

## Applying Disney World's Marketing to Law Firms

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Larry Bodine

The one thing everyone remembers about their visit to Disney World is how clean it is. That's because it is every employee's job -- from the VP of Marketing to Captain Nemo -- to pick up any piece of trash they see and throw it away.

**The marketers at Disney World know they are not selling rides, parades or cartoon characters. They are selling an experience.** "What do we want our clients to say about their experience? Our brand is what our clients say about us, it's not our marketing or logo. At most places it happens by default. We need to make it happen by design," said speaker, trainer and consultant Dennis Snow, who worked for 20 years at Disney World. He spoke at the 2010 Marketing Partner Forum in Florida.

"We want them to say in order **to get repeat business**:

1. It was a magical experience
2. They paid attention to every detail.
3. They made me and my children feel special."

### It's the experience that matters

The same principles apply to law firms. Legal services are more commoditized every day. Legal service has to be excellent, but it has to be the overall experience that matters," he said. "Your law firm should "inculcate" performance excellence. When a receptionist does a great job at making clients feel comfortable, you want your employees to say **"That's just the way we do it here."** You don't want them to say that they do it 'because management has video cameras watching us.' "Inculcate" means that the behavior does not go away, it becomes the way we do things," Snow said.

The law firm equivalent of attention to details, such as picking up every piece of trash, would be how quickly a client can reach their lawyer. For example:

1. Client places call to firm.
2. Navigate to proper person.



Dennis Snow

3. Provide client information.
4. Explain problem or discrepancy.
5. Client waits for answer.
6. Client is contacted by firm.
7. Listens to explanation.
8. Asks follow up questions.
9. Conclude call.

**"At each stage you must ask, what would mediocre service look like at that step? What would excellent service look like? Many of you will find that you've defined as mediocre is what you're doing now," said Snow, who once operated the submarine ride as Captain Nemo.**

**"This is client experience mapping. Take any process you want to get better at – such as first client meeting or the end-of-matter discussion – these are critical moments. Pull members of your team together and map out each step through the lens of the client."**

Your firm must have excellent lawyers (just as Disney has superb rides) but your clients will remember their overall experience with the firm.

Snow recommended gathering employees together and asking them to identify what obstacles exist that are a source of client complaints and frustration. "Generate as many potential solutions to the obstacles as possible. Often, the solution will be generated on the spot. The key is to keep an open mind and build on the ideas," Snow said.

"For those solutions that will require time and study to implement, discuss and agree on who will be responsible to work on a solution. The more involvement from the team, the greater the resulting buy-in," he said. "Set a date to report back on the status of the obstacle and solution."

For example, Disney World knows that after the final fireworks show, the magic is over. At that point visitors are cranky and exhausted. A solution they've found is, in the customer's hotel room, to tuck in a Disney character in bed with a note, saying, "I know you must be tired. Why don't you get some rest with me and you'll feel better." **Similarly at law firms, the lawyers know that most clients hate being in court or in a deposition. Recognizing the client's anxiety and commiserating with them will go a long way to making the client's experience better.**

"It's not fun to work at Disney world. Imagine the people inside the characters in August in Florida. It's hot in there. Forget about the pixie dust and that Mickey Mouse stuff," Snow said. "But they know they have to create an experience." And law firms can do the same.