

## THIS IS SHOWBUSINESS



In today's increasingly competitive hospitality industry, owners and managers are constantly seeking the answer to an important question- How do you recruit, retain, and motivate a cast who are responsible for creating a "magical" experience which exceeds your guest's expectations?

Some answers may be found by looking to successful companies that are consistently achieving these goals.

William Shakespeare wrote, 'All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players'. One company that exemplifies that quote is the Walt Disney World Co. based in Orlando, Florida.

Disney is recognized as one company which creates such "magical" experiences. The Disney challenge is to ensure that all of the 36,000 staff is playing a role in a show which exceeds all expectations.

The Disney approach to people management has helped gain them the reputation of providing a leading benchmark for quality and service in America.

Disney does not just "hire" people for jobs, they "cast" performers for a "role" in the show. The emphasis is in finding 'people oriented' cast members who are willing to adapt to the high standards established, and not necessarily on the skills an applicant may have.

Their 'casting process' introduces each applicant to the culture of the company, and the important role which they will play in the future success. This way there are no surprises, and it is this approach which helps to maintain turnover at approximately 20%.

Success on the "Restaurant Stage" requires the development and choreography of many different aspects, such as a great cast, script, support and direction.

As an owner or manager, you are more director and choreographer of a performance. Your front of house team are the actors, and your customers are the audience for whom they must perform.

The supporting crew is responsible for ensuring the script and show is executed as planned. As director, you have to prepare your cast to recognize guest cues, deliver their lines and improvise when it will add to the enjoyment of the performance.

Think of a typical theatre performance- the audience files in, the curtain goes up, the actors make their entrances and speak their lines. If each and every cast member, not to mention the writer, director, stagehands, customers, makeup artists, and lighting technicians, has prepared themselves and the theatre well, the audience enjoys the show and tells others about it.

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However, despite the proven talents of individual members of the cast or the presence of an award-winning director or the skills of the backstage crew, the whole thing can be a magnificent flop if just one person fails to do a job on which everyone else depends.

Next months article 'The casting call', is about how to attract the right cast for your show.

### About the author

Robert Duprey has over 22 years management and training experience in the Restaurant and Hotel industry. He started Lexington Interactive to provide eLearning specifically for the Restaurant & Hotel Industry. The company is developing a catalog of interactive hotel and restaurant training courses for the video game generation. Contact Robert at: [robertduprey@lexingtoninteractive.com](mailto:robertduprey@lexingtoninteractive.com)  
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