



# What do others do?

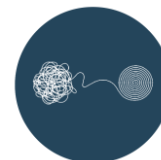
Leadership nuggets collected from the world of business, psychology, sport and the creative industries (and more!) and what we can learn from them.

## What others do... Connection

### The Magic of Disney

In their book, 'Be Our Guest: Perfecting the Art of Customer Service', the Disney Institute reveal some of the thinking behind customer service and the magic of connection. The book, from 2011, is a great read. Here I will pick out some of the highlights that I think are important for us when we think about connection, wherever (and whoever) we are leading.

1. **Language matters.** Disney call their employees 'cast members', not employees. These people are part of something; they literally have a part to play. This is a job, but it is also more than a job, it is a performance, it is rehearsed, it is precise, and it is helping preserve the legacy of Disney as well as the magic of it. Does the language we use tell us something about how we value people? Does it tell us what the role is?
2. **We are all in show business.** We are no longer about the production of goods alone; we are also moving past the 'service economy' where people want great customer service above other things. Now we are in the Experience Economy. People want memorable experiences, they want to feel something, they want to connect to something. People don't go to Disney World just for the rides, they go for the time together which creates conversation, connection and experiences that become memories that are shared across a lifetime. How do we do that in our workplaces? How are we connection bringers?
3. **Disney exceed, not just meet, expectations.** They aim to exceed guest expectations by paying attention to every detail. They talk about 'wowing' guests. They aim for 'little wows' that add up to 'big wows'. They do this in their films through attention to extraordinary detail and the use of easter eggs. They also apply the principle to their hotels and the physical location. There is no litter at Disney. The smell of popcorn is deliberate as guests go through the tunnels into the park; it is created to symbolise walking into a movie, but here it is like a real movie world. These appear to be small things but those 'small wows' say something bigger. Where are our 'little wows'? Do we plan them?
4. **They believe in 'guestology'.** Disney seek to understand their guests (not called customers at Disney!). They want to know and understand as much as possible so they can serve people brilliantly. They are building not for themselves, but for others. The more we know, the more we can connect with people. They spend a lot of time analysing (and asking) different demographics 4 things; what they need, what they want, what they feel and what the stereotypes might be. They use the



information to help connect better. Some cultures don't like the 'in your face' attention that others do. When Disney found that out from guests, they introduced a way for those who wanted attention to get it and those who didn't, to not be exposed. What do we know about 'guestology' in our setting? What could we do?

5. **They are quick to resolve issues.** The rule is to 'immediately resolve a guest service failure before it becomes a guest service problem'. For example, if a ride breaks down, you get free fast passes to other rides. Every member of staff is empowered to fix the problem. They are also told the thing they should not do; talking in front of guests about job-related problems is unacceptable. Focusing on the positive, greeting and thanking each guest, smiling and welcoming people, listening, giving assistance to take pictures, is all expected. These are performance guidelines and the expectation. There are no barriers to connection. How quick are we at resolving issues? Do we overlook obvious barriers that hinder connection?

At Disney, the rides and all the entertainment is (obviously) great but that is not what makes it magical. What makes it magical is the way Disney creates a world of connection. Connection with story, with each other, with place and with a world where litter, and other signs of normal daily life, are absent. We connect with something bigger, and better, than ourselves.

A significant amount of this connection is created by the small things that create the 'big wow'. This kind of magic isn't just for Disney.