

UNLEASHING EXCELLENCE

The Complete Guide to Ultimate Customer Service

Written by two of the world's foremost authorities on service excellence

Media Kit

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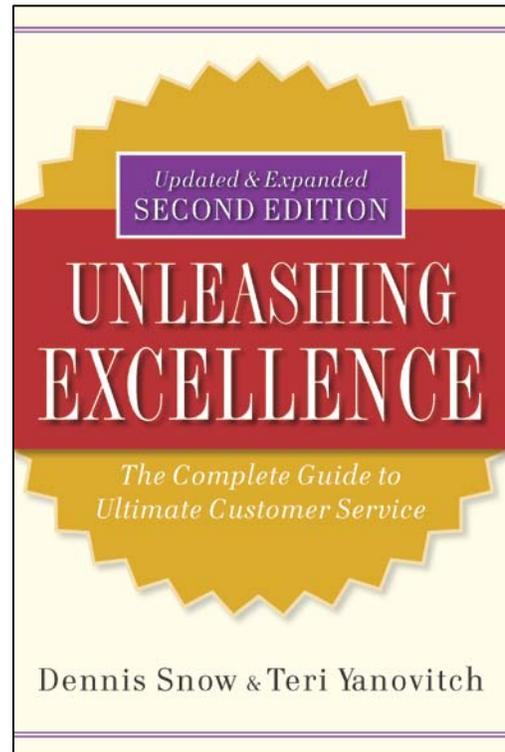
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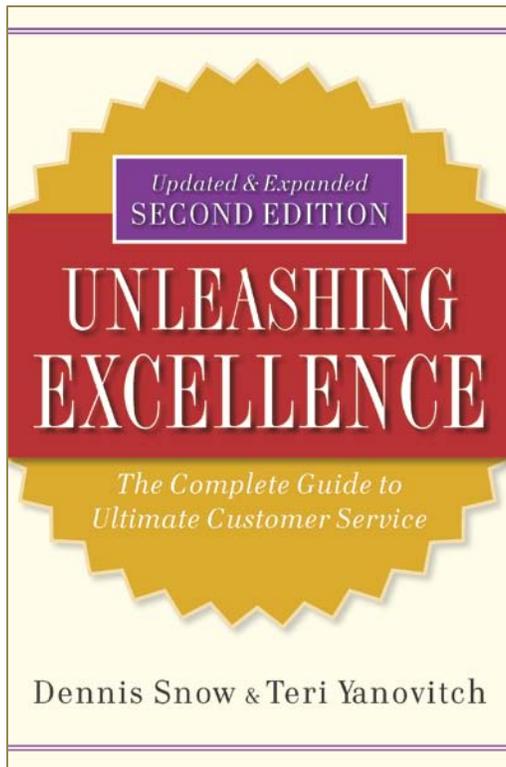
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About the Book



When *Unleashing Excellence: The Complete Guide to Ultimate Customer Service* by Dennis Snow and Teri Yanovitch first appeared in 2003, it quickly became an indispensable reference as the first book to provide detailed step-by-step instructions on how to design and implement a world class customer service system.

Published by John Wiley & Sons, the second edition of this definitive guide has been fully-updated and expanded to include the latest tools, best practices, and user insights by a range of companies and organizations. Among those featured are a national restaurant chain with 31,000 outlets, an international manufacturer of industrial engines and fuel systems with annual sales of \$14 billion, an eight-state chain of kids' hair salons, a ten-bank holding company, and a 460-mile toll-based turnpike carrying up to 2 million vehicles a day.

Few know this subject as thoroughly as Snow and Yanovitch, who have counseled hundreds of companies – including AAA, American Express, Blockbuster, Cummins, Ernst & Young, ExxonMobil, Marriott, Nationwide, Nokia, RadioShack, Scholastic and Subway. Each has spent the greater part of three decades in the field, working with companies that have played a pivotal role in setting the benchmarks on which *Unleashing Excellence* is modeled.

Snow learned the magic of incomparable customer service during a 20-year career with the Walt Disney Company, where he served in such positions as head of Disney University Cast Training and manager of the newly-formed Disney Institute's Customized Programs division that trained outside corporations in the Disney philosophy. Yanovitch's expertise in service excellence was acquired over a period of two decades as a consultant and trainer to approximately 300 of the Fortune 500 companies. She is a former vice president for the quality management firm, Philip Crosby Associates, and a top keynote speaker and workshop presenter for the Disney Institute Business Programs and Disney University. Both are internationally-recognized consultants, trainers and speakers today.

What makes this book unique...

- A comprehensive system that merges the four core elements of what world class service leaders like Disney consistently do well.
 1. Seeing things through the “lens of the customer”
 2. Paying attention to details (“everything speaks”)
 3. Creating service “wows”
 4. Setting employees up to be service heroes.

- A step-by-step process that simplifies an otherwise daunting task into nine easy-to-follow action steps.
 1. Creating the Service Improvement Team
 2. Developing the organization's Service Philosophy and core service tools
 3. Developing and executing an ongoing service communication and awareness plan
 4. Creating and executing a plan for ongoing service training and education
 5. Adapting the interviewing and selection processes to include all elements of the service culture
 6. Creating and implementing a service measurement process
 7. Developing appropriate recognition/celebration processes that reinforce the service culture
 8. Implementing a service obstacle system for identifying and addressing barriers to service excellence
 9. Building an accountability system that ensures commitment to ongoing service excellence

- The key criteria for creating the Service Improvement Team

Unleashing Excellence takes the guesswork out of building an all-star team to pilot a winning customer service initiative from the ground up. Included are specific guidelines on team size, composition, roles and responsibilities – as well as how to stay on mission with a team charter, stay focused with agenda-driven meetings, and stay motivated with sub-teams and clearly-delineated assignments.

- The tools to accurately assess what your customer is really buying

A common mistake companies make is failing to define exactly what the customer experience is *supposed to be*. *Unleashing Excellence* shows you how to develop the four major tools needed to isolate the DNA of your organization's true product or service (called the Service Philosophy), the behaviors needed to deliver it (Service Standards), the means to make organizational processes more consumer-friendly (Service Mapping), and what message your organization's physical environment is communicating to the public (Everything Speaks Checklist).

- A fresh approach to getting employees invested in your service excellence outcome

How you communicate the program to your employees plays a vital role in ensuring its success. If done poorly, the initiative is doomed from the start. Too many organizations, for instance, think that effective communication can be achieved solely through the company newsletter. *Unleashing Excellence* outlines a dynamic communication and awareness plan to ensure that the right message is communicated to the right audience at the right time.

- A clear strategy for delivering service training to every person at every level of the organization

World-class service organizations treat training as an investment, not an expense. *Unleashing Excellence* provides the framework and direction for designing and managing training programs that are easily customizable for different operations and staff, along with insights on the pivotal role first day orientation and on-the-job training play in properly preparing new hires for adoption of an organization's service philosophy and standards.

- Decisive methods for hiring outstanding service talent

How do some companies get their people to be so friendly? By selecting the right candidate for the right role. There are bad, average, and outstanding coffee shop employees, engineers, dentists, accountants, custodians, and presidents. The outstanding ones not only possess the necessary skills for their jobs, they appear to be born for their roles. But how do you find them? *Unleashing Excellence* provides proven methods for matching candidates to an organization's service standards – with specific recommendations on assessing desired behavioral traits, interview techniques, recruitment tactics, and effective reference checks.

- A range of measurement techniques for greater accuracy in hitting program goals

Measuring customer service results can be tricky. Factories have the option of measuring defects, units produced, or production efficiency, among other tangible factors. But what do you measure in

the service industry? Smiles? *Unleashing Excellence* goes beyond the standard satisfaction survey to provide a range of performance monitoring tools, along with guidelines on how to refine a service excellence program based on the results.

- Innovative ways to reward top service performers

When leaders fail to acknowledge staff who deliver superior service, employees begin to think, “Why bother?” Sure, plenty of organizations offer Employee of the Month and Employee of the Year programs. The problem is this is usually the only type of recognition offered, and either the same people keep getting selected or the “it’s my turn” syndrome sets in, diluting the value of the honor. *Unleashing Excellence* provides guidelines for implementing three types of recognition to ensure true excellence is celebrated and rewarded.

- Procedures for identifying barriers to frontline employees’ ability to excel

How many times have you been so frustrated by a company’s processes that it didn’t matter how friendly the employees were? When personnel feel set up for failure, they invariably become emotionally disengaged. *Unleashing Excellence* outlines practical solutions for identifying and removing service obstacles before they become roadblocks to meeting goals.

- What managers can do to reinforce accountability

Intolerable service exists when intolerable service is tolerated. If leaders look the other way when an employee performs in an unacceptable manner, even the best improvement plan begins to collapse. Indeed, the number one reason service initiatives fail is a lack of accountability. *Unleashing Excellence* details the consequences of ignoring and even rewarding unacceptable behavior – along with applicable examples of preventive measures and best practices for making service excellence “non-negotiable.”

The application of the steps has been streamlined with a variety of easy-to-follow visuals, checklists, forms and charts. Examples: bulleted “to do” and “pitfalls to avoid” tips; breakdowns of the responsibilities and duties for each member of the service improvement team; guidelines for drawing up a team charter, developing service standards, and effective ways of engaging staff in the initiative; and meeting agendas for each stage. **Bonus: all 24 forms in the book can be downloaded at www.unleashingexcellence.com in a choice of Word or PDF format.**

Unleashing Excellence is presented in lay language that makes it possible for anyone – from CEOs to department managers—to quickly grasp the concepts and processes involved in transforming an organization, person by person, into the brand it would like to be.

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Dennis Snow

About the Author

Unleashing Excellence author Dennis Snow has been at the forefront of defining and implementing world class customer service systems for three decades. Beginning in 1979, he spent 20 years on staff at the Walt Disney World Company – including as the head of Disney University Cast Training and manager of the Disney Institute's Customized Programs for outside corporations.

Through his own training and consulting company, founded in 1999, Snow has since incorporated the Disney standard into a broader application – now available through his book, *Unleashing Excellence* – that makes it possible for companies in any industry to become world-class service leaders.

Raised in South Burlington, Vermont, Snow – who travels continuously as a speaker, trainer and service excellence consultant – is the son of a successful advertising salesman who was also on the road constantly. “Dad was never a pushy salesman. His clients loved him,” says Snow. The amateur magician taught his son the tricks of the trade, and using his father's equipment, Snow created a magic act and toured it in high school and college. “That's how I found out I enjoy being on a stage,” explains the popular keynote speaker who speaks in front of more than 35,000 people a year.

Following college, Snow's father suggested he pursue a career with Disney, so he headed south to Orlando. When he arrived, however, the only job open was a weekend position as Capt. Nemo on the “20,000 Leagues Under the Sea” attraction at Walt Disney World. Snow gladly took it, supplementing his paycheck with full-time work as a roller coaster operator at a nearby theme park. It wasn't long, however, before Snow was working full-time as a Disney cast member. His first assignment: the park's popular “It's A Small World.” “I got to hear that song eight hours a day,” he laughs. “I still cringe whenever I hear it.”

Indeed, Snow stresses, working at Disney World had its share of less-than-magical moments. On occasion, for instance, he was asked to fill in at Space Mountain when the attraction was closed for

maintenance. The job required greeting visitors with the unpopular news that their favorite ride would not be open. “I had fathers say to their kids, ‘Thank the man for ruining our vacation,’” Snow recalls with another laugh. “Even though there would be signs from the parking lot all the way in, they’d still walk up with this disbelieving look.” It was then up to Snow to find a way to offset their disappointment by arranging a happy substitute. “The happiness of the guests was the priority.”

Within two years of joining the Disney organization, Snow was promoted into management and given a series of assignments supervising aspects of the park, including the Character Department, Epcot Center’s Guest Services, the Magic Kingdom’s Main Street USA, and Fantasyland.

In 1986, he transferred to Disney University, the nerve center for internal training. Snow started out teaching management courses on subjects like how to be an effective leader within the Disney culture. He was also given the responsibility of coordinating the Disney Traditions program, widely regarded as a standard in corporate training. The unique program selected outstanding front-line cast members to provide the initial orientation for new employees. “It really captured the heart of the organization,” he says. “You had people working every aspect of the park – from flipping hamburgers to cleaning the grounds – sharing what they do and how important your role is. That, to me, was actually the most rewarding job I had at the Disney University. I loved teaching all of the other programs, but coordinating the Disney Traditions Program was my first love, because it was such an important part of the Disney experience – those first two days on the job.”

From there, Snow managed the entire Disney University Cast Training division, with over 30,000 employees enrolled each year. “We had courses on everything from how to give an effective performance appraisal to how to deliver an effective presentation. They covered all of the skills that any leader in the organization needed to know. Classes were going on constantly. We had them going in multiple classrooms and multiple buses going out for the field experiences. It was wild,” he recalls.

In the late 1980s, the company and its unique approach to training was highlighted in the bestselling book, *In Search of Excellence*, by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman. “Disney was suddenly bombarded with benchmarking requests,” Snow recalls. In response, the Disney Institute was founded with its own curriculum, geared to making the Disney philosophy accessible to companies in any industry.

By 1993, the Institute was also getting requests to tailor the training to the needs of individual corporations. As a result, the Customized Programs division was created, with Snow in charge. During the next six years, he travelled the world as a presenter to companies in places like South Africa, Australia, Mexico, England and Argentina – while leading the development on new training approaches. The

division was so successful that it became the Institute's fastest-growing venture with nearly 100% repeat business.

After 20 years with Disney, Snow launched his own consulting firm in 1999. "I absolutely loved what I was doing at Disney, but I was ready for a new challenge. I'd done everything within the organization I wanted to do, and a dream of mine as far back as college was to have my own company."

With agreement from the Disney Institute, Snow & Associates was launched by contracting with former Institute clients desiring post-training implementation consultation – a service previously not available. "Companies would go through the Disney Institute Seminars, but they were on their own in terms of incorporating the Disney principals into their own service culture," he explains. Since then Snow & Associates has become a multi-faceted consulting firm offering training, strategy development and implementation, keynote speeches, and coaching. "But everything we do," Snow says, "connects to the subject of customer service."

In 2008, Snow's second book, *Lessons from the Mouse: A Guide for Applying Disney World's Secrets of Success to Your Organization, Your Career, and Your Life*, was published by DC Press. Designed around the ten primary principles he learned from his early days as a front-line cast member to the business imperatives he lived as a member of the management team, *Lessons from the Mouse* is an essential guide to applying excellence for organizations ranging from mom and pop companies to Fortune 500 companies.

The most important lesson Snow has gleaned from his Disney years? "It's about the experience. Everybody has so many options now. One of the exercises I do with a lot with clients is to draw a little circle in the middle of a flip chart and put their products in the center. Then I ask them, 'Tell me what processes I have to go through as a customer to experience your product.' And I start circling that central product with all the processes – driving their car, making an appointment, parking, waiting, etc., Then I draw a big circle around all of that, and I say: 'This is what you are really selling.' Too many organizations think of the physical product itself as the product – but, really, when things go wrong, very rarely is it something with the product. It's usually one of the processes surrounding it. And it was the same thing at Disney World. I always said that Disney World is not about selling rides. They are selling the experience."

For more information: www.SnowAssociates.com

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Teri Yanovitch

About the Author

Unleashing Excellence author Teri Yanovitch has been on the frontlines of the industry for nearly three decades – including as a vice president for the pioneering quality management firm, Philip Crosby Associates, and a customer service best practices ambassador for the Walt Disney Company. Widely regarded as one of the leading authorities in the field, Yanovitch has advised approximately 300 of the Fortune 500 companies on how to implement cultural change and management systems, specifically targeted to service excellence.

The Orlando native obtained a B.S. degree in marketing from the University of Central Florida, before moving to the Northwest to manage Hertz' busy Seattle – Tacoma International Airport rental location, including implementation of the company's high customer service standards.

"It was there that I really saw how important customer service was – because Hertz was the first to realize that a car is a car is a car," Yanovitch relates. "And that the only difference between them and, say, Budget or National was the customer experience. *Do we make it easy for our customers to do business with us? Do we make it fast? Do we make it efficient? Do we make it a pleasure?* That, more than any other factor, was how they became and remained #1."

At the end of her first year at Hertz, Yanovitch was offered a transfer back to Orlando to become a Zone Training Manager, later followed by a promotion to Regional Training Manager for the Southeast U.S. and Caribbean. A big part of the job, she says, "was getting employees to understand that the most important way we could differentiate ourselves was simply in how we treated customers."

Six years after she joined the company, Hertz decided to consolidate certain operations in New York City, with Yanovitch among a select group of employees invited to make the move. She opted instead to join the cutting-edge consulting firm of Philip Crosby Associates, founded by the bestselling author and

pioneer of the influential zero defects movement, which had played a prominent role in how American business responded to the invasion of quality Japanese imports.

Yanovitch managed their ‘train-the-trainer’ program, educating corporate employees on how to implement the quality process in their own organizations. After a couple of years, she was promoted to vice president and began traveling worldwide, teaching, consulting, and implementing Crosby’s 14-step process.

“When trainees would ask if it was really possible to do a job 100% right the first time, I’d smile and ask: ‘If you were lying on a hospital gurney getting ready for surgery, how would you feel if you knew that the surgeon was less than 100% committed to doing it right the first time? Whatever it is you’re selling, unless you’re discounting it as defective, the customer is paying for a problem-free product. Why should they receive less?’”

In 1991, when Philip Crosby sold the company, Yanovitch decided to establish her own training and consulting firm, while continuing to work with Crosby Associates for another six years. At the same time, she began a decade-long association with the Walt Disney Company – for which Yanovitch would play a significant role in both their internal and external training initiatives. For the Disney Institute’s Business Program in particular, she served as a top keynote speaker and workshop presenter for the legion of corporate clients who traveled to Walt Disney World to learn how to apply the Disney’s incomparable approach to service, management and customer loyalty to their own culture. She was also one of the few outside consultants given the responsibility of training Disney employees.

In 1999, Yanovitch merged best practices of customer service with the principles of quality management into a comprehensive system for creating and implementing world-class service on every level. The step-by-step methodology that evolved has since become the basis of her practice, speaking engagements and workshops.

“Customer service is more than smiling nice and giving good eye contact. It’s about giving the customer what you promised, and then surrounding it with an experience that exceeds their expectations. With approximately 90% of products and services in the market today being viewed as mere commodities, the only way of standing out is the customer experience,” she says.

Yanovitch’s methodologies are viewed as industry best practices, and in recognition of her process approach, she has been invited to serve as an adjunct professor at Cornell University in New York and Rollins College in Orlando.

For more information: www.TeriYanovitch.com