

## Create a Compelling Culture of Hospitality

### *Do your greeters truly welcome, or do they simply open doors and hand out bulletins?*

A common picture at many churches this weekend would look something like this: a couple of people – maybe even a literal couple – stand outside the church’s main entrance. Depending on the weather, they may actually be inside the doors. As people approach the door, they open it and give a brief “hello” or “good morning” or some other similar platitude. Across the lobby, at the doors to the sanctuary or auditorium or large gathering room used for worship, the scene is repeated. Only, this time, the doors are usually propped open and an usher is standing there with a stack of bulletins, giving them out as people enter.

After all, isn’t that the purpose of greeters and ushers? Don’t they have a job description that outlines what they do each weekend?

Danny Franks, Connections Pastor at Summit RDU, gives a [brief and compelling argument that hospitality teams serve more than just a utilitarian purpose](#). While acknowledging the importance of system and process, he challenges us to look at the beauty of hospitality:

*The beauty of guest services is that it serves as a signpost to the gospel. Our planning and strategizing and vision casting and volunteer recruiting may indeed reduce combustion points and increase efficiency, but that shouldn't be the reason we do it. Guest services should ultimately point to the kindness of Jesus. **Our hospitality should be a catalyst.***

What about your church? Your hospitality teams, in whatever form and name you give them, are literally the first face of your church as guests engage your campus and worship environments. What kind of gospel-impression are they making?

### **Create a compelling culture of hospitality.**

**THE QUICK SUMMARY** - [It's My Pleasure](#), by Dee Ann Turner

Businesses are built by growing relationships with customers. Culture is created by the stories those relationships tell. Two of the most important differentiators of a business are its talent and its culture. Talent energized by a compelling culture will drive organizational success and provide innovative growth opportunities for both the business and the individual.

Based on her more than thirty years at Chick-fil-A<sup>®</sup>, most of which have been spent as Vice President, Corporate Talent, Dee Ann Turner shares how Chick-fil-A<sup>®</sup> has built a devoted talent and fan base that spans generations. *It's My Pleasure* tells powerful stories and provides practical applications on how to develop extraordinary talent able to build and/or stimulate a company's culture.

## **A SIMPLE SOLUTION**

The title of the book used in this solution is no stranger to a large, and growing, segment of the U.S. population. Made popular by eager and energetic team members at Chick-fil-A<sup>®</sup> restaurants, it is their response to a customer saying thank you, or some variation of that phrase.

But underneath that phrase is much more. It not only represents a value established by Chick-fil-A<sup>®</sup> founder Truett Cathy, it is also instilled as a company value taking many shapes, and most importantly, reflects the culture of Chick-fil-A<sup>®</sup>.

And it's a good place to begin taking a look at the culture of your hospitality teams.

*Creating a strong, compelling culture requires intentionality and vision.*

Culture is the soul of the organization. It is the way we envision, engage, and experience others within an organization. Culture defines the values and behaviors that are acceptable and expected. Culture can be an elusive concept to describe, but at Chick-fil-A, we call it living life together.

It is far easier to create a compelling culture from the beginning than to rebrand a struggling culture later, so it's an essential beginning to any organization.

To build a compelling culture, your organization must take several steps:

1. A compelling culture begins with a clear purpose for existing.
2. A compelling culture must have a challenging mission.
3. A compelling culture must have core values.
4. A compelling culture has guiding principles.

It's never too late to help your team or organization strengthen your culture. Start your strategy with the WHY through defining your purpose. Continue with the WHAT in developing your mission and then focus your efforts day in and day out on the HOW through constant commitment to your core values and guiding principles. With unwavering focus and discipline to the process, you can create a compelling culture for

your organization.

Dee Ann Turner, [\*It's My Pleasure\*](#)

## A NEXT STEP

The minute you follow instructions, you're no longer an artist.

- Seth Godin

For our purposes, take the quote above to the next step: There's an art to connecting with people as a part of a hospitality team. Yes, you have to understand what you do as a greeter or usher, but there is a more important WHY behind those actions.

On separate sheets of a chart tablet, list Dee Ann Turner's four steps for creating a compelling culture listed above, one per sheet.

During a designated leadership team session set aside just for this exercise, work through each of the steps, listing the comments of your team in response to the steps.

After you have listed them, go back and get a group consensus for each step.

Now, extend these steps to your hospitality teams inserting the phrase "of our hospitality teams" and ranking each of the four steps with a 1 (not present at all) to a 5 (always present).

At the next opportunity, review each of the four steps and their rankings with your hospitality team leaders. First, celebrate those steps your team has identified with a 4 or 5 ranking, and encourage your leaders to share your celebration with their teams.

Next, brainstorm how steps with a 1, 2, or 3 ranking can be moved to a 4 ranking. List the responses, and challenge the leaders to take the top three in each group and work with their teams in moving this ranking up.

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