

Chapter 10

Bringing Service Management to Life! Case Studies of Best Practice

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide you with real-life examples of firms that have effectively used various concepts that are discussed in this text. These cases will allow you to understand how hospitality firms can effectively utilize service concepts, theories, and ideas to provide them with a competitive advantage in the market while at the same time gaining customers' and employees' loyalty. In developing this chapter of cases, our aim was to identify a diverse group of mainly hospitality businesses from different parts of the world that have become recognized leaders in their market by adopting service-focused strategies. There are of course hundreds of other great companies out there practicing service management principles brilliantly, and many of these have been mentioned as examples throughout the book. Our hope is that the cases presented in this chapter will help illuminate the key ideas from this book in a *real-world* way and help the reader see how everyday businesses put service management principles into action.

The way we sourced these cases was through our networks around the world—trying to find cases from nontraditional places such as Thailand, Africa, and Eastern Europe. We provided a brief to our industry associates about the cases, and we asked them, often with the support of an academic colleague locally, to follow a basic script we provided, basing their case on some work that we, the two authors of this text, did some years ago (Solnet & Kandampully, 2008). In that study, we analyzed many successful service firms—those who are in the service *folklore* where we inevitably hear stories reported all of the time about great customer service. We analyzed these companies and identified a number of common attributes that these firms possessed. Some of the attributes we identified included:

1. brand strength (how internal and external customers perceive the organization);
2. commitment to customer orientation/customer obsession (how the business stays steadfastly customer focused);
3. commitment to employees/employee obsession (clear processes and values which emphasize employee well-being, training, etc.);
4. a focus on the *process* of service, rather than the core offering (clearly stated service systems and processes that set standards to guide employees);
5. effective use of nonfinancial metrics to evaluate success (such as customer and employee measures);
6. leadership in innovation and use of technology (innovative integration of technology to improve the customer experience);
7. adherence to standards (often made public via books or freely available online to share);
8. frequent recipients of awards for excellence (celebrate success and frequent recipients of awards for excellence including best employers); and
9. effective leadership and direction from a single founder/entrepreneur (often driven by strong leader/founder/entrepreneur).

At the end of each case are some questions. We hope that you will read these cases through a service management lens, one which is able to learn further the applications of service management concepts and theories practiced effectively in the industry. What we ask you to do is to pause as you read, reflect on the prior nine chapters, and relate back to the concepts and theories examined to what is being practiced in the industry. That is where, we believe, the true learning will take place in this chapter—connecting theory to practice. As students, these examples will help you to understand the application of