

## Book Review by Mike Taigman

### *Inside the Magic Kingdom* by Tom Connellan

Have you been to Disney Land or Disney World? My experience tells me that over ninety percent of the professionals reading this article have visited the Magic Kingdom. You may wonder what a Mickey Mouse outfit (sorry I couldn't resist) has to do with running an EMS service? I wasn't sure myself until I watched Kevin, the operations Manager from Mecklenburgh EMS in Charlotte North Carolina, share the video he produced about this book with his peers on the management team. I bought it right after the meeting. I'm convinced we could all use a little pixie dust.

This business book written in story format follows participants in a business seminar through their experience and analysis of how Disney does what they do. Along the way they learn about the "Seven Keys to Disney Success." They are:

- The competition is anyone the customer compares you with.
- Pay fantastic attention to detail.
- Everyone walks the talk.
- Everything walks the talk.
- Customers are best heard through many ears.
- Reward, recognize and celebrate.
- Xvxryonx makxs a diffxrxncx. (No this is not a miss spelling)

We don't have time in this article to explore all the possible EMS applications of these principles. Let's just take a look at the first one. Who is your competitor when it comes to your communications center? Ok I'll admit that in my 24 plus years in this industry I haven't given much thought to this question, but if I did I would probably say police and fire dispatch centers. In my mind it makes sense that if customers were going to compare they would stack us against other emergency service communications centers.

After reading the book I've realized a flaw in my thinking. When customers call us on the phone for an emergency or a routine transport, they compare us with other places they've done business over the phone. I don't know what businesses come to your mind when you think of great customer service over the phone; I thought of American Express, LL Bean and Federal Express. Wouldn't it be wonderful if people who called our transport number or 911 received treatment that equaled or exceeded these icons of customer service?

This book is joyful and quick easy read. It's filled with the kind of stories that make The Magic Kingdom ...well magic. Here is one example. It's a letter written to Disney by a guest:

Dear Disney,

The four members of our family recently spent a delightful vacation at the Magic Kingdom. But one event made our visit seem truly magical.

We got to the front of the line at Space Mountain only to find out that our little Gloria couldn't take her ice cream cone on the ride. Now, we should have realized this up front, but we were so excited to be there that we just weren't thinking.

Gloria broke into tears and we were all in a quandary about what to do. Then one of the staff members-Murphy-came over, bent down, and told Gloria that she would hold her ice cream for her and give it to her when she finished the ride. Gloria said, "Promise?" Then she gave Murphy her ice cream, and she thoroughly enjoyed the ride.

Sure enough, as we walked out the exit, there was Gloria's new friend with "her" ice cream cone. Now you and I both know what happened, because we know that an ice cream cone won't last twenty minutes on a summer afternoon in Florida. Murphy knew what time we would exit; she went to the nearest stand and bought a brand-new ice cream cone thirty seconds before we walked out the exit. Gloria said, "Thank you," but I'm sure she thought it was the same ice cream cone.

We know that someone went out of her way to make our visit special. Thanks so much for going above and beyond.

Your Fan,

Carmen Rivera

I'm sure you can figure out many ways to apply the lessons in this book in your organization. Who knows, with a little creativity and some pixie dust your team might just add a little magic to that not-so-fun process of receiving healthcare.