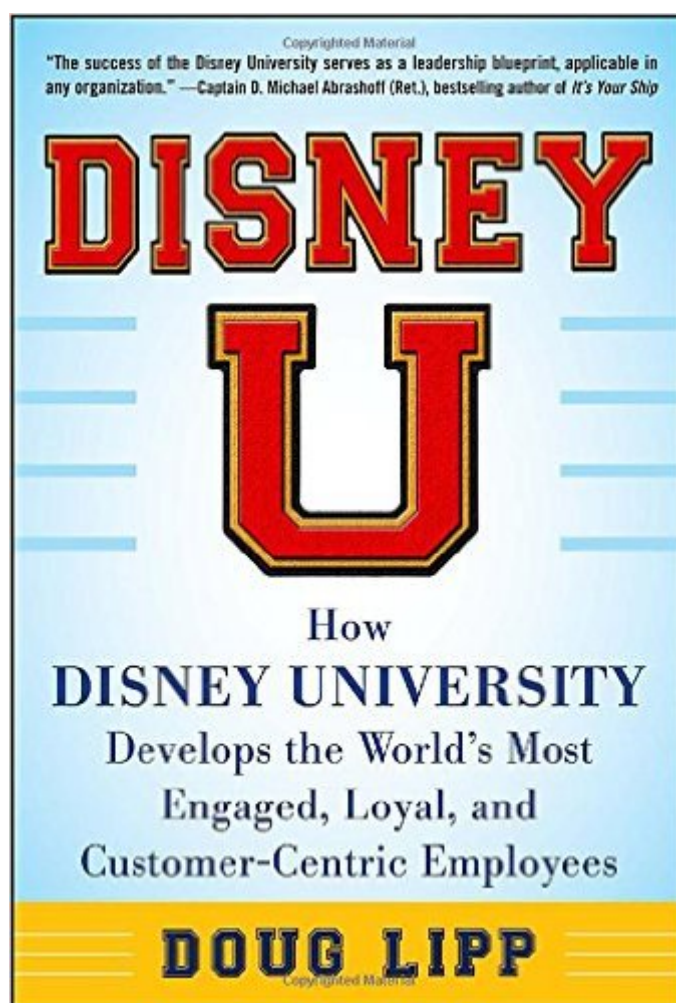


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# Disney U: How Disney University Develops The World's Most Engaged, Loyal, And Customer-Centric Employees



## Synopsis

With a Foreword by Jim Cora, former Chairman of Disneyland International "A leadership blueprint, applicable in any organization." -- Captain D. Michael Abrashoff, U.S. Navy (Ret.), and author of *It's Your Ship* "When I first arrived at The Walt Disney Company, I was surprised to find I had to go back to school--at Disney University! There, I learned the fundamentals of guest service that consistently gave Disney a tremendous advantage in the marketplace. Now, anyone can know these secrets of success thanks to Doug Lipp's informative book. No matter what your business, the lessons taught at Disney University will prove invaluable." -- Michael Eisner, Former CEO and Chairman, The Walt Disney Company

When it comes to world-class employees, few organizations rival Disney. Famous for their friendliness, knowledge, passion, and superior customer service, Disney's employees have been fueling the iconic brand's wild success for more than 50 years. How has Disney succeeded in maintaining such a powerful workforce for so many years? Why are so many corporations and executives drawn to study how Disney continues to exemplify service and leadership standards? The Disney University, founded by Van France, trains the supporting cast that helps create the world-famous Disney Magic. Now, for the first time, the secrets of this exemplary institution are revealed. In *Disney U*, Doug Lipp examines how Van perpetuated Walt Disney's timeless company values and leadership lessons, creating a training and development dynasty. It contains never-before-told stories from numerous Disney legends. These pioneers share behind-the-scenes success stories of how they helped bring Walt Disney's dream to life. *Disney U* reveals the heart of the Disney culture and describes the company's values and operational philosophies that support the iconic brand. Doug Lipp lays out 13 timeless lessons Disney has used to drive profits and growth worldwide for more than half a century. To this day, the Disney University continues to turn out some of the most engaged, loyal, and customer-centered employees the business world has ever seen. Using the lessons outlined in *Disney U* will set your organization on a path of sustained success.

**PRAISE FOR *Disney U*:** "I highly recommend *Disney U* to anyone interested in building an enduring market presence and brand." -- Stephen Cannon, President and Chief Executive Officer, Mercedes-Benz USA "Lipp's narratives reveal how Van and other Disney visionaries set the stage for a world-class organization by skillfully balancing both 'people' and 'technology.'" -- Debi Aube, Vice President of Sales, Bose Corporation "Every leader should have the equivalent of a Van France at his or her side. Thanks to Doug Lipp, we can now tap into the brilliance of a man who helped Walt create *The Happiest Place on Earth*." -- David Overton, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, The Cheesecake Factory "How does Disney University create such enthusiastic, loyal, and customer-centered employees, year after year? Now, for the first time, Doug

Lipp takes us on a journey backstage to answer this pivotal question." -- John G. Veres III, Ph.D., Chancellor, Auburn University at Montgomery "Doug Lipp shares terrific stories about Disney that underscore the importance of creating an organizational culture with an unwavering dedication to superlative service and exceptional quality, both for employees and customers. He then takes it a step further by explaining how to bring these values to life for your organization." -- Christine A. Morena, Executive Vice President of Human Resources, Saks Incorporated

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Disneyland's employee orientation program grew to become Disney University, an institution that "forever changed the professions of employee training and development", according to Doug Lipp in this book. The author was for a number of years the head of the training team at Disney University, and the book is largely a tribute to Van France, the founder of Disney University. The book provides 13 "lessons" in training and managing employees derived partly from the Disney culture and partly from experience gained in facing and overcoming various problems over the years. Central to these lessons are Van France's "Four Circumstances", which are a type of core values relating to the employee training experience: Innovation, Organizational Support, Education and Entertainment. I personally found the most interesting lessons to be those learnt through encountering and overcoming significant problems: \* When the Disney Store was first opened, the shopping experience failed to meet expectations, and a new Disney Shopping Experience had to be created. \* Two years after the opening of Walt Disney World in Florida, employee turnover rate reached 83 percent, and urgent action had to be taken to improve employee morale. \* Recession in the early

1980s required creative approaches to differentiating by doing more with less.\* Communication silos caused lost marketing opportunities, and the Disney Dimensions executive training program was developed to address this.\* Cross-cultural issues had to be dealt with when new parks were opened in Japan and France. Most workplaces are quite unlike Disneyland, and many of the things that they do at Disney will not be transferrable to other work environments.

Personal note: Soon after Disneyland opened in 1955, my father was invited by Walt Disney to tour the park with him and his brother Roy. (My father's firm had been retained to design insurance coverage for the entire Disney organization and he served as the "general contractor" for assigning segment coverage.) Frankly, I had no idea what to expect and still get goose bumps every time I recall entering, for the first time, what was both metaphorically and literally a Magic Kingdom. Some organizations need to have more of their employees positively and productively engaged than do others and that is certainly true of The Walt Disney Company and, especially, true of its theme parks at which "cast members" constantly interact with "guests." In this book, Douglas Lipp explains how "the Disney University develops [who he claims are] the world's most engaged, loyal, and customer-centric employees." They are "second to none when it comes to friendliness, knowledge, attentiveness, passion, and guest service." That was true 58 years ago and remains true today. Van Arsdale France is the "human architect" to which the title of my review refers. According to Lipp, he was "a strange combination of three of Disney's most famous characters -- Jiminy Cricket, Mary Poppins, and Donald Duck" who exuded qualities and values "every leader should strive to attain: crystal-clear direction plus an unwavering commitment and passion," qualities that Disney also possessed in abundance. France played a major role in the development of people who make certain that each park would be "The Happiest Place on Earth" for guests as well as for themselves.

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