

Book Review

'The Disney Way' Harnessing the Management Secrets of Disney in Your Company

Authors: **Bill Capodagli and Lynn Jackson**
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"I dream, I test my dreams against my beliefs, I dare to take risks and I execute my vision to make those dreams come true."

- **Walt Disney**

After receiving many accolades for the first edition of *The Disney Way*, including the coveted "Best Business Book of the Year" by Fortune magazine, the authors Bill Capodagli and Lynn Jackson who are the world's leading experts on Disney have put together an even more insightful edition. They have outlined a novel set of varied organizations that have uniquely applied Walt Disney's "dream, believe, dare, do" principles and reinvented their businesses.

The book will enthrall readers by real world anecdotes of the highly inspiring credo that highlight the importance of embracing self-evident and resolute values. These four uncomplicated beliefs have been implemented by several leaders for many years now.

The revised edition is organized into thirteen chapters, followed by an Epilogue in which the authors examine the integration between the principles they have studied which can be of substantial benefit to other companies. The first chapter charts the beginning of Walt Disney's company from modest roots to the multi-billion dollar corporation it is today. The

reason for this spectacular rise was Walt's dream, steadfast beliefs, risk taking nature, meticulous planning and suitable execution.

The second chapter explains the implication of allowing members of the organization to dream and develop their innovative talents. The company employs several 'Imagineers' whose purpose is to develop creative ideas. But this creative spirit is not restricted to the Imagineers but included all employees.

The third chapter focuses on the importance of implicit and unquestionable belief in values and principles. A clear understanding of the basic beliefs and core values of the company helps in making better decisions. Leadership must encourage employees to always think long-term.

The fourth chapter delves into the philosophy of treating every customer as a guest. Walt Disney was resolute on being able to understand the wishes and needs of his guests. The authors outline that to best examine how an organization values its clients, we need to evaluate how the organization deals with customer complaints.

The fifth and sixth chapters highlight the significance of collaboration and empowerment of the employees. Teamwork is described as a method of nurturing intense devotion, zeal and dedication. They also outline the value of strategic alliances and partnerships with other companies. Instead of utilizing a Disney group of musicians, the Philadelphia Orchestra became a decisive partner in the success of the film Fantasia.

The seventh chapter portrays the management support of taking risks as a method of cultivating innovative ideas. Although the company's success is a result of the numerous risks and skeptics that Walt overcame, he stressed that risks need to be calculated, based on solid fundamentals.

In the eighth chapter, it is observed that many of the above mentioned principles are dependent on the value of formal and continuous training. Each new employee is trained at the 'Disney University', which helps instill not only the specific job skills and competencies but also the company's culture, tradition and core values.

In the ninth chapter, the significance of meticulous planning and proper execution is analyzed. Walt Disney recognized that although creativity does require space to grow, the generation of ideas is considered part of the corporate process and requires careful management.

The tenth chapter outlines the usefulness of the storyboard technique as a means to

generate solutions and to enhance communication. Walt Disney is credited to have conceived 'Storyboarding' which is an effective method to keep track of thousands of drawings necessary to achieve full animation of cartoon features. Today, the technique has spread across many areas of the organizational process.

The eleventh chapter describes the significance of paying attention to detail. Comprehensive attention to the little things is what turns the vision into a top quality product or outstanding service. Walt Disney was relentlessly searching for perfection and always asking how something could be improved.

The twelfth chapter illustrates the number of monumental events in company over the past quarter century. There were blocking of two hostile takeovers, increase in number of theme parks from four to eleven, birth of 3D animation, acquisition of a major television network, fights in boardrooms and courtrooms and the company's corporate image as both 'prince' and 'villain' of Wall Street.

The thirteenth chapter showcases the companies that have implemented Walt's legendary success credo and achieved phenomenal triumph. The leaders in these companies have exercised their 'magic' by empowering employees, created new avenues for the future and dared to make a difference

This book is an interesting read for everyone as we all have been touched by the Disney

characters in our lives and learning about the guiding principles of Walt Disney's company opens the magic for us and helps understand their practical applications across a variety of other organizations.

As Walt Disney said "All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them".

Reviewed by:

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