



To help implement a re-branding campaign and get advice on strengthening its company culture, Mid Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union turned to *Disney Institute*.

SUMMARY

To stay ahead in its competitive market, New York's Mid Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union began a company-wide program to re-brand itself as a full-service, customer-centric financial institution. With help from *Disney Institute*, the company's customer service survey results in all 11 branches have soared and employees are fully engaged in changing the company culture.

A NETWORK-WIDE CHANGE IN CULTURE

After growing from a single credit union to a respected 11-branch, full-service financial institution, Mid-Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union (MHV) began a comprehensive, chain-wide overhaul of its corporate culture in 2011. "Banking is a competitive business. We are up against other local credit unions and the likes of Bank of America and Chase; giants who have huge advertising and training budgets," explains MHV's Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer Bob Michaud. "We had to find a way to compete; to make our brand stand out."

After surveying customers and employees, Michaud and others at MHV decided the credit union needed a network-wide change in culture and a re-branding campaign. MHV had always prided itself on great customer service but it had become a challenge to maintain its high standards as it expanded.

The credit union's executives drew up a list of "brand values and standards" they needed to incorporate into their new culture and worked on ways to implement them.

"However, it's one thing to compile a 'wish list' of values and it's another to make it work," says Michaud. "We needed a new structure to help us spread our message to all 11 branches and our employees." From prior experience with *Disney Institute*, he felt the Florida-based consulting organization could help refine those values and offer ways to put them into practice. "I knew that if Disney could do this for their 60,000 employees, they could help us do it for our 200."

A CUSTOM ENGAGEMENT

Michaud and Patty Osterhoudt, Senior Vice President of Operations, visited *Disney Institute* to explain their needs and help DI staffers draw up a custom engagement for MHV. Notes *Disney Institute* facilitator Katie Sanchez, "MHV had already done a lot of work to change their culture. We helped them discover exactly what they could do to make those changes and how they could best be explained to the entire MHV family."

Sanchez designed an engagement for MVH that drew from well-known *Disney Institute* topics such as Leadership Excellence, Creativity, Selection, Training and Engagement, Quality Service and more. *Disney Institute* Operations and Delivery Manager Tom Thomson then flew to Kingston, New York to present a one-day session for MVH's leadership team and three sessions for their frontline workers.

As Thomson explained in a session with MHV's management, "Making any re-branding effort a success depends on inspiring your workers and sustaining that effort." Thomson told the managers that a growing company needs to implement a "culture by design." He said, "You have to create a structure that employees can understand, make them accountable and be able to sustain it and measure it."

Frontline workers were shown that the way they treated their customers helped MVH differentiate itself from the competition. "Lots of financial institutions offer similar services," said Thomson. "How are you going to set yourself above the rest?" He led participants through exercises that included examples of how Disney employees go "above and beyond" for a customer. He then helped the credit



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union's employees suggest ways to adapt those Disney practices to MHV's needs.

"WOW" MOMENTS FOR CUSTOMERS

"*Disney Institute* helped us breathe life into our re-branding program," says Bob Michaud. "They gave us the kick-start—and the tools—we needed."

Inspired by the sessions, MHV instituted company-wide changes that resulted in dramatic jumps in their customer service survey results. The firm's Net Promoter Score, measurements of how likely customers were to recommend MVH, immediately jumped from 50 percent to 68 percent following the *Disney Institute* work. "That bowled us over," remembers Michaud.

The credit union's Service Quality Index Scores also jumped from 84 percent to 87 percent and, according to Michaud, service-related scores are still trending higher. But there are more than statistical results that prove MVH's culture is changing. Michaud notes that employees are regularly creating what MVH calls "Wow" moments for customers when they go "above and beyond."

Recently a teller saw a customer waiting for a manager to help her with a Certificate of Deposit. The teller realized all the managers were busy so she came onto the floor and told the customer, "I can take care of this for you so you don't have to wait." Says Michaud, "I hear stories like that almost every day. It's obviously having an impact on our customers." To recognize these accomplishments, MVH has instituted a peer recognition program, the "Wow Award," that includes a monthly prize and an annual \$2,400 prize for exceptional customer service.

Inspired in part by *Disney Institute* practices, the credit union has also implemented other changes to help ensure that customer service remains an essential part of the company culture:

- Culture Committee - Formed to perpetuate the company's new culture and to recognize outstanding customer service.
- Brand Manual - Was developed to include information on store design, graphics standards as well as MHV's brand statement and guidelines.

- Heritage and Traditions Video - This mini-history of MVH was created to help inspire and educate employees about the firm's role in its community.

Michaud notes that changing a company's culture is a tall order. "We have to be consistent and our employees have to know what we expect of them," says Michaud. "Disney taught us that."