

AS I SEE IT...



Applying the 'pixie dust'

The Disney Company has been accused of doing a lot of things to keep its employees happy. The most notable is sprinkling employees with pixie dust every morning.

This is not the case, according to Franki Turner, Walt Disney World's manager of marketing and seminar production operations. But what the company *does* do to keep employees happy also applies to the green industry.

"Our corporate management knows that image is very important to preserve," Turner says. "Every person at Disney realizes that. A ticket-taker sees 20,000 more guests a week than (WDW president) Dick Nunis. That person is one of the key marketing tools we have."

Turner said new employees are imbued with what she calls "corporate culture." She defines that as (1) tradition of the past, (2) operations of the present and (3) visions of the future. "They make up the culture of almost every organization. And we try to keep it simple and clean so it's understandable by all 23,000 employees."

After the company's culture has been defined, Turner says that three additional follow-ups keep employees loyal and happy.

No. 1 is training. One full day is set aside to show new employees how to go through the cafeteria line, how to make out time cards, where lockers are, etc. On-the-job training lasts anywhere from three days to two weeks, depending on the job.

No. 2 is communication, one of Disney's strong suits. The company uses bulletin boards, clever videos, newsletters and—most of all—



Franki Turner

personal contact (managers being what is called "out-in-the-area").

No. 3 is care. Disney shows it cares for its employees. The company holds annual picnics and chooses one date a year on which employees and their families can get in the park for free. Disney even goes so far as to help find temporary and permanent housing, and—very important—promotes heavily from within.

Teamwork is of utmost importance. "No one ever says 'it's not my job,'" notes an employee in the standard Disney training video.

Finally, Turner notes, "Cast members (employees) are treated as we expect them to treat the guests."

These ideas, clearly, don't only work for the entertainment industry. They are also applicable to the green industry and others.

Use your imagination. Sprinkle some pixie dust on your employees!

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