

STRATEGY # 1: REMEMBER EVERYONE IS IMPORTANT (Part 4)

12. Design your culture. The Disney Institute defines a culture as “the system of values and beliefs an organization holds that drives actions and behaviors and influences relationships.” Does your culture work for you or against you? Successful cultures are established by design, not by chance, and they’re clear, well defined, and purposeful. One of those purposes should be to create and foster an inclusive environment. It has never been more crucial for leaders to promote, in word and deed, inclusiveness at every level of their operation. There is no downside to designing a culture of inclusiveness.

13. Treat your people as you would want your customers to be treated. The bottom line is that there is a direct correlation between how you treat your employees and how those employees treat your customers. Cast Members at Walt Disney World are trained to deliver on these Four Guest Expectations:

- Make me feel special.
- Treat me as an individual.
- Respect me and my children.
- Be knowledgeable.

Disney leadership trains Cast Members to fulfill these expectations by treating them the same way. You might call it Disney’s version of the Golden Rule: Leaders do unto Cast Members the way they want Cast Members to do unto Guests. It works because the Four Cast Expectations are essentially the same.

- Make me feel special.
- Treat me as an individual.
- Respect me.
- Make me knowledgeable.

Your employees have the same four expectations; if you fulfill them, their self-esteem and confidence will soar, and they’ll behave in a professional and caring way.

At Walt Disney World, I and other leaders did our best to make every last member of the Cast feel trusted and respected, while the Cast Members did all they could to make kids feel important and parents feel valued. Without that, Walt Disney World might not have remained the most popular tourist destination in the world. The same formula can help you and your organization achieve similar success.

ACTION STEPS

- Ask yourself frequently what you have done to show that everyone is important and knows it.
- Create an environment that makes every employee and every customer feel special.
- Treat everyone as an individual.

- Give every person your complete and unconditional respect.
- Spend time getting to know your employees.
- Give every employee the information and resources to learn what he or she needs to know and acquire skills he or she needs to learn.
- Make yourself truly available to everyone on your team.
- Give everyone, regardless of his or her position, the opportunity to be heard.
- When someone speaks to you, give that person your complete attention and really listen.
- Be your authentic self; don't project a false persona.

"I would like people to recognize in looking at my story that the person who has the most to do with what happens to you is you. It's not the environment, it's not the other people who were there trying to help you or trying to stop you. It's what you decide to do and how much effort you put behind it."

Ben Carson

"If you are working on something that you really care about, you don't have to be pushed. The vision pulls you."

Steve Jobs

"The highest form of wisdom is kindness."

Arthur Unknown