

The Experience of Disneyland BY MARK DUNN, CEO



It's all about the EXPERIENCE!

Disneyland is a 22-mile drive from my house, and I estimate I've visited the park over 150 times over the past 15 years. There have been times when my family has trekked to Disneyland at 8:00 in the evening just to enjoy the Peter Pan ride, then gone home. As a family we've stayed at the Grand Californian and the Disneyland hotels over spring breaks. We've watched Fantasmic and numerous other firework shows and the Electrical Parade, as well as various other parades. We've found the "gold spike" that signifies the center of the original park, have ridden on Jingles, and found many of the hidden Mickeys. My oldest daughter's favorite thing to do when she was younger was to go through Sleeping Beauty's Castle. For many years it was closed, but now it's reopened with updated scenery. My daughter, of course, liked the original better.

Walt Disney's vision was that Disneyland would never be completed. Many of the rides that existed when I was a kid are no longer there, like the Sky Buckets, or the Monsanto House of the Future, or the Rocket to Mars. Even my kids have experienced some rides that have come and gone, like the Johnny Rocket Cars.

One big difference between Disneyland and other California theme parks is that Disneyland is never stale. Did you know that in the original plans the two entrances located to the left and right of the flowered Mickey that take you under the railroad track were to have curtains that opened and closed for each person entering? That was quickly determined to be impractical, but the intent was to create an unforgettable experience of

being transported to a place of magic. Disneyland continues to look for new and innovative ways to offer a fantastic experience for the guests.

So, like Disneyland, what are you doing in your office to be new and innovative? Just Google what's new in dentistry and you'll find a great deal including:

- Treatment of decay with air abrasion
- Treatment of decay and gum problems with the dental lasers
- Digital x-ray imaging
- Intra-oral computer camera
- Tissue engineering

I have found the key difference is that Disneyland has "cast members" where other parks only have "employees." The cast members are instilled with the concept that they are actors and their role is to make others happy and to be very helpful. In order for the guests to be fully immersed in the magic of each land, it's important that each set of cast members wear uniforms specific to the land. It's also important that guests not see cast members from one land in another, so cast members travel in underground passageways, backstage, and behind the scenes.

Along that same line, it's important for your own employees to understand there's more to their jobs than just performing their tasks well. To be excellent they need:

- Great attitude. Bad attitudes bring everyone down. A great employee helps make work great for everyone else by having a good spirit about the job.
- Tact. If there is a problem in the office, a great employee won't make a scene in front of everyone else, but will deal with an issue privately and diplomatically. Great employees don't spread gossip and are truthful.
- Excellent working skills. Great employees constantly seek ways to improve themselves. They don't wait for the employer to send them to a seminar; they find books or seek external education.
- Dependability. They do the job they are supposed to do and do it every time so no one has to worry that it won't be completed.

After so many trips, I still get excited when I go to Disneyland. Since 1955 it has been able to capture the essence of what a truly wonderful experience entails and has been exceptional at consistently providing that experience to the millions of people attending their parks. One thing I will always take from my experiences at Disneyland is that "YOU (as in the employee) make the magic!"