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Strict rules disney employees have to follow

Having a system to keep track of your action items is so important for productivity, especially as an entrepreneur, in charge of your own tasks. Whether you opt for a combination of digital tools for task and calendar management, or stick to an old-school paper and pen planner or "to do" list, your system will help you organize priorities, keep track of progress, and delegate tasks when needed. But over-reliance on a system could actually be getting in the way of making progress. If you're not careful, your system could actually become a means of procrastinating, preventing you from being able to do work, and instead filling time with checking, updating, organizing or reviewing what needs to be done. This is something I was definitely guilty of. I'd check, double-check and triple-check my list of action items, prioritizing, re-organizing and color-coding to ensure I was properly tracking everything on my plate. And while this kind of organization did give me a great view of what I needed to get done in the coming days, it transformed what could have been valuable work time in unproductive time. The game-changer for me came after reading David Allen's productivity book, Getting Things Done. The book contains many helpful tips and tricks for establishing and abiding by a productivity system, but one rule in particular transformed the way I organize and accomplish my tasks: In Getting Things Done, Allen introduces what he calls "the two-minute rule." This rule dictates, essentially, that if the task can be completed in less than two minutes, you should do it at that moment it arises, without delay. No excuses. No putting it on your list to be done later. Get it done, right now. Adopting this rule generally means you very quickly take certain types of quick tasks off your plate: email responses, social posts, uploads and downloads, completing and sending documents, appointment scheduling, website updates, sending invoices, making payments, putting documents and other things where they belong, and initiating chores like laundry, dishes, and more. Anything that would take less than two minutes to complete never sticks around long enough to be added to your system. The logic is sound: The process of writing down or otherwise logging this short task in your system would take somewhere between 30 and 60 seconds, and then you'd have to read it and decide whether to do it each time you check your system again. By that point, you'd have spent as much time (or more) thinking about doing the task as it would have taken just to do it in the first place, and it hasn't even been done yet! Factor in the time it then takes to then switch gears and actually get it done at a later point, and the two-minute rule saves even more. When you start incorporating this rule into your life, there's another added benefit: you no longer get bogged down in the "lots of little things" holding pattern that can sometimes be paralyzing for entrepreneurs and others who dictate their own tasks and schedules. You no longer have that moment where you wake up to an overwhelming list of 45 things to be done in a day, or the frustration of having to delay more meaningful work to complete little things like "start laundry" or "write rent check" or "send Bob my headshot for the website." With these smaller tasks no longer clogging up your "To Dos," your mind and your schedule are clear to focus on the bigger, more meaningful, and more impactful tasks that will take you longer than 2 minutes to complete and have a bigger payoff in terms of productivity and progress. Disney parks aren't "the happiest places on earth" without reason. Behind all of the magic, there are tens of thousands of employees (or, as Disney calls them, Cast Members) making it all possible—from the rides to the food to making sure you don't see mosquitoes at Disney World. Needless to say, with that many employees and such a commitment to creating a magical experience, there are all sorts of Disney secrets that go into making the magic happen. That includes how employees—whether they're playing a character or not—interact with guests. The three words that Disney employees are trained not to say are "I don't know." "If a guest asks you a question, you always have to have an answer, no exceptions," an anonymous former Cast Member shared online. "If you don't know it, find out, but don't say you don't know. If it's a silly question, make up a silly answer." It's not so much about the words themselves as it is the idea that you'd be quashing someone's question. Just imagine: You're a young child on a Disney trip and you want to know where Winnie the Pooh goes after he's done having breakfast with guests. You ask a character attendant Cast Member, who says...I don't know? That's a bummer, and exactly the opposite of the personalized, magical employee-guest interaction that you want from a Disney park. Why Disney employees can't say "I don't know" Like many of the aspects of the Disney park experience, it dates back to Walt himself. Walt Disney was perhaps the epitome of a showman and a businessman rolled into one. "He was a storyteller—that's what he was very good at," says Christopher Lucas, author of Top Disney: 100 Top Ten Lists of the Best of Disney. So when Walt was building an entertainment company, "he believed that everything you do should advance the story." So if you're an employee at Disney World or Disneyland, you're part of the story. That's why Disney park employees are called "Cast Members" rather than employees—even if they're not playing a character. And that's why avoiding "I don't know" is so important. Cast Members are trained to "say something to move the story forward," says Lucas. Even if they truly don't know, they can say something like "I can find out for you" or "That's a very good question." Then they'll either come up with a whimsical answer that suits the question or engage the asker's attention with, say, something else fascinating about Winnie the Pooh, to make the asker (especially a kid) feel like they still got an answer. They have to toe a line, though, because they don't want to give an answer only to have the child ask another Cast Member the same question and get a different answer! Learning to navigate guest questions in a way that keeps the magic alive is a major part of Disney training. And perhaps surprisingly, "the rules of behavior apply to the entire company, not just the parks," Lucas elaborates. "If you work at Disney corporate in the accounting office, you're still expected to act like a Disney employee." Again, this comes from Walt. One of the philosophies Walt had was that any single person you encounter represents the entire company. "Everybody should be acting the same way, behaving the same way, and answering questions the same way," Lucas explains. "It helps if the company has that policy across the board." Walt had those policies for Walt Disney Studios employees, even before the parks were up and running. But at the parks, where children's curiosity is a big part of the experience, they're perhaps the most prominent. That's true for both Disneyland and Disney World, but do you know the differences between those two parks? Are there other things Disney employees can't say? Again, it's not so much about certain words. Disney Cast Members are trained to create the best possible experience for the guests, and any and all things they say to guests must align with that. "They never want the guests [to] feel like they asked a stupid question," Lucas says. And he says if you're a Cast Member, whether you're responding to a question or not, "you always have to make the [guest] feel like...they're the most important person you're gonna meet all day." Cast Members are supposed to make people feel like they're "part of the magic," essentially. And the rules for Cast Members depend on where in the parks they are, too! For instance, Lucas says, "Every Cast Member [working at] the Haunted Mansion is acting like a funeral director...if you try to make them smile or laugh, it's very hard to do!" But, needless to say, that's far from true for the rest of the park—that same Cast Member could be working at the Seven Dwarfs Mine Train the following day and be cheering up a storm. The book One Little Spark!, written in 2015 by a former Imagineering ambassador, provides a comprehensive look into the extent of the training Disney employees receive and how that creates the park environment we know and love. That's not the only Disney secret that's been discovered. There's also a hotel suite hidden inside Cinderella's Castle! Who's up for a much-needed Disney vacation? We'd certainly love to be there for the Disney World 50th anniversary! Next, check out the 15 etiquette rules all Disney employees must follow. Sources: Stefano Carnevali/Shutterstock pisaphotography/Shutterstock Katja Kreder/imageBROKER/Shutterstock Originally Published: August 09, 2021 While not many of us like to be told what to do, rules exist for a reason. Otherwise, the world (and our daily lives) would be in a constant state of utter and total crazy chaos. When you have a place as orderly (and in my eyes almost perfect) as Disneyland, then it's totally obvs that some pretty strict employee rules exist in order to keep it the "happiest place on Earth." Think about those infamous carnies at the county fair, then think about those who work at Disneyland — big diff right?!? While Disney keeps their in-house rules and regulations totally on the down low, here are 21 that are rumored and/or known to be true. 1. They're not called employees. Disneyland workers are always referred to as cast members. Think of Disneyland as the stage — these folks are the players and guests are the stars of the show. 2. You won't see any tats on cast members. While tattoos on guests are everywhere (and this is the perf place for your Disney-centric tattoo inspo), you won't see any skin art on cast members. If they have them, they must be well covered. 3. And no extra jewelry, either. Cast members can't be seen sporting a nose, lip or tongue piercing. And earlobe expansions are a total no-no. Their earring rules state, "One earring in each ear is permitted. Earrings may be clip-on or pierced, post, hoop or dangle and must be worn on the bottom of the earlobe. Earrings may not exceed the size of a quarter." And they can only wear one ring on each hand (unless they have a wedding band set). Ankle bracelets are totally NSFW. 4. Eyeglasses must be simple. If a cast member has impaired vision and wears glasses, the pair they sport must be of a conservative hue and can't have any large logos. So those hot pink Chanel logo specs will have to stay at home. 5. There is no Mr. This or Ms. That. Every cast member is on a first name basis. This is something that came directly from Walt Disney himself. At the parks, his film studios and offices, he was always Walt, never Mr. Disney. 6. Men can have a beard, but it's gotta be well-groomed and tidy. For decades, cast members weren't allowed to sport facial hair at all while employed at the park, but this strict policy was changed a few years back. Now they can — but with conditions. Facial hair can't be a work-in-progress; mustaches and beards must be fully grown (which means they'll have to spend their vacay growing out their 'stash). Additionally, facial hair must be trimmed, well-kept with no wack-a-doodle shaping and must, as Disney states, be "well-maintained at no longer than a quarter of an inch in length." 7. Nails must be tamed. While long nails with images of the cast of Beauty and the Beast or a tribute to Minnie Mouse might be tempting, a Disneyland employee can't go there. Nails must be simple. As Disney states, "If polish is used, it should be an appropriate, neutral color. This includes deeper, richer shades of polish. Polishes that are not permitted include black, gold, silver, multicolored or neon. Also, nail charms or decals aren't permitted either. (Photo via Nailed It by Chelsey) 8. Hair must be tamed too. For women, hair must be "neatly combed and arranged in a classic, easy-to-maintain style." And those "extreme styles"? They're a no-go. As for hair color — think natural. "The Disney Look does not permit extremes in dyeing, bleaching or coloring. If the hair color is changed, it must be natural-looking and well maintained. Subtle highlighting or frosting is permitted as long as it creates a uniform look over the whole head." 9. Use two fingers. When pointing, say giving directions to the nearest Churro stand, cast members must do so with two fingers, not one. Pointing with one may be considered rude in various cultures and, since Disneyland is a melting pot, they don't want to offend anyone. 10. There is no such thing as "I don't know." If you have a question that pertains to the park, cast members can't answer with an "I don't know." They must either ask another cast member or call someone who'll know. But remember, this is for real questions. They can't help you with "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" or "Is there life after death?" Well, at least we don't think they can. 11. They can't Snapchat their day as Elsa. Or, for that matter, they can't talk about their Princess gig anywhere outside of work — like on their YouTube channel or at an open mic night. Their job as a Disney character is not unlike being a spy. There is, indeed, a veil of secrecy. 12. The size of their body matters, if they're a character, that is. There are size constraints for certain character roles, and while it might be an odd job requirement, it totally makes sense. Disney princesses such as Cinderella, Snow White and Aurora are usually in the 5'4" to 5'8" range, while a character like Alice is usually under 5'2". And they're all pretty fit and trim. 13. No free costume rental for you. Have a pal who works at the Haunted Mansion and you think that you can ask them to borrow their costume for Halloween? Think again. Cast members (and their friends) can't wear the Disneyland costumes for any sort of personal use. 14. They also need to be able to write "in character." Those who are livin' their day as a Princess, Pluto or Peter Pan (among many, many others) will need to learn to properly pull off the character's in-character signature. That way, when the kids go home and compare the John Hancock from this year from two years ago, it appears that the autographs are one and the same. Each character has their own style, like Minnie Mouse puts a heart over the "I," Daisy Duck puts a flower over her "I" and Woody adds a star to his lasso-like "y." 15. They need to learn and use code words. Not-so-magical things can happen at the Magic Kingdom. And instead of saying, "We need to clean up that vomit outside of Space Mountain," it's "We have a Code V." Other codes include Code P or Code U (for urine) and Code H (for horse poop on Main Street). 16. If they see trash, they have to pick it up. Everyone, from execs to a roaming Alice, must pick up any litter they see. And they can't pick it up by squatting, rather one must embrace their inner ballerina and gracefully swoop it up. 17. No photos, please. While we're all used to taking (and sharing) photos everywhere, cast members aren't allowed to take photos backstage, like ever. No one wants to ruin countless childhoods by seeing Mickey without his head. 18. They can't make guests feel stupid. "If someone asks you 'what time does the 3:00 parade start,'" a former cast member stated, "You can't laugh. They may be serious! Actually, they are most of the time! You have to say '3:00' with a smile that doesn't suggest to them that you think they are a big stupid and should go learn something." 19. Celebrities LOVE Disneyland, but you have to treat them like any other visitor. It's said that asking a celebrity for a photo or autograph while you're working is grounds for termination. 20. There are lots of little things a cast member can't do. There are plenty of mundane little things that are off limits. They can't be seen chewing gum, checking their cell phone while on "stage" or eating while on the job. And since Disneyland has a ton of Pokestops, that also means you can't play Pokemon Go while at work (no matter how tempting). If you worked at Disneyland, which rules would be the hardest for you to follow? Tweet us @BritandCo and let us know!

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