

STRATEGY # 1: REMEMBER EVERYONE IS IMPORTANT

If you want your employees to deliver excellent service, you'd better provide them with excellent leadership. Leadership is more than a role; it's a responsibility. Being a leader means doing what has to be done, when it has to be done, in the way it should be done, whether you like it or not, and whether they like it or not. It means making the right things happen by bringing out the best in others. Excellence requires common sense leadership.

The first and most important leadership principle is inclusion. Inclusion is engaging and involving your employees and showing them that each one of them is important. When everyone matters and everyone knows he or she matters, employees are happy to come to work, and they are eager to give you their energy, creativity, and loyalty. You want to be included, listened to, respected, and involved, don't you? You want to be asked your opinion and have it taken seriously. You want to feel valued. And you want to be known as an individual and treated as such. Well, so does everyone else. That's why great leaders make sure that everyone feels included and no one feels left out. At Disney we defined our approach to inclusion with the acronym RAVE: respect, appreciate, and value everyone.

Strategies to Create a Culture of Inclusion:

1. **Make sure everyone matters...and that everyone knows it.** Just as great parents pay attention to everyone in their family, so great leaders pay attention to everyone in their organization, bolstering his or her self-esteem and self-confidence at every step. If everyone feels recognized, appreciated, and listened to, everyone will want to take every opportunity to learn and grow. When people feel valued for the talents and skills they bring to the team, their level of commitment soars. Common sense? Yes. Common practice. No.
2. **Know your team.** If you have children or godchildren or nieces and nephews – you know how important it is to treat each one in a way that makes him or her feel special. As a parent, you find it easy to treat each child as an individual because you've discovered over time what makes each of them unique and how to appreciate him or her for who he or she is. Why not do the same with our employees and team members? Every worker has different motivations, priorities, preferences, and dreams. Use that information to find ways to maximize their abilities and help them realize their goals and ambitions. Getting to know each person as an individual isn't easy, and it doesn't happen overnight. But believe me, it pays off big time.
3. **Let your team get to know you.** Remember, your inclusive workplace includes you. Too many leaders keep their distance from employees, both physically and emotionally. I promise you, you'll get a lot more respect if you let people know who you really are. Make sure people around you know what moves, you, what excites you, what you care deeply about, and even what you struggle with. Life as a leader got a whole lot easier when I started being myself twenty-four hours a day, for better or for worse.

Strategies 4-7 will be shared next week.

Lee Cockerell - 10 Common Sense Leadership Strategies

"Nothing contributes so much to tranquilizing the mind as a steady purpose - a point on which the soul may fix its intellectual eye."

Mary Shelley

"Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself."

Leo Tolstoy

"It is literally true that you can succeed best and quickest by helping others to succeed."

Napoleon Hill