

Disney Institute Customer Service Training Helps 15,000 South African Workers Prepare for World Cup Visitors

SUMMARY

In an effort to boost customer service prior to the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa, the Federated Hospitality Association of Southern Africa (FEDHASA) retained *Disney Institute* to deliver hospitality training to approximately 15,000 of the country's front-line service workers.

The training, which was delivered across nine provinces over 34 days, focused on Disney best practices as they relate to quality service, leadership and people management. The programs for front-line workers focused primarily on delivering great service; a series of train-the-trainer sessions also included the leadership and people management content.

For the sessions with front-line workers, *Disney Institute* facilitators taught a variety of programs and activities based on Disney's world-renowned service excellence and model of treating visitors as guests.

"The first and most important step in any customer service improvement program is simply recognizing and appreciating who your customer is and why they are with you," said Jeff James, vice president of *Disney Institute*. "By sharing this concept with workers of all levels throughout South Africa, we helped give them the tools they need to provide Disney-style service excellence to visitors for World Cup and beyond."

The train-the-trainer sessions followed the front-line worker training. "The trainer workshops were longer and include more skills-based sessions around leadership and people management," said James. "This team of trainers is critical to coaching and reinforcing the right attitudes among the service workers now that our facilitators have returned to the United States."

The entire program in South Africa was the second phase of an engagement that began late last year. *Disney Institute* conducted extensive research to determine the current state of customer service in South Africa, and

to identify areas where Disney best practices could be applied. From those findings, *Disney Institute* developed a multi-phased training program that included interactive, multi-media learning experiences and "how-to" videos featuring South African cast members currently working at *Disney's Animal Kingdom*® Theme Park at the *Walt Disney World*® Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

All of the training was designed to be fun in nature to help get workers excited about representing their country to millions of visitors, said Brett Dungan, chief executive officer of FEDHASA.

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"The main objective was to develop a locally-relevant program that would help workers deliver memorable and unforgettable service to all who visit our country," says Dungan. "Our country has a clear vision of where we want to be with customer service. Disney understands better than almost any organization how to keep employees engaged and invested in service excellence. They've been instrumental in helping us achieve our goals."

Program participant Vincent T Kokomane said the training was very valuable for him, and that he was "impressed by the great service delivery that I noticed around during the World Cup."



CASE STUDY: 2010 FIFA WORWORLD CUP

"I walked in stores and hotels and I felt honored because I saw a significant change among some staff members who attended the *Disney Institute* training sessions," Kokomane said.

Samantha Nel, a resort manager who also attended the *Disney Institute* sessions, said: "I started off by only sending my front-line staff, but when I realized how valuable the training was, I tried to send as many people as we could. The trainers from Disney were extraordinary—not once did I feel bored—and I took a lot of helpful customer service tips home."

The programs in South Africa were derived from three of *Disney Institute's* most popular courses: Disney's Approach to Quality Service, Disney's Approach to Leadership and Disney's Approach to People Management. All programs offer an insider's look at business practices that have helped Disney maintain its status as one of the world's most admired companies and brands. Quality Service, Leadership Excellence and People Management are three of five core programs available in private as well as public forums at Disney Destinations in Florida, California, Tokyo, Paris and Hong Kong; and in company facilities around the world.

"*Disney Institute* has a long history of helping organizations both large and small implement meaningful change that positively impacts the bottom line," said James. "We consistently counsel our clients to not be tempted by quick-fixes. FEDHASA took this counsel very seriously by launching a thorough training program that, if consistently followed, will take customer service in South Africa to new heights."