

Surviving THRIVING in Difficult Times

He knows not his own strength that hath not met adversity. - Ben Johnson

Feeling the heat of challenging times? How can world-class companies consistently navigate through difficult challenges and emerge even stronger and extending their competitive edge - even when others are struggling to survive? What is their secret?

A geodesic sphere (like Spaceship Earth™, Walt Disney World's Epcot® icon) has several unique qualities - among which is how the construction design actually makes the structure stronger when placed under pressure.

The way all the individual pieces fit together reinforce each other even better when external forces increase.

Great companies are similar in how they design their operation. Testing from a difficult external environment - whether via competition, social changes, or the economy - only serves to reveal the effectiveness of their approach to success. Creating an effective internal culture that results in an excellent external brand experience can be done at any time. The question is: why wait?

In a recent study, over 100 senior executives from over 75 corporations identified the "individual facets" that interact to create the strongest possible. These facets include:

- Leaders (both formal and informal) and employees who:
 - Understand and model the culture
 - Learn and grow in a meaningful way
 - Are engaged with the external and internal customers
- A customer experience that:
 - Is aligned with their personal preferences and the brand promise
 - Delivers a value-added quality product/service that exceeds expectations
 - Balances every important detail to create a unique, loyal relationship
- Business practices that:
 - Balance the resources to align with the company mission
 - Constantly innovate to optimize all facets of the organization
 - Consistently reflect an "investment mentality" mindset

These lists resulted in the following categories: 1. Alignment (to the business strategy), 2. Capabilities (talent, information, resources), and 3. Engagement (commitment of employees and customers).

Every company has two things revealed in difficult times: weaknesses and strengths. The best time to create a stronger, more effective organization is always today. To be encouraged - even in challenging times - requires courage. Courage comes from being prepared with the right strategies and the right tactics. By taking the right actions now, you too could actually thrive in these difficult times. What are you choosing to do? Imagine what you might be capable of?

To all of our World Class Benchmarking readers:

Professionals from all over the world express strong interest in learning the best practices of The Walt Disney Company, and for a good reason: Disney is an example of success on many levels. In an effort to satisfy those requests, we are proud to announce that Jeff Kober has been selected as the new contributing columnist for MousePlanet.Com - the leading and most visited sites on the web for information on all things Disney.



Jeff's fascinating articles are full of "behind-the-scenes" insights and are featured every other Thursday. Visit www.MousePlanet.com today to discover this week's article on one way Disney creates such a consistently magical place.

You may be asking what this has to do with world-class organizations...well, read the article and you'll be surprised. There's a strong message for leaders that you'll want apply to your own work-life - and forward it to others.

Of course, as much insight as there are in these articles, there is no better way to learn how the best-of-the-best companies operate than to see them in action! Our highly regarded "Destination: Orlando!" open-enrollment program includes experiences with Disney, as well as several other world-renown businesses. Hurry and register today - we only have two programs still available this Fall.