

Spring 2024

Inventing The Magic: The Story and Success of the Walt Disney Company

Camryn Grogan
cgrogan3@murraystate.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/bis437>

Recommended Citation

Grogan, Camryn, "Inventing The Magic: The Story and Success of the Walt Disney Company" (2024).
Integrated Studies. 571.
<https://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/bis437/571>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Works at Murray State's Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Integrated Studies by an authorized administrator of Murray State's Digital Commons. For more information, please contact msu.digitalcommons@murraystate.edu.

Inventing The Magic: The Story and Success of the Walt Disney Company

BIS437: Senior Project

Dr. Scott Douglas

Camryn Grogan

Abstract

The Walt Disney Company has influenced the worldwide travel market with its massive success in marketing, immersive experiences, and communications. In this BIS437 paper, I will be outlining their history, influence, and success by discovering everything that happens behind the scenes in order to make magic happen for children and families all over the world.

It All Started With A Mouse and A Dream

Walt Disney grew up in Marceline, Missouri where he lived on a family farm. Later, after some struggles on the farm, the Disney family moved to Kansas City. Walt had always found interest in art and drawing and never dreamed of the impact he would make as a young boy delivering newspapers. When Walt was just seven years old, he would sell some of his sketches to his neighbors, (*About Walt Disney*, 2018). Walt attempted to join the armed forces, but was denied because of his age of only sixteen years old. So, he decided to join the Red Cross and was sent overseas to drive an ambulance. After the war, Walt moved back to Kansas City where he began his career as an advertising cartoonist. Walt got an internship at a company called Grey's Advertising. Back in the day, they offered Walt the opportunity to work for \$50 a month, (Susanin, 2014). Walt got to make a lot of the cover art for their company's magazines, but his art was often highly edited and changed by his bosses. Since Walt was only eighteen and a young apprentice, he didn't really see room to complain and he was just grateful for the opportunity to work there. After about six weeks in his apprenticeship, Walt was let go. During Walt's time with Grey's, he became acquainted with one of his co-workers named Ub Iwerks. Ub continued at the advertising agency for a little bit longer but was later let go shortly after the Census.

This is when Walt came up with the idea to go into business with his friend Ub for a commercial art shop. Ub had some reservations, but later agreed and Iwerks-Disney was started. Walt contacted his family in Chicago and told them to send him the \$500 he had in savings so he could buy some supplies. Ub and Walt couldn't afford to pay for an office space, so they settled for an unused bathroom in a national headquarters building. The owner of the national restaurant headquarters building was Walt's former neighbor and he agreed to let Walt

and Ub's firm draw some things for a restaurant campaign. After some initial success working together, Walt got a job opportunity to work with a company that made slides and animated cartoon films. Ub encouraged him to accept the opportunity, so Walt took it and was able to learn more about animation and how to bring his drawings to life. With Walt working two jobs now, Ub struggled to keep their firm together. Ub was later offered the same position as Walt and they left Iwwerks-Disney in the past and moved on together.

At the age of nineteen, Walt had been working at the firm for about a year and he decided to start making his own cartoons at home. Walt's father, Elias, was looking to rent out their garage, so Walt decided to rent it himself to start experimenting with his cartoons. With his brother Roy's help, Walt was able to purchase and make some of his own equipment. Some of Walt's first cartoons were shorts he made about current events that were happening in the news. Later on, Walt was advised by a family friend to show some of these cartoons to a firm called "Newmans". So, Walt began selling most of his animated cartoons about current events to Newmans, where some would play in the Newmans theater. Walt was not paid for these, just paid for selling them to the firm. But, Walt didn't mind because they were getting him some local recognition for animation and cartoons.

Walt's film "Alice's Wonderland", was the last film he made while in Kansas City, (Seastrom, 2019). In these 1923 short films, Alice was a girl in cartoonland that had a lot of animal adventures. At the age of 21, Walt arrived in Los Angeles by train. Walt's brother Roy was suffering from tuberculosis at the time and he wanted to be there for him. Upon his arrival, Walt became tired of cartoons and wanted to experiment with live action, but no one would hire him. Walt and his brother Roy were living with their uncle Robert at the time, and the Disney Brothers Studio was born in their garage. According to, (History.com Editors, 2019) "While

there, he finally sold a short film produced by Laugh-O-Gram, Alice's Wonderland, and signed a contract to make six more such films. In order to produce the series, the brothers founded their company and persuaded both Virginia Davis, who played Alice, and their collaborator Ub Iwerks to join them in Hollywood." By 1924, Walt began dating one of their studio's new hires, Lillian Bounds, (Seastrom, 2019). By the end of 1924, Walt's Alice comics were being played across the country.

In 1927, after about four years of the Alice cartoons Walt decided to move on to a complete cartoon series, (*Disney history 2023*)". Walt then created Oswald, the lucky rabbit. Walt made about twenty six of these cartoons for his distributor, none other than Universal Studios (Which is Disney's biggest rival today!). Later on, Walt discovered that his distributor had tried to make the Oswald cartoon in his studio without Walt Disney. Upon reviewing his contract, Walt realized that he did not own the rights to Oswald. This was devastating for young Walt and created a big set-back for him. Walt had built up enough money to be able to rent a bigger studio, and in this big studio with the help of his long-time colleague Ub, they created Mortimer Mouse. After consulting with his now wife Lillian, she told Walt that the name Mortimer wasn't very kid friendly. So, the name Mickey Mouse was born. After creating two Mickey Mouse films, they wouldn't sell because they were silent films and at this time, sound was becoming a very popular phenomenon in the film industry. So, after another set back they came up with Steamboat Willy, a new Mickey cartoon with corresponding sound. Steamboat Willy opened to amazing reviews in the Colony Theatre in New York, Mickey Mouse became popular almost immediately. With the success, Walt quickly came up with "Silly Symphonies" and "Flowers and Trees" which were their first full color cartoons, and they even won an academy award, and later an oscar. With their growing popularity, Walt realized that

merchandising multiple characters helped them gain more revenue. So, a man in New York offered Walt \$300 to put Mickey Mouse on pencil tablets. At the time, Walt needed the money so he agreed. Soon, you could find just about anything with Mickey on it.

In 1934, Walt told his crew that they would be making their first ever feature film, “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs”. This first movie by Walt Disney has become a childhood favorite for all of us, instilling in us a feeling of magic and dreaming of our own happily ever afters. Soon after its debut, Snow White quickly became the best selling film of all time.

While the war was going on, Walt made two different films, “Saludos Amigos” and “The Three Caballeros”. During this time, his studio focused on making propaganda type films and cartoons. In 1950, Walt found success in his first live action film, “Treasure Island”. After many other popular films and cartoons by Walt such as “Cinderella” and “Mickey Mouse Club”, Disney wanted to branch out. At this time, Walt was now a father and loved spending time with his children at zoos and carnivals. This sparked the idea that there should be a place for both children and parents to go and spend time together and have fun. This started the idea of Disneyland. In Between his idea for Disneyland and movie making, Walt made Sleeping Beauty. Most would be surprised to find out that when the movie came out in 1959, it was a failure, (Harmetz, 1979). No one is quite sure why the movie wasn’t as successful as they expected, but some assume it’s because his efforts were focused on Disneyland at the time. The company lost about 1.3 million dollars after the failure of the movie.

When Walt started brainstorming ideas for Disneyland, he wanted to purchase the lot right across from his studio, but the city of Burbank denied his request, (*The Construction of Disneyland, N.D.*). Sadly, not everyone thought this idea was as great as Walt did. Roy, Walt’s Brother, even said that it could lead them to financial ruin. But, Walt was so confident in his

dream that he decided to start funding it himself and even took some money from his life insurance. Walt soon started a small committee of people to help him start designing and organizing his ideas for the theme park. At this time, he called them WED Enterprises for Walter Elias Disney. This is what we now know today as “Disney Imagineers”. Finally after a long time searching, Walt’s team found land in Anaheim, close to one of the major highways which made it a prime location for a theme park. Since Walt was most popular at this time for his tv shows, he pitched his Disneyland idea to some major networks like NBC and CBS, but they declined. So, Walt thought they should pitch their idea to ABC, which at the time was desperate for tv series. After a friend of Walt’s drew their concept art for Disneyland, Roy Disney took the drawing with him to the ABC pitch. ABC agreed to loan Disney 500 dollars in exchange for one-third ownership of Disneyland and weekly Disney television.

So, soon the construction of Disneyland began. Walt’s vision for Disneyland was to be a totally unique park that was unlike any other amusement park on Earth, (Archer, 2018). Walt wanted it to be something like a permanent World's Fair. They didn’t want Disneyland to just be a random organization of rides and attractions, they wanted every detail to have purpose and tell a story. When you think of Disneyland, a lot of us think of the classic “Main Street USA”, with all of the shops, yummy treats, and historical buildings. Mainstreet USA was inspired by Walt’s hometown of Marceline, Missouri, (Ball, 2020). Mainstreet has many things like a city hall, firestation, bakery, shops, and so much more. But what the average guest may not realize is the significance of the names on some of the windows. There are about eighty-nine dedication windows throughout Main Street, all names of people that helped and inspired Walt in the making of Disneyland. At the very end of Mainstreet USA is Sleeping Beauty castle. Some may

find this ironic with how the Sleeping Beauty movie failed at the time. Inside the castle, you can find a walk through experience of relics from the movie.

When entering the Disneyland park, you are first greeted by the classic “Walt Disney Railroad”. Here, you can take a scenic ride around the park, which takes about twenty five minutes total, and has stops at some of the different lands. Next, you will find Mainstreet USA. On mainstreet you can find many shops, a city hall, a fire station, restaurants, and a bakery. Above the firestation, you will see a lamp in the window. This was Walt’s family's personal apartment. Walt wanted to have a special place just for his family to enjoy the park and have a “home base” to visit, while still being in the park.

Disneyland is separated by areas into different “lands”. First, there is Adventureland. Adventureland has a lot of Asian and African jungle appeal and encompasses the idea of exploration. The first attractions in this land were The Jungle Cruise and The Enchanted Tiki Room. The tiki room has a unique history, because at the time it was one of the first attractions to have speaking animatronics, which required computers. This was originally planned to be a restaurant, but as the animatronics kept further advancing, Walt decided to make it an attraction. According to, (Corless, 2023), “Strangely, Walt decided to put ownership of the attraction under his own company, WED Enterprises, rather than the Walt Disney Company, which owned the rest of the park. This meant guests had to pay a small admission fee of \$.75 when the ride opened in June of 1963.”.

Another land that Disneyland has is New Orleans square. This land actually wasn’t open on opening day. They later changed the Magnolia Park area of FrontierLand into New Orleans square. Here you can find the Pirates of the Caribbean ride. What many people don’t know is that this ride is what sparked the idea for the movie. Most of the time in the Disney parks, rides

are based on movies. But with this ride, it was the opposite! According to, (Volk-Weiss), this was a very complicated attraction for its time. It was a boat ride that had animatronics moving around and speaking on every side for guests to look at and enjoy.

The next land is Frontierland, designed to feel like an old western town. Here, you could ride the Mark Twain river boat or visit Tom Sawyer Island. Walt had many fond memories of his childhood in Missouri, and he wanted Tom Sawyer Island to reflect that. According to, (Kurtti, 2019), “Disney Legend Marvin Davis took a crack at the Tom Sawyer concept, but the boss was not satisfied with the work Davis produced, and the designer recalled that Walt barked, “Give me that thing,” and carried the plan sheet home. That night, in the red barn at his Carolwood Avenue home, Walt worked for hours adding the elements he envisioned for Tom Sawyer island. Davis recalled that the next morning, Walt laid that plan, with his own vellum overlay, on Davis’s desk and proclaimed, ““Now that’s the way it should be.’ The island was built according to Walt’s design.”

The most classic part of the park we all think of is Fantasyland. This land was designed to feel like a fairytale and have all the elements of princesses and magic. According to, (Glover, 2015) “Walt Disney’s favorite land, Fantasyland was envisioned as a fairy tale village beyond the walls of Sleeping Beauty Castle. Unfortunately, as the opening of Disneyland drew near, unforeseen budget overages caused the team to scale back on the design of Fantasyland. So the land became a medieval fair, with banners and flags decorating the entrances to Snow White’s Adventures, Peter Pan’s Flight and Mr. Toad’s Wild Ride.” Lastly, there is Tomorrowland, a land designed to be futuristic and always focused on new development. Here you can find the Astro Orbiter that brings guests up high and spins around to give awesome aerial views of the parks. According to, (*Tomorrowland: Walt’s vision for Today*) “When Disneyland opened on

July 17, 1955, Walt dedicated Tomorrowland with these words: “A vista into a world of wondrous ideas, signifying man’s achievements ... a step into the future, with predictions of constructive things to come. Tomorrow offers new frontiers in science, adventure, and ideals: the Atomic Age, the challenge of outer space, and the hope for a peaceful and unified world.””

After a long time of planning, building, and making more tv shows about the creation of Disneyland, Walt finally made it to opening day. Sadly, opening day was far from perfect. During the summer in 1955, exclusive invitations were sent out for the opening of Disneyland, (*Disneyland opens / July 17, 1955, 2009*). Everyone was amazed by this new theme park and wanted to visit so bad that they made fake admission tickets. The opening was supposed to be exclusive, so the park was not yet able to handle the size of crowds that came on the opening day. Thousands of people entered the park with their fake tickets. Because of this, the park ended up running out of food, ladies heels were getting stuck in the asphalt, and the riverboat ride almost sank because of the amount of people on board in the park. The picture below shows how big some of the crowds were on this day.



The grand opening of Disneyland. Designing Disney. (n.d.-b).

During the opening day, Anaheim was also experiencing record breaking heat. All of the small issues adding up made for a not so perfect opening day like the Walt Disney Company had

hoped. Walt was busy all day doing other interviews, that he didn't even know about all of the mishaps until press releases went out the next day, (Designing Disney. (n.d.-b)). It was so hot that day, that women's heels were sinking into the hot asphalt. The drinking fountains weren't working, because Walt had to make a decision between having water to drink or having the plumbing. This caused people to accuse Disney of forcing them to buy sodas. Walt made a plan for redemption and invited the media back for a private tour of Disneyland so they could experience the magic without all of the crowds. Disneyland opened to the general public on July 18th, 1955. Adoring fans were outside waiting by the gates as early as two a.m. Even though the opening day didn't go as planned, the company was able to recover quickly and as we all know, today Disneyland is a huge success.

Evolution of Disneyland:

Today, millions of people travel to Disneyland every year. In 2022, Disneyland saw 16.9 million visitors, (MacDonald, 2023). This park is not the same as it once was either. Though they have kept the original charm and design as Walt intended, as Walt used to say, "Disneyland will never be completed. It will continue to grow as long as there is imagination left in the world." Today, Disneyland features two parks, the original Disneyland and California Adventure. Between the two parks, there are now 67 attractions total. There are also three different hotels on property, Disneyland Hotel, Pixar Place, and The Grand Californian. There is also a shopping center known as Downtown Disney where anyone, even people not visiting the parks can spend time shopping and eating.

With the evolution of Disney films as well, Disney now includes the Star Wars franchise, which brings thousands of Star Wars fans to the city of Bhatti, another park expansion, in the parks each year. Disneyland also includes ToonTown, a place for children to meet classic

characters and enjoy a ride on “*Mickey and Minnie’s Runaway Railway*”. The park also now includes New Orleans Square and Critter Country. In this area, you can find classic rides like “*Pirates of the Caribbean*” and “*Splash Mountain*.”. Now, New Orleans square is being transformed into a *Princess and the Frog* theme with the recent closure to refurbish *Splash Mountain*. Walking down the streets of Disneyland, you can feel the original charm that Walt intended you to feel. It gives feelings of nostalgia, the American 50s, and childhood imagination. Even with changes and updates to the parks, the company still preserves the classic charm of the parks. Even today, you can look above the mainstreet fire station and see a lamp in the window of what used to be Walt’s family’s apartment that he built inside the park. Disneyland is the only Disney park world wide that Walt Disney himself has visited and completely designed himself.

Disney’s California Adventure features many different lands from classic Disney movies. One of the most popular lands is Cars Land, which immerses you in Radiator Springs. Here, you get to enjoy unique foods and rides based on the Cars movies. Next, there is Grizzly Peak, an area themed with the wilderness. Here, they have the classic ride, Soarin’ Over California. One of the areas that the majority of people are the most familiar with is Pixar Pier. Here you will find the classic Mickey Mouse ferris wheel, and other rides based on some of your favorite Pixar films. Disneyland is always evolving and it still is today. There are many projects that are underway or beginning shortly. Disney is always looking for ways to grow.

Disneyland also features three themed hotels for guests to stay on the Disneyland property. Disney’s Grand Californian, Pixar Place, and the Disneyland hotel. Here, guests can be immersed in the Disney experience by staying on property and being close to the theme parks.

The Role of Disney Movies on Value and Morality

There's a good chance that you have watched your fair share of Disney movies. These classics have grown up with a lot of us, influencing the majority of our childhood and early adult years with nieces, nephews, our own children, and even grandchildren for some. From my personal experience, Disney movies taught me early on to dream of a happily ever after for myself. As an avid Disney lover, even in my young adult years, the Walt Disney Company is still influencing my life almost daily. After the creation of Disneyland, how did Disney get to this place of having such an influence on our childhood?

My grandmother was a child during World War II and would tell me stories of her dad who had gone to war. When people would ask her where her dad was, she would just show them his soldier picture. When we think of World War II, we are often reminded of the propaganda that went on in the media at the time. But did you know that they even pushed this war propaganda to children? Even Donald Duck became an army recruit in his classic Disney films and cartoons, (Smithsonian Magazine, 2022). The purpose of these depictions was to serve as an educational short that showed the war in an uplifting manner. Yet, the company still faced some backlash for their participation in propaganda. An executive director at the Walt Disney Family Museum says "The world of Disney is seen as "an upbeat place to take refuge," she adds. "A feel-good place. War isn't a popular topic." During this time, Walt even signed a contract with the US Navy to make war training films. Before the war, Disney was struggling to stay afloat. Because of the war, movie theaters across the world were closing. The war helped Walt have a creative outlet and stay afloat during this hard time for people all over the world. According to, (Smithsonian Magazine, 2022) "Mobilizing soldiers bound for combat and engaging civilians on the home front also led Disney to paint the enemy as immoral or even inhuman, most prominently in short films like *Der Fuehrer's Face*, a 1943 cartoon starring Donald Duck;

Commando Duck...”. This depiction communicated a certain message to people at home and the way they viewed the war. Since Walt’s biggest audience was children, it even influenced the way the children thought at the time. Following the war was when Walt made Disneyland. As we know, this boosted Disney’s fame and Walt Disney became a household name.

Disney has been facing backlash from the “woke” media lately for the way their movies reinforce stereotypes. Early Disney movies like Snow White, Cinderella, and Sleeping Beauty depict the idea that women need men to save them, (Gray, 2022). Some people think that this view of a happily ever after is not realistic, and gives children the wrong idea about gender roles. But personally, I think this sense of dreaming for children is a good thing. As a young girl, I always dreamed of who I would marry one day and if I would get a happily ever after like my favorite princesses. While some call that unrealistic, I think children need this sense of wonder. Taking the fairytale aspects out of movies like this doesn’t challenge children to dream. In later movies, we see how Disney fought to relieve these stereotypes by making princess movies where the woman is adventurous and takes charge. We see this in Pocahontas, Mulan, and Aladian. These movies are all examples of women challenging the rules in their culture at the time and going after what they want. While I do think that some of their stories are noble and good to encourage young women to fight for what they want, I do think it opens up the child’s mind to issues they shouldn’t necessarily have to think about at a young age. Some parents don’t agree with how in these movies the main character defies authority and goes after whatever she thinks is right at the time.

Today, Disney is facing a lot of backlash for their woke views that are being integrated into some of their movies. As we have seen throughout Disney history, there has been a trend of putting current views into their movies, but it has gone to the extreme recently when Disney has

started to challenge traditional gender roles and values. Disney announced that they would be making a new live action snow white. A lot of fans quickly became very excited to see one of their childhood favorite movies being remade. But sadly, the actress that Disney cast as Snow White pushed her woke agenda onto the movie and challenged the traditional fairytale. This devastated millions of fans everywhere and the movie has since been canceled. We also see this with Disney's new movie Elemental, which made less than \$30 million when it was released, (Jones, 2023).

Regardless of views when it comes to social issues, there is something to be said about classic Disney movies that give children the sense of magic and fairy tales. A huge reason why Disney became popular from the beginning was how it appealed to a child's imagination. Walt's vision for the company was to challenge not just children, but adults as well to believe in magic and fairy tales. As Walt says, "Laughter is timeless, imagination has no age, dreams are forever."

Influence of Disney on a Child's Imagination

Not only do Disney movies play a role in morality and values, they also play a role in a child's development. It is very prominent in our society today that Disney has become a household name. When I think of my childhood, most of it involves Disney in some way. A lot of parents today find delight in taking their child to meet Mickey Mouse for the first time and seeing them light up with excitement. Because of the Disney parks, the Disney movies that we all grew up with come to life in a special way to make the Disney magic real for children everywhere.

The classic animated films have created a sense of imagination in many children. It has shown that animation is a great way to introduce children to topics of morality and values, (Psychologists, 2023). A lot of the movies have the "Good V.S. Evil" plot which helps to influence

a child's morality. Children love to see the hero triumphing over whatever evil is thrown their way. The "Disney way" of telling stories with a hero helps children to relate and look up to something. We see how children fixate on some of the classic characters and strive to be like them by acting out the movies, dressing up like them, etc. According to, (Psychologists,2023) "Wearing these costumes encourages children to role-play, which is a fun yet effective way for them to explore their identities and goals."

The Florida Project

On November 15th, 1965, Walt and his brother Roy announced "The Florida Project." (*Walt and Roy Disney announce "Florida Project"*, 2019). It had been publicly known that the Disney brothers had purchased a very large amount of land in the Florida swamps, but no one knew what the purpose for it was. At the time, even Walt didn't even know what it was for, but he knew that it would be their biggest project yet. At this time, the Orlando and Kissimmee area wasn't developed like we know it today. All they really had in this area before tourism was farmland, military bases, and swamps. Walt settled on Florida because of the busy roadways and pleasant weather year round.

According to, (*Building Disney World, n.d.*) Walt bought land little by little and by 1965, he had bought about 27,443 acres of land for \$5 million dollars. Sadly, Walt never got to see the building of Disney World, he later passed away in 1966. But before he passed away, Walt shared with his brother Roy his dreams for "Magic Kingdom" and an "Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow". After Walt's passing, Roy made it his mission to make sure that Disney World would open. Building codes and land issues threatened the Florida project before it even began. Roy then decided to make Disney World its own entity, so it would be green from the regulations of the government, like an independent city, (Iwerks, 2019). This is now called

the “Reedy Creek Improvement District”. When it came time to name the Florida Project, Roy was insistent on naming it Walt Disney World, (Pilcher, 2021). He faced some push back from others in the company that thought Disney World was an easier title. But Roy insisted, and that was that!

The construction of the Magic Kingdom started first in 1967 (Sohrab, 2022). A lot of people don’t realize, Magic Kingdom was built above ground level. Under the park is something Disney calls “utilidors”, a series of tunnels that help Cast Members and characters to get from place to place quickly. So the employees knew which part of the park they were under, the walls of the tunnels are labeled with different colors, each representing different parts of the park. Walt also wanted these tunnels to be a way to keep the magic alive for children. If you’ve ever been to Disney World, you’ll notice that cast members all have different costumes for their working location, even down to what ride they work at. The tunnels allow cast members to get around the park without having to walk into a different part of the park. For example, Walt wanted to avoid FantasyLand cast members walking around in Adventure Land, because it is supposed to be immersive. Seeing a cast member in a different costume may be confusing for children.



This map above shows the arrangement of the tunnels in the Magic Kingdom. The stairways that are marked lead to different locations and shops around the parks where the cast members that work in the land can easily get back to their work location. It is rumored that there is even a Subway down there for the cast members. Today, you can get the opportunity to tour

these tunnels by doing the Keys To The Kingdom Tour. The tour gives you Disney History as well as allows guests to tour the utilidors.

The utilidors also help to “keep characters real” for kids. For example, if a child is meeting Mickey Mouse at his meeting spot, but a parade goes by with Mickey Mouse as the lead float, that could be very confusing. So, these tunnels allow for characters to make a quick exit for a quick break to keep the magic alive for children. This is a big reason why they are very insistent on not taking any photos or videos in the tunnels as well. Walt’s dream was to immerse children and families in magic and he didn’t want anything to jeopardize the child’s imagination.

For this Florida Project, they used the same lands and a lot of the same attractions that can be found in Disneyland in California, but Liberty Square was exclusive to Magic Kingdom to reflect Walt’s patriotism, (Iwerks, 2019). In my opinion, Liberty Square has some of the most immersive imagery used in its construction. When walking through this area of Magic Kingdom, you will notice that a part of the walkway is a brownstone path. They used this to represent the times in colonial America when there was no indoor plumbing. The Disney company has an amazing way of bringing everything to life.

In Main Street USA, the windows feature names of important people that helped in the creation of the company and the building of Disney World. Walt’s window is above the Plaza restaurant in Magic Kingdom, because Roy thought it to be his way of looking over the parks since he died before the opening.

Disney World opened on October 1st, 1971. A few weeks after opening day, Roy gave an official opening speech. For this heartwarming speech, beside him he had his wife Edna and Walt’s widow Lillian. Before he started his speech, according to (Pilcher, 2021), Roy said, “Somebody go find Mickey for me. We don’t have Walt anymore, and Mickey is the nearest

thing to Walt that we have left.’ Mickey appeared and Roy promptly began his speech, with Mickey standing proudly at his side.”. A few days later, Roy went home to California and he passed away. Some say that Roy dedicated the last of his life to make sure that Walt’s dreams came true.

Before Walt’s death, he had a dream of building his own city. A place where the future could meet practical living. Walt got most of his ideas from the World’s Fair. The World’s Fair was an exhibition where people from all over the world would come together to show off their countries achievements. Walt’s original vision for Epcot was to serve as a sort of permanent World’s Fair, (Bricker, 2019). This community was going to be called “Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow”, also known as Epcot. Walt wanted Epcot to have a community of about 20,000 residents that would serve as a running experiment for inventions and ways to make life more efficient, (Krieger, 2021). Walt wanted them to have their own airport, as well as a large convention center and 30 story hotel.

When Walt and Roy both passed, the leaders of the Walt Disney Company weren’t sure what to do with Walt’s Epcot idea. After looking over Walt’s ideas for this community, they decided to make Epcot into a second park. This park would showcase some of the latest achievements and give us dreams for our future. There would be a world showcase that guests can explore different foods, gifts, and attractions from different countries around the world. Epcot would be a celebration of the world and our achievements through time. We see this displayed in the “Spaceship Earth” attraction that shows us how far we have come in terms of technology and advancements in our society. This attraction highlights essential moments in history and how they changed technology and life as we know it today. In the World Showcase, you can visit eleven different countries. Mexico, Norway, China, Germany, Italy, United States,

Japan, Morocco, France, United Kingdom, and Canada. Each of these pavilions have their own unique foods, shops, and attractions for guests to enjoy. Though Epcot is one of the more educational parks, many people enjoy visiting the World Showcase to experience these different cultures.

Evolution of Walt Disney World:

Just like Disneyland, Disney World is always changing and growing. Today, Disney World has not just two, but four theme parks and over twenty-five different hotel options. The two additional parks at WDW are, Hollywood Studios (formerly known as MGM studios) which opened in 1989 and Animal Kingdom in 1998. There are even some expansions that didn't go as planned and are no longer available to the public anymore.

Treasure Island opened in 1974, meant to be a pirate themed area based on the Disney film, (Olito, 2019). A few years later in 1976, it was renamed to Discovery Island, to be a place for families to enjoy different kinds of animals. The park was known for having a wide variety of birds and plants for families to relax and enjoy. Guests would have to take a boat from the main Disney resort areas to get to this island in the middle of Bay Lake. There was some controversy about how the animals were treated on this island and if they were really being cared for. So in 1998 when Animal Kingdom opened, the demand for Discovery Island dropped drastically. So, the park just never opened back and sits abandoned today.

Disney's River Country opened in 1976, close to what is now Fort Wilderness Campground. Themed after "Tom Sawyers Swimming Hole", this waterpark was the first major expansion to WDW since its opening, (Delpozoz, 2022). This park was advanced for its time with its filtration system, taking water from Bay Lake and filtering it to be used in the water park attractions. At the time River Country opened, Disney World was still very small, only having

the Magic Kingdom, two resort hotels, and a small shopping center. As time went on and Orlando kept developing in the tourism industry, other water parks soon surpassed River Country. Even Disney's own Typhoon Lagoon waterpark (added in 1989), and later Blizzard Beach waterpark (added in 1995) exceeded sales over River Country. When River Country closed for the annual winter refurbishment, it just never opened back without a word from anyone in the company. As years went by, people have come up with some crazy theories as to why they never opened back. A little boy got a brain-eating amoeba from the water at the park, so a lot of people argue that this is the reason for their closure. But, with the advancements of the other parks, River Country just fell behind and wasn't the latest and greatest anymore. Thus, forcing it to close its doors and never reopen alongside Disney's other two waterparks.

Some say that Hollywood Studios is Disney's most changed park, (Schmidt, 2022). The idea for Disney-MGM studios started when Disney hired a new CEO, Michael Eisner. Eisner had a lot of experience with tv networks and he wanted to create something that was focused around the entertainment industry. At first, the idea was just going to be used as an addition to Epcot. But later as the idea began to develop more, the company decided to make it into its own separate park. MGM studios was designed to resemble the golden age of Hollywood. MGM Studios got its name because at the time, Disney made a deal with the movie studio Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Eisner envisioned that the main draw to this park would be to offer backstage tours to movie sets for Disney films, as well as other film companies who may be interested. Although this idea seemed great, the demand for these kinds of tours didn't seem realistic at the time, so that idea soon fizzled out. Then, they came up with the idea for the "*Great Movie Ride*". This cart ride took guests through classic movie sets and amazing animatronics.

As the interest for the production side of things started to dwindle from guests, the company decided to take out most of the studio areas and make them into more parks and attractions to draw in more guests. In 1994, Disney created a new expansion known as Sunset Boulevard. This area features many shops and the classic attraction, Tower of Terror, based on the Twilight Zone series. Later on, the MGM brand didn't renew their contract with the Walt Disney Company. So, Disney announced that they would be changing the name of MGM Studios to Hollywood Studios. This would also give room for Disney to make even more park expansions and attractions to go along with the Hollywood theme.

Later on, Disney added Toy Story Land and Star Wars Land to Hollywood Studios. The theme of Toy Story Land is meant to resemble Andy's backyard. The elements that make up Toy Story Land make you feel like you are as small as a toy, with giant pencils, Christmas lights, and game pieces. Star Wars Land is just like the one over in Disneyland. Here, you can experience the city of Battu and all it has to offer. With unique foods, flights on the Millennium Falcon, and character interactions, there is something for everyone there!

Disney's Animal Kingdom opened in 1998, following the closure of Discovery Island. Some of the animals from Discovery Island were transported to Animal Kingdom. DAK is Disney's largest park, spanning over 500 acres, (Niles, 2013). The Disney Company decided to make the park farther away on Disney property from the other parks and hotels to serve as a more peaceful environment for the animals. The park features several different lands, Africa, Asia, Dinoland, and Pandora (World of Avatar). Pandora didn't come until recent years, but Animal Kingdom has mainly stayed the same since its opening. Today, you can visit many different species of animals at DAK, as well as take a ride on Dinosaur or Expedition Everest.

Imagineers are currently in the process of throwing around ideas for a retheming of the classic Dinoland USA, but nothing is set in stone at this time.

It's true what they say, Disney World is like a little "bubble". When you visit WDW, it does feel like you are in your own little world! Even though Walt's dream for Epcot didn't happen the way that he envisioned it, I do think that Walt's dream came true in the sense that Disney World has expanded so much that it really is like its own city. Today, about fifty-eight million people visit WDW a year, (Castillo, 2023).

Disney's Marketing and Growth

The Walt Disney Company is a household name in today's society. There's a good chance that Disney was a part of your childhood in some way. It's no surprise that the success of this company has become an example to companies across the globe. The company has a way of appealing emotionally to its consumers to help people feel a sense of magic and nostalgia. This feeling and their constant growth keeps families coming back to the parks year after year.

According to, (Urrutia, 2024), "Moreover, Disney's ability to create immersive experiences across its theme parks, movies, merchandise, and digital platforms reinforces their brand identity and solidifies customer engagement." The Walt Disney company is well known in the travel industry for their amazing customer service. Anytime you're visiting a Disney destination, the cast members make you feel like royalty. I will never forget when we would go on Disney cruises and the staff would call me princess. When I was younger, that made me feel so special and like they truly cared for me. The magic I felt as a child keeps me coming back for Disney vacations today as a young adult.

As we've seen through Disney history, Walt's claim to fame wasn't exactly easy. There were many things that went wrong in his quest to become a well known animator. But, even after

some poor business decisions he was able to recover and make a name for himself. Disney quickly became a household name to families everywhere and people were eager for any new show Walt put out. Disneyland was such a big deal because it was the first theme park of its time to be fully immersive. This set the Disney company apart from any of its competitors. As we have all experienced through time, Disney never stopped making animated films and live-action films as well. On April 18th, 1983, the Disney Channel cable network began running for eighteen hours a day, (D23 Editors, 2019). Later on December 7th, 1986, the channel began running for a full twenty four hours. The TV network quickly became one of the fastest growing and most popular networks. Disney channel is still running today and is known as one of the most popular children's networks, alongside its competitor Nickelodeon.

Today, Disney also presents themselves in many different platforms that helps them to reach so many people. Disney has a tv channel, streaming services, a cruise line, a vacation timeshare, theme parks, and beach destinations. The Disney vacation club has made it possible for families everywhere to experience a Disney vacation in various different forms. When you are a part of DVC, you get exclusive discounts, bigger room options at Disney resorts, and the ability to use your timeshare points in different ways. For example, if you're a part of the Disney Vacation Club, but you don't feel like going to the Disney theme parks this year, you can use your points on a Disney cruise. Disney Cruise Line offers families the Disney magic, while also enjoying the relaxation of a cruise vacation. Disney also has resorts on Hilton Head island in South Carolina and Vero Beach. This way, it allows DVC members to have other options besides the theme parks. This allows Disney to be a "One-stop shop" per say for families that engage in Disney often. Disney vacations also allow for personalization. With the new Genie+ system, for an extra cost per day, clients are able to choose when they want to ride a ride so they can skip the

line. With so many different restaurant options in the park from table service, quick service, and character dining experiences, your Disney vacation can be anything you want it to be! There isn't a right or wrong way to experience Disney.

Disney having their own streaming services allows them to take control of their content, thus making them more money. Because now if people want to watch Disney movies, you either have to buy or rent it, or subscribe to Disney+. The company is known for being very strict on their copyright rules and keeping control of their content. If you've ever bought those cute Disney shirts from Etsy for your vacation, chances are the shop could easily get in trouble for copyright infringement. Even as a Disney travel agent myself, when sharing Disney content we are not allowed to change the caption in any way. We have to post exactly what came from the company themselves. Anything that is not directly authorized with the company is considered copyright infringement.

Recently, Disney has been facing some backlash for their pricing increases during and after the pandemic. According to, (Whitten, 2021) the Walt Disney Company lost \$2.6 billion from the theme parks alone during the 2020 pandemic. Part of this is a result of the company's former CEO, Bob Chapek. Chapek is now known as one of Disney's worst CEOs. His decisions he made on behalf of the company had many people questioning if he really had the company's best interest at heart. As we all have probably experienced, living in these post-pandemic times right now is hard for families across the country. The Disney parks are starting to become less accessible to all families and a lot of people are not happy. One of the major changes that caused frustration for many was the changes to their annual passes. Now, if you live outside of Florida you only have one option for an annual pass, while Florida residents have three different options. As a past annual passholder myself, this even made my family pretty upset.

Chapeck was soon let go and former Disney CEO Bob Iger took his place once again, delaying his retirement. Though Chapeck is gone, we are still seeing Disney increasing a lot of the prices. This is likely due to the influx of travel increasing post-pandemic and the company trying to gain back some of the revenue that was lost.

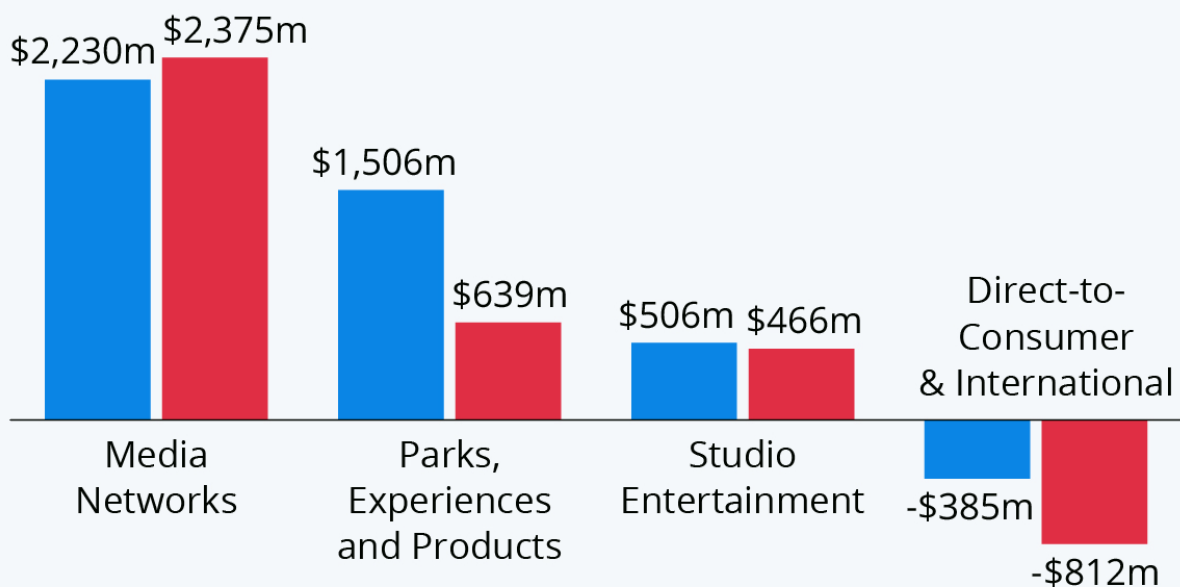
Disney In The Media:

It's clear to many that we have seen a shift of the Disney company in the recent years in the media. Even CEO Bob Iger said, "I'm mindful of the fact that our performance, from a quality perspective, wasn't up to the standards we set for ourselves," (Berg, 2023). Parents everywhere have banned Disney movies from their homes out of fear that the "woke agenda" will be pushed to their children through the films. The company has been reaching to be more inclusive in recent years by introducing lesbian and gay characters into the films, making them no longer kid friendly. The source also states that movies like the new Little Mermaid remake and Elemental didn't receive the revenue that they anticipated. According to Business Insider (Berg, 2023), "Disney's recent box office performance is a stark contrast to the run of smash hits that defined Iger's first stint as CEO, from 2005 to 2020, during which Disney broke records with "Frozen," "The Avengers" franchise, and "Black Panther." (Michael Nathanson, the analyst who asked the question, pointed this out, which Iger seems to have appreciated.)". People everywhere wonder if this big Disney decline has something to do with covid or their woke agenda. A lot of parents have sworn off Disney completely and won't even allow the old films in their homes anymore.

COVID-19 Crisis Hits Disney On Multiple Fronts

Segment operating income of the Walt Disney Company

■ Quarter ended March 30, 2019 ■ Quarter ended March 28, 2020



Source: The Walt Disney Company



statista

<https://www.statista.com/chart/21613/disney-operating-profit-by-segment/>,

Since Bob Iger's return as CEO, he told CNBC studios that his main goal was to bring creativity back to animation and their films. As previously stated, during Bob Chapeck's time as CEO, he did not see the importance of animation. This has brought on an issue of if they should be focusing on representation or telling a story.

Disney's Financial Performance

It's no secret that following the Covid-19 Pandemic, Disney has faced a fairly large financial loss. Not only in the theme parks, but all across the board within the company. According to, (Wang, 2022) "Disney has ushered in its first deficit fiscal year in ten years.[8] In order to reduce the operating costs, Disney has made drastic reforms to the offline non-paradise business and accelerated the pace of marching online.[9] Due to the limited passenger traffic caused by the COVID-19 epidemic, Disney will continue to promote the policy of layoffs. In the first half of the fiscal year 2021, the company laid off 32,000 people, closed Blue Sky Studio in the second quarter, and laid off 450 employees. In 2021, a total of 60 North American specialty stores will be closed, and the number of closed stores is equivalent to 20% of the total number of stores in the world."

This large number of lay-offs had a lot of people boycotting Disney all together. So many people in the face of the pandemic had their job security taken away. A lot of ex-Disney Cast Members took matters into their own hands and started their own businesses based on what their role used to be in the company. For example, some ladies who used to work at the "bippity boppity boutique" now offer in-room makeovers for your little princesses and princes. Some Jedis also offer "jedi training" at your resorts as well. So many cast members were devastated and wanted to continue making magic.

Even in 2024, the Walt Disney company is making an effort to come back strong after the pandemic. There has been drastic price increases across the board at the Disney parks. Not only have ticket and hotel pricing increased, but we've even lost some things that used to be free when visiting the parks. For example, you can no longer ride on the "Magical Express" when traveling from the airport to your Disney hotel. This used to be included in your stay and free to

any guest staying on Disney property. But now after Covid-19, it is no longer available. Now when visiting the parks, guests can no longer get fast passes, which also used to be included in your stay. Now, guests have to pay anywhere between fifteen to forty dollars per guest, per day to have access to Genie+. This works somewhat like fast passes used to, except you can't make your selection for the day until the day you want to use them. With the old fastpass system, guests used to be able to make their selections up to thirty days before their arrival. But alas, this is no longer the case.

Now that we're at the end of the pandemic, how have these price increases affected traveling families? Inflation in the United States has influenced every family in one way or another. It seems like everything is getting more expensive, while everyone's pay rates stay the same. So many families are struggling to make ends meet, which makes traveling a last priority. According to, (Picchi, 2023) "The entertainment giant may be battling a few issues, including parents' increasing wariness of spending more than \$100 per day for a ticket to Disney World. Intense competition from rival destinations, especially as pandemic restrictions have eased across the globe, may also be playing a role, Passy noted."

It seems that one of Disney's biggest competitors, Universal Studios, has had a lot more new attractions than Disney has seen recently. This makes a lot of people want to travel there to try new things, rather than just doing the same thing at the Disney parks. Universal also offers more discounts and promotions than Disney does. Such as a buy two days get two free ticket deal and free unlimited express pass for staying at some of their deluxe resorts. This makes Universal a better value for a lot of families rather than Disney.

Controversy of Representation V.S. Fantasy Story Telling

Today, representation has become a large issue. People want to see more diverse characters when it comes to the things that their children are watching. But when does it become too much? What is making parents everywhere ban so many tv shows and movies from their home?

Fantasy is a big part of everyone's childhood. Whether you realize it or not, you engaged in fantasy in one way or another as a child. Even something as simple as pretending to be your favorite character, to pretending you have superpowers can all be considered fantasy. Fantasy keeps a child's imagination alive and at work. It seems in today's society that most writers have lost sight of the simplicity of childhood while trying to be "woke". Woke culture has quickly turned into cancel culture and this has caused numerous problems for popular influencers and businesses everywhere. Social media has become such an influential tool in our society that if enough people decide to "cancel" someone, their career or business can be done overnight. This has caused many businesses to become more inclusive and diverse out of fear of being canceled. While yes, having diversity is great, many companies like Disney have taken it too far which have outraged parents.

The Parental Rights in Education act which came into effect July 1st, 2022 in Florida was a very controversial topic, (CS/CS/HB 1557, 2022). This bill was instituted by governor Ron Desantis and it prevents school staff from discussing sexual orientation and gender identity in schools. Desantis states that those issues are too complex for children to be taught in school and it should be up to the parents to talk about at home if they so wish to.

Disney got involved in the political issue which brought on numerous problems to the company. According to, (Blair, 2022) "Chapek said that he called Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis Wednesday morning, "to express our disappointment and concern that if the legislation becomes

law, it could be used to unfairly target gay, lesbian, non-binary and transgender kids and families.”. What Chapeck didn’t know was that his involvement in political issues would hurt the Disney company tremendously. Because of this, Desantis signed a bill that allowed the state of Florida to take control of the Reedy Creek District, (CBS Miami, 2023). As previously stated, the Reedy Creek District allowed Disney to serve as their own government and they could be in charge of land management and things of that sort. Desantis commented that it was no longer fair to allow Disney special privilege above the other theme parks in Orlando.

Disney has also caught backlash over some films that have been released in the past few years. Lightyear, a take on the classic Toy Story character Buzz Lightyear, featured a same-sex kiss in the film. It was rumored that this kiss was originally cut from the film, but they reinstated it following the “Don’t Say Gay” bill as some say. The company also released “Elemental”, which is an animated film that features a non-binary character. The film had the lowest opening weekend of any Pixar film ever released, (Clark & Fox News, 2023). Disney has also brought racial issues into their productions such as the Proud Family remake, which discussed critical race theory issues. Because of these issues, Disney has since had a \$2.4 million subscriber loss from their Disney+ streaming service.

The company has taken representation and inclusivity too far, to even now be editing their classic stories to be more progressive too. One of the most recent examples of this issue is the new live action Little Mermaid film. People were upset that the new Ariel wouldn’t have the beautiful bright red hair that she has in the original film. This created a great divide between Disney fans because some people were excited about the new representation, while others were disappointed that it didn’t match what they had known and loved in their childhood. People’s dislike of the movie had nothing to do with race issues, but more about a childhood movie not

being portrayed in the way that they remembered. Since Disney has been around for such a long time, it's no longer just about their movies and TV shows, it's about the nostalgia that people get when visiting the Disney parks and watching their old favorite movies.

The company had been saying for years that they would eventually remake the classic Snow White movie into a live-action. The movie was later officially confirmed in 2016, but between the pandemic and so much of the company's losses, the film has gotten forgotten about until now. The company announced that Rachel Ziegler, a popular West Side Story actress, would be playing the princess in this remake. Fans everywhere were so excited, until the actress started doing interviews. Ziegler said, "'She's not going to be saved by the prince. And she's not going to be dreaming about true love. She's dreaming about becoming the leader she knows she can be, and the leader that her late father told her that she could be if she was fearless, fair, brave and true," (Variety, 2022). Fans quickly became upset because of the ulterior motive in the movie, rather than telling the classic story we all know and love.

All of these issues happened during Bob Chapeck's time as CEO. When Bob Iger returned, these issues were left to him to clean up. According to, (Gonzalez, 2023) "In response, Iger said, "We pride ourselves in being accessible to all people." He then said that Disney's main goal with their content is to entertain, not push any agenda. "It should not be agenda driven; it should be entertainment-driven," said the CEO. He also said that the company should be sensitive to the fact that parents have a different level of comfort with the content they show their children." Iger also states, "While Iger agrees that the company's content shouldn't be agenda-driven, he is also not admitting that Disney has openly said their content was "woke" and that it will stop being so". With all of the money lost by the company recently because of these political

issues, Iger is aware that something has to change. It's time to bring imagination and fantasy back to what we show children.

Disney's Impact on Today's Tourism

Not only has the Walt Disney company changed Orlando forever, they have also changed the tourism industry. Disney created a new standard for theme parks all across the world. The immersive experience captivates guests and keeps them coming back time and time again. Disneyland and Disney World caused many companies like Universal Studios and SeaWorld to make their own immersive theme parks as well, making Orlando one of the biggest theme park destinations in the world. No matter how many times you visit Orlando, there's no way you can experience everything it has to offer. Disney World alone boosted Florida's economy greatly. Disney has so many separate entities now that there is no doubt the company has impacted the tourism industry forever.

Because of the Walt Disney company, many other theme parks have realized the importance of realism and immersion in their experiences. Theme parks are no longer just about the rides, it's about the experience and the feeling of being in the stories you love. For example, Universal Studios can contribute a lot of their success to their immersive Harry Potter attractions. At Universal, guests can buy interactive wands, try treats that are from the Harry Potter films, and even take a ride on the HogWarts Express. These experiences have become a big rival in Orlando to the Disney parks.

But now, Disney has tried to add some new small things to enhance the guest experience when visiting the parks. MagicBand+ is a new interactive experience where guests can see their band light up to the colors of the fireworks and cause some of the classic character statues to talk. The company has also been slowly releasing new "Hey Disney" technology in a few of their

resorts. Hey Disney is like an Alexa, but exclusive to Disney Parks. Guests can ask the virtual assistant for things like park hours, more towels in the room, or a fun wake up call from your favorite characters.

Disney Parks also uses an exclusive app that allows guests to plan their day completely. On the app, you can make dining reservations, make lightning lines through Genie+, and add important reminders. You really can't go to Disney World without being familiar with this technology. The app makes it so much easier to keep track of everything that may be important to your family during your Disney vacation.

Disney Cruise Line is one of the biggest cruise lines in the world. With five ships and one new one debuting in 2025, you can be immersed in Disney magic in many destinations. Whether you want to go on a European cruise, Alaskan cruise, Caribbean, Bahamas, Australia, and even more unique itineraries, Disney Cruise Line can do it! DCL's biggest competitor today is Royal Caribbean. RC has many more ships than DCL does and offers a lot of other unique destinations. But, the luxury and magic of Disney keeps customers coming back to their cruises time and time again.

As previously mentioned, the Disney Vacation Club timeshare also allows people to enjoy a variety of Disney vacations as well! From a business standpoint, this is very smart for the company because it keeps consumers buying into the Disney timeshare, but gives them the ability to choose between Disney parks, beach resorts, or a cruise. This way, guests are having some sort of Disney vacation, regardless of where they are choosing to spend their time.

Disney Parks International Expansions

Today, you can find Disney parks all around the world. The company now has theme parks in Paris, Tokyo, and ShangHai.

Tokyo Disneyland was the first international Disney park. According to, (OLC group, N.D.), the OLC group performed a study for European and American leisure facilities. The study concluded that Disneyland was the ideal choice for their vision. So, the company made a formal request to the Walt Disney company to expand to Japan. In late 1974, the Disney company agreed to expand to Tokyo. The project was officially named the “Oriental Disneyland Project”.

After many meetings and agreements were made, they started on the first phase of development in 1975. The first thing they needed to figure out was where they were going to build the park. The two companies decided that the Urayasu area of Chiba would be the ideal location. After this, they were able to begin the designs of the park. In early spring of 1977, they officially named the park “Tokyo Disneyland.”. At first, it was a little tricky to make sure that both the Disney company and OLC group were on the same page when it came to design and building. But after about 5 years of back and forth negotiations, they were finally able to sign an agreement. According to, (OLC Group, N.D.) “The amount of construction funds needed for the theme park was several hundred billion yen,” Which at the time, was not as easy to come by as they expected. But, the company was able to get the vice-governor Takeshi Numatata to join them at a bank business meeting. This helped them immensely and they were able to get the construction funds they needed to begin the building process.

Upon signing the construction contract with the Walt Disney Company, the OLC Group sent trainees to Disneyland in California so they could learn what it means to operate the park. The trainees stayed there to learn for about a year before returning back to Japan to apply what they learned. On December 3, 1980, the company was finally able to host their official groundbreaking ceremony. This was monumental, as this process had taken a lot longer than expected. But, the company soon ran into a problem. The construction ended up going way over

the original budget of 100 billion yen, and was actually about 180 billion yen. “President Takahashi was emphatic: “Don’t compromise. Create the real thing.”. The next step was to find the cast members. This was the company's biggest struggle in the building process, because finding transportation to this area was somewhat difficult. The park was only able to find enough staff 6 months *after* the opening of the park. “Tokyo Disneyland opened at last on a rainy April 15, 1983. Before the gates opened, the president of Oriental Land at the time, Masatomo Takahashi, and the chairman of The Disney Company at the time, E. Cardon Walker, cut the tape with Mickey Mouse and other Disney characters looking on.” (OLC Group, N.D.)

Disneyland Paris was the next addition to the international Disney parks. Before Tokyo Disneyland even opened, the Walt Disney Company threw around ideas of a European park in the late 60s. But, with the beginning of the Florida project in Orlando, the company really didn’t have any extra money to spend. (Schmidt, 2023). But, after Tokyo Disneyland opened, the idea of a European park was still on the company's mind. There were many different locations discussed, but they got it down to four. Two options in the french countryside and two in Spain. Later, they decided on land not too far from Paris and they were officially able to start construction in 1988. The new park would be called “Euro Disneyland”. A lot of their ideas they based off of the Florida project. They wanted to build a Magic Kingdom style park, a shopping district, and had plans to remake MGM Studios a few years later. They also planned on having 6 hotels on the Disney property as well as a golf course.

The main source of transportation to Euro Disneyland would be the train station. One of the main railway lines was expanded to connect the Disney park with Paris. This would be a big help in bringing visitors to the parks and making it easier for people to visit all over Europe. But, opening day on April 12, 1992 was far more disappointing than anyone expected. The park

didn't see much attendance for awhile after opening and it was even rumored that they were going to close. The parks were trying to do many different things to improve their occupancy and they decided to change the name of the park to "Disneyland Paris". Disney CEO Michael Eisner said: "As Americans, the word 'Euro' is believed to mean glamorous or exciting. For Europeans, it turned out to be a term they associated with business, currency and commerce. Renaming the park Disneyland Paris was a way of identifying it with one of the most romantic and exciting cities in the world." But even still, the park's performance was not what they expected and the company was in debt because of it. The company discussed bringing Epcot to California, but the idea had to be scrapped because of their large money loss.

Later when Disney introduced a new executive for the Euro Disney park, he was given the task to turn the park around. He said, "There was never anything wrong with the product we opened in Paris," Rasulo said. "It's an absolutely beautiful park, one of the most beautiful in the world. But what we probably didn't understand very well was that ... Disneyland Paris is an incredibly diverse environment and very different from the American environment." The park needed to make more changes in favor of the European people, rather than the American people. The consumers in Europe found it hard to relate to, as things weren't designed for their ways of life.

Thanks to Rasulo, Disneyland Paris now focuses on the European people, rather than the American market that the Disney company is used to. Because of this change, Disneyland became widely more successful and now sees millions of tourists each year.

Next for the Walt Disney Company was Hong Kong Disneyland. This theme park opened in 2005. Before Tokyo Disneyland, the company had tossed around the idea of building a theme park in China. As most of the other Disney parks, the main lands of the park are mainly the same

and resemble the original American parks very similarly. This park also has Sleeping Beauty castle, instead of Cinderella castle like Disneyland in California. Several years after opening, the park announced plans for expansion into lands such as Toy Story land, which can be found at the Orlando park as well. After the controversy of the former EuroDisney, the company knew not to Americanize the park too much. The Disney company lost sight of what overseas fans wanted to see and expected them to desire the American version. As proved with EuroDisney, they had to come up with a different plan and they knew to do things differently this time.

Shanghai Disneyland is the next and last current overseas Disney park to open. Shanghai Disneyland opened in 2016. The goal of the park was to blend the Disney company with Chinese culture, such as what they did with Hong Kong Disneyland. In Chinese culture, peaceful surroundings and family time are very important. So, the Disney company wanted the Shanghai Disneyland resort to reflect these values, (Glover, 2016). This is shown in one of the first lands designed in the theme park, called Gardens of Imagination. This area is 15 acres of green and vibrant plants for families to relax and enjoy.

The company also made sure that classic Disney songs would be presented in Mandarin, to be familiar and true to Chinese culture. Guests can also enjoy the first ever fully Mandarin version of The Lion King production at Disney Downtown. The artists also made sure to include their culture in the architecture of the buildings in the park.



As you can see from the photo above, the architecture of the building is made to be a part of their culture. This building features the vibrant red and golden dragons that are special to many Chinese families. Similar to how the Europeans felt, the Chinese people didn't want an Americanized park. The Disney company made sure to be inclusive to their culture in the building of this new theme park.

Disney's Growth and Company Expansion:

There is no doubt that the Disney business model is one that is admired by tourism industries, marketing agencies, and businesses all around the world. Not only as Disney impacted the tourism industry, they have also expanded into various other third party companies. In recent years, the Walt Disney company has purchased many well known companies. Some of them, people may not even realize are owned by Disney! They do a great job of keeping everything the way that it was previously, making a lot of people not even realize it's Disney owned.

The biggest shock to many people was when Disney took over the Star Wars franchise. The first Star Wars film was released in 1977, and since then it has been continuing on as one of the biggest movie franchises. Today, there are twelve Star Wars movies as well as several TV series based on the storyline. In 2011, Disney bought LucasFilm. According to, (Cuevas, 2018) "Driven by a tremendously talented creative team, Lucasfilm's legendary Star Wars franchise has flourished for more than 35 years, and offers a virtually limitless universe of characters and stories to drive continued feature film releases and franchise growth over the long term". Disney has proved this to be true, with how much they have done with the franchise upon buying it. Now, you can find "Galaxy's Edge (Star Wars Land), in Disneyland California as well as Disney World Orlando. Here, guests can fly the famous Millenium Falcon, be a part of the resistance, try famous snacks from Battu, and so much more.

In March of 2022, Disney opened the Galactic Star Cruiser in Orlando. This was unlike any other experience Disney has ever made. This "hotel" was made to have the structure of a cruise ship. From the second guest's check-in, they will feel as if they have actually stepped aboard the Star Cruiser. Here, guests go on Star Wars missions, eat food from Battu, and get two full days worth of Star Wars immersion. The guests staying would have access to Galaxy's Edge in Hollywood Studios as well. Sounds amazing right? Guests didn't quite agree. The price tag

kept so many adoring fans from living out their biggest Star Wars dreams. The starting price for one guest was about \$1,200 per day, (Whitten, 2023). It was later announced that the Star Cruiser would make its last voyage in September of 2023, just a little over a year after it's first opening. The Walt Disney company spent roughly over \$2 billion dollars to create the Star Cruiser, so this was a huge loss for the company. Before the official closing announcement, many people saw it coming because of its low performance and low accessibility for many people.

It has been since rumored that Disney has filed permits to make changes to the "hotel", possibly making it into just a standard Star Wars themed hotel, but nothing has been officially confirmed or announced.

Another shocking purchase Disney made was their purchase of the Marvel franchise. This franchise is near and dear to a lot of people and their childhoods. Marvel was purchased by Disney in 2009. According to, (Dindral, 2018) ""This transaction combines Marvel's strong global brand and world-renowned library of characters including Iron Man, Spider-Man, X-Men, Captain America, Fantastic Four and Thor with Disney's creative skills, unparalleled global portfolio of entertainment properties, and a business structure that maximizes the value of creative properties across multiple platforms and territories," said Robert A. Iger, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Walt Disney Company.'"". Today, you can have many different immersive Marvel experiences in Disney parks. In California Adventure, you can find Avengers Campus where you can meet superheroes, shoot webs like Spiderman, and watch amazing animatronic performances of the classic heroes. In Orlando, you can help get the "Cosmic Generator" and take a ride with the Guardians of the Galaxy on Cosmic Rewind. As well as continuing the Marvel movies, Disney has also come out with many TV series on Disney+ based on the movies and even creating new Marvel characters.

But, something that has confused fans is why you can still find Marvel rides and themes in Universal Studios, when Disney now owns the franchise. Even though Disney owns the majority of the Marvel franchise, they don't have as many rights to it as everyone may think. According to, (duBois, 2022) "In short, before Disney purchased Marvel, the comic book giant signed a contract with MCA Inc., which owned the Universal Studios theme parks at the time." This means that though Disney bought the rights to Marvel, that doesn't erase the rights that Universal also has. A part of the contract was that it limited the way that Disney used the characters "west of the Mississippi River", meaning Walt Disney World in Orlando. This is why you can meet characters like Spiderman and Iron Man in Disneyland in California, but not in Florida. But, also according to (duBois, 2022) "There are a few loopholes in the contract that Disney has cleverly worked around at Walt Disney World, mostly at Disney Springs. The shopping and entertainment complex at Walt Disney World is not considered a theme park. This is why Disney is free to use characters like Loki on treats from locations like Amorette's Patisserie, or sell merchandise at Super Hero Headquarters, as long as neither location uses the word "Marvel."

Marvel coming to Disney has been a huge win for the company. Not only can you find some awesome Guardians of the Galaxy rides at the theme parks now, but you can also embark on "Marvel Day at Sea" aboard Disney Cruise Line. This immersive experience brings the magic of Marvel to guests to meet their favorite superheroes and embark on journeys with them. Marvel has had many beloved fans for years and this has brought all of those adoring fans to Disney parks and Disney Cruise Line to experience the Marvel magic.

Another company that Disney has purchased in recent years is ESPN. This was purchased by Disney in 1996, (Buckley, 2023). Many sports fans have their favorite networks that they are

exclusively loyal to, so this switch of ownership worried a lot of fans. But, as previously mentioned, Disney has done a great job of keeping the companies largely the same as they were before. Today, you can even find the “ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex” at Walt Disney World in Orlando. Here, many different sporting events take place each year. One of the biggest is the all-Star cheerleading Summit and Worlds Championship. Cheer teams all across the country work hard all season to get paid bids to these competitions. Teams can only compete if they have earned a bid at a previous competition. This level of competition makes this the biggest event in the all-star cheerleading. A lot of people call it the “Superbowl” of cheerleading.

Within the integration with ESPN, Disney also acquired ABC, also known as Freeform today. Once streaming services started becoming popular, Disney was able to produce ESPN+ which made an exclusive place for different sports programming. The Walt Disney Company also owns Hulu, allowing them to offer a bundle with Hulu, ESPN and Disney+ together. With recent crackdowns on password sharing and “woke” culture being produced on Disney+, the company has been seeing a money loss within its streaming platform users.

The Future of The Walt Disney Company

So what’s next for the Walt Disney Company? Will they continue seeing steady growth as they have for 100 years now? As Walt said, Disneyland and Disney World will never be finished. If only Walt could see how far his company has gone today. According to CEO Bob Iger, he stated in a press conference that there is still a lot of building to be done. He says, “And when I talk about building, I’m not just talking about building things bigger. I’m talking about growing the company—turning building into real growth. What I mean by that is growth in our organic businesses, looking for growth outside of those businesses, other opportunities—and, of

course, growing the capital that we return to shareholders in the form of dividends or stock buybacks.”, (The Walt Disney Company, 2024)

Disney has a lot of exciting films that are set to be released later this year. These include, *Moana 2*, *Inside Out 2*, and *Mufasa: The Lion King*. When talking about the new movies, Bob Iger says, “We did make some management changes at the studio. I feel good about those. We’re also managing our costs more aggressively,” he said. “Most importantly in all of this discussion is focus. And that’s not just the focus of management, it’s the focus of your creative team.” (The Walt Disney Company, 2024). After seeing much money loss over the controversial films in the past few years, Iger has made an effort for change and we will see that reflected in the films that are soon to come.

One of the most exciting announcements by the Walt Disney Company for adoring Disney fans everywhere has been the possible expansions at the Disney parks and Disney Cruise Line. According to, (The Walt Disney Company, 2024) “In terms of the big opportunities for expanding Disney’s Experiences business, Iger pointed to the company’s plan to turbocharge growth with a roughly \$60 billion investment over the next decade in expanding its domestic and international parks and Disney Cruise Line.” There have been several rumors about what these possible park expansions could be. Some say it could be an expansion of Magic Kingdom, behind Frontierland. Some are saying it could be a villain's land, or even an *Encanto* themed land. There is also talk of a re-theme and expansion of the former DinoLand in Animal Kingdom. This is rumored to become a *Moana* land, *Indian Jones* themed land, or *Zootopia* land. Nothing has been confirmed yet, so many fans are excited to see what Disney will do with these advancements and grants they are receiving. Iger also states, “Iger noted the businesses’ strong track record and said, “We have thousands of acres of land still to develop. We could actually

build seven new full lands if we wanted to around the world, including the ability to increase the size of Disneyland in California—which everybody thinks is kind of landlocked—by 50%. So, you look at the returns and where you’re going to place your bets in terms of capital to deliver value to shareholders.”.

Disney Cruise Line is also set to see some major changes in the next few years. In addition to the new Disney Wish cruise ship that debuted last year, Disney is also set to unveil the Disney Treasure and Disney Destiny, both set to sail their first voyage in 2025. The company is also unveiling a new private island later this year. LightHouse Point will be the newest tropical destination exclusive to Disney Cruise Line only. The company has seen great success in their other private island, Castaway Cay. This new island is supposed to be very similar, but have it’s own exclusive elements that will keep guests coming back.

Within the growth of the company, Iger also has dreams to continue the success of the streaming platforms. He says, “In putting basically Hulu into a Disney+ app experience—which we launched in beta in December and comes out of beta at the end of the month—we are not only increasing the volume of content that we have on the platform, but with that comes significantly more engagement,” he said. “And in bundling Hulu with Disney+, we’re finding wherever we bundle, churn rates are down significantly, so that’s a path to profitability.” (The Walt Disney Company, 2024)

The Walt Disney Company also plans to continue the growth of ESPN as well. Iger states, “What we’re trying to do is be very, very pro-consumer... and that basically means making ESPN available in multiple ways so the consumer can enjoy the sports they want to watch,” he said. “The joint venture that we created with Fox and Warner Bros. Discovery is an example of that.” (The Walt Disney Company, 2024).

Conclusion

As I have outlined in this paper, the Walt Disney company has served as a great business example in many different fields. Between their successful marketing, great communication, and values that withstand time, the Disney company is beloved in households all around the world.

It's no question that Walt Disney's rise to success is inspiring to many people. They are a company that has stood the test of time and been successful through the generations. Today, beloved Disney fans can reflect on how Disney was in their childhood, but also now see Disney through their child's eyes as well. Disney has evolved with changing society to withstand year after year. Making families of all ages love the Walt Disney company.

When Walt started, he was struggling to make ends meet and taking jobs where he could. After losing Oswald the Lucky Rabbit, he wasn't sure where to go. Then, Mickey Mouse changed everything. The creation of Mickey quickly became a worldwide sensation, gaining Disney millions of fans. After several movies and TV shows, the creation of Disneyland changed everything. Now, millions of guests and families make the trip to California every year to see the nostalgic magic that I'm sure all of us have dreamed about at one time or another. Then later, the creation of Disney World changed Florida tourism forever. Now Orlando is a hotspot for many other theme parks in addition to Disney.

Disney's storytelling overtime has contributed to its great success among families. From Disney's start with his creation of Mickey, to the classic princess stories we all know and love, and now the Star Wars and Marvel franchise, the movies that this company produces are near and dear to our hearts. The company's love for classic storytelling has kept loyal fans for years and years. Making this company a household name all around the world.

In addition to their commitment to storytelling, Disney's partnerships have kept them in a state of always growing in a lot of different ways. Owning ESPN has kept Disney in the sports world. Owning Hulu in addition to Disney+ has allowed them to keep loyal monthly and yearly subscribers for their streaming services. And of course, buying Star Wars and Marvel has brought lifelong fans to Disney for unique experiences and productions that are exclusive to the company.

Disney has also been able to expand worldwide, creating even more fans than ever before. Now, you can visit Disney parks in places like Paris, Tokyo, Shanghai, and of course, California and Florida. Disney Cruise Line has also created exclusive experiences for families that can only be found on one of their cruise ships, making Disney an all around vacation experience for families. Whether they want to go to the beach, visit a theme park, or embark on a cruise, it can all be found within the Walt Disney Company.

Though Disney has faced some not so good leadership in recent years, the track record of successful leaders has made this company withstand many hardships that it has faced over time, one of the biggest being the recent Covid-19 pandemic. After bad leadership during the pandemic, Bob Iger was able to come back on as CEO and take the reins once again to make the company as successful as it once was. Now that we're in the post-covid era, the theme parks are finally seeing the crowds that they once were. Though so many things have changed, it's clear that Disney has once again stood the test of time and remained a beloved household name.

Looking ahead for the Walt Disney company, the future is bright. With many expansions on the horizon, it's no doubt that their success with movies as well as the theme parks are going to continue to rise for years to come. With the D23 expo coming up, it is expected that even more new things will be announced to the public at that time. With the great leadership that

Disney possesses at this time, there is no doubt that they will continue to seek the vision that Walt Disney himself had from the beginning. That is to make Disney truly an escape from reality. A place for adults and children to come together and enjoy the simplicity of spending time together and enjoying eachothers company.

To close, I would like to end with a quote from Walt Disney himself, “Disneyland will never be completed. It will continue to grow as long as there is imagination left in the world.” (Walt Disney). The end is nowhere in sight for the Walt Disney Company. From generation to generation the Disney tradition has been passed down, and will continue to do so for years to come. If only Walt himself could see just how far his dream has taken the company to where we are today. Afterall, it all started with a mouse and a dream.

References

About Walt Disney. D23. (2018, April 10). <https://d23.com/about-walt-disney/>

Archer, S. (2018, November 22). *Behind the fascinating design of Disneyland*. Architectural Digest. <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/design-of-disneyland-book>

Ball, K. (2020, November 13). *Disneyland's Main Street USA - A walk down disney legend lane*. The Disney Classics. <https://www.thedisneyclassics.com/blog/main-street-dedication-windows>

Berg, M. (2023, November 8). *Bob Iger admits Disney's movies aren't all that good anymore*. Business Insider. <https://www.businessinsider.com/bob-iger-admits-disney-movies-have-been-bad-2023-11>

Blair, E. (2022, March 10). *After protests, Disney CEO speaks out against Florida's "don't say gay" bill*. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2022/03/08/1085130633/disney-response-florida-bill-dont-say-gay>

Building Disney World. DOZR. (n.d.). <https://dozr.com/blog/building-disney-world>

Bricker, T. (2019, October 26). *The History of Epcot Center*. Disney Tourist Blog. <https://www.disneytouristblog.com/epcot-center-history/>

Castillo, L. (2023, December 23). *Disney World Visitor Statistics [Fresh Research] • Gitnux*. GITNIX. <https://gitnux.org/disney-world-visitor-statistics/#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20average%20annual,World%20each%20year%20on%20average.>

CBS Miami Team. (2023, February 27). *Gov. DeSantis Signs Law, State takes control of Disney's Reedy Creek District*. CBS News. <https://www.cbsnews.com/miami/news/gov-desantis-signs-law-state-takes-control-of-disneys-reedy-creek-district/>

Clark, J., & Fox News. (2023, June 20). *Disney's "elemental," which features "non-binary" character, flops in opening weekend*. Fox News. <https://www.foxnews.com/media/disneys-elemental-features-non-binary-character-flops-opening-weekend>

Corless, T. (2023, June 24). *The complete history of Walt Disney's Enchanted tiki room*. WDW News Today. <https://wdwnt.com/2023/06/the-complete-history-of-walt-disneys-enchanted-tiki-room/>

Cuevas, A. (2018, April 30). *Disney to acquire Lucasfilm Ltd.*. The Walt Disney Company. <https://thewaltdisneycompany.com/disney-to-acquire-lucasfilm-ltd/>

Disney history. D23. (2023, March 2). <https://d23.com/disney-history/#:~:text=Walt%20Disney%20made%20his%20Alice,named%20Oswald%20the%20Lucky%20Rabbit.>

The Construction of Disneyland. Designing Disney. (n.d.). <https://www.designingdisney.com/parks/disneyland-resort/construction-disneyland/>

D23 Editions. (2019, September 11). *Disney Channel, The*. D23. <https://d23.com/a-to-z/disney-channel-the/>

Delpozo, B. (2022, June 14). *Whatever happened to river country? the history behind Disney's abandoned First Water Park*. AllEars.Net. <https://allears.net/2020/01/29/whatever-happened-to-river-country-the-history-behind-disneys-abandoned-first-water-park/>

Dindral, A. (2018, April 30). *Disney to acquire Marvel Entertainment*. The Walt Disney Company. <https://thewaltdisneycompany.com/disney-to-acquire-marvel-entertainment/>

duBois, M. (2022, October 12). *This is why Walt Disney World can't build some Marvel-themed attractions*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/megandubois/2022/03/29/this-is-why-walt-disney-world-cant-build-some-marvel-themed-attractions/?sh=76e0c392421e>

Glover, E. (2016, June 15). *Authentically Disney and distinctly Chinese: Shanghai Disney resort ...* Disney Parks Blog. <https://disneyparks.disney.go.com/blog/2016/06/authentically-disney-and-distinctly-chinese-shanghai-disney-resort-blends-magic-of-disney-with-spirit-ofchina/>

Glover, E. (2015, May 13). *Sixty Years of Innovation: New Fantasyland at Disneyland Park | ...* Disney Parks Blog . <https://disneyparks.disney.go.com/blog/2015/05/sixty-years-of-innovation-new-fantasyland-at-disneyland-park/>

Gonzalez, E. (2023, April 5). *Bob Iger doesn't want to push LGBTQ Agenda*. Inside the Magic. <https://insidethemagic.net/2023/04/bob-iger-doesnt-want-to-push-lgbtq-agenda-eg1/>

The grand opening of Disneyland. Designing Disney. (n.d.-b). <https://www.designingdisney.com/parks/disneyland-resort/grand-opening-disneyland/>

The Walt Disney Family Museum . (n.d.). *Tomorrowland: Walt's vision for Today*. Tomorrowland: Walt's Vision For Today | The Walt Disney Family Museum. <https://www.waltdisney.org/exhibitions/tomorrowland-walts-vision-today>

Gray, R. (2022, February 25). *Did Disney shape how you see the world?*. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20190724-did-disney-shape-how-you-see-the-world>

Harmetz, A. (1979, September 17). *Disney's "Sleeping Beauty."* The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/1979/09/17/archives/disneys-sleeping-beauty-is-awakening-again-idea-surfaced-a-year-ago.html#:~:text=No%20one%20is%20quite%20sure,slightly%20more%20than%20%245%20million.>

History.Com Editors. (2019, July). *Walt Disney Company is founded | October 16, 1923.* History.com. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/walt-disney-company-founded>

History.Com Editors. (2009, November 24). *Disneyland opens | july 17, 1955.* History.com. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/disneyland-opens>

ICYMI: CEO Bob Iger addresses Disney's strength, growth, and momentum at Morgan Stanley Conference. The Walt Disney Company. (2024, March 8).

<https://thewaltdisneycompany.com/bob-iger-disney-morgan-stanley-conference/#:~:text=Turbocharging%20Experiences,parks%20and%20Disney%20Cruise%20Line.>

The Imagineering Story. (2019).

Jones, C. (2023, July 12). *What's up with Disney and its seemingly never-ending "woke" controversy?* MovieWeb. <https://movieweb.com/woke-disney-movies-controversy/>

Korkis, J. (2021, April 21). *How Disney's Animal Kingdom began.* MousePlanet. https://www.mouseplanet.com/12925/How_Disneys_Animal_Kingdom_Began

Krieger, A. (2021, September 29). *Epcot was Walt Disney's Radical Vision for a new kind of City.* HowStuffWorks Science. <https://science.howstuffworks.com/engineering/structural/walt-disneys-epcot-news.htm>

Kurtti, J. (2019, April 12). *Memories from a Missouri childhood: Tom Sawyer Island | Disney ...* Disney Parks Blog. <https://disneyparks.disney.go.com/blog/2019/04/memories-from-a-missouri-childhood-tom-sawyer-island/>

MacDonald, B. (2023, June 22). *Disneyland crowds return to 90% of 2019 levels, report says.* The Mercury News. <https://www.mercurynews.com/2023/06/22/disneyland-crowds-returns-to-90-of-2019-levels-report-say-2/>

Magazine, P. (2023, November 4). *Can Disney play a major role in child development?* Psychologists Magazine | Mental Health Magazine | Psychology Magazine | Self-Help Magazine. <https://www.psychologists.com/can-disney-play-a-major-role-in-child-development/>

Magazine, S. (2022, July 11). *How Disney propaganda shaped life on the home front during WWII*. Smithsonian.com. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-disney-propaganda-shaped-life-on-the-home-front-during-wwii-180979057/>

Niles, R. (2013, August 23). *Theme park history: A short history of Disney's Animal Kingdom*. Theme Park Insider. <https://www.themeparkinsider.com/flume/201308/3621/>

OLC Group. (n.d.). *Opening of tokyo disneyland: History / chronology: About us: Oriental Land Co., Ltd.*. Opening of Tokyo Disneyland | History / Chronology | About Us | Oriental Land Co., Ltd. <https://www.olc.co.jp/en/company/history/history03.html#:~:text=Tokyo%20Disneyland%20open ed%20at%20last,other%20Disney%20characters%20looking%20on.>

Olito, F. (2019, April 4). *Disney World mysteriously closed an island 20 years ago and left it in ruins. take a look inside*. Business Insider. <https://www.businessinsider.com/look-inside-disney-worlds-abandoned-discovery-island-2019-2#discovery-island-originally-opened-in-1974-under-its-original-name-treasure-island-1>

Pilcher, K. (2021, October 27). *50 years ago: Roy Disney made Walt's dream come true*. WKMG. <https://www.clickorlando.com/theme-parks/2021/10/01/50-years-ago-roy-disney-made-walts-dream-come-true/>

Picchi, A. (2023, July 14). *Disney World's crowds are thinning. growing competition - and cost - may be to blame*. CBS News. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/disney-world-cost-attendance-down-ron-desantis/>

Saxton, J. (2021, November 5). *How walt kept Disney World A secret*. AllEars.Net. <https://allears.net/2021/11/08/how-walt-kept-disney-world-a-secret/>

Schmidt, N. (2022, July 20). *The history of Disney's most changed park: Hollywood studios*. AllEars.Net. <https://allears.net/2020/04/05/the-history-of-disneys-most-changed-park-hollywood-studios/>

Schmidt, C. (2023, June 4). *The evolution of disneyland paris: 30 years of twists, turns and unlimited potential*. AllEars.Net. <https://allears.net/2023/06/05/the-evolution-of-disneyland-paris-30-years-of-twists-turns-and-unlimited-potential/>

Seastrom, L. (2019). *Hollywood Cartoonland: Walt Disney's Alice Comedies*. The Walt Disney Family Museum. <https://www.waltdisney.org/blog/hollywood-cartoonland-walt-disneys-alice-comedies>

Sherman, A. (2023, September 6). *Disney's Wildest ride: Iger, chapek and the making of an epic succession mess*. CNBC. <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/09/06/disney-succession-mess-iger-chapek.html>

Susanin, T. S. (2014). *Walt before Mickey: Disney's early years, 1919-1928*. University Press of Mississippi.

Sohrab. (2022, August 29). *Building a fairytale: The construction of Cinderella Castle, part 1*. D23. <https://d23.com/building-a-fairytale-the-construction-of-cinderella-castle-part-1/>

Urrutia, K. (2024, January 29). *Walt Disney Marketing strategy: Driving the magic of brand success*. Voy. <https://voymedia.com/walt-disney-marketing-strategy/>

Variety. (2022, September 10). *Rachel Zegler and Gal Gadot on bringing a new modern edge to "snow white."* YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RVg3yetTE4>

Wang, Y. (2022) *What is Disney worth?*
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6f0f/ab40251576e35e221871b485dc5c5b44573e.pdf>

Walt Disney Studios. (n.d.). *Behind the Attraction* [Film]. (Pirates of The Caribbean, Season two episode one)

Walt Disney Archives. (2019, April 17). *Walt and Roy Disney announce "Florida Project."* D23. <https://d23.com/this-day/walt-and-roy-disney-announce-florida-project/>

Whitten, S. (2021, February 12). *Disney said Covid-related costs shaved \$2.6 billion from Parks' operating income in latest quarter*. CNBC. <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/02/11/coronavirus-hurt-theme-parks-costing-disney-2point6-billion.html>

Whitten, S. (2023, May 19). *Disney World's costly Star wars: Galactic starcruiser to close in late September*. CNBC. <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/05/18/disney-worlds-star-wars-galactic-starcruiser-to-shutter.html>