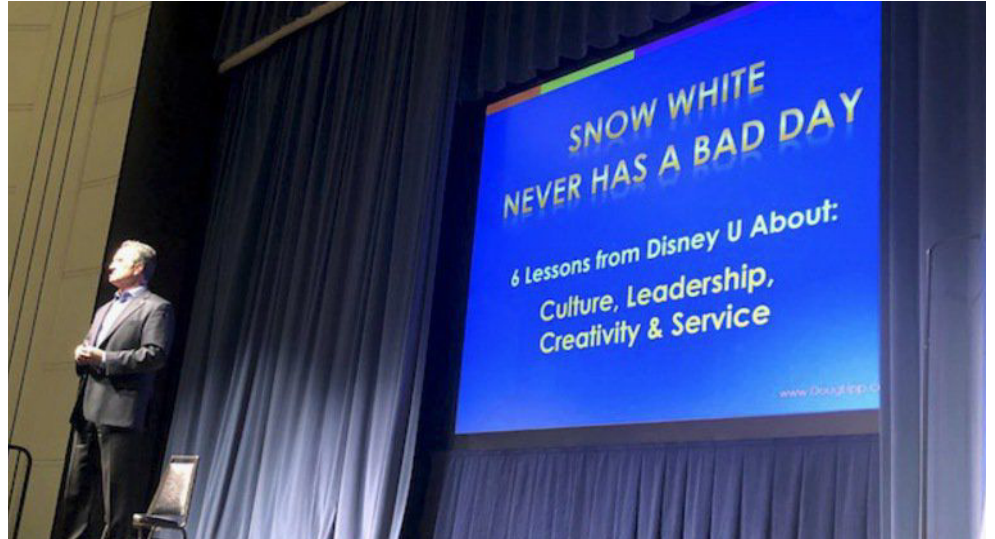
One of his main points on positivity — first presented to him by his mentor, Van France, founder of Disney University — was that “Snow White Never Has A Bad Day.”

Lipp mentioned how France once told the legendary Walt Disney himself: “If we’re going to have truly engaged employees and give our guests world-class service, then let’s be really clear, Walt. Our No. 1 customer is our employee.”

For younger readers who may not be familiar with Walt Disney, he created the Disneyland park in Los Angeles in 1955. A similar Disney World followed in Orlando in 1971. The motto of Disney and France in regard to employees became “Hire Right, Train Right, Treat Right.”

“One of those three is generally missing from most organizations I’ve worked with,” Lipp pointed out to the crowd.

“All too often, I’ve seen organizations who say, ‘Well, you have no idea how tough it is to get good people in this day and age. The business is booming and I can’t get good people.’ I hear that from every business. ... Well, it’s amazing how organizations that run a tight ship and run a good organization don’t seem to have the same problems. They attract good people.



Doug Lipp talks about his Disney days during an Indiana State University Speaker Series presentation Wednesday night in Tilson Auditorium

“And then train right. Don’t just throw that newly hired employee into the middle of the mix and expect her or him to survive. And training doesn’t have to be in the classroom. It could be in 30-second bursts of on-the-job training. It could be in pre- and post-shift huddles.

“Finally, sending them into the environment of ‘Treat Right.’ That respects them. ... So if you blend all these together, that’s how you differentiate. And I would argue that’s how Disney [the company] — not only in California and Florida, but in total 12 theme parks worldwide — continues to do it. It’s not sexy. It’s not difficult. But it escapes a lot of organizations.”

Lipp also emphasized France’s insistence on safety and courtesy being shown to Disney employees and patrons.

“Safety is No. 1,” Lipp said, recalling France’s words. “If you kill too many customers, they ain’t coming back. If you kill too many employees, they ain’t coming back.”

An international consultant and eight-time author, Lipp most recently wrote a book titled “Disney U: How Disney University Develops the World’s Most Engaged, Loyal, and Customer-Centric Employees.”

Fluent in Japanese, he helped The Walt Disney Company open its first international theme park as a member of the Tokyo Disneyland start-up team in the early 1980s.

Upcoming ISU Speaker Series appearances include former U.S. Secretary of Labor under the Clinton administration Alexis Herman on Feb. 22 and president of People Ink Ann Rhoads on March 28.

