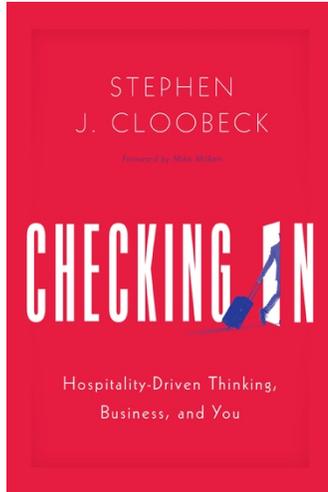


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CHECKING IN

Hospitality-Driven Thinking, Business, and You

By Stephen J. Cloobek

PEOPLE FIRST, SYSTEMS SECOND, AND HOSPITALITY ABOVE ALL

**Stephen J. Cloobek's The Meaning Of Yes Philosophy
Has the Power To Change Customer Experiences And Businesses' Bottom Lines
Across Industries**

In **CHECKING IN: Hospitality-Driven Thinking, Business, And You**, Stephen J. Cloobek, a pioneer of the hospitality timeshare industry and inaugural leader of Brand USA – who has been featured on multiple episodes of *Undercover Boss* – shows business leaders how to infuse their organizations with a transformative culture of hospitality. More easily preached than practiced, Cloobek's philosophy, called the Meaning of Yes, teaches radical customer service – empowering team members, leveling hierarchies, and embracing accountability, all to serve the end consumer.

The book is a reminder that the simplest lessons can be the most easily overlooked, but a return to fundamentals has the ability to turn around businesses, even those in the most dire straits. Cloobek describes an expensive consultant's report written about a company he had just acquired: "It was full of numbers, figures, and charts, but where were the sections on our people, our talent?"



Rather than bury his nose in the numbers, Cloobek relays how he chose to lead by example. He placed his business card – with his personal cell phone number and e-mail – on the front desk of each hotel and resort property in the company’s international portfolio, and as a result, he saw employees do more to proactively optimize the guest experience. If he was accepting calls and answering guest emails at all hours of the night, they had every reason to ensure that these messages were positive in tone and content.

Cloobek convincingly argues that as of May 2018, the five biggest companies by market value – Google, Facebook, Microsoft, Amazon, Apple – aren’t tech, but hospitality companies. Tech is the tool, hospitality – making life a little easier, more comfortable, more enjoyable – is the ultimate focus. He says, “No matter what industry you’re in, no matter what personal goals you have as business leaders and entrepreneurs, we’re all in hospitality now.”

The Meaning of Yes, which shaped Diamond Resorts International into one of the world’s largest hospitality timeshare companies, can be implemented by any business regardless of size or industry. It is grounded in five principles that CHECKING-IN brings to life through example, anecdote, and convincing persuasion:

Focus Unrelentingly On The Guest: Providing an excellent customer experience means never being satisfied with existing offerings

Commit To Continuous Improvement: Incremental changes lead to big differences in customer satisfaction and commercial outcomes

Prioritize Reputation Over Brand: What others have to say about you is more important than what you say about yourself

Ensure Total Alignment: Customer satisfaction must be the focus from top leadership down to front-line team members



Do Well By Doing Good: The most successful hospitality people see their work as a calling, not as a job

The Meaning of Yes upends the traditional corporate hierarchy by putting people first, systems second, and hospitality above all. What emerges are “collaborative meritocracies” where individual achievement is recognized and rewarded irrespective of rank, title, or tenure. Collaborative meritocracies focus team members on *achievement* over advancement, which pushes businesses forward.

Cloobek’s success story is proof that in an age where technology and automation are changing the face of business, the demand for true human connection, emotional skills, and an emphasis on hospitality has never been greater.

For leaders and team members at all levels of the business ladder, CHECKING IN will re-instill passion and a renewed focus on what really matters in business today.

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About the Author

Stephen J. Cloobek is a self-made entrepreneur with more than thirty years’ experience across every aspect of hospitality design, development, and deployment.

As the original founder and former CEO and chairman of Diamond Resorts International (NYSE:DRII) – a business that grew to become the second-largest vacation-ownership company worldwide with more than four hundred properties across thirty-three countries in its portfolio – Cloobek made a name for himself as the industry’s most adamant advocate for radical customer service, what he calls embracing the Meaning of Yes.

For his commitment to serving the hospitality industry and amplifying its economic impact nationwide, Cloobek was appointed by Commerce Secretary Gary Locke to serve as the inaugural chairman of the board in Brand USA Inc., a US government-formed nonprofit corporation with the sole mission of promoting travel to the United States. As Brand USA’s leading voice, Cloobek



coordinated with the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of State, the Department of Commerce, Congress, the White House, and leading American business in a first-ever effort to efficiently, effectively, and economically make the United States a more welcoming and accessible international travel destination for millions of would-be visitors around the globe.

But to Cloobek's own amusement, he is perhaps most frequently recognized for his appearances on CBS's hit TV show *Undercover Boss*. Featured on multiple episodes across multiple seasons, Cloobek to this day ranks as the "most generous boss" who has ever participated in the unscripted program.

Cloobek works with many charities and civic organizations, including but not limited to: the Prostate Cancer Foundation, FasterCures, Keep Memory Alive, Water.org, the Brent Shapiro Foundation for Drug Prevention, and various educational initiatives. In personal efforts to assist Diamond Resorts team members dealing with unexpected life events, Cloobek founded the Diamond Resorts International Team Member Crisis Fund (now the Diamond Resorts International Foundation) in 2012, an unprecedented initiative that continues to offer aid to Diamond team members worldwide struggling with personal difficulties.

Cloobek received a degree in psychobiology from Brandeis University in 1983 by the seat of his pants, only to learn after graduation that he had been grappling with undiagnosed dyslexia all that time.

Cloobek will be donating all of this book's author proceeds to dyslexia research, education, and supportive causes.

CHECKING IN: Hospitality-Driven Thinking, Business, And You

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