

I'm Going to Disney World!

How a Trip to Magic Kingdom Showed Me Some Magic for My Own Business

by
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There are people who go to Disneyworld every year. They never go anywhere else. I once thought these people were insane, but now I can't wait to go back, myself! My marketing brain understands why. Here are three things Disney does to make people want to come back again and again.

1 Build a new world—every detail of the world. At Disney, employees are not employees. They are Cast Members. You don't ride a bus or a shuttle. You ride the Magical Express. Every detail is taken care of, because you are not in the real world anymore. You are in Disneyworld. One day, we got caught in a storm and ducked into the souvenir shop. We happened to be in China (not real China, Epcot China). We planned to buy Disney logo ponchos that were conveniently displayed when a sign caught our eye: "Umbrellas purchased here will be personalized with your name in Chinese letters." Waitaminute, a souvenir that is practical, cute, and educational? We'll take three, please! Umbrellas purchased, lettered, and unfurled, we made our way through the rest of the exhibit. As we left the area some fifteen minutes later, another Cast Member waved to us and called my children by name. She was reading their names off their umbrellas! It was a moment of authentic, spontaneous

fun—one that my kids talked about for the rest of the day. Which brings me to the Cast Members themselves...

2 Create a culture of caring. At Disneyworld, the staff is happy. Cast members smile at you, even if they're running by you with an armful of ice or tee shirts. And this is not an accident. Disney trains its employees to be this way. The buttons are a great example of this. You

can celebrate anything at Disney, whether it's your first visit or your honeymoon or your 90th birthday, and when you check in to your hotel, they ask you what you are celebrating and give you a button to wear so everyone knows. It provides Cast Members with an opportunity to personally engage visitors. Everyone is eager to help, attentive to your needs—and this is not an act. While returning some sunglasses my

kids decided they didn't want after wearing them for 37 seconds, I had a chance to talk with a Cast Member about his job. I complimented him on his pleasant attitude and willingness to help me out with what had become a stressful situation (before you judge, that this was our second 12-hour day and our kids were overdue for lunch. Yes, Disney is intense.) He told me, "We always keep in mind that people are here on vacation, and it's our job to make

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it a great experience. We have fun helping you have fun."

3 Dream big and share your vision at every opportunity. On the



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Magical Express from the airport to our resort we watched a film that contained footage of Walt Disney himself, explaining the plans for Disneyworld, beginning with, "We chose Florida because it has all the room we need for everything we want to do." He made decisions based on what would allow big dreams to grow. And it keeps on growing. During our visit, several new attractions were under construction. Instead of typical "please excuse the mess" signs, there were brightly colored plaques emblazoned with Walt Disney's quotations: philosophies on building, teamwork, and ideas. It actually got you excited about what was happening behind those walls. Everything they do is aligned with a purpose intended by the man who started it all.

So now we're back from Disney, back to real life. When the plane touched down in Providence (I mean, Warwick) I felt like I had a great big Mickey-ears-shaped hole in my heart. My son had been sighing all day, "I'm going to miss Disney." My daughter was already planning "the next time we go." And I have to admit, my husband and I were starting to agree with all those Disneyphiles we'd previously thought were crazy. In the words of an avid fan who makes the pilgrimage annually, "When you're at Disney, you are truly in another world. You don't worry about anything, you just enjoy every moment. There's no other word for it except magical." There's a method behind this magic—try making some magic happen in your business today! ☺

