

Creating a Service Mission

Ask anyone who has any experience at a Disney theme park to describe their experience, and they will typically say words like "service", "excellence", "dream come true", or "amazing". How does an operation earn those kinds of accolades and results – consistently?

No, the answer isn't "pixie dust"! The key reason is that everyone in the organization is unified by focusing on a single, higher purpose, which is reinforced by the front line operation. This is the reason our expectations are exceeded when a teenage (near minimum wage) popcorn seller voluntarily leaves their popcorn stand to "make a magical moment" by taking a photo of a

family – quite possibly the only photo of them all together for the entire vacation – all because his more important purpose was to "create happiness". That is a "Disney Difference", and it is the kind of difference every world-class company makes by defining and supporting a commitment to more important things than the "job".

There is power in a central mission or service statement. While at Disney and since then, we at World Class Benchmarking have had many opportunities to help organizations from all over the world discover their primary mission. Disney's job is to create happiness. What is yours? Here are some examples:

Pick 'n Pay (A South African Grocery Chain): "We serve. With our hearts, we create a great place to be. With our minds, we create an excellent place to shop."

New York Department of Finance (Responsible for collecting billions from NYC taxpayers): "We help people pay the right amount on time."

M. D. Anderson (University of Texas Cancer Center): "We make cancer history."

Department of Administrative Services (An Iowa State Government Group that must compete with outside vendors for delivering services to other parts of Iowa State Government) "We partner with government in delivering results."

The Brookfield Zoo (Located in Chicago): "We engage guests in celebrating animals and nature."

Tom Peters and Robert Waterman noted in their landmark book: *In Search of Excellence*: "Whether or not they are as fanatic in their service obsession as Frito, IBM, or Disney, the excellent companies all seem to have very powerful service themes that pervade the institutions. In fact, one of our most significant conclusions is that, whether their basic business is metal-bending, high technology, or hamburgers, they have all defined themselves as service businesses."

For your organization, consider the following:

Do you have a succinct declaration of your organization's purpose?

Does it communicate a clear expectation internally of what matters most?

Does it create an image of your organization?

Is it more than a corporate mission statement nailed to the wall in some boardroom?

Is everyone on board to that mission?

How does your role tie into the mission of the organization?

How can you help each employee tie into the mission of the organization?

It's important to have everyone pointed in the same mission. Indeed, there is power in that. "We Create Happiness", a concept when Disneyland was first created, has endured until today. By shaping a vision of your own, you can build an ideal, a statement of that exemplifies the products and services you offer.

Imagine the possibilities when everyone is pointed in the same direction with the same higher purpose in mind. It's attainable even in your kingdom, just as it was in this happiest of all places more than 50 years ago.

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