

Seven Keys to Consider: Exceeding Family Expectations in 4-H Clubs



Based on: "Inside the Magic Kingdom: Seven Keys to Disney's Success", written by Tom Connellan

Lesson 1 - The competition is anyone the customer compares you with.

Who is our competition? As far 4-H youth development, most of us can quickly list the obvious: Scouts, Sports, Boys & Girls Club and/or Big Brothers & Big Sisters. However, competition can be found even beyond that. Essentially Disney believes that their competition is anyone who raises customer expectations – because if someone else satisfies customers better than you, no matter what type of business, you suffer by comparison.

What are people's expectations when they come to a 4-H club meeting? How is the club meeting those expectations?

Lesson 2 - Pay fantastic attention to detail.

How little things make a big difference.

On Main Street in Disneyland there are 37 hitching posts. Now this in itself may not seem amazing. However, each of the hitching posts are stripped down and repainted – nightly. All of the hitching posts do not receive the same amount of wear, but the high-wear points are done every night, attention to detail is part of the company's culture.

In our 4-H Clubs, if we knew that increased attention to detail would improve 4-H Family retention, how much more attention would a club be willing to focus on it? What would clubs focus on? What are people's first impressions of 4-H?

Lesson 3 - Everyone walks the talk.

Everyone in club leadership needs to "walk the talk". Actions speak louder than words. There are things that obviously need to be accomplished. Some things may be one person's specific role. Others may be something all of us should consider a part of our role.

What are some of those things everyone in club leadership should be doing? How can this common sense lesson turn into common practice?

Lesson 4 – Everything walks the talk.

Disney believes that everything at Disney communicates something to the guest. Every "thing" should be consistent with the Disney philosophy because it can positively influence a guest's experience. The way employees are dressed, the cleanliness of the park, the type of music that is played throughout are all to enhance the guest's experience.

In the 4-H Club program what are the things are "walking the talk"? What are the things that need to be "walking the talk"?

Lesson 5 - Customers are best heard through many ears.

Cast members have an important role at Disney – they are considered listening posts. Throughout their interactions they collect information about the customers and about their experiences at Disney. This information is used to make improvements, changes and tells them what is going well.

Families in the club are the best sources of information. In 4-H Clubs, who is listening to what members and families are experiencing, what they like and what is frustrating?

Lesson 6 - Reward, recognize and celebrate.

Employee motivation is something that each company must consider to incorporate into their plan. Disney receives many letters from guests each year. Many of these letters refer to a cast member they interacted with while on their stay at Disney. The supervisor takes the letter and reads it aloud to the cast members within that department. The cast member in the letter stands so that all will know who is receiving the compliment. The letter is then posted on a bulletin board for all to see.

This lesson takes time. It is hard to find time to do it all, but the paybacks are huge. How can club members and volunteer staff that make our program possible be rewarded, recognized and celebrated for their accomplishments?

Lesson 7 - Everyone makes a difference.

Every person has a role—and they are all equally important to the overall experience. In 4-H Clubs, everyone has a role to play and does make a difference. We know when someone is missing.

Who has an impact on 4-H members: the one that greets them at the door of the club meeting, the one that calls to remind them of the next meeting, the 4-H'er that takes time to introduce them to others during recreation, the project leader that teaches them new skills or the one that encourages them to go to 4-H camp?

Sources:

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