Management positions at Team Mickey—a sports-themed store—and Disney's Pin Traders followed, and at each job Hickman had some amazing experiences.

“One day a young boy came into Team Mickey asking for a pin that showed Mickey Mouse playing tennis,” said Hickman. “We weren’t selling this particular pin at the time, but I knew I had one in my desk drawer.”

Rather than give the pin to the child, Hickman decided to create a “magical moment” for him. Surrounded by guests and cast members, he engaged the boy in a trivia contest, asking five questions that he knew the child would get right.

“It was a huge deal when I handed him that pin,” Hickman reflected. “In fact, I received a letter from him six weeks later with a pin from the tennis club where he was taking lessons. I reciprocated with a newly released pin that depicted Walt Disney as a child playing tennis. We wrote back and forth like that for several years. It’s experiences like this that make the Disney brand so special.”

In 2004, Hickman took another step forward on his career path when he joined Disney’s Campus Recruitment Department as a campus recruiter. In this position, Hickman promoted Disney Internships and Programs to students across the U.S. and abroad.

“I’ve recruited students from 27 states as well as China and Mexico,” he said. “I’ve even had the opportunity to represent Disney at both Rowan and Temple, which was really awesome.”

While working as a recruiter, Hickman experienced two “career highlights.” The first was being selected for a temporary, 15-month instructor position with Traditions, Disney's orientation program. The second was the opportunity to work on-site at Aulani—Disney’s Hawaiian resort and spa—interviewing and recruiting team members over a six-month period.

Hickman's creativity and leadership skills didn't go unnoticed. In 2013 he was promoted to campus recruitment manager. Today Hickman oversees 70 recruitment professionals across the country.

“All of the recruiters have prior Disney leadership or specific human-resources-related experience,” he said. “My job is to make sure they have the tools they need to perform their day-to-day tasks and to make sure we are providing a world-class experience for our recruits.”

As much as Hickman loves Disney, his colleagues there appreciate him, as well. “Over the seven years I’ve known him, Jeff has always displayed tremendous passion for his job and genuine concern for those he works with,” said Lisa Downs, director of Disney Campus Recruitment. “He’s also creative in his engagement of his team members. For example, he may have a contest or create a game to keep an element of fun in work. That’s what makes him a great leader and is what makes others want to emulate him.”

For Hickman, a self-described Disney aficionado, there's never a day when he wakes up and dreads going to work.

“Yes, I have tough days,” he said. “But in my mind there's no place that is cooler or more amazing than Disney. I can only hope that my Disney journey continues for many years to come.”

"I was that kid who was fortunate enough to go on several trips to Disney World while growing up. I just always thought it would be an amazing place to work."

—Jeff Hickman, STHM '01