

DISNEY GREAT LEADER STRATEGIES

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DISNEY GREAT LEADER STRATEGIES . . .

AN EXPLANATION OF TACTICS LEADERSHIP IS A ROLE?

The question is . . . Is leadership a role or a responsibility? The fact of the matter is that leadership is a role, and leadership is a responsibility . . . but mainly it is a *responsibility*. Being a great Leader is quite different than being a great manager.

I want to go over the *Disney Great Leader Strategies* and give you my thoughts about each one of them. I especially want to add some new thoughts to some of them that I have learned over the last few months . . . and in particular I want to point out what the responsibilities of all of our Leaders and Front-Line Cast Members are in relation to safety.

When you think about our responsibilities as Leaders, you have to believe that there is nothing more important than creating and maintaining a safe environment for our Guests and for our fellow Cast Members. Safety is everyone's responsibility. Throughout *Disney Great Leader Strategies*, you will find important information to help you be a GREAT Leader in the area of safety.

It is vital that we, as Leaders, stay alert and take corrective action when we observe a potential hazard or unsafe behavior. We need to make sure that we reinforce safety in our communications to our fellow Cast Members in Pre-Shift/Homeroom meetings, in briefings, in one-on-one communications, and in writing. We need to engage in proactive coaching around safety issues with Cast Members and encourage them to look out for one another.

Make sure that you are reviewing your Safety Scorecard for trends. The more you know about the numbers and the type of incidents, the more aware you will become of potential incidents as you walk your areas, observing the operation and the Cast Members at work in the operation.

Have good eyes and pay attention. Just think about how easy it is to see safety issues when there is a new baby in the house. The safety issues just pop out at you if you are looking for them and paying attention.

When an incident occurs, we need to get right into it and find out WHY it happened and WHAT caused it and take immediate corrective action.

Creating a safe work environment is the number one responsibility for Leaders. Cast Members will take their lead from you about how important this subject is. You need to be a GREAT role model. Your personal example and focus will be directly related to how well we do in this area of our responsibility.

The next most important thing for Leaders to do . . . and I find it hard to say that this is the second most important thing after safety . . . so let's just say that this next one is right up there with safety as the two most important things we do if we want to be GREAT Leaders.

Creating an inclusive environment for EVERYONE is what I am talking about.

We, as Leaders, have a huge responsibility to do many things; but at the end of the day, the thing that can make the largest difference is fostering an inclusive environment that touches *EVERYONE* . . .

- an environment that makes every Cast Member feel special . . .
- an environment that treats *EVERYONE* as an individual . . . and
- an environment that provides developmental opportunities for *EVERYONE* so that each and every individual can achieve the level of his or her own ability.

Today, the *Walt Disney World*® Resort is a place that truly respects all people, no matter where they are from . . . or what their culture is . . . or what religion they practice . . . or what race they are . . . or what age they are . . . or what gender they are . . . or what natural origin they are . . . or what their sexual orientation is . . . or what their physical ability is . . . or what level of education they have achieved . . . and on and on and on.

We should be proud of what we have done. We have achieved this because of great leadership at all levels—as we have done with all of the important things that we have done together throughout the years. While we have done much there is always more to do. As a Leader, you really never get finished with your role. As with everything, we can always do better and better and better.

Fostering an inclusive environment truly is a journey that never ends. There is no final destination in this ever-changing world. *Focused leadership is the number one way we will continue to succeed in this area.*

Like all environmental and cultural changes, they take time. Environments and cultures usually do not get a lot better or a lot worse quickly. We, as great Leaders, need to have the patience, as well as the persistence, to continue to move our environment and culture along.

While we may not be able to change the environment and culture of America as quickly as we would like to, we can change our Company's environment and culture much faster than that of our country. We do control our destiny.

In my Time/Life Management class we always ask the question: “What should you do today that won't pay off for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, or 40 years from now?”

Focusing on an inclusive environment is one thing that we should continue to do because the payoff comes down the road . . . and the sooner you get started and plant the seeds, the sooner you reap the harvest. This is true of almost everything in life.

Having an inclusive environment is really the most important thing that we can do to ensure our future success.

As you know, it is not only the right thing to do; but it also has significant business implications; and we know well that we, as Leaders, must balance Cast Excellence, Guest Satisfaction, and Business Results to be truly successful. One without the other two just does not work. *Great Leaders* are continually doing a balancing act. I have written about some of these in the past, but we know that this one document best describes our expectations around leadership here at the *Walt Disney World*® Resort. Whether you hold a management position or not has nothing to do with the value you can get from the *Disney Great Leader Strategies*.

We all have numerous roles and opportunities in our life to demonstrate great leadership, whether it is at home, at our place of worship, in the community, in our neighborhood, in our children's schools, or anywhere else.

Everyone has an opportunity to practice great leadership behaviors. Leadership is simply defined as making the right things happen. With this definition, we all have many opportunities to practice great leadership throughout our lives.

It is true that most of my focus will be on the Leaders here at the *Walt Disney World*® Resort because I want every one of our Leaders to be great. Some people say this is impossible and, to some extent, I might agree; but *my goal is for all Cast Members to have great leadership*. If we don't shoot for 100 percent, we have zero chance of getting there.

Everyone deserves great leadership so that he or she can work in an environment that is positive and in one that involves and respects everyone. Most of us spend more time at work than we do at home, so this should be a place that we look forward to coming to each day. The Leader you work with has more to do with that than anyone else.

People often ask me, "How is the morale at the *Walt Disney World*® Resort?"; and I tell them: "Well, it depends on who the Leader is. Some Cast Members are really happy, and some are really unhappy. Many times Cast Members work just a few feet away from one another, but they have different Leaders."

When I was starting my career, no one took the time to tell me the things that you will learn by studying the Great Leader Strategies. Think about *Disney Great Leader Strategies* as a way for you to avoid all of the pitfalls that many "wanna-be" Leaders fall into.

Think of it as a way not to commit mistake after mistake when you are given the opportunity to be in a leadership role, whether it is at home or at work. Oh, how I wish I had had this document and training when I started out so I would have not made all of those mistakes. I am sure that the people who worked for me wished I had had that training as well.

Some mistakes are fatal, and people never recover from them. Look at the front page of the newspaper for numerous examples of poor leadership from corporate executives to government officials, to church officials, to charitable organizations, to school teachers, to parents, and on and on. The examples are in the news every single day without fail. Look in the paper tomorrow, and you will find a news story about failed leadership and the terrible impact it had on someone or some organization or family.

The trail always leads back to leadership. Poor leadership or great leadership has a lot to do with everything that happens in the world in one way or another. It has been this way forever, and it will always be that way. A thousand years from now leadership will matter just like it did a thousand years ago.

If you want to be a *great Leader*, start by reviewing the *Disney Great Leader Strategies* often and try to figure out where you have opportunities so that you can begin the journey right now on your way to becoming great . . . for your family, friends, and fellow Cast Members. Many things can be improved with effort and focus, including negative behaviors and habits.

I remember the *great Leaders* I have had in my life. One was my mother, one was my grandmother, and there have been three in the workplace.

Remember this quote that introduces *Disney Great Leader Strategies*: "In times of drastic change, it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned usually find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists."

This is a fancy way to say that you must be a lifelong Leader to be successful and be open-minded about continual change in all parts of your life. The people in your life will remember as well whether *YOU* were a *great Leader* or not! . . . Lee

DISNEY GREAT LEADER STRATEGY

NUMBER 1 OF 12:

FOSTER AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT!

Here's how you can think about Workplace Inclusion: While diversity focuses on our differences and similarities, workplace inclusion focuses on the respect and appreciation we show one another, so no one feels left out. Feelings are a big deal. If people feel left out, then they are left out.

To put it even more simply, workplace inclusion is making sure that everyone matters . . . and that everyone knows that he or she matters. We make people feel included by talking and listening to them, recognizing them, knowing them well, and by developing them . . . or at the least by assisting them with their development by encouraging them, and by getting them into the right kind of training.

The problem is that it is not going to work as well unless everyone is doing this—which is a no-brainer—because if people feel excluded, whether it is because someone is preoccupied and not paying attention or for some other reason, then the idea of inclusion is lost.

Creating the right environment is one of the main responsibilities of a Leader. The great Leaders do this especially well. Whether it is at home or at work, the environment matters, and we, as Leaders, have control over that environment.

To create a healthy, respectful, trustworthy environment at work, we all need to set the example by paying attention to everybody, by showing respect to everybody, and by being available for everybody that needs to see us or, at a minimum, find another way to assist them if we are not available.

As everyone continues to learn about the importance of an inclusive environment and goes about practicing being inclusive, we will continue to have a special environment that is crisp, clean and clear, in every way and one that makes everybody want to stay and have his or her career at the *Walt Disney World*® Resort. We all know to some degree how it feels to be excluded.

I remember when I joined a couple of companies in my career I was excluded because I was not an “insider.” On one occasion I know I was somewhat excluded because of where I was from—Oklahoma—and that I had not received my formal training from the right hospitality school. I felt excluded in junior high school from the “in crowd” as well. That may have been my imagination, but that is still the way I felt. This is not a good feeling, and it can take its toll on one's self-esteem and self-confidence, which can be key factors in how someone's life turns out. I have finally recovered!

We need to take this very seriously. We need to pay attention to everyone. Responsibility is not self-serving. It is about the future: the future of the organization, the future of your family, and the future of the people that you work with. *Great Leaders build up people's self-esteem and self-confidence.*

If you have children, you know how important it is to focus on each one in a way that makes each one feel special, which may not be the way to make the others feel special. Think back to when you were a child and how important this was to you. You know it is vital to treat them as individuals and to show complete respect to them and to develop them. It is easy to do with your children because you know them very well, if you are paying attention.

It is the same way with your fellow Cast Members. If you know them well, then you will treat them well.

It is also a no-brainer that when people feel respected and valued for the talents and skills they bring to the team, they feel more motivated and inspired, which leads to commitment. When people are committed, they feel a strong personal connection with the work that they do. Every single role at the *Walt Disney World* Resort is important. If it were not important, we would not have that role.

You will find that the more inclusive your work environment, the more people will want to be a part of your team. So, being known for being inclusive will help you recruit and retain the very best Cast Members, which will ensure that you get the right business results. Turnover in your area will be extremely low, as will disciplinary problems, sick-day usage, Cast injuries, and on and on.

Okay, now if being inclusive is so important, how do you do it? In the July 25-31, 2005, edition of **The Main Street Diary** in *Lee's Main Message to Leaders*, I wrote about the “soft stuff” being the “hard stuff” (go back and read it) . . . and inclusion is no exception. It's all the things you've heard before, but that does not mean that they are easy to do. It's:

Knowing Your Team . . . I mean really knowing them. Someone told me recently that her manager, after ten years of working with her, did not know if her child was a boy or a girl! Know all about them. Know their past work experience, know their aspirations, know what skills and talents they possess, and on and on and on. Review résumés and backgrounds of your team members. Ask them their short- and long-term goals and how you can help. Know how many candidates you have in your Leadership Casting Call pool. Understand their skills, experience, and the other qualifications they possess. Know how many of your Cast Members are potential candidates for Leadership Casting Call in the next six to twenty-four months and what it will take to get them ready.

The College Program is the perfect place to spot potential. Bring the great ones back on a professional internship, and then hire them if they are great before they graduate from college.

You must look for potential candidates, since many potential candidates are not aware of their own potential. We must nurture potential. We often can see the potential in our team members that they cannot see in themselves. I am where I am today because along the way in my career a couple of Leaders got to know me, took an interest in me, and developed me. They made me realize that I actually had potential. My wife, Priscilla, saw my potential too and married me. That is what she claims anyway.

Erin Wallace and I spotted a Cast Member a couple of years ago in a round table with Front-Line Cast Members. She stood out like a bright star in the sky. She was a single mother without a college degree, and she just did not believe in herself. She was concerned about taking care of her daughter and being a Leader. Her Leaders went about making sure she could do both well. We followed up with her management team . . . and we nurtured her, encouraged her, and trained her. Today she is one of our very best Leaders. She personally told me that she did

not believe she could be a Leader before we started to focus on her. She tells me when I see her how proud she is of herself and that she still cannot believe it.

Engaging Your Team . . . This means that you are asking their opinions or making it clear that you want to hear their points of view. This means that you will ask for their opinions and ideas, even if they don't volunteer them to you. Ask questions like: "What do you think?" "Do you think this is the best way?" "Do you know anything else I should think about before I make this decision?" I appreciate and value your advice to me, even when it is something that makes me bite my tongue because I don't want to hear it.

Great Leaders must have comfortable relationships with their team members at all levels. I guess that is why people get engaged. It is a time to get to know one another better, so get engaged with your fellow team members.

Developing Your Team . . . Developing others is a Leader's main responsibility—after selecting great people. If you know all of your team members really well and you are continually engaging them, then you will know where they need development.

One of the most satisfying gifts of being a Leader is to see others achieve their goals and aspirations. Your personal success and paycheck will never give you the same good feeling as that of seeing others achieve their goals because of your leadership.

Even with your family, if you have children, your main responsibility is to develop them for future responsibilities and opportunities. Development might be giving them candid, thoughtful feedback and other coaching and counseling. It might be getting them into the right training class or university program. It might be exposing them to new situations, experiences, and roles. It might be giving them recognition and appreciation, which will build their self-esteem and self-confidence. It might mean giving them tough feedback too. As long as you focus the development on them, then you are on the right track. Development takes time, so get with it today.

Greeting Others Sincerely . . . I know that this sounds like your mother talking; but I assure you that if you are not paying attention and focusing on people, this is an easy one for Leaders to mess up. People get so engaged in their work, in their projects, and in their own life that they often are preoccupied—which is basically not paying attention to what is going on around them—and they walk right by someone, or they don't stop to chat a minute, or even worse, they only really greet the same people day in and day out and develop a bad habit of not giving the same attention and courtesies to everyone. I assure you that everyone notices. Stay alert. You are a Leader, and everyone is watching you and judging you every minute of the day.

When you know your team members well, engage them often, and spend time developing them. Then this one will become very natural to you. Hey, you can even ask about their grandchildren. They say no cowboy can draw a gun as fast as grandparents can draw pictures of their grandchildren out of their wallets.

Building Community . . . Think of your team as a community.

Each one of your team members has different motivations, ideas, priorities, preferences, and dreams. They are all from different backgrounds and different neighborhoods. Get to know them well, so you can leverage these dynamics when making short- and long-term decisions for your business. The more perspectives you have, the more successful you will be in planning and implementing your day-to-day responsibilities because you will have viewed them from many different angles.

Never assume what your team's position will be on an issue; ask them, talk with them, and get their feedback. If this is an inclusive group, you will get a variety of thoughts that you will not get from people with similar backgrounds or experiences. Get to know them, and let them get to know you. The more you know about one another, the more successful your relationships—and as a bonus, you will enhance your knowledge by thinking about things from different points of view, which will help you make far fewer mistakes in your decision making, which everyone will appreciate.

Listening to Understand . . . If you have read Stephen Covey's best-selling book, **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People**, then you know what this one is all about. Said another way by Stephen Covey, ***"Seek first to understand, then to be understood."***

Most Leaders—not all—do not listen well. They do not stay totally focused on the person speaking or take the time to listen totally, and this includes trying to figure out what they are not saying or what they are trying to tell you that is not so evident.

Most often what people are saying and what they are trying to say are two different things. Most Leaders are thinking about what they are going to say when this person stops talking! When you are thinking about what you are going to say versus listening intently, you lose.

Some good hints on being clear would be to say, ***"I think you are saying . . . " or "I understand from what you said that this is what you want me to do . . . " or "Is there anything else that you think I should know?"***

By the way, if you want a good education on being inclusive and becoming a great Leader in all parts of your life, then read **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People**. Even if you read it a long time ago, go back and read it again. You have grown, and it will mean even more to you today than the first time you read it. I have had this book on my desk for more than 25 years.

Communicating Clearly, Directly, and Honestly . . . Communicate with people using regular words, and say what you mean. Don't beat around the bush. Don't leave people more confused when they leave than when they got there.

Communication is clarification. When you communicate with me clearly, directly, and honestly, then I know what to do. "Spin" is always a mistake and is always figured out in a New York minute. If you communicate clearly, directly, and honestly all of the time, then it just becomes second nature for you—and you will become very good at it, and you will have a trusted reputation.

Do it in person, one-on-one when you can; the next best way is in small groups, then larger groups; then, e-mail, or a personal handwritten note, or a note to the person's home address; and last, a big impersonal memo or a general message on the portal. Even when you write an e-mail or memo, take the time to personalize it and make it fun and interesting. ***Effective communication is very difficult, and you have to work really hard to make it effective.***

Personally Get Involved . . . The executive in charge of the business should approve all management hires and promotions, making sure that we are selecting from a diverse pool of candidates. Talk frequently with your teams about the subject of an inclusive environment and the subject of hiring and promoting a diverse workforce at all levels. You are expected to have a reputation for being a Leader who helps people get into management by using your authority and position to discover them, develop them, help them clear the hurdles, place them, and stay close to them to ensure their success.

When a good candidate is found outside the Company and you have no budget for the position, all managers should bring that to the attention of their Steering Committee Member. Let's see if we can figure out a way to bring that candidate on board before we say "no" to him or her. ***A major part of a great Leader's role is to create more Leaders.***

Hearing All Voices . . . This is a really good one. Everyone has an opinion. Most everyone can speak, but most people do not have a voice unless you allow them and encourage them to have a voice.

One of the best ways to ensure that you hear from everyone (his or her voice) is to know everyone well, to build a trusted, personal reputation for honesty, high integrity, and caring. Everyone has a reputation, and each person pretty much is responsible for what it is.

Being available for people when they need or want to see you, making people feel important and wanted, and showing total respect to all people in your actions and words are important traits and habits to have if you want to hear all voices. When you hear all of the voices, you make better decisions. When you hear all of the voices, you make fewer mistakes. When you hear all of the voices, you have everyone supporting whatever decision you make. ***To be heard and respected is one of our most wanted needs.***

The reason that there are wars going on around the world is that many people do not feel like they are being heard. When you ignore people, don't listen to them, or don't show respect to them, you will not hear their voices . . . and you are headed for trouble. They may not go to war or do something violent. They usually just become apathetic and give you about 20 percent of their capacity.

One of the best ways to build commitment is to make sure that each and every person has a VOICE . . . and that each and every voice is heard!

People will only let you hear their voice if they trust you 100 percent. Every day some of our team members are holding back their voices because they do not trust us. Safety and security are the basics in life for a healthy, respectful environment to take hold and thrive. The last few sentences, facts, or issues are the ones you don't often hear. When people trust you enough to tell you the entire story, then you are hearing their voices. ***Voice is not a sound; it is content.***

Speaking Up When Others Are Excluded . . . When you are in a responsible position, you need to be on the lookout for those persons who are being excluded for one reason or another. Maybe they are introverts and find it difficult to speak up. Maybe they don't speak your language well or maybe not at all. Maybe they dress differently and feel insecure in the group. Maybe they have low self-esteem and low self-confidence. Maybe they have had a bad experience in the past. Maybe someone is telling a joke that offends them.

There are lots of reasons that people are excluded in life. Excluding people and making them feel uncomfortable or not worthy is a really bad thing. We, as Leaders, need to really be on the ball to make sure that this is not happening on our watch. Take the time to look out for everyone and to put a stop to anyone's being excluded when you notice it or when it comes to your attention. Make sure that your team understands this issue well and that you set the example for total inclusiveness. Some exclusion is very subtle unless you are a "pay-attention wizard." When you start to look for it, you will find it—then have the courage to stop it.

Being Brave . . . Now here is the one that separates the good Leaders from the great ones. Courage is one of the leadership traits that can make more of a difference than anything else in the world in getting the right results.

I know, like you know, that we don't always do this very well, especially in corporate life. We end up not having our own voice for the same reasons that others don't have their voice, as I wrote about before.

We get good jobs, and we get good paychecks; and then we get insecure, and we end up not being as brave as we should be. That is a shame for sure. But when it comes to promoting an inclusive environment . . . and treating all people respectfully . . . and making sure that everyone has the opportunities that match his or her competency . . . these are areas in which we all have to stand up and be brave and make certain these things happen. ***We have got to get this totally right because everything else depends on this being done well.***

If I don't tell Al the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, then he cannot make the best decisions—and he would not fully trust me. If he does not tell me the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, then I would not trust him . . . and if I didn't trust him, then I would not tell him the truth. Which comes first? The chicken or the egg? Or better said, which comes first, the chicken or the truth? I have no idea, but I know that as the environment gets better and I have more trust in someone, then I get braver. Most people will be as brave as YOU will let them be.

By now, you know that I am a fully enrolled believer that leadership is the silver bullet.

Over the last ten to twelve years, we have accomplished much. What we have done in good times and tough times can be attributed to our world-class leadership team. We are very good. Our Cast even gives us great scores on our Cast Excellence Survey each year. Each year we have improved. Last year we received a score of 6.10 on a 7.0 scale on the question, “Do you trust your Leader?” That is unbelievable in this day and age where many people in other companies don't even trust their leadership as far as they could throw them—and they can't throw a lot of them too far with all the baggage that they are carrying. ***We are different . . . we are honest . . . we do care . . . we do serve our teams instead of expecting them to serve us. Great leadership has made a difference.***

Think on these two things. . .

Ask yourself frequently what you have done, exactly, to show that you are a strong advocate for inclusiveness at all levels. Grade yourself before your team grades you behind your back. You have got to do real things to get a high score on this question. You must have a point of view on this subject and communicate it frequently. YOU cannot stay silent on this subject or you risk people's deciding where you stand, which is very dangerous for a Leader.

Study very carefully your Cast Excellence results and look for indications of where you need to focus more on the subject of inclusiveness. Your team will give you a good report card on your survey, if you analyze it carefully and read between the lines.

A position of authority should be used to encourage people to have a voice, which will help an individual develop self-esteem and self-confidence. Shame on anyone who takes a person's voice away through intimidation or by ignoring that person thereby abusing one's position of authority. Don't take anyone's voice away—not your spouse's, not your partner's, not your direct reports', and for sure not your children's.

Social and cultural changes in America take a long time; and truthfully, we, as individuals, have very little control over that. Some, but not a lot! However, each of us can do a great deal to promote inclusiveness within our Company. As Leaders, the rest of the organization will take its cue from us if we consistently live inclusive values every day. ***The bottom line is that an environment of inclusiveness can exist at the workplace long before it***

happens in American society at large.

There is no downside to inclusiveness. It is all upside for all parts of our business—and frankly, for our country!

Earlier I referred to an article that I wrote for **The Main Street Diary** entitled “The Soft Stuff Is Actually the Hard Stuff,” and I feel it is a great way to conclude my thoughts on this subject:

“What in the world is he talking about,” you might be asking right now, after reading the title of this article. “The soft stuff is the hard stuff.” What does that mean?

Sometimes in business, people talk about being nice to people as a soft thing . . . and that you should not spend too much time doing this because you need to get on with the hard stuff of making more money, being more productive, getting the costs down, enforcing the rules, keeping the labor in line, keeping the place cleaned up, and all of that other so-called hard stuff in our business.

Taking the time to be available for your team members might be classified as soft stuff, and it is kind of hard to measure what impact it has on the business anyway.

- Making your team members feel special,
- Treating them as individuals,
- Showing complete and unconditional respect to them,
- Spending time developing them and educating them, and
- Knowing their roles could all be in that soft category.

If you let it slip into that category in your mind and actions, you could talk yourself into thinking that you don’t have time to do that soft stuff with all of the hard stuff you are faced with every day. ***The fact of the matter is that if you don’t do the so-called soft stuff exceptionally well, you will never achieve the potential payout in the hard-stuff category.***

At the end of the day I have learned—and it did take me a while to learn this—**THE SOFT STUFF IS REALLY THE HARD STUFF.**

If we all spent more time figuring out how to do the so-called soft stuff really well, we would not have much hard stuff to do . . . because when you do the soft stuff well, your team will take care of the hard stuff . . . because they know exactly how to do it, and they will do it if they want to do it . . . and they will want to do it if you do the **SOFT** stuff well. Now you know the rest of the story.

If you are having trouble getting both the hard stuff and the soft stuff done in your life, then come to one of my monthly Time/Life Management Seminars to learn how to get it all done.

If you don’t have time to come to my seminar, then go on to the *My Disney TEAM* portal, Work tab, and scroll down to **The Main Street Diary** module where you will see a listing for resources, and there you will find the seminar in writing. Read one page a day. In about a month you will have some new soft knowledge that will help you get the **SOFT** stuff done in your life; or if you are anxious to be a Great Leader, then read the entire thing right away . . . and then study it over and over and over until you get it.

DISNEY GREAT LEADER STRATEGY
NUMBER 2 OF 12:
DESIGN YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR SUCCESS . . .
“BREAK THE MOLD!”

Organizational structure is critical because I believe that until you get the structure right, you can't get the best results even when you have an inclusive workplace.

If you have great people and a bad structure, the results will suffer. Great people will become frustrated with a poorly organized organization.

I always tell the Leaders out there to become familiar with *organizational structure*. Read about it and study it, and make sure that the structure you put in place is one that makes sense from the viewpoint of Cast Members and our Guests.

Be open-minded as a Leader, and be willing to re-create the *organizational structure* and to change the whole approach if necessary.

Be open-minded about giving some people more responsibility and others less as warranted, based upon their performance and potential.

Don't worry about the way it has always been. The way it has always been can be good, or it can be bad. Current ways of doing things need to be continuously challenged. One of the most important things in *organizational structure* thinking is to ***make sure that every individual clearly and completely understands what he or she is responsible for, what level of authority he or she has, and how he or she will be held accountable.***

This is a perfect place to talk about safety again. If you are a great Leader, you will make sure that all of the Cast Members that you work with clearly understand what they are responsible for in the area of safety, how they should use their leadership authority, and how they will be held accountable for performance in this area. Clarity is a wonderful thing. When we make things clear, our teams perform to or above expectations. Set high expectations in this area, and you will get results beyond your wildest dreams . . . and remember that dreams do come true at Disney.

This one is just as important at home or in a volunteer role as it is in business. I can tell you one of the best ways to have a smooth marriage (or any other relationship) is to understand who has what responsibility and how much authority. The downside is that many marriages and other relationships end in divorce or separation because of basic misunderstandings.

As far as at my home, I have the authority to go out and buy new shoes without my wife's involvement; but if I am buying a new car, I would involve her. I don't have the authority to clean out her closet or to make any decor changes to the house without her approval. I know it is my responsibility to take out the trash, to change the light bulbs, and a few other things. I have full authority in this area; and I am held accountable in a simple way by being reminded if I forget to do it.

I have far less authority at home than I do at work. As I am reminded from time to time at home with those sweet words, “You are not an Executive Vice President around here.” *Great Leaders* are also great followers.

With children it is critical to have clarity around responsibility, authority, and accountability I assure you. If you have children older than the age of two, you already know this. If you want them to make their beds, brush their teeth, and put away their toys, then you better be clear about it . . . or you will be doing it for them.

As I go through these strategies, I will give similar analogies to make simple points. More are coming later.

We have learned a lot about how to think about *organizational structure* since September 11. We have learned that there is great value in being creative and in considering all kinds of structure changes. September 11 pushed us to try new ways and to eliminate certain positions and levels. We really were pushed to scrutinize the number of people that it takes to get a job done.

No one should be able to hide in the organization. This simply means that each position needs to have real value, and you need to consider these questions:

- What would happen if we eliminated this position?
- What would happen if we redistributed this position’s direct reports to others who can handle more responsibility?
- What would happen if this position were a part-time position?
- Does the position create real value for our Company?
- What would happen if we outsourced this position’s responsibilities?
- What would happen if we changed our processes so that we would no longer need this position?
- What would happen if we automated this position so that it became self-service like the ATMs are for banks?

When thinking about *organizational structure*, evaluate how many meetings it takes to keep the operation running smoothly. One great meeting a month might be much more effective than one average or poorly planned meeting a week.

Let the people that attend the meeting have a say in evaluating the effectiveness and the efficiency of the meeting. Let them recommend changes. Be creative in making meetings more interesting so people will want to come and make sure they leave believing that the meeting was a good value for the time they spent attending.

The next thing to think about is the number of layers in the organization. Scrutinize the number of layers in the organization, and get as flat as you can. The more layers that information goes through, the more inaccurate it is. Deal directly with as many people as you can.

When people tell you they are overworked and cannot do more, try to figure out if they are truly overworked, or:

- Are they disorganized?
- Is the process getting in the way?
- Are we doing work that should be stopped because it no longer has the value it once did?
- Ask yourself if they could get the work done if you would give them more authority, which would save them time!

When people receive authority, they are getting a powerful thing. My point of view on authority is that if it is given to you and you don’t use it and use it in a responsible manner, then you are irresponsible. Remember that

responsibility and authority go hand in hand. You cannot give someone responsibility without giving that individual authority.

Each one of us is paid part of our salary for our opinion. You don't have to be in charge to have an influence on *organizational structure*. If you think you have a better way, write it up and present it to your Leader.

The structure should expedite taking care of our Guests, responding to Cast needs, and making business decisions. A good structure will expedite the communication process. In a great structure, people will say that they feel informed and that they know what is going on.

The most important thing in *organizational structure* changes is to remember that most anything will work if you want it to work, give it a chance, and keep a positive attitude. Remember that if it does not work, you can change it again.

Organizational structure is so important and often does not get the attention and scrutiny that it should from Leaders. I published a lesson in **The Main Street Diary** about the fall of the Roman Empire. Much of its decline had to do with not paying attention to *organizational structure* and making sure that it had the right people in the right jobs, which will be *Disney Great Leader Strategy* No. 3.

Don't repeat the mistakes of the Roman leadership. Pay attention to this important part of your ***responsibility*** as a Leader. It will pay off for all of us! Remember that this is called *Disney Great Leader Strategies*. These are the things that *great Leaders* will focus on. . . . Lee

Measures of the Success of *YOUR* Organizational Structure!

- Ease with which the operation runs in your absence.
- Ease with which decisions are made.
- Ability to get answers quickly and provide information to the team.
- Clarity of lines of ***Accountability, Responsibility, and Authority.***

Methods to Use to Evaluate Progress of *YOUR* Organizational Structure!

- Cast Excellence Survey Results
- Progress of Action-Planning Sessions
- Polling of Business Partners
- Progress on Guest Satisfaction Results
- Improvement in Your Business Results

DISNEY GREAT LEADER STRATEGY

NUMBER 3 OF 12:

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN THE RIGHT ROLES!

In *Disney Great Leader Strategy* No. 2, I talked about the critical importance of getting the *Organizational Structure* right before you try to do anything else. Those who achieve a high degree of having an effective and

efficient *Organizational Structure* in place will, without a doubt, be able to achieve better results.

Disney Great Leader Strategy No. 3 is to ***Make Sure You Have the Right People in the Right Roles.***

Once you have the *Organizational Structure* in place, you are ready to put the right people in the right roles. ***This is one of the most important things that Leaders do.*** Hiring new people and promoting people to new levels of responsibility are **BIG** responsibilities. You want to do this very well and be very careful. Take your time and do this really, really well for your sake, their sake, and for our Company's sake.

If you follow the tactics in the *Disney Great Leader Strategies*, you will do a better job at selecting people. There are 18 tactics on how to do this one well. Some are more critical than others, but all are important. The more you do, the better the selection you will make.

First, you want to understand the deliverables for the job.

- What do you want this person to bring to the table?
- What do you want him or her to be able to accomplish?

Write this down so you are sure about what you are looking for. What kind of talent you need may change from time to time based upon different circumstances. This time you may need someone great at training, and the next time the role is open you may need a person who is really great with labor management or high-level computer-technical skills.

One thing to remember is that each time you have an opening . . . **you have the opportunity to create a challenging job.** This time you can add additional responsibilities to the new person's role. The replacement you are hiring does not have to be exactly like the person leaving. Look for opportunities to add additional talent and strength to your team. Add talents that you are missing on your team. Expand your thinking about people's capabilities. Don't just hire for the job.

Make sure that the candidate has the right level of expertise and experience so he or she can be successful.

The four areas you want to have competency in are:

1. Technical,
2. Management,
3. Technology, and last but not least,
4. Leadership.

Remember that management and leadership are two different things. Management is about the act of controlling, and leadership is about the ability to do the right things and to inspire the Cast.

When I speak of controlling, I am thinking about discipline and being organized . . . the ability to handle a lot of balls in the air at one time and to keep your promises, which is following up and doing what you say you are going to do and doing it fast.

There is a tape in the Company D stores that I made. I think it sells for a couple of dollars. If you go and buy one, you will hear an explanation of the differences between management and leadership. The tape is titled "*Inspiration—The Real Work of Leaders,*" and it can also be checked out from the Disney Learning Centers.

Think about the qualities of “the perfect candidate.” How would the perfect candidate look? Write down what the perfect candidate’s talents and competencies would be and then start from there for your search. You may never find the perfect candidate, but you will get a lot better candidate using this method.

Partner with Casting to ensure that you are using all of the available resources to assist you in your selection.

Select the best candidate and not the best available. Don’t get into the way of thinking that “I am going on vacation on Friday, so I had better pick one of these people so I can get this job filled.” We, as Leaders, are not in the business of filling jobs. Our role is to select the very best people in the world and develop them for even greater responsibility. Think about this person being your Leader one day.

Select by talent and not by résumé. Just remember who wrote the résumé. It may or may not be 100 percent accurate. It is estimated that 40 percent of résumés have exaggerations on them concerning:

- Previous titles,
- Job responsibilities, and
- Results that were achieved.

I once was interviewing a man, and his résumé said he worked for the state of Pennsylvania from 1977 to 1979 as a cook. I got deeper and deeper into what he did for the state, and finally he admitted that he was in prison for those two years. He was not even telling me a fib. He did work for the state of Pennsylvania, and his job was a cook. I am not saying that I would not hire him. I am just saying be careful and look for things that don’t sound or look right. You may be hiring someone who is not telling you the truth as a Leader in your organization. The lack of truthfulness may be worse than the original offense. Could you really ever trust someone who lied to you in the interview? What would he or she lie about in the workplace?

A big thing to consider is how the person will blend in with the current team.

- Does this person have good relationship skills?
- Is this person politically astute?

Not everyone can work at Disney. If they want to be totally in charge, this is the wrong place for them. We work as a team, and that is the only way this big organization can get it all done. It is way too complex for Lone Rangers. If you don’t believe this, try to put on a Disney Press Event or open your business by yourself.

Involve team members in the selection process. Let them interview the candidate as well. They will have different questions, interests, and observations than you will. Compare notes when everyone is finished.

This is the time to explain to candidates what their responsibilities will be, how much authority they have, and the accountabilities for the position. The bottom line is for them to understand what they can and cannot do. We are different from the rest of the world. Just ask anyone who has ever joined us if this is not true and how frustrating the first year was until everything fell in place. It takes time to figure it all out.

Use structured interviews when possible. We like to see the profiles. We don’t care how you look (except for *The Disney Look*) or where you are from. We want to know how you think and how you will lead.

Talk with people who have worked with this candidate in the last and current position if possible. Visit and

observe the operation the candidate currently manages. Is it clean? Are the employees well trained? Does the staff look and act professional? Is the parking lot clean? What you find there is what this candidate will bring here. A \$400 plane ticket to go and see his or her operation before hiring this individual is much cheaper than hiring a problem and then wishing for years that you had been more careful.

Quiz people on their knowledge. Ask people:

- “If this happened, what would you do?”
- “If that happened, what would you do?”
- Ask questions that need an explanation and not questions that can be answered by yes or no.
- “What would you do if you found out your Leader was doing something illegal or unethical?”
- “What would you do if a Cast Member came to you and said, ‘I have a drug problem, and I need your help?’”

Have people actively demonstrate their expertise as well. We once had an applicant apply for a Pastry Chef’s job. She said that she was an expert in wedding cakes; so we sent her into the pastry shop and told her to make a three-tier wedding cake. The cake was great, and we hired her.

We asked a Chef to make us the best hamburger and french fries he could. We gave him four hours to round up the ingredients, cook it, and serve it to us. I will never, ever forget that beautiful hamburger and fresh french fries . . . that golden toasted bun . . . those center-cut beautiful tomatoes . . . that fabulous slice of red onion cut just the right size . . . that crisp green lettuce . . . that wonderful seasoned mayonnaise and Dijon mustard . . . and just a dash of salt and pepper. That Chef ruined me for life. I’ve never had a burger like that again!

One of the hardest things to do and one of the most important things for Leaders to do is to remove wrong-fit talent. Yes . . . we should work with people and make sure they get the right training and the tools to perform their role. We should coach and counsel them to be sure; but at the end of the day, if people cannot or won’t do the job, then remove them. Either put them in a role they can perform; or if we can’t find that, then document their performance and terminate them with the assistance of Employee Relations. This really is the best thing for everyone concerned and especially those having to work for a poor Leader.

Use the *Disney Great Leader Strategies* as a tool for evaluating performance and for documenting the problems with performance. Use the *Disney Great Leader Strategy* document as well for making good people great . . . and great people even greater. . . . Lee

Measures of *YOUR Success on Disney Great Leader Strategy No. 3!*

- Demonstrate searching inside and outside the Company for the best candidate for the position.
- Demonstrate an ability to use all resources, including the JOBS System, Disney Profile, Profit & Loss Statements, and other data sources in the selection process.
- Demonstrate an ability to replace/recast wrong-fit talent.

Methods to Use to Evaluate *YOUR Performance and Suitability!*

- Number of times you’ve given your business card or Disney Casting Scout card to someone who you thought should be working for us.
- Effective use of the Performance Connection.
- Effective use of *Disney Great Leader Strategies*.
- Effective improvement in Business Results, Cast Excellence Results, and Guest Satisfaction.

DISNEY GREAT LEADER STRATEGY NUMBER 4 OF 12:

ENSURE THAT CAST MEMBERS ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THEIR ROLES!

This strategy is all about the responsibility of Leaders to train and develop their fellow Cast Members. We know, as parents, the importance of the development process for children; and it is the same for all of us. If you don't have children, you were a child; so you know what I am talking about.

If you want to do one thing to improve people's lives, then train and develop them. Education is power. The more you know and the more you can do are the things that will give you the best opportunity to continue to improve your life. Training and development are also two of the best ways to improve self-confidence and self-esteem in everyone. There is no worse feeling than being in a role and not knowing what you are doing. There is no better feeling than being confident and knowing how to perform your role well.

Another bad feeling is feeling like there is no future. Education, training, and development open doors for the future. I don't know how much time exactly that you should spend training and developing your fellow Cast Members, but I would say the answer is "a lot." This is one of the major responsibilities of *great Leaders*. Poor Leaders are not required to do this for obvious reasons.

If you want to give your children the best gift you could give them besides unconditional love, then make sure that they have great reading and math skills. Give them the gift of loving books and learning, and the odds of their having a successful life goes up dramatically.

As you review each one of the tactics below, think about how they apply to safety as well as to other parts of a Cast Member's and your areas of responsibility. We have a "**Top 10**" Daily Leadership Safety Accountabilities list that is important for all of us to be familiar with. The next few items come from that list and will be found throughout the *Disney Great Leader Strategies*.

Attend all safety-training classes for Leaders and require all Cast Members to attend any training assigned to them. ("Top 10," No. 6) As a Leader, make sure that *YOU* attend all safety-training classes for Leaders; and require all Cast Members to attend any safety training assigned to them. Be the role model for this.

Communicate best practices with your peers, share safety stories, talk about safety every day, and discuss safety trends and action plans with your Cast. ("Top 10," No. 7) Strong communication is vital to great development in the area of training and education. Encourage Cast Members to share stories among themselves.

Proactively walk and assess your area(s) to observe conditions and behaviors, identify prevention opportunities, take appropriate action, and communicate to your Cast Members. ("Top 10," No. 2) This is another excellent way to educate and train your Cast Members when you make it a priority to walk and assess your area(s), observing safety-related conditions and behaviors. As you identify prevention opportunities, take immediate appropriate action and communicate this action to your team. Everyone should be aware of what is

going on in his or her area when safety is involved.

Model safe behavior by understanding and actively engaging in the COACH model: Care, Observe, Act, Communicate, and Help. (“Top 10,” No. 1)

One of the very best ways to train, educate, and develop people is to be a great role model . . . so make sure you are modeling safe behavior by understanding and actively engaging in the COACH model:

Care . . . Show your team that you care by focusing on them and this subject of safety. Talk about it a lot to show that you really do care. Tell them that you care. You have to let people know what you are committed to and passionate about.

Observe . . . Your facility, your Cast behavior, and work practices should be observed closely when it comes to safety. Just taking a few minutes every day to observe people working will give you lots of things to correct.

Focus is a powerful leadership tool.

Act . . . If you are modeling great leadership, you will show that you care by acting as soon as you observe something that needs immediate correction—to avoid an incident or an injury. “*Do it now*” is one of the most important management techniques we teach in my time management class. Timing is so important in many things in life, but it is vital and critical when you are dealing with the safety of others.

Communicate . . . **Great Leaders most often are great communicators who can find the right way to get the attention of others.** When you communicate: you want to teach, and you want the message to be heard. Find creative ways to communicate around safety issues. Great stories are a powerful way to communicate because they are easily remembered by the listeners. Remember that you have to communicate the same message points over . . . and over . . . and over for the message to get through.

Help . . . There are many ways to help people be safer and incident free. One way to help is to educate and teach; another way to help is to offer assistance—for instance, like showing someone how to lift something heavy. Another way to help is to be a great role model. Another way to help is to be clear around your expectations in the area of safety. Another way to help is to enforce the rules around safe work practices and safe work facilities.

If you do all of these things, you will be a great **COACH**. Remember that we, as Leaders, really are coaches. ***Be a great COACH!***

Make sure that expectations are clearly understood for the role. Tell the Cast Members what *YOU* expect in their performance and what they can expect from leadership. This clarity will put you on the spot to do the right things. There is nothing like letting everyone know what you believe in and where you stand. It will help you “walk the talk.”

Make sure you take the time to teach your Cast Members how and where to spend their time on the job.

Teach them how we work when it is busy, and teach them what to do when it is slow. Teach them where to be and what to do in their particular roles. For instance:

- Everyone should be taught to be at his or her station when we open the ballroom doors for a function to welcome our Guests. No one should be backstage at this moment. If it is slow, we can always be organizing and cleaning our areas. We can spend more time with our Guests when it is slow and provide more individualized attention.

- Restaurant Managers should be in the dining room during the opening hours and not in the office.
- Chefs should be in the kitchen during open hours and not in the office.
- Front Desk Guest Service Managers should be at the Front Desk for most of the shift.
- Attraction Managers should be in their attraction at key times to make sure that all safety and other operational guidelines are being followed.
- Merchandise Managers should spend most of their time in the shops with their Cast and Guests.

Don't let Cast Members get used to being backstage or standing around talking to one another when they should be onstage serving our Guests.

Make sure that every single Cast Member understands our *Vision* and how it fits into his or her role, as well as understands the difference between his or her purpose and role. Both of these are published every week in **The Main Street Diary**. These concepts are very important to understand, and you should make sure that you take the time to clearly explain these concepts to each and every Cast Member on Day One . . . and remind them of these concepts often.

Read the Guest letters in **The Main Street Diary** to your teams at Pre-Shift and Homeroom Meetings. These letters are emotional and a tribute to the Cast for the wonderful job they do in taking special care of our Guests.

Cast Members should know the business and the strengths and the opportunities for improvement. This means that *YOU* need to tell them what we are good at and what areas we are weak in. Explain to them things like, "We have reoccurring difficulty keeping the queue lines clean when it is really busy; and I want you to focus on that." "We have some problems seating people on time on Saturday nights, and we are working on improving that." "Our strength is the quality of our food, and you can recommend anything on the menu with confidence."

Teach every Cast Member how not only to satisfy every Guest but how to exceed Guest expectations. Teach them about the ***Four Guest Expectations*** and how they can use these expectations to provide exceptional service. The ***Four Guest Expectations*** are:

1. Make Me Feel Special
2. Treat Me as an Individual
3. Respect My Children
4. Have Knowledgeable Cast Members

Teach them to get a Leader when they need one to satisfy a Guest or when a Guest is so difficult that they cannot handle it. Teach the Leader to respond quickly and fix the problem. Teach them how product knowledge translates to happy Guests.

One of the best ways to develop people is for leadership to be actively involved in coaching and counseling and educating the Cast. Teach your fellow Cast Members something new every day. Have a reputation as a teacher. When you really want to learn something, teach it. When you are known as a teacher and a developer of people, you will have more people wanting to work for you; and you will have *Disney Great Leader Strategy* No. 4 well under control.

Hold Pre-Shift meetings every day. A well-run, well-organized, 10-minute pre-shift meeting translates into more than 40 hours of training a year for every Cast Member. Work on improving your verbal presentation skills,

so you can inspire your team when you present to them. Show your passion for excellence.

Learn to conduct “skill” checks during the pre-shift meetings. For example:

- “Jullian, show the team how to present a bottle of wine, how to pour it, and describe this wine to the rest of the team.”
- “Margot, show me how you dispatch this ride. Take me through all of the procedures.”
- “Tristan, tell me what you know about this particular plush. Why should I buy it?”

Have people display for you their product knowledge. This ensures that they know, and the rest of the team learns this lesson too.

Conduct knowledge checks as well. For example:

- “Priscilla, what time does the *Magic Kingdom*® Park close tonight, and what time are the fireworks?”
- “Kate, what do you do if a Guest wants to cash a second-party check?”
- “Cherry, what do you do if a Guest says that he or she didn’t really like dinner?”
- “Cherry, what do you do if a child is lost? Who do you report this to?”

Always make sure you can do the work of the people you lead as much as possible. This builds credibility. You will never be as fast as they are, but they will appreciate your knowing how to do the work.

Ask yourself: Are the Front-Line Cast Members training Leaders . . . or vice versa?” The Front-Line Cast being involved in the early technical training of a new Leader is fine by the way; but shortly thereafter, the Leader should know how to do the work, establish credibility, and be in charge. It is okay, and it is a compliment to the Cast to tell them when you first arrive as a new Leader that you are counting on them to teach you what you need to know to be successful and teach you what you need to know so that you can support them.

Make sure you have a clear, well-developed training process that ensures that all Cast Members receive consistent training that maximizes their effectiveness on the job. Make sure that you are training from the operating guidelines.

Develop people, and keep a record of the people that have been developed and consider them for promotional opportunities.

Have a clear, well-defined process for keeping the Cast up to date on information. Communication vehicles like pre-shift meetings, bulletin boards, one-on-ones, *The Main Street Diary*, *Eyes & Ears*, and the *My Disney TEAM* portal are all good ways to keep everyone informed.

Gain knowledge and understanding of key processes of the overall business, not just of those within your span of control. Be inquisitive. Ask “why?” a lot to gain understanding. The better you understand it, the better you can teach it and support it.

Know what research is available and how to use it. Share it with your team. For example:

- Guest Comments
- Guest Letters
- Guest Satisfaction Scores
- Price/Value Ratings and Research

- Verbatim comments from our Guests
- These are all available for your use.

Make sure every Cast Member knows what we are famous for and how important it is to do those things exceptionally well. Courtesy, friendliness, and cleanliness are key areas that we are world-famous for. Think about what you want your business to be famous for; then go about making it happen. Sincere Cast interaction and engagement with our Guests is one thing that we do better than anyone else in the world, but we need to do this even better in the future.

Work with your training team to make sure that all resources are being applied and are getting the proper results. Remember that the role of a Leader is to help more Leaders emerge. This is what *great Leaders* do, and they do it by developing people. Leadership Casting Call will help us all identify potential Leaders of the future. Future Leaders may not always be obvious at first glance. Get to know your people, and you will then spot the ones who have great potential and just need some development to get there.

Find ways to deliver on the ***Four Cast Expectations:***

1. Make Me Feel Special
2. Treat Me as an Individual
3. Respect Me
4. Make Me Knowledgeable, Develop Me, and Know My Job

Do these things, and you will help your fellow Cast Members, our Guests, our Company, and yourself more than you can ever imagine!

Remember, too, that our Company has a responsibility to develop our Cast Members; but at the end of the day, it is the responsibility of all Cast Members to go about getting themselves developed and ready for what they want.

Measures of *YOUR* Effectiveness!

- Number of classes/subjects you teach.
- Amount of time you spend educating “on the job.”
- Number of people you have developed and promoted under your leadership.
- Every Cast Member can explain our *Vision* and *Our Purpose and Role*.
- Cast Members understand the key drivers of Guest Service for their roles.

Methods to Evaluate *YOUR* Effectiveness!

- Guest Satisfaction Measurement and Guest Service Ratings—Percentage of Improvement.
- Cast Excellence Survey—Percentage of Improvement.
- Ask Cast Members to tell you what they think their responsibilities and authority levels are and what your expectations are of them.
- Spot-check service by doing physical observations and having others do it for you . . . so that you know the truth.
- Conduct periodic tests of Cast Members on technical knowledge (verbal/written).

Remember the old saying: “We are all born the same. It is education that makes us different.”

Here is a cute story that points out the importance of teachers.

A father says to his daughter, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” She says, “I want to be a teacher.” Her father says, “Honey, don’t you really want to be a doctor like me?” She says, “No. I want to be a teacher.” Her father says, “But, honey, doctors are really important. Without doctors many people would suffer and be sick.” The little girl says, “But, Daddy, without teachers there would be no doctors!”

Remember also that *as a Leader you have the power to help others have a better life and to reach their goals*. If you are a developer of people, you will be fondly remembered by many; and you will be responsible for others having a better life . . . and that is what leadership is all about: “Getting results by doing the right things.” . . . Lee

DISNEY GREAT LEADER STRATEGY

NUMBER 5 OF 12:

MAKE DRAMATIC LEAPS IN GUEST SERVICE!

Okay!

- Now you have the organizational structure set up right . . .
- You have selected the right people for the right roles . . .
- You have focused on selecting and developing them . . . and
- Now it is time for them to go to work and to *Make Dramatic Leaps in Guest Service* . . . and in Cast Excellence and Business Results.

If you ever wondered if you are in a leadership role to maintain or to make dramatic leaps, then this strategy is the one you have been waiting for. If you get offered a new role and the Leader tells you in the interview that he or she wants you to take this role and just to maintain things, then don’t take the position. *Great Leaders* don’t maintain anything. They want to make it better for our Guests, our Cast, and for our Business Results.

If everyone approached his or her new role—no matter what salary grade and no matter what the role—and had this attitude, we would have results even better than the excellent ones we already achieve. The best way to get ahead is to achieve great results . . . with the right leadership behaviors, of course.

In order to improve things, you need to know how good they are. **One thing you can do is to experience our product frequently as a Guest.** This is why I put on my really casual clothes, baseball hat, sun block, and head off to the parks, resorts, and other operations with my three grandchildren . . . to find out the truth. Going there and doing it is far more valuable than reading or hearing about it.

I assure you that reading about Europe, China, or India is one thing; but going there is a far different thing. You need to see it, touch it, feel it, hear it, and smell it to really understand it, whatever it is. Experience is one of the really great teachers in life. I remember the first time I ate a raw oyster. It is hard to describe it. You have to do it! That must be why my mother always said, “At least take one bite; and then if you don’t like it, you don’t have to eat it.”

If you don’t know the truth, then you don’t know what is great and what needs improving. This is a simple thing

but most important. How can you make a good decision if you don't know the facts?

Proactively review Safety Scorecard trends and measure your incident reduction and regulatory training progress against your targets. (“Top 10,” No. 3) While this strategy is about how to make dramatic leaps in service, it is also how to make dramatic leaps in safety for our Cast Members and for our Guests. Make sure that you proactively review Safety Scorecard trends . . . and measure your incident reduction and regulatory training progress against your targets. Safety is an area that we always want to make really dramatic leaps in lowering incident rates. If you focus on this, you will see the results of your actions in fewer incidents, less suffering, and less turnover.

Conduct Incident Prevention Analysis when an incident or a near miss occurs and take appropriate corrective action. (“Top 10,” No. 4) Make sure that you do this. Get involved, find out the cause, and take corrective actions so that it does not continue to happen or ever happen again.

Include safety objectives and hold yourself and your Cast accountable. (“Top 10,” No. 8) Safety should always be part of your daily routine—observe, take action, and correct. Keep safety top of mind at all times during the workday . . . or at home . . . or at play . . . and hold yourself and your Cast Members accountable.

Correct unsafe behaviors and conditions and consistently apply appropriate disciplinary action. (“Top 10,” No. 10) As a Leader, you *must* correct unsafe behaviors and conditions and consistently apply appropriate disciplinary action. I know this is a tough one, as we all feel sorry for someone who is injured; and it does not feel right sometimes to discipline a person, but I can tell you that if you do not have strong discipline around incidents that are caused by not following operating guidelines, then you will have more injured Cast Members. The only way to achieve excellence in anything is *Education and Enforcement* with doses of positive reinforcement and recognition.

As a Leader, you must be a role model for exemplary Guest service, as well as for Cast service, I might add. You must always respect our Guests, even the tough ones who are giving you a really bad time. Never say anything negative about one of our Guests. Your fellow Cast Members are watching your behavior and actions, which fashion their own attitudes as to what is right and wrong.

When the Guests are upset, they are not upset with you. They don't even know you. They are upset or disappointed with our not meeting their expectations—and we just need to stay focused on fixing their problem the best we can in a professional way. As one Cast Member put it, “When a Guest is not happy with you, he or she is mad at your nametag and not at you personally.”

Never get defensive or loud with our Guests. If you think you have won because the Guest walked away, you are wrong. Winning a disagreement with one of our Guests is a loss for all of us. *YOUR goal is to bring the Guest back to a state of being happy with us.* I know there will be exceptions, but they should be few and far between. There will always be a percentage of people who take advantage of us or who are totally unreasonable; but you don't want to start dealing with everyone in a harsh way because of a few exceptions. Be professional and courteous to the unhappy and unreasonable Guest as well.

Strive for 100 percent Guest Satisfaction and ensure that everyone on your team knows what is expected . . . without exception and without excuses. From time to time in the Olympics, there is a perfect 10; and I assure you that every Olympian is going for the gold. Silver is nice, but it is not gold! No one remembers who came in second in life. As they say, “Second is the first loser.” I am not talking about if you were the second born in your

family. I am talking about in competition. My second- and third-born grandchildren are the same winners as the first-born grandchild is.

There is a saying, “It is not whether you win or lose, it is how you play the game.” At Disney how you play the game is important, and we need to win. ***I have no interest in being the second most “magical” place in the world, and I know you don’t either.***

Demonstrate zero tolerance for anything but great Guest service. Make being rude to Guests a federal offense. Being preoccupied and not paying attention to a Guest is a second-degree offense. Treat our Guests the way you would want to be treated if you had the problem they were having. Remember the ***Four Guest Expectations***. No. 2 is “*treat me as an individual.*” How long should a Guest wait while you are having a conversation with another Cast Member? The answer is ***zero seconds***.

We all need to have the attitude that we will always perform at our best . . . whether it is hot or cold outside . . . whether we have worked a double shift or not . . . whether we feel well or not . . . whether we had an argument at home this morning or not . . . whether we are upset with our Leader or not. ***There is no good excuse for not being professional all the time. It is our role in the show. It is what great Leaders do! It is what is expected at Disney.***

Personally talk with the Cast to let them know what it will take to make dramatic leaps in service continuously.

- It will take things like being very careful about selection of Cast.
- It will take an excellent training program and product knowledge.
- It will take an attitude of everyone truly helping one another and working as a team with our Guests’ total experience being top of mind.
- It will take all of us insisting on quality in everything we do and not starting to take shortcuts.
- It will take all of us speaking up when something is wrong.
- It will take all of us doing **Take 5s** many times a day . . . really every chance we get.
- It will take all of us continually moving up in our ability to have sincere, professional, personal engagements and interactions with our Guests.
- We need to WOW every single Guest many, many times a day.

Doing the right thing takes courage; and by the way, courage is defined as “being afraid and doing it anyway.”

Make sure you understand what “world-class service” looks like from our Guests’ perspective. Our Guests are well traveled and have high expectations. Don’t use language like “you guys,” as in “Are you guys ready to order?” or “Where are you guys from?” Leave the guys out, and just use proper English.

The correct way to address a Guest is “Excuse me. Are you ready to order?” or “Where are you from?” I don’t know where this “you guys” came from, but I wish it would go back to wherever it came from and stay there. For most people, it is just a bad habit.

Conducting ourselves with the right professional etiquette is important because of who we are. Be careful what you say and do as they are watching us and judging us all the time. We all need to focus on proper manners and etiquette when we are onstage. These include not being preoccupied when we are in the presence of our Guests, smiling, saying thank you, looking for opportunities to surprise, delight, and wow our Guests. The 7 Guest Service Guidelines are perfect guidelines to follow.

Visit places known for “world-class service” to see what you can learn. Then bring that learning back to your operation, and ask yourself if your business is as good as it could be. Look for these world-class places inside and outside of our Company. Many best practices are right here at the *Walt Disney World®* Resort.

Don't worry about the “*not invented here*” philosophy. When you read the newspaper or a magazine or a trade publication, be on the lookout for good ideas that could be implemented here or that can be changed a bit and implemented here. If you find a better way, then implement it in your business.

Explain, teach, and support your Cast in service recovery. When the recovery takes place on the spot by someone empowered to do it, you are always better off. When the next level up has to get involved, they need to be available fast. With service recovery, quickness is important. The longer you make someone wait the angrier he or she will get.

When you are fast, it sends the message that you care. Learn to say:

- “I am sorry” and
- “I know how you feel” and
- “What can I do for you?” and
- “What did you have in mind?”

Silence is golden. Let the Guests or Cast Members vent, and then deal with them. When people are angry and yelling, they don't listen well and are unreasonable. When people start repeating themselves, they are ready for you to sprinkle them with “*pixie dust*.” Just wait until they get tired of yelling, and then work your “*magic*.”

Anticipate the kinds of problems that will occur in your business, and teach the Cast in advance what to do when they do occur. Not many new things happen in our businesses. Most can be anticipated because they are the normal things that have always occurred. At pre-shift meetings, make a list of the Top 10 and tell the Cast what to do when they happen. If you have to go to the Top 15 or Top 20, then do it. Prepare your team to be successful.

One of the most important things you can do is to make time in your calendar for in-costume experiences. This is where you learn the real truth. In costume doing it is far different than watching it being done. Do it for at least four hours. When you finish, you will appreciate your Cast Members, they will appreciate you, and you will have a long list of things you can do to improve that part of your business. I have never had a Cross-U experience that I did not think was a very valuable and productive use of my time. Front-Line Leaders need to do this often as well.

Don't ever get so important that you forget to do this. This one thing alone will improve your credibility with your fellow Cast Members, and you will have a reputation for knowing what is going on. *Credibility is everything in leadership positions.*

Be visible in your operation. Your team should see you every day. You should be in the thick of things—up to your elbows in the business—and then you will really get to know what is going on.

Read Guest letters frequently, and call or e-mail those Guests for further clarification on issues, problems, or subjects. Our Guests love us, and we can learn a lot from them. After all, they are the ones that we serve . . . so they know what they want and how we can do a better job for them.

Sometimes we are too close to things; and at first, you might think that a Guest or Cast suggestion makes no sense. It might not in the end, but listen and think about each one.

Understand and educate others as to the key drivers of Guest Satisfaction for your particular business.

The key drivers for us for a Front Desk of a resort are to be able to check in upon arrival and to provide special requests that our Guests have made—for example, a crib, or a refrigerator, or room location, or nonsmoking room. If we do that and we are really nice, friendly, and courteous, then we are in great shape. If we do a **Take 5** as well, then we have hit a home run! If we are nice, but it takes two hours to check in, our Guests will not be happy. If they have asked for a crib and we don't get it there fast, things will go downhill fast. ***Fast, again, is important.*** Every business has a few key drivers and a lot of other things that are not as important. *Focus on the key drivers;* and when you get those in good shape, start working on all the other things.

Train your Cast Members in all aspects of Guest Service, from how to provide quality service, to product knowledge, to service recovery, to professional etiquette (Remember: NO “you guys”). Teaching how and when to approach a Guest is important. If the Guests are in deep discussion, you would not want to interrupt them at that moment to ask them how their soup is. At least wait until they have taken a bite. Train your Cast so well that they can perform their roles even if you are not there.

Teaching our Cast proper etiquette is important. I am from Oklahoma, and many people drank beer out of the bottle there. When I got to New York and worked at the Waldorf Astoria, I was taught not to wear a brown suit after 5 p.m. but to wear a tuxedo if I was going to be entering a function room where the Guests were in black-tie . . . and never to drink out of the bottle. That is what glasses are for. I was told, “You can do anything you want when you are not performing your role in the show. Remember our onstage and backstage concept.”

Etiquette is very important. We have to learn to judge every Guest as quickly as possible and deal with him or her as individuals. With some Guests you can be too familiar while others love this type of interaction. Learn to know the difference. Teach your Cast the difference.

Host informal sessions and meetings with Guests. Invite other Leaders to participate . . . share what you learn . . . and use those learnings to make dramatic leaps in service. Our Guests love to come to these kinds of things and to give us their feedback. I have an e-mail relationship with several of our repeat Guests and see them when they come down. Their feedback to me is invaluable.

Have the right team in place that understands Guest service and can immediately correct Cast performance, when needed.

One of the great things about working at the *Walt Disney World®* Resort is that we have tremendous resources. **Learn to fully utilize all of the tools and resources available to learn more about our Guests' needs and desires.** Sometimes Leaders think they need more people when in fact what they need is better-performing people.

The level of service in your business is pretty much a reflection of *YOUR* expectations and *YOUR* leadership. Did you know that where we have *great Leaders* with high expectations their business runs far better in all aspects than the one down the road with uninspired, average leaders? *Leadership counts when it comes to excellence.* It really is the only thing that can make a difference at home or in your professional life.

Remember the saying: “If you have flies in your operation, it is because you like flies.” You see, *great Leaders* would not put up with flies in their operation . . . even if they had to buy a thousand fly swatters and assign quotas to every Cast Member.

If you are in charge, then be in charge. Use your authority to make great things happen. If *YOU* want it to be great, it will be great. Never be satisfied. Always be looking for the better way. Be a pain in the neck about quality.

Look for new ways, both internally and externally, to better your best effort every day. There is always a better way. Do not fall in love with the way you do things and forget to look for the better way. This is called *progress*.

Try to visualize what the future state of things should and could be and then go about trying to make that future state come to pass. In the Olympics they call this setting a new world record. The Olympians are not there to maintain. They are there to do the very best they can, and that often surprises them because you never know how good you can be until you give your very best effort. One medallist had a liver transplant and still won . . . and you thought you had problems!

Remember this simple saying, “A Leader’s role is to do what has to be done, when it has to be done, in the way it should be done, whether you like it or not!”

If *YOU* continue to focus on the ***Four Guest Expectations*** of:

1. Make Me Feel Special
2. Treat Me as an Individual
3. Respect My Children
4. Have Knowledgeable Cast Members

and the ***Four Cast Expectations***:

1. Make Me Feel Special
2. Treat Me as an Individual
3. Respect Me
4. Make Me Knowledgeable, Develop Me, and Know My Role (job),

YOU will not have any problem in ***Making Dramatic Leaps in Guest Service*** and in all of the other aspects of your business and, for that matter, of your life! . . . Lee

Measures of *YOUR* Effectiveness!

- Guest Service Observations and Comments
- Guests Letters
- Local Guest Satisfaction Measures
- Guest Ratings
- Delivery on Key Drivers
- Cast Morale and Excitement in Working in *YOUR* Operation

Methods to Evaluate *YOUR* Effectiveness!

- Benchmarking

- Evaluation of Service by Others
- Evaluation of Service by Leaders
- Evaluation of Operation by Asking Others
- Personal Observation by *YOU*
- Cross-U Experiences

DISNEY GREAT LEADER STRATEGY

NUMBER 6 OF 12:

IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE, STRUCTURED PROCESSES FOR GETTING WORK DONE!

Now that we have our *Organizational Structure* right, for now anyway . . . and we have put the *right people in the right roles* . . . and we have *trained and developed* them . . . and we have taught them how to *make dramatic leaps* in results when they get to their new assignment, we are now ready to tackle what some may say is the boring part of leadership: making sure that we are ***implementing effective, structured processes for getting the work done.***

The world has a process for everything. There is a process for putting your trash out, including exactly what must go in the recycle bin and what can and can't be put out on certain days. It is very clear that you must cut your Christmas tree into four-foot lengths, or they won't pick it up . . . and on and on. You might call these rules or policies or guidelines or whatever—but what they really are, are processes for how we have determined that things should be done.

We have a process for how to order things and processes for how to do the payroll and processes for how a Guest is checked in to a resort. We have a process for everything.

Processes are good if they work from the Cast and Guest satisfaction standpoint. Some processes, while not totally satisfactory to everyone, are just plain-old necessary for control purposes. One I can think of is that we need to keep the cash locked up and secure if we want it to be around when we need it. The security processes at the airport are necessary, even if they are a hassle and take a lot of time. “Safety first” wins out every time.

The way I think of processes in need of evaluation is if you hear Cast Members or Guests saying that one of our processes is a real hassle, then it is the responsibility of the Leaders to work on seeing if that process can be altered or totally eliminated to make the process more satisfactory to people.

Leaders have the responsibility to identify the process problems and opportunities for improvement in their operation and act as quickly as they can to address and change processes so that they are not a hassle and that they make sense from a service and control point of view.

Ask the people doing the work and the Guests using our processes for their opinion. Get the Cast involved at every level to identify process problems and to help fix them.

Sometimes we are not sure if the elimination of a process will cause other problems—for example, control of assets. In that case you may want to do a 30-, 60-, or 90-day test to see if the new process can meet our control needs.

The ATM is one of the great process changes in America. I know some of you do not know life without an ATM machine on every corner around the world, but I remember having to go into the bank and wait in line to cash a check and make deposits. Automatic deposit also is an example of a huge process change; and now, even reviewing your bank accounts and other accounts online is a great process change.

Look for a resolution to, rather than the culprit of, the problem (what versus who). Spend time resolving rather than researching. This means find out what process made things go wrong and change that versus looking for someone to blame.

An example of this is when Guests say their room was not made up when they returned at 8 p.m. Don't go looking for a Housekeeper to blame. Review the processes that allowed this to happen. Fix the process, and you won't have to worry about who did or did not do something correctly. If someone is just not following the process, then coach that person.

This is another strategy where some of the “Top 10” Daily Leadership Safety Accountabilities fit. Certainly No. 4, Conduct Incident Prevention Analysis when an incident or a near miss occurs and take appropriate corrective action, is a process as is No. 5: Contact your injured Cast Members within the first 24 hours of the incident and engage in returning them to productive work, within their restrictions, as soon as possible. Once again, Leaders need to be directly involved when these incidents occur. Show your Cast Member that you care and are concerned with how to correct this in the future so that no one else is injured.

Take care of Guest feedback on your own versus delegating it further down the chain of command. When you do this, you will learn firsthand what processes are not working; and then you can take the responsibility to get that process fixed. Often Guests would tell us when they made their reservation that they needed a crib or refrigerator in their room. When they arrived and got to their room, there was no crib or refrigerator. It was 10 p.m., and the baby was out of control; and soon mom and dad were out of control and yelling at the Front Desk Manager.

The reason that these things were not in the room is that we had or have lousy systems to support the process of getting things requested in the room. Now we have much better systems to take care of these requests. When we go and fix the process we usually fix the problem. Future new systems will further improve processes in this area.

Great processes are required to make routine things happen consistently. The airlines are struggling right now to put in efficient, effective processes for boarding a plane safely. Yelling at the inspectors and firing them will not work. The process for boarding a plane safely has to be foolproof eventually or as close to perfect as possible. We all know that humans are a long way from perfect and that they can easily get distracted and often have really bad judgment. The solution will probably be mostly technology with human support.

Since September 11 everyone has looked at every process for everything related to security. There were a lot of bad processes in place. **Implement processes that work from the Cast, Guest, and budget point of view.** For security we had to increase the budget to fit the process required because Safety always wins out as number one.

Make sure that you go back and check processes three to six months later. Have they taken and are still in place, or have they reverted back to how they were before? The old saying, “what is expected must be inspected” is a good one to remember. Don't believe what people tell you. Go check for yourself. Don't be naïve.

To keep a process in place is hard. The easy part is documenting a process. The hard part is getting everyone to routinely follow it.

Scan weekly and daily reports for new ideas on processes that need to be changed. Most complaint letters are because of process failures. If you read the letters knowing this, you will have plenty to work on. We used to write to our Guests who complained. We now call them. This is a process change that was a win-win for us and for our Guests. A two-way conversation is always better than a one-way conversation, which is what a letter is. Many Cast complaints are process problems as well. Service failures are almost always process failures.

Great Leaders ask “why” a lot. “Why do we do it that way?” “Why can’t we change it?” Elevate questions and suggestions to whatever level you have to in order to accomplish the task. Expect resistance when you try to change an established process. Someone put that process in place. Some departments are more prone to put processes in place for legal reasons or financial control reasons; and many are good and need to be there; and some need to be altered or eliminated.

Great Leaders push through the resistance if they believe they are right. This is called courage. You may not get things changed every time, but you will get a lot more changed than Leaders without courage and the ability to stand up for what they believe. The *great Leaders* recommend solutions that are well thought out.

Conduct regular stop/start/continue discussions around current practices and processes. For example, “Let’s **stop** counting these daily and **start** counting them once a week, and let’s **continue** to train all of the Cast how to stack the dishes properly so that we don’t break as many. This seems like a better process than the one we had before.”

Involve yourself in industry-related associations and read industry-related publications to learn new approaches to processes. Visit other locations on property and elsewhere to find the better way and then implement it.

Keep up to speed on what others are doing externally and internally to improve processes. When you read Time, Newsweek, or the daily paper, look for stories about companies that have made break-through process changes using technology or other methods. Then think: “How can I use that idea in my business even if I changed it a little bit?”

There are hundreds of process issues that continually need to be challenged and studied for their effectiveness. E-mail alone is a process that has changed the world.

Processes such as electronic approval as well as things like reprimands, payroll processes, clocking-in and out, and on and on are the responsibility of leadership to be continuously improved.

Here is a story that illustrates why processes need to be continuously evaluated for their effectiveness.

I was the General Manager of a hotel once upon a time, and one morning a Guest came to my office and was very upset. He told me that he and his wife had decided to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary in my restaurant last night. He said they ordered two lobster dinners and a nice expensive bottle of Chardonnay wine to go with their dinner. He went on to tell me that the lobsters came, but the wine had not been served yet (and by the way, you always pour the wine before you serve any course in a meal . . . this is a big rule that I learned from a very

tough restaurant manager when I was a waiter early in my career). They eventually got the wine, but by then they had eaten their dinner. I apologized and did some recovery by inviting them back for a re-enactment of their anniversary *on me*.

That night I went down to the restaurant pre-shift meeting and asked the servers to describe the process for serving a bottle of wine to a Guest.

They told me that when a Guest orders a bottle of wine they have to find the restaurant manager, and he or she has to open the securely locked wine cabinet that is right in the dining room. The manager will only give them a bottle of the wine if they have already rung up the price on a Guest check; and then they have to show the check to the manager, and then he gives them the wine. That was the ***process***.

I told the servers the story about the Guest from the night before that had been in my office that morning very upset about receiving his wine after he and his wife had finished their dinner . . . and even worse it was their 25th anniversary. I asked the group, “Why do you think this happened?”

One of the servers raised his hand and said, “That was my party.” He said what happened is that the manager had gone to the storeroom and had not told anyone where he was going; and he had taken the key to the wine cabinet with him, and it took 25 minutes to locate him. By then the Guests had finished eating and were very unhappy.

I said, “Okay, let me explain the ***new process*** to you. When we open the restaurant every night, the manager will unlock the wine cabinet. When you need a bottle of wine for a Guest, you will ring it up and go and get it for yourself and serve it. At the end of the night, the manager will balance the wine cabinet with the wine key on the point-of-sale system. The manager will relock the wine cabinet when we close the restaurant for the night. The manager will also, from time to time at random, ask to see your checks that are open. If either the wine that you served to a Guest is not rung on the check or if you served a bottle of wine before ringing it up, you will be terminated. That is the ***new process***!”

After that many parties actually consumed two bottles of wine with dinner. If you can’t get the first bottle, you really don’t need the second bottle.

My sales went up, Servers’ tips went up, Guest satisfaction went up, and my operating income went up. Everyone was happy! No one got terminated because I was very clear about the consequences for not following this process. I made this change without lengthy study and without a committee.

The reason the Guest came to see me was that I had had two-inch gold stickers made and put on the menus that said, “If you are not happy with any part of your experience in this restaurant, please contact the restaurant manager or me”; and I signed it Lee Cockerell, General Manager.

So, for goodness sake, please take part of your day, every day, to work on process improvement so that very few people will say it is a ***hassle*** to do business with us! . . . Lee

Measures of ***YOUR*** Effectiveness!

- What impact have changes had on quality time for coaching, counseling, and training the Cast?
- What impact have changes had on the amount of time Leaders spend with our Guests?
- How many ideas and suggestions have ***YOU*** generated for process improvements?

- Do Cast Members understand and support the processes and Operating Guidelines?

Methods to Evaluate *YOUR* Effectiveness!

- Survey the Cast. Do they see improvement?
- Survey the Guests. Do they see improvement?
- Evaluate the progress on Guest Satisfaction Measurement goals.
- Evaluate process improvement section of the Cast Excellence Survey.

DISNEY GREAT LEADER STRATEGY NUMBER 7 OF 12:

EXPLORE, PROBE, AND KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON IN YOUR ORGANIZATION . . . AND ACT UPON THE INFORMATION!

This really might end up being the most important strategy for Leaders or for parents.

- Do you think that the CEO of Enron, if he didn't know what was going on, now wishes he did?
- Do you think the parents who did not know their kids were building bombs in their room at home now wish that they did?
- How many times have you said, "I had no idea that was going on"? Who is responsible if you don't know what is going on in your area of responsibility? *YOU* know who!

Will you ever know everything? Of course not. Could you know more? Of course you could.

Do you think that Leaders and parents get handled and manipulated by others? Do you think that everyone tells you everything that is going on? Do you think your children will ever tell you everything? You will never be old enough to be told everything, I assure you. My mother never got old enough, and I am sure I am not old enough . . . and I am sure that you did lots of things that may have been wrong or inappropriate and never told your mom and dad either.

One thing is for sure, and ***Never Forget This:***

When you are in a leadership role, you get handled on purpose maybe and maybe not, but you do get handled. If you ever believe that everyone tells you everything that you should know, then you are very naïve . . . and some day you will be taking the Fifth Amendment. Your kids don't tell you everything, you didn't tell your parents everything, people don't tell their Leaders everything, and their Leaders don't tell them everything. It is just the way it is. So if you want to know more, you have to have a lot of ways to learn the truth. One way in which people don't tell you everything is that they just leave out part of the story. They don't lie. They just don't finish the story, or they leave out a really important part.

Cast Members often call me and tell me that they were terminated or disciplined unfairly. Almost 100 percent of the time when I get into the facts, I find that they have left out the most important part of the story . . . that they were treated fairly. From time to time we do find that a Cast Member was treated unfairly, but this is a rare exception.

Humans often rationalize the facts differently. We are all kind of wired to blame someone else for our mistakes and lapses in judgment. It is hard to admit your mistakes openly and honestly, but *great Leaders* do that and move on.

There are things you can do, though, to give yourself a lot better view of reality. See, the problem is that if you don't know the truth you cannot make the right decisions and take the right actions. So, it is a big deal to know what is going on because Leaders are supposed to be doing the right things.

You need many ways to stay informed. I know it is stressful sometimes to know the truth, and I know it causes extra work . . . but that is just one of the things that *great Leaders* do.

One of the best ways to know what is going on is to **establish comfortable relationships so that people at every level feel comfortable discussing an issue or topic with you.**

When people tell you things, don't shoot the messenger even if you feel like it. Remember that if you shoot the messenger, he or she can't give you any more messages. It's kind of like the story about the goose that laid the golden eggs. Be nice to that goose. Don't have it for dinner!

With our focus on safety, Leaders really need to know the truth and know what is going on. In this regard, you really need to be proactively walking and assessing your areas of responsibility looking for opportunities to find things that you can correct to avoid future incidences. When your Cast Members see you every day and see your interest in this area, they will help you with ideas on how to make the workplace even safer.

Make sure that you let everyone know you believe that everyone should be equal from an opinion standpoint and have access to leadership at all levels. *Be available* for people when they need you 24 hours a day. I know your parents were available to you 24 hours a day when you needed them. You will not die from a call in the middle of the night when someone needs you. Yes! It is one of the downsides of being a *great Leader*. Make sure your team has your phone number and, more importantly, know that it is okay to call you when they need you.

One study says you only need six and a half hours of sleep anyway; and if you sleep eight hours, your chances of dying early go up by 20 percent. If you sleep nine hours, your chances of an early death rise to 40 percent. You might be saving your life by getting a wake-up call in the middle of the night.

Be honest with yourself and know that you are not isolating yourself within the organization. Go into your kids' rooms from time to time to make sure there is nothing dangerous in there. Kids do the strangest things. My mom was like an FBI agent, so we never did blow up the house. Check your team out too to make sure that they are not doing anything that will cause the organization to blow up. This is a metaphor . . . "an implied comparison" . . . so relax.

One thing I do is always go to the office of the people I am meeting with; so when I want to see one of my direct reports, I go to his or her office. It takes some of my time; but that way I get to see them in their environment, and I get to see the people who work with them. Often this gives me an opportunity to talk with others in the area for a few minutes, and I often learn many things that way. This way I am visible. A lady last week told me that I looked younger and slimmer than in my pictures. That is reason enough to get out and about. I told her she could come to all of my meetings if she would just say that over and over again.

Regularly spend time with your direct reports discussing people, projects, processes, and profitability. Don't just ask them if everything is okay and let them say "yes." Everything is never okay. Tell me about each person who reports to you. Take me through the projects you are working on. Tell me what process improvements you are making. Tell me what areas of your financial statement you are worried about.

Insist on deadlines and due dates and hold people to them. "I need that back by 5 p.m. on Friday, December 12. If you need more time, tell me at least two weeks in advance."

Walk Cast and Guest areas several times a day. When you arrive, walk the locker room, changing rooms, wardrobe areas, and bathrooms to make sure they look great. Make sure they are clean, well maintained, and orderly. Your walking all of your areas first thing before you start to work will give you lots of things to focus on while you are at work.

Ask yourself if you would be proud to walk your areas with your vice president, or with me, or with Al. Would you use that restroom or shower? Make sure that they are cleaned and maintained so that you would be proud to use them.

If you do this every 24 hours, you will be able to measure progress and standards and fix things before they become an issue. Ask people if there is anything you can do for them as you walk around, and then record it in your planner and follow up. When you see them tomorrow or the next day, tell them what you did. This builds huge trust and credibility. We are always looking for ways to give feedback around action planning. This is a good way to do it on an individual level. When you do something for people, let them know about it. People don't always notice or know that something they brought up has been resolved.

Be visible in the work areas. Visit breakrooms, and talk informally with the Front-Line Cast. Listen intently; gather and share key information. When your fellow Cast Members see you often, they will have a better, more trustful relationship with you and tell you the things you need to know. If they see you only once a week or once a month, they will not have a comfortable relationship with you or be inclined to tell you something that may be very important. *YOU* have to prove you are trustworthy and that you will follow up . . . and then the *truth* will flow.

Hold breakfasts, lunches, dinners, or other forums on a regular basis with Cast Members and with Guests to learn what is going on firsthand. I used to do lunches; but in these more frugal times, they just get me—without the lunch—and that works fine too.

Look beyond the surface appearance of reports, comments, and feedback. Develop the skill of reading between the lines like your mom and dad did. When you know your people, you will know if there is more than they are telling you. Didn't your parents ever say, "What is it darling? What's wrong?" Look for personality changes and behavior changes. When people change their regular behavior, something is wrong. Your job is to find out what it is and fix it or help them fix it. It might be a business issue, and it might be a personal issue. Don't ignore it and wish later that you hadn't.

As they say, "Anyone who does not know their kids are taking drugs is not paying attention." I knew if my son even thought about doing something wrong when he was growing up, and I can spot the same behaviors in my grandchildren in a split second.

The ability to manipulate starts very young and becomes a problem if not dealt with early. Don't close one eye when people lie to you. My grandsons and granddaughter often tell me that they should have candy and that their mom said it was okay. I call them on it and tell them I am going to call their mother and check, and then they change their story and then I give them the candy anyway because I am their grandfather. They know that they are not to lie; or as they would say, "I think that is what she said."

Follow through on ideas and concerns people share with you. If you don't, they will stop sharing information with you. This means you must be organized, write things down, follow up, and get back to them with an answer. It may not be the answer they hoped for, but they will respect you for the follow-up. When you don't follow up, you send a message to people that their issue was not important and that they are not important. Credibility is all we have as Leaders. We either do what we say or we don't.

Demonstrate care, consideration, respect, sensitivity, and confidentiality. Keep your word, and keep your promises. Take a time-management course every month until you learn how to do this. It really does not matter how smart or talented you are if you can't follow up and get it done. This is called discipline.

Practice "Power Listening"! The best way to listen is to go to a place that is quiet, without interruptions, where you can focus on the person speaking with you. Sit close to the person, and focus on him or her and the issue. Take notes, and don't interrupt that person. You can do this at home too.

Sitting behind a big desk is the worst setup for listening. To make people feel comfortable, I always go out of my office to greet them and welcome them in. I don't have them escorted into my office like I am the king in waiting. This way I am immediately paying attention to them and not taking phone calls and continuing to work on something at my desk. It actually shocks many people in a positive way. It is intimidating enough for some people to go to a Leader's office, so you need to put them at ease. When you are meeting with people, try hard not to take phone calls or to be interrupted, even if you have to get a "Do Not Disturb" sign from Resorts and put it on your door.

One good question to ask at the end is, "What would you like me to do?" This will clarify the seriousness and next steps. If the person says, "Nothing. I just wanted you to know," versus saying, "I would like you to call everyone into this office and discuss it with them and get back to me by Monday before I call your boss or get a lawyer," then you will be clearer about what you may want to do next.

Great Leaders are great listeners, and great listening is fueled by curiosity. It's hard to be a good listener if you are not curious about people. The enemy of curiosity is grandiosity, which is the belief that you have all of the answers.

We talk about performance excellence a lot. The short explanation of what performance excellence is:

- ***First, great leadership behaviors, and***
- ***Second, Cast involvement.***

When you as a Leader practice great leadership behaviors as defined in *Disney Great Leader Strategies* and involve your fellow Cast Members in their work, you create an environment where everyone can and will perform in an excellent way and that is why we call it performance excellence.

Effectively utilize Performance Excellence Meetings, Homeroom Meetings, Pre-Shift Meetings, and other

forums to listen and to learn the truth. When I have a performance excellence round table with Cast Members, I have someone from my office take notes on a laptop so that I can focus all of my attention on the people talking; and then we follow up on every issue brought up and get back to them. This is the way to build credibility. A person in a leadership position without credibility is in big trouble.

Having a confidential voice mail and making sure the Cast have the number is another great way to listen.

Experiment with new concepts and ideas for 30, 60, and 90 days to see if a suggestion will work. You never know. Most suggestions are reversible if they don't work. Try things. The ones that are not reversible need the appropriate study before you implement them, such as major construction or promoting someone. Take more time to think these out and involve others to help you come to the right decision. When you involve others, the risk of a bad decision often goes down. Other points of view and experience are very helpful in solving problems. Just because you are the Leader does not mean that you are the smartest or that your idea is the best one.

Personally attend meetings where Guest Satisfaction and Cast Excellence data are being presented. Ask questions for clarity.

Communicate Guest and Cast data to your teams. Check to see if **communication boards are up to date with the latest ratings and action plans?** There is nothing better than posting the issues on a board and the actions that were taken to show Cast Members that we are listening and following up. ***You have to market your follow-up.*** Tell people that this is the issue they brought up, and here is what I did about it. This is the way that you build followers . . . and someone told me that there is one thing that all Leaders need the most, and that is followers.

Ask your Leaders and Front-Line Cast Members what they are measuring.

Schedule your priorities and plan your day to be out and about walking your operation observing, listening, and following up. Read **The Main Street Diary** every week without fail. There is good stuff in there, if I do say so myself. Share this information with your fellow Cast Members. Once again I want to remind you that the Guest letters alone are worth reading *The Diary*.

Thank your fellow Cast Members for giving you tough issues and feedback, and thank your Guests too. "Thank you for letting me know that," is a good phrase to say often as it shows that you are interested and not defensive.

Often I get comments from Guests telling me that some Cast Members were rude to them, or they did not deliver the right service that the Guests expected. I never argue with them or try to convince them that they are wrong. I thank them and tell them that I wish that all 58,000 Cast Members would behave themselves and do exactly what they have been trained to do. I assure them that this is my main focus . . . and that I appreciate their bringing it to my attention . . . and that I will follow up.

Every week I have Chris Bostick from my office go out into the operations to check on things for me from the perspective of a Guest. This gives me another perspective of *the truth*. We do a great job, but we are not as good as we sometimes think we are—and this knowledge alone will drive us to higher new levels of performance for our Cast, for our Guests, and for our Business Results.

Just yesterday I got the impression that everyone was exposed to **The Main Street Diary** in one of our operations.

The next Cast Member I saw I asked, “Have you ever heard of **The Main Street Diary?**” She said, “NO!” Now there is *the truth*.

Again observe your operation from the Guest and Cast points of view regularly. Experience it for yourself. ***Learn the truth!*** . . . Lee

Measures of *YOUR* Effectiveness!

- Number of hours spent in meetings listening to Front-Line Cast Members and Leaders.
- Number of Cast Members attending Homeroom Meetings and other forums.
- Number of Cast Members involved in measurement.
- The level of comfort Cast Members have in discussing issues with you, your Leader, and your Leader’s Leader.
- Time spent walking around your area of responsibility observing and getting to know your Cast and their concerns.
- Amount of time spent in career discussions with your Cast Members.

Methods to Evaluate *YOUR* Effectiveness!

- Percentage of change in Cast Excellence Survey results.
- Results from Homeroom Meetings and other forums where you learn things.
- Turnover rates.
- Number of Cast Members approaching you or calling you.

DISNEY GREAT LEADER STRATEGY NUMBER 8 OF 12:

ACTIVELY OBSERVE AND REACT TO THE PERFORMANCE OF YOUR DIRECT REPORTS—TAKE TIME FOR RECOGNITION, COACHING, AND COUNSELING!

Only four more to go after this one, and we will have covered all twelve *Disney Great Leader Strategies* . . . and then, at the very least, you will know what *Great Leadership* looks like at the *Walt Disney World*® Resort.

I am hopeful that one day every single Cast Member will be able to say, “I have a really *great Leader*.” We may never get there; but as they say, “We will die trying.” I figured out that this means that we will never give up trying and that since we will die one day, then we will die trying.

- We have gone through making sure that we are organized properly.
- We have learned how to be better at putting the right people in the right roles.
- We have learned that one of our main responsibilities is to develop others.
- We have learned that *great Leaders* make dramatic leaps in results.
- We have learned that *great Leaders* fix the process issues that cause hassles for our Guests and fellow Cast Members.
- We have learned that the really *great Leaders* have multiple strategies on how to know what is going on with *Disney Great Leader Strategy* No. 7,
- and now we are going to learn how very important it is to give candid feedback, which includes coaching and

counseling and the fuel that drives all of us: **Recognition** and **Appreciation**.

This strategy is one that we all need to learn to do better. Parents are often pretty good at this one. Some parents also fail here, as do many Leaders; and the results are sad because without great execution of this strategy people just don't perform, develop, and behave the way they should or could. This is one that many people look back on and say:

- "I wish I had been more firm with him," or
- "I wish that I would have recognized his excellent performance more often so he would have stayed with us and not quit," or
- "I wish I had told her I loved her more often and then maybe she might not have left me."

A lot of people are very good with children in providing recognition and encouragement. When a child puts one block on top of another, we always say "good job." Even when a child tries to put one block on top of the other and fails, we say, "Good job, try again." So most of us know how to do this. ***The problem is we just don't do it enough.***

One thing you can train yourself to do is to **always notice performance, both positive and negative, and provide feedback**. Feedback is a powerful thing, and it is hard to improve without it because we all have a hard time seeing our faults the way others see them. In the worst behaving person, you can find something positive if you look hard enough; and that is a start.

YOU, as a Leader, are a coach . . . so **coach and train Cast Members on better ways to perform their roles**. Even with the kids, you can say, "Here, let me show you how to do that." If you observe people doing something wrong and you don't correct it, then shame on you. If they know you saw them and didn't say anything, then they may assume the way that they are doing it is okay or that the behavior is okay. *Silence is consent.*

As I have said many times, my wife, Priscilla, has frequently said to me over the years, "Lee, be careful what you say and do today because they are watching you and judging you." With this in mind, remember that as a Leader you have to **actively and visibly role-model great performance**. *People learn from what they observe much more than from what they are told.*

Ensure that your teams know what great performance and performers look like. In the area of safety, this is a critical tactic. When we take time to recognize and reward Cast Members for the right behaviors and work habits and also use the appropriate discipline, we end up with better results. Remember, recognition is the fuel that drives great performance. Make sure that you are taking the time to **acknowledge and celebrate excellence in safety performance through positive recognition of both individuals and teams**. ("Top 10," No. 9).

One thing that you can never do as a Leader is to ignore or tolerate poor performance or poor behaviors. It will only get worse, I assure you, if you don't stop it in its tracks. Do it on the spot, or take the person in the office and be clear about what he or she did and explain the consequences if that behavior or performance continues. Like I always say, "When did your mom and dad deal with you when you had bad behaviors or poor performance? Did they do it on your annual performance review? . . . or on your mid-year check-in? . . . or at the next scheduled meeting?" Of course, they did not. They dealt with it right then, even if it was 2 a.m. Your future was much more important than their sleep. They did it because they love you, and you do it with your Cast Members because you respect them and you want to help them perform and behave properly not to mention that this is your responsibility when you take on a leadership role.

One college student said her dad did not even wait until she got into the house to deal with her coming home late. She said he was waiting out in the yard. I wish more of our Leaders would get out in the yard.

This is just as important when you talk about safety. It is very important to correct unsafe behavior and conditions and consistently apply appropriate disciplinary action. (“**Top 10,**” No. 10)

Give positive feedback right away too . . . and in the way Cast Members like to receive it. Some people don’t like public recognition and some do. When you send a note of appreciation, copy their Leader. This way they get double recognition, which is just like two dips of ice cream on the cone. It is just better!

At the end of the day, **coaching and counseling can go only so far; so there are times when Leaders have to weed out consistent non-performers.** Do this after you have coached and counseled them and disciplined them; and if you are seeing no improvement, at this point, they have terminated themselves.

With your kids, you have to keep working on it; as my son once told me, “You can’t fire your children, Dad. You have to develop them.”

If you want to be a *great Leader*, you have to pay attention. **Greet all people with whom you come in contact. Pay attention to the environment and your interactions with people. Be conscious of the impact of your presence.** You may not think you are a big deal, but some others might because of your position. Don’t ignore anyone by mistake or on purpose.

Make a point of remembering a person’s name and saying “thank you.” These are powerful, so use both often.

Actively and visibly participate in recognition processes; celebrate the victories!

Participate in and be visible at Cast Member events. As a Leader, you will be missed; and this sends the wrong message about what is important to you.

Spend meaningful time with your fellow Cast Members and direct reports. This is a big form of recognition.

Make a point of letting people know specifically what they are doing right. This we all know is called *positive reinforcement*. It works. It works on kids, wives, husbands, partners . . . and yes, they even use this technique at *Disney’s Animal Kingdom*® Theme Park to teach the right behaviors to the animals.

I try to send out many notes a day to people who do great things, telling them that what they did that was great and to keep it up.

A big form of recognition is to **unleash the potential of each Cast Member by providing developmental opportunities for him or her.**

Here is a story that originally taught me the importance of recognition: Once upon a time, I was the Director of Food & Beverage of a big hotel. We could serve a banquet on one floor for 2000 and on the other floor for 5000; and we often did. I had a Banquet Manager who worked for me who ran the service for these events. His

name was Eddie Towfigna. He was a real commander. He made every function run on time and kept up to 400 banquet servers organized and on their toes. I realized one day that without him I was dead. The next morning, after having this realization, I wrote him a letter and told him how great he was, how much I depended on him, and how much I needed him; and if he was ever going to leave me, to come and talk with me before making that final decision. I sent this letter to his home. A few months later I was invited to his home to have dinner with him and his wife Joyce. When we walked into their house, there was that letter framed and hanging in the foyer. At first I was a little embarrassed for some reason; but later I realized how important it was to recognize him and how proud it made him and his wife feel, or they would have hung it in the garage.

I could tell you a hundred stories like this . . . and I will tell you one more.

In 1987 I was the General Manager of a hotel. I had been there a week or so, and one day I walked into the ballroom where we were about to serve a luncheon for 500 Guests. I noticed a hole in one of the tablecloths from a cigarette burn. Yes! In those days people smoked everywhere. I called over the young woman who was the Banquet Captain and told her to change this tablecloth. She said, “Why?” I said, “Because it has a burn hole in it.” She said, “But it is very small, and I will just cover it up with the salt and pepper shaker.” I said,

“No. Change it.” She said, “But we are about to open the doors and let our Guests in.” I said, “Then you better hurry.”

Ten years later I got a letter from her informing me of the big job she has now. She said that she really believed that the day when I told her to change that cloth that I was crazy and unreasonable. She said that she was mad at me and did not like me for that. She said she watched me do crazy things like that for the next two years and that over the years she finally figured out that this was the way to lead. She said that looking back she had learned to do things right as a Leader from that experience with the hole in the tablecloth and that she just wanted to write to thank me for teaching her that lesson so long ago.

I, of course, did not even remember the incident; but it made a lasting impression on her and helped form her leadership style. There is no better feeling than the one you get from a letter like that; and by the way, she said that she does not dislike me anymore. She actually likes and respects me, she said.

Great Leaders are great at giving encouragement, and they are never satisfied.

Great Leaders learn to:

- Make People Feel Special
- Treat Them as Individuals
- Respect Them
- Develop Them, Make Them Knowledgeable, and Know Their Jobs

So that is the end of *Disney Great Leader Strategy* No. 8 . . . since I decided not to tell you the other 99 positive stories about how practicing this strategy can really make a difference for people under your leadership. . . . Lee

Measures of *YOUR* Effectiveness!

- Number of daily pre-shift meetings.
- Technical knowledge of Cast Members.
- Amount of time spent in Guest-contact areas.

- Amount of time spent with Cast Members.
- Visibility at Guest Satisfaction Measurement celebrations.
- Amount of discipline issued.
- Amount of time and effort developing your direct reports.
- Observations of the work environment—is it one of vitality and energy?
- Amount of time spent with homeroom/work team Cast Members.

Methods to Evaluate *YOUR* Effectiveness!

- Observations and evaluations by others, including your Leader.
- Personal discussions with Cast Members and others, including your Leader.

DISNEY GREAT LEADER STRATEGY NUMBER 9 OF 12:

EXPAND AND ACT UPON KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE OF THE BEST SERVICE AVAILABLE ANYWHERE!

We are proceeding in an orderly manner in the way that we think about how *great Leaders* get results versus the way that average or poor Leaders get results.

The point here is that great Leaders usually have a plan, and they follow that plan and stick with it through thick and thin until it becomes clear that additional change is required to continue to make a difference.

We started out making sure that we had:

1. The *Organizational Structure* set up right for success.
2. Then we discussed how to fill the boxes in the organizational chart by making sure we followed *Disney Great Leader Strategy* No. 3 by *having the right people in the right roles*.
3. After that we moved to the next logical step and that is *Disney Great Leader Strategy* No. 4, which is the *development and training of our fellow Cast Members and ourselves*.
4. Then we moved on to *Disney Great Leader Strategy* No. 5, which deals with the need for everyone to understand that when you have a new position you are there to *make dramatic leaps in the way things get done*.
5. After that we reviewed the boring, perhaps, but so important strategy that deals with leadership's responsibility to continually be *changing, adjusting, and fixing process problems* that are a hassle to our Guests and fellow Cast Members.
6. Next we reviewed one of my favorites and that is *Disney Great Leader Strategy* No. 7, which talks about all of the ways you need to work to *know what is going on* and to seek the truth.
7. Then we went over to *Disney Great Leader Strategy* No. 8, which is about what everyone wants and needs in life, and that is all about *recognition, coaching, and counseling*.

Now we will discuss how to stay on top of all of your responsibilities in the following four areas of:

- 1) Technical competence,
- 2) Management competence,
- 3) Technology competence, and
- 4) Leadership competence.

This one is titled ***Expand and Act Upon Knowledge and Experience of the Best Service Available Anywhere.*** This means to expand your knowledge and abilities in the four areas of competency listed above. This means to continually throughout your entire life keep expanding your knowledge and abilities so that you do not become known as that person who does not keep up and does not understand new and better ways to do things. These people are sometimes referred to as “dinosaurs,” as well as other things not to be mentioned here! We all know what happened to the dinosaurs when they could not adapt to changing times.

YOU and I and everyone else can become better in the technical knowledge of what we do. This simply means that a Chef can become a better cook over time if he or she focuses on it. The food will continually be getting better. The dancer can become a better dancer with practice. The Front Desk person can become more technically competent as he or she gets experience in the position.

We can become better managers over time as well. Management is defined as “the act of controlling.” This simply means that you have to be organized or someone around you has to be organized so that we do what we say we are going to do . . . and that we follow up . . . and get things done on time.

If you are a restaurant manager, then that restaurant needs to be *under control* from the way the phones are answered, to the way people are seated and greeted, to product knowledge of the staff, to the processes and operating guidelines that we use to run the restaurant. A restaurant with poor service or poor food is not under control. This is the same for an attraction, a merchandise store, parking, ticketing, custodial—and the list goes on.

Something that may not have even been mentioned a few years ago is the need for all of us to become continually more competent with technology. If we don’t understand it and use it, then we will not be using the best new ideas for technology solutions that can help our Guest service, our focus on Cast Excellence, and our Business Results. When you use it, you start to think about the possibilities.

Technology may not be the solution for everything in the future, but it will be the answer to many business improvements including Guest service and Cast Excellence, not to mention Business Results. When Guests can get the accurate information they want by serving themselves and when Cast Members can get the information they want when they want it by using technology, that will be a good thing. I think that printing your own paycheck stub online from home or changing your address without calling someone and being on hold for the rest of your life is a welcomed entrance into a new way of life; and in this way, technology is good. The good thing about technology is that it works (hopefully) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. The *My Disney TEAM* portal is seldom rude, and the accuracy factor continues to go up dramatically.

The last area that everyone *can* improve in is leadership. If you focus on studying leadership and thinking about your own behaviors and your way of getting things done, *YOU* can improve.

Some ways to improve are:

Consistently ask yourself, “Do I have the best service in the business?”

You must know what the best looks like and how to apply it to your business. My thinking here is that it is hard to know what the best looks like if you have not seen it or have not experienced it. When you are out and about, look for excellence and then check to see if your business is as excellent.

Make sure that you understand how good you are in the area of safety compared to the rest of the world and to the rest of the *Walt Disney World*® Resort. How do you stack up in your area compared to others in your industry? Learn about best practices at other places and communicate and implement best practices into your business. (“**Top 10,**” No. 7)

If you are in the restaurant business, save up your money so that from time to time you can eat in the best restaurant in town . . . and when on vacation, eat at the best restaurant wherever you are.

Try different things; try things unfamiliar to you. Don’t always order a burger and a Bud. There are other wines in the world besides Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Chardonnay.

Try items you have never had before.

Don’t use the excuse that we are tight on spending right now and that you cannot expense it. *This is your education, and you do what you have to do to learn what you need to know to get ahead.*

No one is going to care when you tell them that your knowledge is weak because back in the early 2000s, times were tough, and “The Company” would not fund some things for you. The person you are telling this to will say, “Well, that’s too bad; but you still don’t get the job.”

You see people want to know what we know. They are not really concerned as to why we don’t know what is required to get and hold onto a position.

Expose yourself to the best—reflect on it, then act on it. High quality is often free. The cost of average service and great service is about the same. The difference is usually leadership focus.

Stay current with business and industry trends. Read! Read! Read! Be an expert in your business.

Go on best-practice trips. This can be as simple as going to the best places and observing what they are doing and asking questions. People will tell you a lot if you ask them. Some of the best practices are right here in Orlando and at the *Walt Disney World*® Resort.

Best ideas may come from businesses that are not exactly like yours. You may go to a fancy department store and get an idea for a display for food or to a great food store and get a great idea for a merchandise display or product.

Keep up with the pace of change in your business. Things are changing faster than ever. Read the paper every day and a magazine like Newsweek or Time and others to keep up with what is happening.

A few years ago did you think you would be eating sushi? Some of you are probably saying “no,” and I am still not eating it! Anyway, things change; and they change fast. If you would have told me years ago that people would pay 12, 15, or 20 dollars for a glass of wine, I would have not believed you.

Pin trading as an example was observed at the Olympics in Atlanta, and now it is a tradition at the *Walt Disney World*® Resort because one of our Leaders expanded his or her knowledge and acted.

Participate in professional networking. This means that you should purposely establish the right relationships

with the right people in your field, and keep in touch with them so that you have a broad range of professional contacts. Someone told me once to get to know a good lawyer and a good doctor long before you need them because eventually you will probably need them; and when you have long, good relationships with people, they take better care of you.

Read best practices bulletin boards for great ideas. The Productivity Team has a system of sharing productivity ideas across the property for example. Review our **Take 5s/Magical Moments** site on the *My Disney TEAM* portal for ideas on how to improve the Guest experience as an example.

Aggressively solicit input regarding the service provided by your team from others, and also solicit how your competitors are doing compared to you. Keep a keen eye on the competition and others. We are good, but so are they; and we want to learn from them what to do and what not to do.

The bottom line is that you must have an attitude and a clearly defined method for keeping up in this world that is changing so fast, since the alternatives of not keeping up are not very appealing. As you know, when you don't keep up, you get behind . . . and sometimes you even get lost . . . and no one can find you!

Encourage team members and Leaders to benchmark while on vacation and recognize the contributions that they bring back. I met a lady last night who runs a restaurant in New York City. She told me that after staying at *Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa* for a week and experiencing our restaurants at the *Walt Disney World®* Resort she now realizes how much better her own restaurant could be . . . and that she plans to go back and make improvements after experiencing what could be done. This is a smart lady who understands this strategy very well.

This simply illustrates how you should get out of your "little world" and into the big world from time to time. It will be time well spent. This lady from New York City had a nice vacation and gained some great ideas for her business free of charge because she was paying attention and making notes of the things she liked and wanted to implement when she got back to her restaurant in New York City.

I bet you can't wait until we review what *great Leaders* do when they practice *Disney Great Leader Strategy* No. 10: ***Partner Effectively and Successfully With Staff and Other Cross-Functional Partners.***

You already know if you do this well or not. Even if this is not one of your strengths, you can improve a great deal after you study this strategy. One of the most effective ways that work gets done at the *Walt Disney World®* Resort is through relationships. You may say that is not fair, and it may not be; but that is the way it is . . . so you can either change our Company culture, or you can change yourself! . . . Lee

Measures of *YOUR* Effectiveness!

- Number of new ideas you have had lately.
- Number of Guest Satisfaction Measurement improvements you have made.
- Number of trade journals you read and share.
- Product ranking compared to the best in the world.
- Service ranking compared to the rest of the world.

Methods to Evaluate *YOUR* Effectiveness!

- Guest Satisfaction Measurement results.
- Others' observations of your business and services.
- Guest letters.
- Doing Cross-U in costume.

DISNEY GREAT LEADER STRATEGY NUMBER 10 OF 12:

PARTNER EFFECTIVELY AND SUCCESSFULLY WITH STAFF AND OTHER CROSS-FUNCTIONAL PARTNERS!

We have now discussed in depth the first nine of the *Disney Great Leader Strategies*. Remember that these strategies are only for those who want to be *great Leaders*; so if that is not your goal, then don't waste too much of your time on these. I bet you hope your Leader is studying them, though. I think there is a message in there somewhere for all of us. What do you think people really think about your leadership style?

All bad Leaders eventually fail. They hold leadership positions, but they do not Respect, Appreciate, and Value Everyone. So in the end, they fall . . . and they fall fast . . . and they are usually taken down by their own followers and by their own poor behaviors.

Hitler was one of the worst leaders of all time. His leadership style, I think, shows how unless you respect, appreciate, and value everyone that you cannot be a *great Leader*. History is full of examples of not understanding this simple concept.

One thing is for sure, and that is you cannot get the results you want in the long run unless you have good, trusting partnerships with people in your business life and in your away-from-work life as well.

Partnership skills may be one of the reasons that some Leaders get such great results and are remembered fondly through the centuries while others fail because they do not develop strong relationships with people.

I remember one incident a few years ago where a Leader who had a bigger title than mine learned of some decision we had made in Operations, and it was an area in which he had some responsibility. We did not mean to leave him out of the loop, but somehow we had. I got a message to meet him at *Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa* at 4 p.m.; and the message was that he was very upset with me. I met with him and told him the facts and apologized for not being on top of communicating with him properly on the issue.

The real reason that this worked out fine was that I had a very good relationship with him, and he considered me a good partner who was always trying to help him. This issue we were discussing was a business disagreement. Even after we talked that day, he did not totally agree with our decision; but he told me that he trusted me . . . and that I was a good partner . . . and that he would let the decision I had made go forward anyway. If we had been at odds with each other and did not have a good relationship, he could have pulled rank on me and reversed the decision. By the way, the decision turned out to be the right one—so there were no further issues around this one.

I would like to cover some of the ways that people show that they are good partners. The first thing is to **be available for people** when they need you or want to see you. Don't be one of these people that can't be seen for two months. Being available for people that need to see you is really important.

One time I had a sinus infection and called my doctor. The office staff said I could see him in two weeks. I told them I would be dead in two weeks with this infection. I never went back to that doctor again. I have a doctor now who has agreed upfront to see me within 24 hours from the time I call. I like her, and I recommend her to people. Recently, however, she decided not to take any more patients so she could spend more quality time with the ones she has. The Doctor who took two weeks to see is still taking patients.

Another story about being a good partner deals with my wife, Priscilla, who called me one day and asked me to come home because she was sick; and she needed me to pick up Margot from school that day since she had agreed to go out and get her. I had a meeting with Al at 4 p.m. on that day; and I told her I would cancel it and be there. You see being a good partner in marriage keeps you married, and I don't want to live alone. Al totally understood and told me that if he ever found out that I would not have gone home when my family needed me, that he would not be very happy with me. I was available when my partner needed me!

- Let me tell you a secret, and don't tell anyone: Policies and rules have a *little, tiny bit of flexibility*; and when you have great relationships with people, that policy or rule can be stretched in your favor just a little bit. It is called *giving someone the benefit of the doubt*.
- When you have a bad relationship with people, the rule or policy seems to have no flexibility. That is why I am always nice to the patrolman when he stops me for speeding. I am hoping for a break. Bad partners get few breaks in the world. One time on the Florida Turnpike, the Officer gave me a warning. I bet others got the ticket based upon their attitudes. I said "Yes, sir" several times to him.

Being available for others means **working together to make meetings happen in a timely way**. Leave time on your calendar for the unexpected as there is a lot of this in the world.

Show timely progress and resolution of projects in a quality manner, satisfying the goals and objectives. Keep people informed on a regular basis of how you are coming along with a project, and involve them too if you need help. Don't leave people out there wondering how far along you are in completing a project. They will appreciate occasional updates and won't have to worry about how it is progressing.

Live up to commitments you make to partners. This simply means to follow-through so you have to be somewhat organized. Saying you "*forgot*" sounds as though you are taking the Fifth Amendment. Forgetting is not a very good excuse, and it is way overused.

Return your phone calls and e-mails promptly. I can tell the disorganized people out there by the way they do this. There are a lot of phones in this country. I can't imagine why it takes someone three days to call someone back. Sounds like a time-management problem or a bad attitude to me. So, be sure to **get back to people when they ask you about issues**.

Don't avoid conflict and confrontation on tough issues. When you have a great relationship with people, you can have tough, difficult conversations on most any issue and still maintain the relationship and do the right thing.

My wife and I disagree from time to time, but we don't get divorced over it . . . or not talk to each other anymore . . . or go to bed mad over it. Great partners can have disagreements without fallout.

Stand up for what is right for Guests, fellow Cast Members, and for the business. First, this is your responsibility; second, it is the ethical thing to do, even if it is difficult.

Have the courage to fight the right battles. You don't have to win every battle, and you really don't have to start a battle over everything. *Give the benefit of the doubt* sometimes. That is what good partners do. If you take on every issue with the goal of winning, you will not have a partner for long at work or at home. As they say, "Save your bullets for the BIG battles."

Create relationships where you don't have them . . . by taking the responsibility for creating them yourself. Get to know the right people. Offer help to them to get the relationship going, and work on cultivating and keeping the relationship alive. Communicate a lot with people you want to have a good relationship with. Build a strong relationship with people like your doctor and other important people in your life.

My mother-in-law, "Sunshine," came to see us the first time when we moved to Florida. I noticed she left behind her bedroom slippers and robe. I figured out that she would be coming down a lot. I went to the store and had a brass plaque made that read, "**Sunshine Suite.**"

I put this on her bedroom door at my house. She told me later that if I were not her son-in-law she would adopt me; and by the way, she is a great mother-in-law. When your real name is "Sunshine," you have to be great. If you have a poor disposition and are pretty negative, you may want to legally change your name to "Sunshine." It might help.

Be open-minded and flexible. No one likes to deal with or spend much time with hard-headed, inflexible people who don't like any new ideas, concepts, or suggestions. Are you one of these people?

Remember that partnerships are important in all areas; for example, our vendors. We should have a good relationship with them. We should never be high-handed . . . or treat them poorly . . . or use our buying power to push them into an agreement that is not fair.

Welcome input and constructive feedback. The way you do this is to continuously remind people that you want this; and when they finally give you a little dose of it, you thank them . . . and you smile . . . and you don't get defensive . . . and you *don't shoot the messenger* . . . and over time they will learn that they can tell you anything. This process takes a while because what you are doing is **building trust** . . . and that takes time and consistency of behavior.

One way to be a great partner is to **ask for and offer help**. There is no bigger compliment than someone's asking you for help. Your offering help also builds a strong relationship.

Expand your sphere of influence at all levels. Get to know people in all areas and at all levels as much as you can. Get to know people long before you ask them for something. *The bottom line is that when everything is equal, people spend more time with and help out people they know.* When you know people, it is easier to access them when you need to.

Work toward making partners out of your adversaries. You can probably figure out who they are if you think about it for a while. They may not care for you . . . and you may not care for them . . . but if you need one another to get your job done . . . then be big enough to call them and invite them to lunch and say, “I don’t know how we got to this point, but I want to have a good working relationship with you; and if it is something I did, please let me know.” You don’t want to have a bunch of people who don’t want to work with you. That makes no sense at all . . . *because as a Leader without influence, you are in bad shape.*

Learn to focus on collaboration, rather than conflict, in solving problems with people. You do not always have to win. Give people a break and *give them the benefit of the doubt.* Again, save your bullets for the big battles and the big problems. Developing great relationships is like saving up bullets for the really big battles where you must win. Don’t use your authority and title to make people do the wrong things. Listen and involve others; and be willing to change your mind. “All of us are smarter than one of us,” said Ken Blanchard, the famous business author.

Great Leaders look for and network with other Leaders. If you are playing the role of the Lone Ranger, stop this. That was a movie. This is real life, and you cannot get it done alone. Remember, it is only lonely at the top . . . if you place yourself on a pedestal.

Use your influence and position to help others get what they want. Help other Leaders become better Leaders. When you learn to do these things, people will say nice things about you behind your back; and what is better than being referred to as a great partner? The two *Great Partners* at Disney were Walt and Mickey . . . and we have a Partners statue to prove it . . . and many of you have been awarded this honor as “Partners In Excellence.”

Next we will review *Disney Great Leader Strategy* No. 11: ***Demonstrate a Passionate, Professional Commitment to Your Role.*** This is where the rubber meets the road and separates the men from the boys and the girls from the women . . . and by the way, be sure to do a **Take 5** a few times every day this week! . . . Lee

Measures of *YOUR* Effectiveness!

- Results of collaboration.
- The effect of increased spheres of influence.
- Decrease of time required to resolve partner issues and conflicts.
- Decrease in the number of people needed to resolve issues and conflicts.
- What the “*word on the street*” is about *YOU*.

Methods to Evaluate *YOUR* Effectiveness!

- Talk with people on your team.
- Partner feedback (360-degree results) from Cast Excellence results or just ask your Cast how you are doing.

DISNEY GREAT LEADER STRATEGY NUMBER 11 OF 12:

DEMONSTRATE A PASSIONATE, PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT TO YOUR ROLE!!!!!!

If you can't nail this one, *YOU* will never be great. In fact, *passion* and *commitment* go hand in hand.

I believe that *passion* has more to do with greatness than any other trait. *Passion* is contagious. *Passion* is the driving force that enables people to attain far more than they ever imagined. *Passion* gives you more personal physical energy.

At the *Walt Disney World*® Resort, we are blessed with huge numbers of Cast Members who are passionate about what they do every day. They demonstrate a passionate, professional commitment to their roles. They always find a way to “make it happen.”

There is a big difference in being interested in something and in being committed to do something. Committed means you will go all the way for what you believe in. Dr. Martin Luther King was not interested in the civil rights movement. He was committed to it. He actually went all the way and even gave up his life for what he believed in.

Some ways to think about this is: **Make sure your job is something you love to do.** If you don't love what you do, then start right now looking for another role. There are hundreds of roles at the *Walt Disney World*® Resort, and there must be one somewhere that can get you excited.

Be an eternal optimist about what *YOU* personally can do for the business. Our Company is made up of 58,000 of *YOU*. If each one of us does our very best, then that is all we can do. If *YOU* do your very best every day, *YOU* will make a difference in people's lives. Don't ever think that your vote does not count. Just look at the presidential election in 2000—every vote mattered.

Another way to demonstrate a passionate, professional commitment to your role is to **demonstrate personal ownership**. This means doing it right, and doing it right each and every time you do it. Do it right when no one is watching or will even know. Don't let anything or anyone get in your way. Stay with it until you get it done. Don't let other people's bad attitude affect you.

You have a reputation, and only *YOU* can control that reputation. Think of yourself as a brand. Are you a quality brand or a not-so-well-thought-of brand? Are you a Lexus, or an old car on your last legs? A Lexus is dependable, moves quickly, and is not too loud. Actually, it quietly performs year after year after year even when it is quite old with huge amounts of miles on it.

The biggest thing is to **have a positive attitude**. Some people are just wired to be positive, and some people have to work at it. When people ask me how I got to this position, I tell them that I am just as surprised as they are. In fact, if you went back and talked with my high-school teachers, they would be very surprised that Lee became the Executive Vice President of *Walt Disney World*® Operations. They would probably think that someone stole Lee's identity, which is a common crime these days. The fact of the matter is I believe that the main reason I have this position is because of my positive attitude.

When I started out at twenty years old in Food & Beverage, I was told I had to work New Year's Eve and then be back at 6 a.m. for inventory. I said, “Fine. No problem.” . . . and I smiled.

When I was told I had to work weekends, Christmas, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, April Fools' Day, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Father's Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and my birthday, I said, "Fine. No problem." . . . and I smiled.

It is true that I got a lot of experience along the way from performing a lot of different positions . . . and I relocated 12 times in my career for promotional opportunities and gained even further experience . . . and it is true that I traveled widely around the world and learned a lot more . . . but in the end, I would chalk up a lot of my success to just having a plain old good attitude.

Remember that saying: "Good attitude, good results; and bad attitude, bad results."

My son and my grandchildren learned that you get a lot more with a good attitude than you do with a bad one. A few episodes of "time out" and they figured that out pretty quickly. As I told my grandson Jullian recently, "Just tell your mom that you are sorry and things will improve immediately."

Another way I think about attitude is that ***people with a good attitude do not talk in a negative way about their company.*** They certainly can have recommendations and suggestions on how to improve things. I am talking about those people who sit around complaining about everything but do nothing about it or complain to someone who can do nothing about it.

I met with four Maintenance Cast Members, who instead of complaining to their fellow Cast Members, brought their issues right to me, face to face with a professional, candid approach. While we did not agree on everything, I now have a better understanding of their issues and they better understand my position . . . and that is a good place to be. We have mutual respect for one another's point of view, and that is how progress begins on anything.

As they say, "If you want to complain about your health, then go see a doctor. If you want to complain about your job or your company, then go see someone who can do something about it." This would be someone who has the authority to correct or change something. At the least you should be told why it is the way it is and why it can't or won't be changed. Telling people "***why***" is important. It is a form of respect.

In the area of safety, always be professional. If something in your area needs to be corrected, don't sit around and talk about it. Go to the appropriate Leader or person who can make a difference and explain the situation. You will find that a professional organization is a safe organization because the leadership has a daily focus on safety.

One way to tell if you are on the right path and in the right role is by ***being excited about coming to work versus excited about going home.*** I would say—at a minimum—have equal excitement. People who don't love what they do wake up in the morning, and their first thought is that they can't wait until quitting time. They say things like, "I can't wait until 5 o'clock to get out of here," or "Thank goodness it's Friday." I tell you—and I am telling the honest-to-goodness truth—I love to get up at 5 a.m. and go to work . . . and I love to work all day long. I am so happy that I am happy.

I have had positions that I was not happy in, and I quickly got out of those positions in my career. The way I knew I was not happy was that I was getting bored and not starting any new projects and initiatives, and I was starting to go home earlier and earlier. I think I was in a bad mood too, as I recall my wife, Priscilla, telling me.

Another thing that professional, committed people do is to **spend the right amount of time, in the right ways, on the job.** This may mean going in on a Saturday or Sunday or late at night to see how your business is functioning. It may mean doing in-costume experiences to learn the truth. It may mean going and experiencing the product as a Guest and seeing for yourself how things are going. Sometimes it may mean working seven days a week in a crisis . . . and sometimes it may mean lots of hours during some critical times of a project or other situation . . . where your leadership, experience, and professional commitment are required.

Get people focused on the goal. Make sure they understand the vision and the mission. Make sure they understand how Guests, Cast, and Business Results must rise together. Make sure all of your Cast Members understand the difference between their purpose and their role. Talk about these things until you are blue in the face, and then talk about them some more.

Seeing dead people is not the sixth sense as was portrayed in the movie *The Sixth Sense*. That was a movie. Having a sense of humor is really the sixth sense after hearing, seeing, feeling, tasting, and smelling. **Lighten up the workplace for people. Find ways to break the monotony and routine for people. Create elements of surprise.** If we are not having fun, we will not be doing our best work. Don't be Mr., Ms., or Mrs. Serious all of the time.

Take your responsibility seriously but don't take yourself too seriously. Don't start believing you are Mr., Ms., or Mrs. Big Deal. Don't be self-centered. Don't fall in love with your title. Some Leaders have watched too much television and behave like some of those folks in those business movies. They sit around pushing buttons on their phones and saying things like get me Mr. Big Shot on the phone or get me a cup of coffee.

I personally make all of my own phone calls, and that way I get to know the assistants as well. I often get calls from executives around the world, but it's not them on the other end when I pick up the phone. It is their assistant, and I get to talk to them a while until the caller picks up. Actually, often I just speak with the assistant and don't need to leave a call-back message. This saves me time as well. Some might say that making your own calls is unproductive. It might be for some people—but not for me. I get to see how the phone is answered, how many times it rings, and how I am treated when they don't expect me to be on the line. It's one way to think about this subject, anyway. I also get to listen to great Disney music when I am on hold.

If you are in our business and you are a professional, committed, passionate Leader, then you will be **spending time with Guests out in the operation and on the phone, taking their calls, and calling them to see what is going on.**

As a matter of fact, one way to demonstrate your commitment is to **deal with “the most difficult Guests in the world” yourself.** Take the call. You will learn a lot. You will learn things that will improve your business. You will be glad to get an opportunity to turn one of our Guests around if that Guest is not happy with us.

Don't always delegate this. Remember that the Guests are not mad at you or upset with you. They are upset with a situation. After all, they don't even know you as I said before; so don't get defensive with them. Just try to bring them back around to where they love us again. I know! I know! Some Guests can be impossible, but they are a rare exception. When you resolve a difficult situation for one of them, you have a lifelong family story to tell. Always, always, always be polite, professional, cool, and calm. Be a Leader.

Experiencing our product frequently as a Guest shows your passion, professionalism, and commitment. It shows that you really want to know the truth and to know how good we really are. We have many Leaders that

do not get out and experience our product often enough.

As Kevin Myers told me once: “We are not as good as we think we are sometimes,” and that thought has really stuck with me. We are good; but when you go out, you will find lots of opportunities to improve what we do . . . and that is what professionals who are passionate and committed do. They are never totally happy. It is kind of a curse. They sometimes drive people crazy.

Sign up for Cross-U no matter where you work, and get out there and find out where the opportunities are. By the way, it is fun too.

Interacting with our Guests is really a very satisfying experience as most of our Guests are just in awe of what we do. They basically want our jobs. They think that we have the best deal in town and the nicest people they have ever seen and met . . . and you know what, they are right.

Professionals do the right things for the right reasons. You can’t be a part-time professional and be professional only part of the day. There are many unprofessional people in professional positions. *Professional is the attitude and behavior and not the title.* ***Our Cast performs professionally even when they are not happy with a Company decision or their own Leaders’ decisions. Our Cast stays focused on the “main thing”: our Guests.***

Professionals hold people accountable for performance and results. Give your fellow Cast Members feedback, both positive and negative. Be clear about what their responsibility is, what their authority is, and what they will be held accountable for.

Tell people what is going to happen to them with continued poor performance and bad behaviors. Help poor performers get better. Give them every opportunity; and if they can’t perform at expectation, then put them on a plan to document the required performance improvement needed. They will either improve, or they will have to leave the Company eventually through resignation or termination. The quicker you deal with poor performance, the higher the odds are that the individual will turn around his or her performance, which is our goal.

When did your Mom or Dad deal with your bad behaviors and attitude? When they told you to be in at 11 p.m. and you came in at 1 a.m., when did they deal with it? Did they wait until your annual review? your mid-year check-in? or your weekly meeting? My mother dealt with it right then, and she was very clear about what would happen if improvement was not made. I heard her loud and clear and did not repeat many acts of disobedience and violation of the house rules.

You want to deal with performance issues right when they happen so that the problem is fresh in everyone’s mind.

As I told you earlier, one young lady who told me her dad did not wait in the living room for her to come in late. He was out in the yard waiting. I told her that I wish more of our Leaders were out in the yard.

Your parents did it because they loved you. Leaders do it because they respect their people and want them to be successful. If your Leader knows you are not performing and does not say anything to you, then it sounds like he or she does not respect you as he or she should.

Your goal is to correct the behavior and the performance. It is one of your main responsibilities as a Leader and as a parent.

The people you really want to pay attention to are the high performers. Tell them often how much you appreciate them and how much you depend on them. *Great Leaders* need encouragement just as much as any other person; and by the way, *great Leaders* can find a dozen jobs every morning. If you appreciate them, then tell them.

I told Al that he could not give me excessive positive feedback. I am just as insecure as the next person. Positive feedback improves self-esteem and self-confidence dramatically. It is the fuel that drives performance for all people.

Walk the operation daily teaching, coaching, and counseling. When you see people doing something incorrectly, step over and show them the correct way. When you hear someone talking to another person and saying something that could be said in a more effective way, step over and say: “What you said to that Guest was okay; but next time you may want to say it this way instead, and I think you will get a more positive response.” Then tell that person the right way. When you see people doing something right, tell them also. “That was perfect the way you handled that Guest.”

Every time you come into contact with your fellow Cast Members you have an opportunity to teach them something or to give them some coaching, counseling, or feedback—just as your mom and dad used to do because they wanted you to be as good as you could be.

Keep raising the bar! **Set continuously higher performance expectations for those that report to you.** Set goals for everyone on your team, and encourage them to set even higher levels for themselves.

Be a Leader who on a daily basis **shares your enthusiasm and pride in Disney with your fellow Cast Members and our Guests.** We represent the best product and brand in the world, and we should all be proud of that and show that pride in our actions and words.

Leaders lead by example. Remember, *YOU* are always under a microscope.

Leaders are *authentic*. You earn the trust and respect of the people you work with when you know who you are and when you “walk the talk.” Who believes in Leaders who don’t believe in themselves? Don’t be weird . . . behave all day long!

Remember that all of these strategies can fit into your personal life as well. When you review them, just think for a minute how these things also fit into your entire life.

As I have told all of you before my wife, Priscilla, has told me for years: “Lee, be careful what you say and do today. They are watching you and judging you.”

And last, but not least, **energize others with your excitement for performance excellence.** If you want to brief yourself on all of the aspects of performance excellence at the *Walt Disney World*® Resort, then review the February 25, 2001, Special Edition of **The Main Street Diary** . . . and listen to the audiotope “Inspiration—The Real Work of Leaders” that is for sale in the Company D stores. This will help you understand the reasons why you should be so proud of our Company, and it will give you some thoughts on how to deliver inspirational messages to your fellow Cast Members who, hopefully, are your followers . . . *because the one thing that a Leader needs for sure is followers.* Look back from time to time to see if people are with you. . . . Lee

Measures of *YOUR* Effectiveness!

- Be present on the job at all hours of the day and night when required.
- Consistently question, and never be satisfied with the status quo.
- You are the expert; be knowledgeable about the business.
- Your team clearly understands your purpose and goal.
- Your workplace is one of vitality and energy.
- You and others can vividly recall the last time you had spontaneous fun.

Methods to Evaluate *YOUR* Effectiveness!

- One-on-one discussions between your Cast and Leader, Organization Development team, or other management.
- Observations of the workplace by Disney management and Front-Line Cast Members.

DISNEY GREAT LEADER STRATEGY NUMBER 12 OF 12:

UNDERSTAND AND DEMONSTRATE MASTERY OF BUSINESS FUNDAMENTALS!

Getting started right is half the battle. All one has to do is really mess up in the first few days or weeks of a new leadership position and people remember that for years and years and years.

We know that we know how to serve our Guests in Operations. We are world-class at it . . . and really world famous! If you ask anyone in the world where the most famous place is for friendliness and courtesy and attention to detail, he or she will always have the *Walt Disney World*® Resort at the top in the No. 1 position. After all, we are the No. 1 vacation destination in the world for a reason. Since most of our Guests are repeat Guests, the reason we are No. 1 is that we do the best job of anyone in the world . . . or they would not be coming back.

The second thing we know is that we also know how to lead and manage our fellow Cast Members. We work hard at creating an environment where they can do their best and where they can show off their Disney knowledge. The Cast Excellence results year after year show that we do a great job of leading. I know there are Leaders out there who still need to be more committed to *great leadership*; but all in all, we have a strong team.

The third thing that is so important after serving our Guests and leading our Cast at world-class levels is to be able to manage and understand our business so that we are getting the best business results possible. I know you know this; but just as a reminder: the business climate in the world is difficult and uncertain right now, and we will continue to have to tightly control spending and staffing, forever I suspect. It really is a new millennium, and everything is moving faster . . . and with the Internet, we have a whole new world for marketing and selling our product and for reducing our costs—but so does everyone else.

We could all have reasons, I am sure, to become negative as we see that we are having to work harder and harder in leadership positions (1) to not only serve our Guests, but also to hit our profit targets, and (2) to keep our

fellow Cast Members motivated, inspired, and focused on performing their role in the show with excellence every day.

One thing I know for sure, when I have those infrequent moments of “*pixie dust*” leaving my brain, that this is the best place to be . . . and it does not get better than this. Call your friends in other companies and ask them how green the grass is in their company.

We are very fortunate to have the premiere brand in the world; and in difficult times, we are still the No. 1 vacation destination in the world.

So, as you are faced with difficult challenges that sometimes seem unreasonable, put on your positive hat and lead. Your attitude will be the No. 1 thing that sets the tone for how we continue to be successful in achieving our *Vision*. This requires us to work our “*magic*” every day . . . have Guest Satisfaction that exceeds expectations . . . and have Cast Excellence, which simply means that we focus on making this a workplace where our fellow Cast Members are made to feel special, treated as individuals, respected, and developed.

Leadership today is more important than it has ever been in business and is the silver bullet that will ensure that we achieve all of our goals. It is easy to lead in good times. It is the true test of your leadership in these times. *Be great!*

Some of the things that you can and should do for yourself and your team are as follows:

Share the mission, vision, and brand essence so that your team understands them and can apply them practically to the business. Each business has a *Vision* and *Brand Essence* just like the *Walt Disney World*® Resort does. Ask your executive for it if you have not seen it. Every week in **The Main Street Diary** the first section is the *Vision* for the *Walt Disney World*® Resort.

The *Brand Essence* describes the way we want our Guests to feel. The Brand Essence for *Walt Disney World*® is:

“*Walt Disney World*® is a magical passage into a world of fantasy and adventure. Here, we can wish upon a star, experience the impossible, and bring our dreams to life. Together, treasured friends discover a wonderland that dazzles, delights, and renews through all the seasons of a lifetime.”

Our Guests do feel this way, and they tell us every day in person and in the thousands of Guest letters that we receive.

Make sure that you **understand your business unit’s strategic plan and the strategic plan of the *Walt Disney World*® Resort**. If you don’t, ask your executive to put together a presentation for you so that you can clearly articulate the plan and get others excited and committed to it. If there is something you don’t understand or something that you think you need to know, then ask for it.

Develop specific core strategies and action plans that support and integrate with the business unit and the *Walt Disney World*® strategic direction. Core things are those things you do that give you a competitive advantage. They are hard to replicate by the competition. They are things like FASTPASS® that are expensive and complicated; and we were the “first to market” with this concept. Being first gives you a clear and long-lasting competitive advantage. McDonald’s® is a great example of coming out first with *fast food*. *McDonald’s*® is still the leader more than 50 years later.

Walt Disney was the first to come out with theme parks, and we are still the Leader 50-plus years later. By the way, it takes courage to be first.

I believe that things like **Safety** and **Security** will be—if they are not already—a competitive advantage for us in this world we now live in.

I believe that **Making Every Guest Feel Special** will be a competitive advantage for us in this world that is starving for this kind of feeling. We know how to do it.

I believe that **Treating Every Guest as an Individual** will be a core competitive advantage . . . and with the implementation of Destination Disney, we will fully realize this advantage. We already know how to do this. Technology will make us better.

I believe that **Knowledgeable Cast Members** create a core competitive advantage in a world where this is the exception, and we know how to do this.

Just like for our Guests, we can create key core competitive advantages similar to the ones above through leadership and commitment. *Hiring and retaining the best* created a huge core competitive advantage for us.

Continuously improving our core business processes will create competitive advantage. Destination Disney and FASTPASS® are two examples. The *My Disney TEAM* portal has the potential to be a core business process, depending on how we continue to develop it; and it will give us a way to become great communicators quickly and to have self-service processes.

So **think** a lot about *CORE* and *COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE*.

Some simple examples that are part of our strategy are to grow part of our operating income each year through productivity and cost savings . . . and part of our strategy is to improve the Guest experience through high-involvement Cast interaction with our Guests. We call this our **Take 5s** and **Magical Moments**.

Other strategies include improving the value for our Guests who stay on-site in our resorts versus off-site; and we are in the middle of trying to figure out exactly what that means. Things like free transportation have value, and we will continue to try to figure out what other things will bring Guests on-site. Theming of our resorts has value.

I think there are between five and eight really important things in each business; and if you get those right, then the rest fall into line. For instance,

- If you check in Guests at our resorts efficiently . . . and provide them with the information they require . . . and then check them into a clean room that is kept clean during their stay . . . you have accomplished the core items for your business.
- When you put a towel animal and other fun surprises in the rooms, then you are moving up the chart to additional things above core—but these things are really important as well, as they make the real difference between Disney and the rest of the world. *The little things* in life add up and matter. If all of our Cast Members are courteous, friendly, engaging, and professional, then we have hit a home run.

Sit down with your team and try to figure out where your business is going; break it down into components; analyze it; and then plan the next steps on how to make your business better. If you need help with the analysis, then ask for help. We have many experts at Disney in Finance, Organization Development, and Human Resources as well as other staff departments. You are not alone here. *Great Leaders* use their resources to gain

even better performance.

Be aware of global trends that may impact your business both for the better and for the worst. *Reading* is one of the best ways to keep up with global trends and current events that may impact your business. Read a weekly news magazine and *USA Today* every day to keep up with what is going on.

Things like airline prices, oil prices, polls of attitudes, inflation, interest rates, the stock market, international crisis, exchange rates, crime, and on and on, give you leading indicators of what might affect your business. The more you know, the better your intuition . . . and the better your ability to make a good business decision.

Identify and focus on the top priority in your business and fix it. Spend lots of time on the top priority. Sometimes fixing the top priority fixes other things too. If you fix check-in and clean rooms, then you don't get complaint letters . . . and you don't lose repeat business.

Just like in a restaurant, the priority for the Chef is great food. In the dining room, it is knowledgeable, friendly, and courteous service. Do these well, and the restaurant will do well. Great places, you will find, hold up much better in recessions. Get into your financial statements and Guest Satisfaction Measurement data and look for those big opportunities.

Read and understand the financial section of the newspaper. Many of these are available on-line by the way. **Read our Company's annual report. Understand the relevance of both to your business.**

Understand and use reports you are receiving; otherwise, stop receiving them. If you don't understand them or what action to take based on them, then ask someone to explain them to you.

Be clear, decisive, and deliberate in moving toward your goal. Expect resistance from time to time—but don't be stopped if you think you are right.

Understand the budgeting process. Know how to interpret budget reports and how to apply them to your business, including flex budgeting, forecasting, and productivity.

Get involved in Operating Labor Management issues and help get the deployment system right, so it works for everyone. Let's continue to fix it and tweak it and not think that we should just throw it out. *Anything we focus on gets better and better.*

Consider financial obligations, costs, and their impact when making decisions. There are few small decisions at the *Walt Disney World*® Resort because of our tremendous volume of transactions, Guests, and Cast. A penny in cost could cost us an additional \$500,000 a year in expense. We serve a lot of people.

Use available resources to make timely decisions. Develop them if they are inadequate. When you are having trouble making a decision, ask for help. **Know how to use your resources effectively.**

Help your team understand how decisions made in your area integrate with the needs of the Guests, Cast, and business. Teach your team to approach decision-making in the same balanced way.

Don't be a fence sitter. Be decisive and make tough choices. When we make decisions, we always consider the impact on the Guests, the impact on the Cast, and the impact on the Business Results. This is what we like to call

the *three-legged stool*. It cannot stand on two legs.

Proactively explain the logic and process behind your decisions. Decisions at the *Walt Disney World*® Resort are not easy; but as long as you make calculated decisions by weighing the impact of Guest, Cast, and Business Results, then you have followed the right formula for decision making.

There is often no clear right decision. There are often almost-right decisions, and you can be sure that someone will not be happy with every decision you make as a Leader. *All you can do is to be thoughtful, involve others, and then do your best.* Also be ready to reverse a decision if it turns out that you were wrong. That is the sign of a really *great Leader*.

Invest the time and energy and get started early enough to thoroughly research and analyze issues to make good business decisions. Question, question, question! Ask “Why?” a lot. Why are we doing this? What results do we expect to get from this decision? What will happen if we don’t do it? Could we do just part of it now and the rest later? Is this reversible if we don’t like the outcome?

Evaluate how you’re spending your dollars. Are you getting what you paid for? Review your costs and invoices regularly. You might be shocked at what you are paying for some things.

Have in place good internal controls in your operation, and audit them frequently to make sure they are working. Ask someone else to audit them for you, and you audit their business in return to see if you can find weaknesses in controls, procedures, and operating guidelines. Start at the back loading dock. Are we getting everything we are paying for? This is an area that needs to be under tight controls.

Understand the impact of theft and shrinkage in your business. *It is real,* and it will be the person you least expect.

Continually look for ways to get work done at a lower cost with more effectiveness. There will always be a better way over time.

Know where and when to take risks and when to be cautious. If a decision is high-risk or not reversible, then take a lot more time to figure out the right answer.

Partner with others to seek new ideas and drive business changes. Some of the best ideas are right here at the *Walt Disney World*® Resort—in another department that you might not know about.

Know the metrics that drive your business, and have measures in place to chart progress. We have some of the best business resources in the world at the *Walt Disney World*® Resort in people and in systems. *Use these resources often and freely* to enhance your results in getting the best Business Results possible.

If you really want to be competent in this area and you need to be, then take finance courses inside and outside the Company. For some of you, go as far as getting your MBA.

And last, but not least, think about how you would **operate the business if it were your own.** I know that we don’t do a lot of things with this in mind, but each of us can continually challenge the way we do things and make significant progress over time.

Measures of *YOUR* Effectiveness!

- Team's ability to understand and apply goals, both short- and long-term, and priorities to daily business.
- Level at which actions and decisions of the Cast reflect the business plan.
- The ability of Cast Members to understand and interpret area reports.
- The questioning nature within the area by Cast Members to gain understanding and their resulting ability to know the business and contribute to improved financial performance.

Methods to Evaluate *YOUR* Effectiveness!

- Percentage of improvement in financial performance.
- Informal discussions with the team to determine the level of understanding of the business plan.
- Performance metrics.

So those are my points of view on *Disney Great Leader Strategies*. I hope you will find this to be helpful in your own career and personal development. Strive to be the greatest Leader you possibly can . . . and don't ever underestimate the difference you can make by being a great Leader! . . . Lee

Note: *Disney Great Leader Strategies* . . . An Explanation of Tactics is available on CD at Company D.

Reference:

“Top 10” Daily Leadership Safety Accountabilities

1. Model safe behavior by understanding and actively engaging in the COACH model: Care, Observe, Act, Communicate, and Help.
2. Proactively walk and assess your area(s) to observe conditions and behaviors, identify prevention opportunities, take appropriate action, and communicate to your Cast Members.
3. Proactively review Safety Scorecard trends and measure your incident reduction and regulatory training progress against your targets.
4. Conduct Incident Prevention Analysis when an incident or a near miss occurs and take appropriate corrective action.
5. Contact your injured Cast Member within the first 24 hours of the incident and engage in returning them to productive work, within their restrictions, as soon as possible.
6. 6.Attend all safety-training classes for Leaders and require all Cast Members to attend any training assigned to them.
7. Communicate best practices with your peers, share safety stories, talk about safety every day, and

discuss safety trends and action plans with your Cast.

8. Include safety objectives in Day-to-Day Accountabilities for all Performance Development Plans and hold yourself and your Cast accountable (specific goals can also be included in the Performance Objectives section as stretch goals).
9. Acknowledge and celebrate excellence in safety performance through positive recognition of both individuals and teams.
10. Correct unsafe behaviors and conditions and consistently apply appropriate disciplinary action.