

## **Servant Leadership- As practiced by Herschend Family Entertainment**

Herschend Family Entertainment owns, operates and manages family-oriented theme parks and attractions across the country. It's our goal to bring families closer together, and create memories worth repeating. Today, HFE owns, operates and manages 24 themed entertainment properties across nine states.

For nearly 50 years Silver Dollar City here in Branson, has been an institution in the Ozark Mountains built on a foundation of serving others. Founder Mary Herschend along with sons Jack and Pete built a legacy of service to guests and employees by instilling core values that paralleled the concept of "doing the right thing."

Silver Dollar City began as a dream of Hugo Herschend, Mary's husband. The couple along with their two sons visited the Ozarks in the 1940's and fell in love with the hospitality of the Ozark people. After becoming enamored with Marvel Cave, the couple leased the cave and took over tour operations in 1950. Hugo dreamt of ideas to entertain the guests while they waited for cave tours. The ultimate dream became Silver Dollar City, an 1880s pioneer frontier village located at the entrance of Marvel Cave and built on the actual foundations of Marmaros, a real 19<sup>th</sup> century mining village. Silver Dollar City opened in 1960. Sadly, Hugo Herschend never saw his dream turn into reality. After passing away in 1955, Mary and her sons along with their fellow employees took over Hugo's dream and began to craft Silver Dollar City into the experience that lives today.

From those humble beginnings the Herschend family created a culture that has touched employees and guests alike by epitomizing the Golden Rule. As Pete Herschend recalls, "If ever there was an embodiment of the Golden Rule, Hugo was it. There is only one way to deal with people and this is straight and honest. I never, ever knew that man to compromise his values."

All in a manner consistent with Christian values and ethics sums up the vision, mission and core values of Herschend Family Entertainment. The goal for shareholders and the leadership of the company is to be a Christ-centered company. Our objective is that Jesus is used as the mentor and role model for behavior toward all the people the company serves, including guests, employees, suppliers, the community and stockholders. "The greatest ministry that we have is the operation of the company properties," Pete Herschend explains. "The greatest witness we have to who Jesus was and is, is how we operate day in and day out."

Today, Servant Leadership principles are taught to employees on their first day of work during the orientation process. While we teach the culture, history and expectations of working for the company, we also immerse new hires into our vision, mission and core values. Our goal of "Bringing Families Closer Together

and Creating Memories Worth Repeating” can only become reality by employees who believe in and implement our Core Values each and every day.

Serving Others is one of our core values that is defined by 1 Corinthians 13. We fashion those leadership principles based on the definition of love from the bible. By working as a team and empowering each other and by being patient, kind, humble, respectful, selfless, forgiving, honest and committed we as leaders in the company want our employees to see love as a verb and not the emotion we often reflect upon. As our CEO Joel Manby asks, “Why would a company spend time talking about love?” The answer is simple. At Herschend Family Entertainment, we want to create a culture and work environment that is fun and enjoyable. We want the enthusiasm of employees to supersede the guests’ enthusiasm. We want to learn from Jesus and his principles and set the example in business and in life with regards for seeking the appropriate behavior in all situations.

Real leadership begins on the inside with one’s own commitment to inspire the best in others. Hear what is expected of HFE leaders and the eight attributes that allow one to manage with grace when handling day-to-day and long-term situations.