

# **Leading a Culture of Service Excellence**

**Presented at the**

**Alaska Travel Industry Association's  
2008 Convention**

**by  
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# Interviewing and Selection

The selection and interviewing process is key for not only ensuring that your organization recruits and hires the best possible candidates. It is also a marvelous opportunity to communicate your culture. **Everything Speaks** during the interview process. Interviewees are picking up subtle (and not so subtle) clues as to what the culture of the organization truly is.

The selection/interview process should \_\_\_\_\_ the culture of the organization.



Key attributes:

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- 
- 

Key things to listen and watch for:

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- 
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Notes:

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## Sample Talent Questions for Current Employees

- What part of this job is most enjoyable for you?
- When you are a customer, what does great service look like to you?
- What tools are of greatest help to you in doing your job?
- What do you think the company expects of you as an employee?
- What do you think it takes to be considered great at your job?
- What do you find most frustrating about serving customers?
- What does a supervisor or manager do to get your best performance?
- What makes you feel successful at your job?
- How do you get everything done that needs to be done in your job?
- What frustrates you as a customer?
- What factors need to be in place to motivate you to do your best work?
- What's the best part about serving customers?
- What role do fellow employees play in your satisfaction at work?
- How would you describe excellent performance in a job such as yours?
- Why is your role important to the organization?

*"Every role, performed at excellence, requires talent"*

Marcus Buckingham, First, Break All the Rules



# Training

Training should ensure that the employee:

- Is \_\_\_\_\_ of the organization.
- Understands the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- Understands what is expected.



George Miliotis was the General Manager of the California Grill restaurant from the time it opened in 1995 until he left in 2002. The California Grill is an upscale restaurant located at Walt Disney World. George is a big believer in training and education. Every new cast member attends the Disney “Traditions” orientation. George recognized, however, that it was *his* responsibility to support and supplement the education his cast members received. George spent 15-minutes every day educating all California Grill cast members (front-of-house and back-of-house). If he wasn’t there, the Assistant Manager conducted the training session. Three topics were covered in these short sessions; wine, food, and service. George trained servers from all walks of life to be world-class food and wine experts. Every cast member on every shift knew how to describe all menu items in a way that highlighted the reason that it was special (menu items vary depending on season). George’s servers knew the perfect wine to accompany the meal a guest had ordered. Servers could describe the freshness of the tomatoes used in a way that would literally make your mouth water. George also discussed guest service issues, which included recognizing performance, providing showmanship tips (how to describe the wine list is truly an art), or anything else he felt deserved attention. The impact of these daily educational moments was impressive:

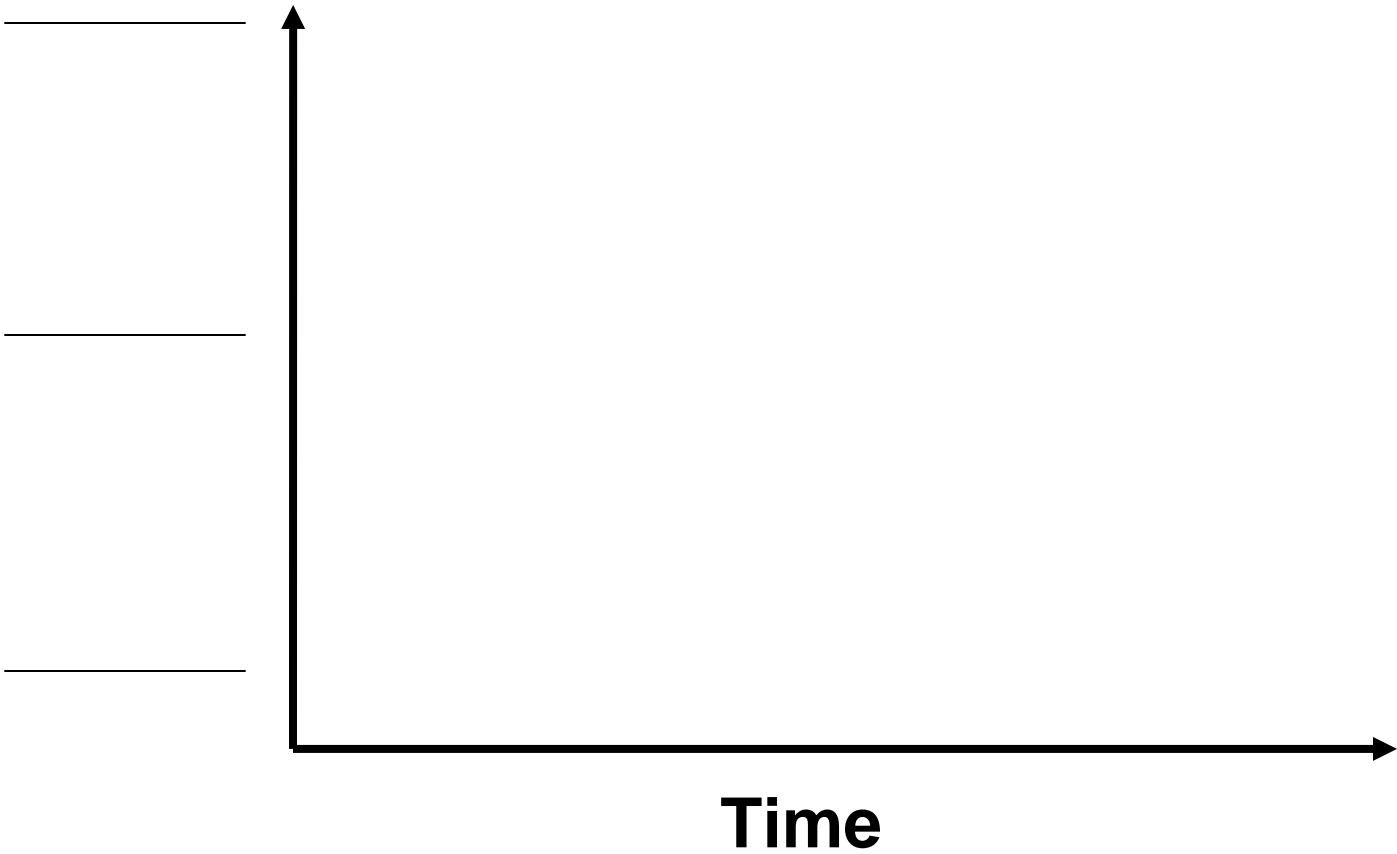
- Wine revenue represented 30%+ of total sales at the California Grill. Beverage sales in similar restaurants average only 10-15% of sales.
- In 1999, the USA Today food critic wrote that the single best meal he had that year in the United States was at the California Grill.
- 65% of the original staff (7-years at the time George left) were still with the restaurant. This is in an industry that averages nearly 200% turnover per year.

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## Sample Service Excellence Training Agenda

- 15 min.                    **Welcome/opening**
- Service-oriented participation activity
  - Objectives of the service improvement process
  - Overview of the service improvement process to date
  - Significance of the process to the company and employees
- 10 min.                    **Introduction of the customer service model**
- 20 min.                    **The "lens of the customer"**
- Definition of the "lens of the customer"
  - Interactive case study identifying behaviors that demonstrate an understanding of the customer's lens
  - Introduction of Service Mapping
- 20min.                    **"Everything speaks"**
- Definition of "everything speaks"
  - Interactive identification of environmental distracters
  - Participant discussion of best practices
  - Introduction of Everything Speaks Checklist
- 20 min.                    **Creating a Wow**
- Exceeding expectations in the real world
  - Interactive identification of behaviors that frustrate customers
  - Participant discussion of best practices for exceeding expectations
  - Introduction of Service Theme and Standards
- 20 min.                    **Action Planning**
- Individual action plans
  - Discussion of organizational next steps
- 15 min.  
2-hrs total                    **Interactive review of content**

# Communication *Stages of Understanding*



Notes:

# Accountability

## Accountability tools

Performance Appraisals

Job descriptions

Promotions

Coaching

## Coaching Employees

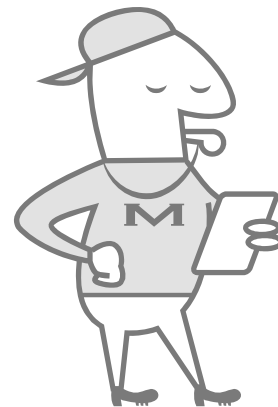
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# **Coaching Planning**

**Step 1: Position the discussion**

**Step 2: Discuss the performance situation**

**Step 3: Set a plan of action**

**Step 4: Communicate the consequences of non-performance**

**Step 5: Set a follow-up plan**

# Recognition

## The Importance of Saying “Thank You”

Recognize literally means to “\_\_\_\_\_.”



### Recognition/Celebration Opportunities

#### Organization-to-Employee:

*Current tools:*

*Opportunities for improvement:*

#### Manager-to-Employee:

*Current tools:*

*Opportunities for improvement:*

#### Peer-to-Peer:

*Current tools:*

*Opportunities for improvement:*

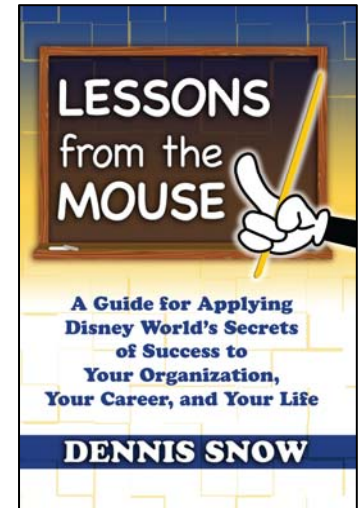
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Dennis Snow's newest book is now available!

## Lessons From the Mouse *A Guide for Applying Disney World's Secrets of Success to Your Organization, Your Career, and Your Life*

What can a mouse teach you? When that mouse has been delighting and entertaining hundreds of millions of people for decades, it turns out there is plenty to learn! Dennis Snow's newest book, ***Lessons From the Mouse*** provides ten no-nonsense, practical principles that anyone, anywhere can apply. He entertains while he educates with chapters like "What Time is the 3:00 Parade?' Is Not a Stupid Question."

The mouse is very candid here – no Disney pixie dust blinds the reader. Backstage snafus, onstage errors, and occasional chaos emerge in all their drama, humor, or irony. At its heart, though, ***Lessons From the Mouse*** presents ten lessons that guide readers in applying excellence in their own organizations, careers, and lives. The ten lessons include:



- Never Let Backstage Come Onstage
- What Time is the 3:00 Parade? Is Not a Stupid Question
- Little Wows Add Up
- Have Fun With the Job – No Matter How Miserable You Feel
- Don't Be a Customer Service Robot
- Pay Attention to the Details – Everything Speaks
- Never, Ever Say, "That's Not My Job" – Don't Even Think It!
- Everyone Has a Customer
- Figure Out What Ticks Off Your Customers – And Do Something About It
- Take Responsibility for Your Own Career

Find out more information at [www.lessonsfromthemouse.com](http://www.lessonsfromthemouse.com) or order from:

**Amazon.com**  
**BarnesandNoble.com**

For quantity discounts please go to [www.800CEOread.com](http://www.800CEOread.com) and type *Lessons From the Mouse* in the Search field.

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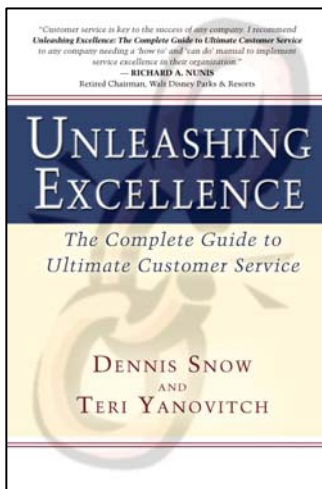
## Creating a Culture of Service Excellence (DVD)

Dennis's customer service presentation is now available on DVD. This informative 45-minute DVD covers topics like:

- Looking at your organization through the "lens of the customer."
- Paying attention to the details because "everything speaks."
- Delighting your customers by creating "little wows."

Featuring a keynote speech presented before a live audience, the DVD includes the service principles and stories that bring the principles to life. The content is designed to be entertaining, informative and practical. Use this DVD to:

- Provide content for in-house training programs.
- Introduce new employees to the service standards they are expected to demonstrate.
- Revitalize a company's focus on customer service.
- Re-familiarize employees with the key drivers of a service-driven organization



## Unleashing Excellence – The Complete Guide to Ultimate Customer Service (Book)

Many books have been written on the importance of excellent customer service. What has been missing is a "how to" book that takes the reader step-by-step through the key *processes* of planning and building a culture of service excellence. Dennis Snow and Teri Yanovitch have written a book that fills that gap.

**Unleashing Excellence: *The Complete Guide to Ultimate Customer Service*** encourages readers to take a strong look at their customer service efforts. With practical tools (all of which can be tailored to a company's own needs) readers find a step-by-step guide to building a service-driven culture. Here are tools and approaches that can be implemented by the most experienced company or department, as well as an organization just beginning to focus on customer service.

Nothing is left out of **Unleashing Excellence: *The Complete Guide to Ultimate Customer Service***. If you've been searching for a blueprint for building a customer service program, you'll find it here. The book's chapters include:

- The "DNA" of Service Excellence
- Creating a Service Improvement Team
- Developing Your Service "Non-negotiables"
- Communicating the Service Strategy to Your Team
- Service Training and Education
- Interviewing For Service Excellence
- Developing Effective Service Measurements
- Recognition and Reward Systems
- Implementing a Service Obstacle System
- Building a Culture of Accountability