



DISNEY'S FOUNDATIONS OF Business Excellence

Participant Guide



PRESENTED BY



Engage with the Disney Institute community!



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Iconology

ICON

DEFINITION



A proposition that states the principles and underlying logic behind Disney's approach. It is a context-neutral business truth that transcends boundaries of industry and geography. The suitcase is a reminder that insights are completely transferable to your organization.



Ideas that promote commitment in your organization rather than compliance.



A common business practice that detracts from achieving exceptional service.



Tips, gleaned from the insights, which can be used to build and sustain your service culture.



Videos, stories, or other content that supports an insight and highlights Disney's approach.



Personal reflection on the insights, ideas, and illustrations discussed in the course.

Introduction

“What’s our success formula? It’s attention to infinite detail, the little things, the minor, picky points that others just don’t want to take the time, money, or effort to do.”

—John Hench, Walt Disney Imagineering

COMMON FRUSTRATION: “Our organization is falling short of the long-term results we are capable of because we are not delivering the customer experience we need to be delivering.”



Disney’s consistent business results are driven by strategically focusing on certain business functions and opportunities in which companies often fail to see the value and potential—and that is a key source of what differentiates us. We have learned to be intentional where others may be unintentional.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY INTENTIONAL?

At our Disney parks and resorts, being intentional means being highly purposeful and paying particular attention to detail.

- We tend to think about things differently than others—and to a greater degree.
- We pay extraordinary attention to the details surrounding general business processes.
- We strategically place emphasis that is both greater than and different from what is typical in corporate best practices.
- We have prevailing evidence that suggests what we do works.

The Disney Name Tag



The Disney name tag is a memorable and important symbol of our culture.



The greater the connection between Cast Member and Guest the more an experience can be enriched. Our attention to detail, and the understanding of how details can connect us to our Guests, has taught us that our ability to deliver an exceptional Guest experience is present because we intentionally manage the processes that affect both our Guests and our Cast Members, even with a simple name tag.

The Disney name tag represents more than a way for Guests to identify us:

- We use first names rather than titles, since Walt's vision was to build a first-name culture.
- Our name tags are intentionally designed so that they have the same basic look that includes the logo for different lines of business, and they might also include a pin or design if there is a special anniversary.
- You can get to know a lot about a Cast Member from a Disney name tag, including hometown or country. Cast Members may request a special bar that attaches to the name tag to indicate a second language, making it easier for non-English speaking Guests to identify a Cast Member who speaks their language.
- Leaders wear the same name tag as front-line Cast Members do.

THE BIGGER PICTURE: WHAT EXACTLY DO OUR DISNEY PARKS AND RESORTS DO DIFFERENTLY?

Disney Institute focuses on certain core areas, primarily within Disney parks and resorts, that work together to deliver sustained business results..

Disney Institute Chain of Excellence



By strategically focusing on leadership excellence, employee engagement, and quality service—in that order—combined with a continuous improvement mindset and a clear understanding of your brand and organization’s goals, you can set your organization on a path to the sustained results you desire.

- **Leaders** set the strategy and make a meaningful and credible **brand promise** in the marketplace.
- These same leaders drive the momentum within the chain by intentionally aligning the entire organization around a common set of **values** (who we are) and a compelling **vision** (where we are going).
- A carefully designed **culture** creates the environment in which every employee has the opportunity to be fully **engaged** and successful throughout his or her career.

- A **service framework** is designed and built on the essential foundation of **common purpose** and architected to ensure exceptional service delivery across all touch points.
- A passion for **feedback** and **continuous improvement** can accelerate the momentum within the chain creating greater ongoing impact.

These concepts are intentionally presented as a holistic, connected, and reinforcing chain. It indicates that while we can focus on specific needs within any one component in the chain, the other components must be considered at the same time for maximum results. One cannot fix any one area in isolation without considering the others, because excellence has a ripple effect.

Customer Focus

“We’re all proud of the honors that many groups around the world have given us. And we’re even more proud that the public—whether in theaters, at *Disneyland*®, or in their homes—continues to express its faith in the kind of family entertainment we produce.”

—Walt Disney

YOUR BRAND IS YOUR PROMISE

Disney is recognized as having one of the most powerful brands in the world. People know the power of the Disney brand because they can feel it in their *hearts*. Disney makes an emotional connection, and it does so *consistently* in a way that makes people want to come back for more.

INSIGHT

Customer loyalty and profitability follow when an organization makes a meaningful and credible promise to a customer, and then delivers on that promise—over and over and over again.



Understanding how we think about the brand promise requires breaking it down into these concepts:

- **CUSTOMER LOYALTY** refers to the existence of customers who engage in long-term, repeated purchase behavior. Customer loyalty provides attractive economic and competitive benefits.
- **BRAND** refers to the blend of perceived benefits associated with a product or company.
- **BRAND PROMISE** refers to the product and benefits intended to be provided by the ideal brand experience.
- **CONSISTENCY** refers to the ongoing dependable delivery of a branded experience that builds trusting relationships with customers.

For the brand promise to have true meaning and value, it needs to be developed with awareness of what is important to customers, and be put into practice to help make decisions about the product or service.

When you maintain a credible, meaningful brand promise over time, your brand experience is more likely to be delivered with a higher level of consistency. This will help you develop more trusting relationships with your customers and increase the likelihood of deep attachment to your brand.

Loyal Guardians of the Brand



Managing the brand is about consistently delivering an experience so unique and special that customers actively seek out and protect it as their own, creating an extraordinary ripple effect of long-term, passionate customers.

Many Guests have very strong feelings about our attractions at our Disney parks, and they give voice to those feelings through blog comments, letters, and communicating directly to our Cast Members.

This kind of affinity is powerful and necessary to form a deep attachment. But when changes are made, this affinity can cause distrust, questions, and uneasiness, even with the most loyal customers. To respect our customer loyalty, we have to understand this, listen, and deliver on our promise.

The deep attachment our Guests feel toward our brand happens because we are strategically focused on the promise we make to our Guests, how we keep that promise, and we make sure that we keep it over and over again. There is no reason that your company cannot do the same with your customers.



YOUR ORGANIZATION MUST HAVE A PURPOSE

INSIGHT

A common purpose is the essential foundation on which all other service decisions can be developed.



A *common purpose* is a succinct explanation of what you want the customer's experience to be at an emotional level and what you want to do for your customers.

Purpose drives everything your organization does; purpose leads you down the path to higher performance and an exceptional delivery of service.

Disney's Common Purpose

We create happiness by providing the finest in entertainment for people of all ages, everywhere.

What can I start doing differently?



How is your organization consistently delivering (or not delivering) on a brand promise to your customers?

Consider what the common purpose is (or might be) at your organization. Note words that come to mind that might describe the common purpose shared by people at all levels of your organization.

Leadership Excellence

DEFINING LEADERSHIP

Any dictionary will show that the word leadership is a noun, but this can create challenges for those who treat leadership as a noun in practice. At Disney, we choose to think about leadership as a verb because we believe that leadership is not who you are, but rather what you do.



Leadership is a result of the actions one takes rather than the position one holds.

What traits and behaviors do you think define a successful leader?

At our Disney parks and resorts, we intentionally infuse values into leadership.

INSIGHT

Leaders establish, operationalize, and sustain the *values* and *vision* by which their organizations thrive.



The long-term success of our Disney parks and resorts has been cultivated by the actions of exceptional leaders who have exemplified the values first shown by Walt and Roy Disney.

The intentional actions of exceptional leaders and Cast Members drive the long-term success of the company.

THE LEADER'S ROLE

If leadership is defined by a person's traits and behaviors, then **values** and **vision** become crucial elements in how a leader functions within an **organization**.

Defining Values

Values are important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is desirable or undesirable. Personal values influence behaviors and attitudes, and organizational values serve as broad guidelines in all business interactions.

Defining Vision

A vision is an ambitious view of the future that everyone in the organization can believe in, and it promises a future that is better than what now exists. The vision will evolve, but must remain realistic, specific, relevant to all involved, and must create an environment for organizational change without sacrificing values.

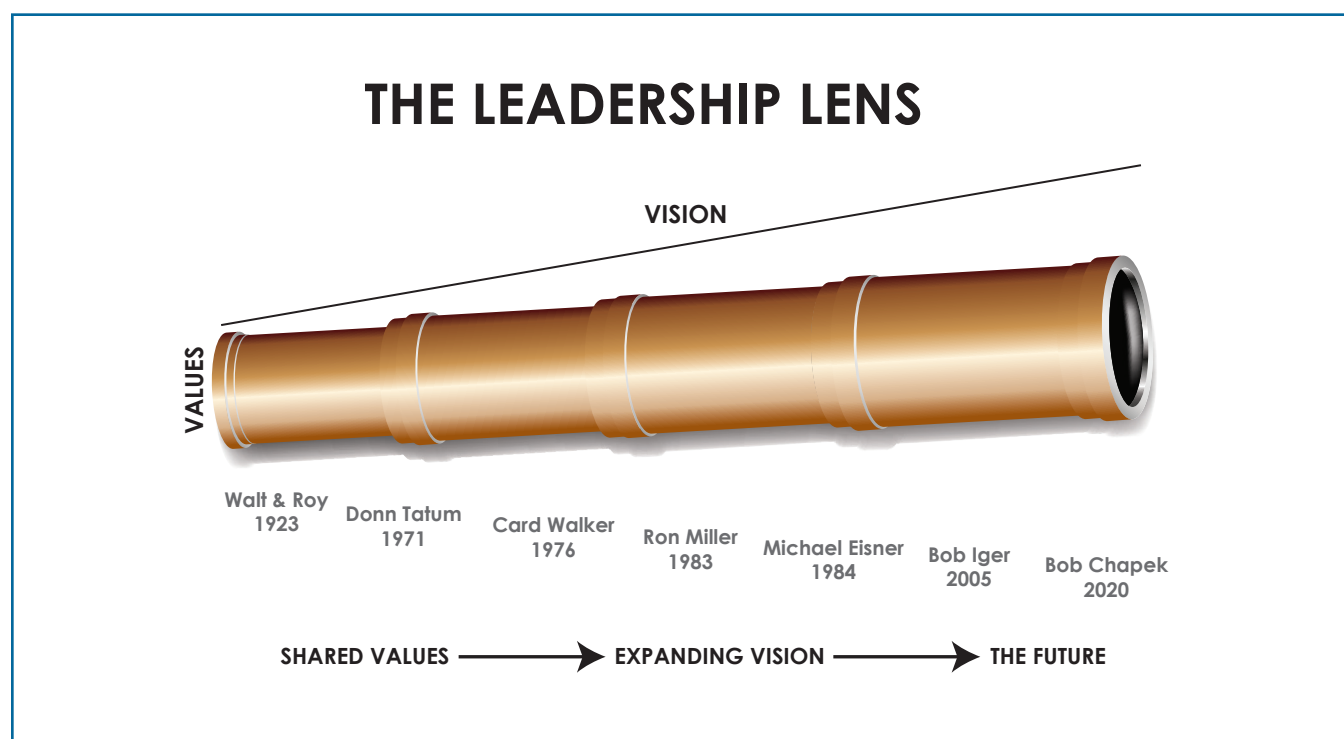
Defining Organization

An organization is an individual or a group of people that form interdependence through collaboration to achieve certain goals. In this program, organization is referred to as the sphere of operations that you are responsible for as a leader, at any level or position.

THE LEADERSHIP LENS

Values-infused leaders cultivate success by making values foundational to their decision-making.

Leaders help establish “who we are,” “what we stand for,” and “why we are headed in the direction we are.” They must explain *the why* and help people get behind the vision through an understanding of the values.



The Leadership Lens is like a telescope looking at an ambitious view of the future through the lens of shared values. While values can evolve, they tend to remain relatively consistent over time, shifting in subtle ways. You may need to evolve your value set or express it differently when a significant change occurs or is needed. The vision can and must change over time to ensure a vibrant organization.

What can I start doing differently?



Consider the behaviors of leaders in your organization. What do they value?

What do you value?

How are these values and the vision for the company communicated? Describe how this can be improved.

Employee Engagement

A CULTURE OF ENGAGEMENT

INSIGHT

Because your culture is defined by how people behave, the ideal employees are those who most closely align with your desired behaviors.



What do we mean when we say “desired behaviors”?

- Behaviors are the observable manifestation of your culture.
- Behaviors reflect assumptions about how people think and act, as well as the values and beliefs that members of the organization share.
- Desired behaviors are the behaviors that you want exhibited in your organization, those that will bring all of the elements of your unique culture to life.

Behavior (n): the way in which one acts or conducts oneself.

**If ... Culture = Desired Behaviors
And ... Desired Behaviors = Results
Then ... Culture = Results**

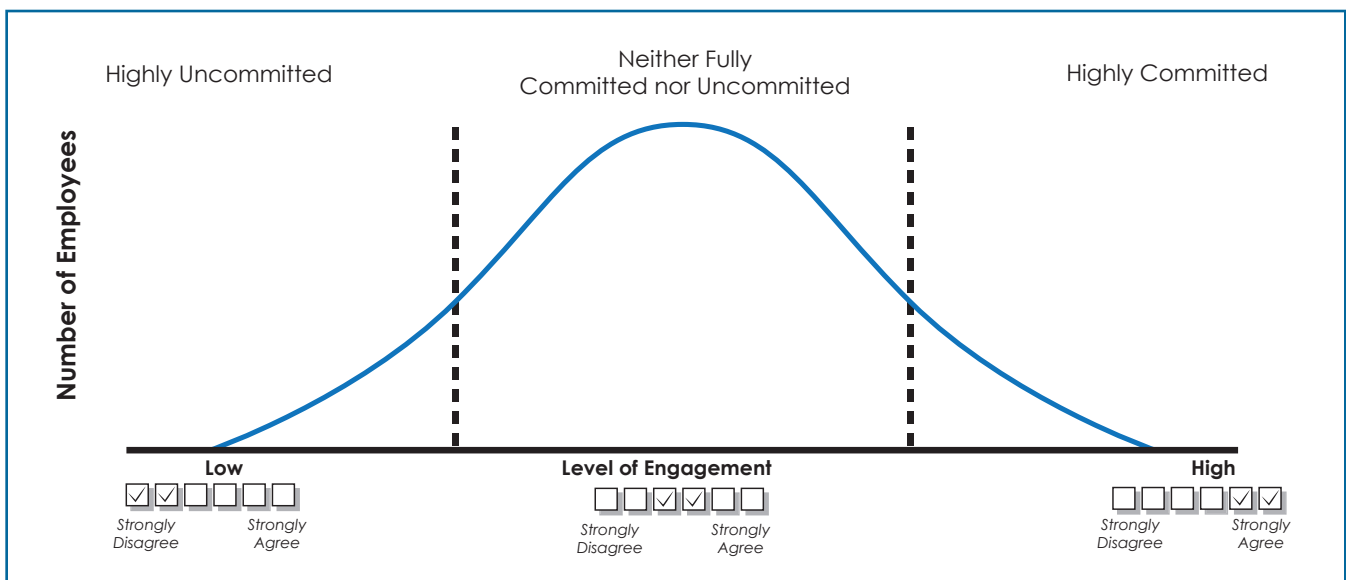
Shifting the Curve in Employee Performance

"Why are my people not performing the way I want them to?" This is a critical gap within many organizations, and it defines the engagement challenge.



By increasing the number of highly engaged people in your organization, you will have more people performing the desired behaviors.

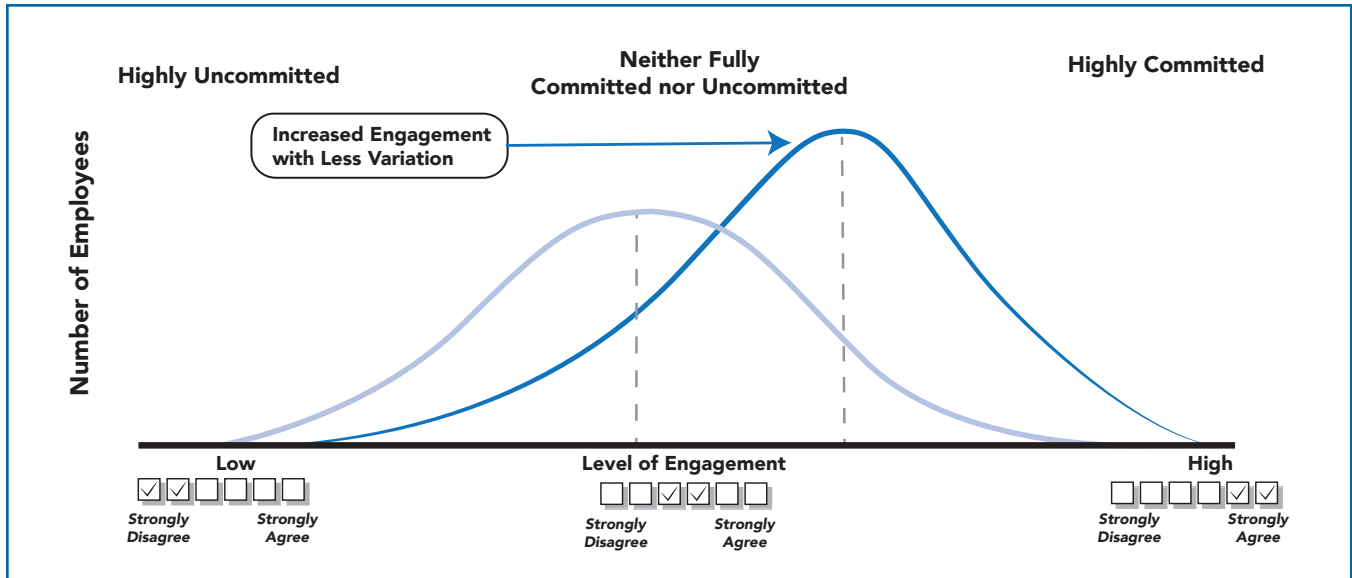
Employee engagement in most organizations tends to look like a standard bell curve.



Characteristics:

- **HIGHLY UNCOMMITTED** – A relatively small number of employees, these people are typically performing their jobs beneath the standard that is expected and are not exhibiting the desired behaviors. They may be actively opposed to something or someone within their organization if not the organization itself.
- **NEITHER FULLY COMMITTED NOR UNCOMMITTED** – These people are typically meeting the expectations required of their role, but they sometimes fall short of consistently exhibiting desired behaviors. This is the largest category of people within a typical organization, and they are “up for grabs.”
- **HIGHLY COMMITTED** – Typically the smallest group, these people consistently exhibit desired behaviors and work hard to exceed expectations every day.

Sustained improvement in organizational performance requires an increase in the number of highly engaged employees. Therefore, maximizing the number of highly engaged employees represents the primary goal and measure of success for organizational effort.



You can increase the percentage of highly engaged employees and shift this curve to the right by paying attention to four details: selection, training, communication, and care.

- Put the right people in the right roles.
- Provide people with high-quality training.
- Carefully listen to employees' viewpoints.
- Care for employees.

You may not be able to control the actions of every person in your organization, but you can create an overall environment where your performance curve consistently and increasingly reflects an engaged workforce delivering your desired behaviors.

YOUR BUSINESS IS A FUNCTION OF ITS PEOPLE

“Our Cast do what they do because of our culture—a culture in which every person here understands how important and how special a Disney vacation is to each Guest family. Guests often refer to their experience in our parks and resorts as ‘Disney magic.’ Yet, **it’s not the ‘magic’ that makes it work—it’s the method.** It’s a deliberate process . . . that is continuously reinforced by leaders and peers alike, and the result of this is more than a loyal and happy Guest, it’s a loyal and happy Cast as well.”

—George A. Kalogridis,
President, Segment Development and Enrichment



Quality Service

EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IS ACHIEVABLE

INSIGHT

Exceptional service is achievable for every organization because exceptional service is *architected* from systems and processes that you control.



THE CUSTOMER IS KING

Exceptional service is NOT simply the result of a poster or slogan posted on the office wall.



Exceptional service is about systems, standards, and processes.

Even in an imperfect environment, the achievement of exceptional service is possible.

Service is not entirely about people.

Exceptional customer service results from an integrated systems approach. Service is not just about hiring friendly people and hoping they will deliver customer service that is better than your competitor's service.



Typically, an organization will provide their front-line employees with customer service training. Customer service decisions have little to do with customer service training.

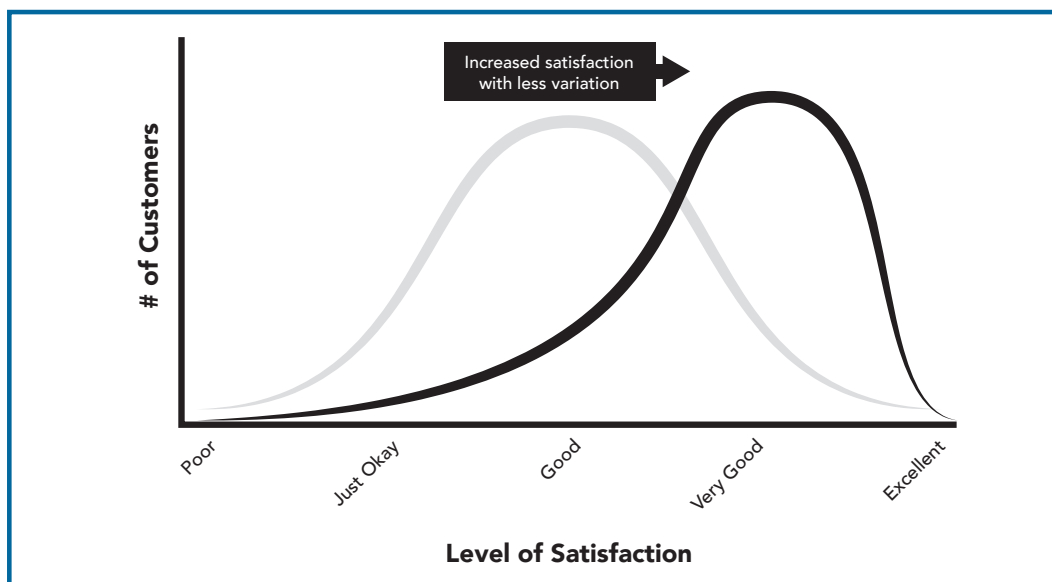
SHIFTING THE CURVE IN THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Most organizations have service that falls into three broad categories: poor service, average service, and exceptional service.



Recognize that while your aspirational goal should be perfection, your practical service goal is not perfection.

As an organization, we are continuously shifting the curve from what you would typically see in terms of service from an organization to more and more employees delivering exceptional service, every time. We also focus on the systems and processes that ensure our service curve is consistently *right and tight*.



SERVICE STANDARDS HELP UNLOCK CONSISTENCY

INSIGHT

A key to driving consistent service delivery is to develop and set standards that empower your people to embody customer-centric service values and behaviors in every aspect of their role.



Service standards are the operating priorities and values that guide the consistent delivery of service. They help unite everyone in the organization in a core set of values that provide parameters to make quality decisions using critical thinking skills while delivering service.

At our Disney Parks, Experiences & Products division, we have five service standards. Our service standards are the foundation for the world-class customer service and care that our Cast Members provide by aligning our overall purpose with a deep understanding of customer expectations. We apply these standards both externally, in our service to our Guests and internally, in how we treat and serve each other.



SAFETY • COURTESY • INCLUSION • SHOW • EFFICIENCY

- **SAFETY:** Is always our first priority. Everyone is responsible for creating and maintaining safe environments and safe situations at all times, including both physical and emotional safety.
- **COURTESY:** Providing friendly, personalized service to make Guests and fellow employees feel special and individual; seeing, listening, and interacting with kindness and compassion.
- **INCLUSION:** The heart of everything we do. In order to make magic for everyone, we must include everyone. The Inclusion Key both stands alone and supercharges the other four keys.
- **SHOW:** Attention to detail sets us apart from other experiences by immersing Guests in a story and maintaining environments that are clean and tidy; these experiences must reflect the lives and experiences of our Guests and feel relevant.
- **EFFICIENCY:** Providing a great experience through practices that minimize costs, reduce wait times, and provide Guests the best value for their entertainment dollar; we need to proactively include different perspectives to make our work better.

What can I start doing differently?



Where is your organization on the service curve?

To apply the curve to your organization, identify some systems and processes you have in place that might contribute or distract from the delivery of consistent service.

Continuous Feedback & Improvement

THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF INNOVATION

"In this volatile business of ours, we can ill afford to rest on our laurels, even to pause in retrospect. Times and conditions change so rapidly that we must keep our aim constantly focused on the future."

—Walt Disney



Today's global economy is rapidly changing, which makes organizational innovation increasingly critical.

INSIGHT

Everyone has valuable information to share.



Harnessing a wide variety of perspectives is critical to boosting the quality of new ideas.

"I never know where my next great idea will come from."

—Walt Disney

What can I start doing differently?



How can innovation have economic value for your organization?

Name a successful process for continuous feedback in your organization. Then, note how you might expand the use of continuous feedback in your organization.

Note any ideas you may have about processes that can be put into place to make continuous improvement part of your culture.

Conclusion

“Give the people everything you can give them. Keep the place as clean as you can keep it. Keep it friendly, you know. Make it a real fun place to be. I think they’re convinced and I think they’ll hang on after as you say, well, after Disney.”

—Walt Disney

BUSINESS EXCELLENCE REVISITED



Disney’s consistent business results are driven by strategically focusing on certain business functions and opportunities in which companies often fail to see the value and potential—and that is a key source of what differentiates us. We have learned to be intentional where others may be unintentional.

Disney Institute Chain of Excellence



You can achieve business excellence in your organization by:

- Clarifying your brand promise to deliver a consistent brand experience.
- Communicating and reinforcing your common purpose.
- Intentionally providing values and vision through leadership excellence.
- Intentionally designing a culture of employee engagement.
- Intentionally delivering quality service through systems and processes.
- Keeping your organization moving forward through continuous feedback and improvement.

When you think differently about what business excellence truly means, you will be able to intentionally align the components of your Chain of Excellence to achieve sustained results.

NOTES

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