

Analysis of Disney's Marketing Strategy- IP Authorization, Global Localization, and Youth-Oriented Innovation

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Abstract. This study offers a thorough examination of The Walt Disney Company's marketing approach, emphasizing how it has developed into a globally integrated system focused on youth-oriented innovation, localization, and intellectual property (IP) empowerment. Disney developed a synergistic economic model that linked experience, product, and content by acquiring Pixar, Marvel, and Lucasfilm. Its STP approach creates emotional bonds between generations by efficiently segmenting consumers based on age and consumption scenarios. Disney's IP authorization as a high-profit engine is further examined in the study, which moves from basic licensing to full-chain brand consultancy. Disney uses cultural customisation to adapt to local markets while maintaining consistent models throughout its global expansion. It uses digitalized, interactive, and socially conscious marketing strategies for Generation Z and Alpha. The results show that Disney's success stems from its steady fusion of innovation, technology, and customer interaction, establishing the company as a representation of creativity, happiness, and enduring brand loyalty.

Keywords: Disney, marketing strategy, IP, global localization, innovation.

1. Introduction

The global theme park industry has witnessed remarkable growth over the past few decades, evolving from simple amusement venues into complex, immersive entertainment destinations that blend culture, technology, and storytelling. This growth reflects a broader societal shift towards experiential consumption, where people increasingly seek memorable, interactive experiences rather than just material goods. In this context, Disney Parks, a cornerstone of The Walt Disney Company's entertainment empire, hold a unique and influential position.

Disneyland, the first of Disney's theme park ventures, opened in 1955 in Anaheim, California. Its emergence marked a pivotal moment in the history of leisure and entertainment. Prior to Disneyland, amusement parks were often associated with carnival - like attractions and lacked the cohesive narrative and high - production - value experiences that Disney introduced. Since then, Disney Parks have expanded globally, with locations in Florida, Tokyo, Paris, Hong Kong, and Shanghai, each adapting to local cultures while maintaining the core Disney magic [1].

The study of Disneyland is crucial for understanding not only the theme park industry but also the intersection of business, entertainment, and cultural influence. Disneyland's success has set benchmarks for guest experience, brand extension, and destination marketing, influencing countless other theme parks and entertainment ventures. Moreover, in an era where digital entertainment competes fiercely with physical attractions, examining how Disneyland continues to thrive by creating immersive, emotionally resonant experiences offers valuable insights into consumer behavior and the future of experiential industries. This introduction aims to lay the groundwork for exploring Disneyland's role in the theme park industry, its historical significance, and its ongoing relevance in shaping modern entertainment landscapes. Through a review of existing literature and analysis of its operations, this study seeks to uncover the factors behind its enduring popularity and its impact on the broader industry.

2. Brand introduction

Disney, known as The Walt Disney Company, is one of the most influential entertainment brands in the world.

In 1923, Walt Disney and his brother Roy O. Disney founded Disney Studios in Hollywood. Initially, it started with animated short films and launched a series of classic animated characters such as Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. With their vivid images and infectious stories, these characters quickly became popular around the world and became the iconic symbol of Disney's brand [2].

In 2006, Disney acquired Pixar Animation Studios, the creator of Toy Story, Finding Nemo, and Cars. This acquisition brought innovative animation technology and beloved characters, strengthening Disney's animation dominance.

In 2009, it acquired Marvel Entertainment, gaining a vast universe of superheroes like Iron Man, Captain America, and Spider-Man. This move expanded Disney's reach into the superhero genre, with blockbuster films like The Avengers series [3].

In 2012, Disney acquired Lucasfilm, the owner of the Star Wars and Indiana Jones franchises. The Star Wars sequel trilogy, spin-offs, and series (e.g., The Mandalorian) have since become major revenue drivers.

With the expansion of its business, Disney has gradually entered the fields of film distribution and TV program production from animation production. In 1955, the first Disneyland opened in Anaheim, California, USA, creating a new business model for theme parks, bringing the dream scenes in the world of animation to reality and bringing an immersive entertainment experience to tourists [4]. Since then, Disney has opened a number of theme parks around the world, including Disney World in Florida, Tokyo, Japan, Paris Disney, France, Hong Kong Disney, China and Shanghai Disney.

Nowadays, Disney not only continues to make efforts in the field of entertainment, but also extends its business to many peripheral industries such as toys, clothing, stationery, food and so on through brand authorization. With its rich imagination, high-quality content and positive values, the Disney brand is deeply loved by consumers of all ages and has become synonymous with joy, dreams and creativity [5,6].

3. Marketing Strategy Analysis

As a benchmark enterprise in the global entertainment industry, Disney's sales strategy has built a multi-dimensional and highly coordinated business system.

3.1. STP Strategy: Accurate Market Segmentation and Positioning

Disney has built a consumer network covering all ages through segmentation, targeting and positioning.

Subdivided by age: the children's market focuses on animated IPs such as Frozen and The Lion King; the youth market focuses on action-oriented IPs such as Marvel and Star Wars; the adult market penetrates through films such as Avatar and Titanic and nostalgic IPs (such as Mickey's classic image), which continue to attract multi-generational audience through emotional resonance. This layered strategy allows Disney to establish emotional connections at all ages [7].

Subdivide by consumption scenario: divide the market into "content consumers" (movie, streaming media users), "experience consumers" (theme park visitors) and "commodity consumers" (IP authorized product buyers), and realize crowd conversion through multi-business collaboration. For example, moviegoers may become theme park visitors and then buy IP derivatives.

3.2. IP Authorization: a High-Profit Engine from "Selling Image" to "Consulting Empowerment"

Disney's IP authorization business has an annual retail sales of \$62 billion in annual retail sales in 2021, far exceeding its competitors in the industry. Its core strategy is to upgrade from simple IP authorization to "business consulting cooperation".

Full chain empowerment: Disney not only authorizes IP image, but also provides partners with one-stop services such as market research, product design, channel layout, etc. For example, help licensees analyze the pricing logic and consumption preferences in the Southeast Asian market, and assist them in completing the laying of cross-regional channels.

Dynamic IP value management: score the popularity, business potential and other dimensions of each IP through the "IP Value Evaluation System" to achieve differentiated authorization. Classic IPs (such as Mickey) focus on the market for all ages, and new movie IPs (such as Zootopia 2) are targeted at specific audiences.

Cross-border breaking the circle: cooperate with F1 to launch Mickey's image ambassador, significantly enhancing Disney's brand exposure in the sports arena, jointly with Mingchuang Youpin to expand global channels, and continue to expand IP exposure through cross-border cooperation.

3.3. Multi-channel Collaboration: the Flywheel Effect of Content, Experience and Goods

Disney has built a closed-loop sales system of 'content production → experience scene → commodity realization', which encourages consumers to engage in repeated cross-platform interactions.

Content side: Continuously output IP popularity through movies and Disney+ streaming platforms (such as Marvel dramas and Star Wars derivative content). Disney+ attracts users with low-cost subscriptions (such as \$6.99/month in the United States) and content exclusivity differentiating it from competitors like Netflix (such as landing on the platform 45 days after the release of Marvel Cinema), and improves competitiveness through bundled packages with Hulu and ESPN+.

Experience end: Theme parks adopt differentiated pricing (such as early bird tickets, seasonal packages), which helps attract both budget-conscious visitors and premium consumers. and "immersive narrative" strategies to restore movie scenes into physical experiences (such as Avatar theme parks), while extending the consumption chain through hotels, catering and other derivative services.

Commodity end: offline stores, e-commerce platforms and flash stores form a channel matrix, combining blind boxes, enamel plush and other trendy categories to attract Generation Z consumers. For example, through film warm-up, Stitch IP's revenue of themed consumer goods increased from \$200 million five years ago to \$2.6 billion.

In summary, the essence of Disney's sales strategy is to "build a full link system from emotional resonance to commercial realization through multi-business collaboration, global localization and accurate capture of consumption trends with IP as the core". Its success lies not only in the quality of the content, but also in the systematic design and continuous innovation of the sales strategy.

3.4. Global Layout: the Balance between Standardization and Localization

Disney's expansion strategy in the global market is reflected in "core model standardization + regional details localization".

Standardized replication: Copy the core model of "content + park + goods" in Europe and Asia-Pacific markets to ensure the consistency of brand experience. For example, Paris Disney basically copied the American model and quickly opened up the market with its brand influence [8].

Local innovation: launch Spring Festival limited IP products for the Chinese market, which enhanced cultural resonance and improved brand affinity among local consumers. and cooperate with Shanghai Fine Arts Film Studio to launch traditional technique animation short films; in the Southeast Asian market, take advantage of China's supply chain advantages to reduce costs and expand scale through the model of "Chinese production + regional sales" [9].

Cross-border collaboration: Take advantage of the huge population base in the Asia-Pacific region and the innovative practices of the Chinese market (such as e-commerce live broadcast and IP game linkage) to export Chinese experience to the global market, such as helping Chinese brands such as Bubble Mart to enter Europe and the United States through Disney channels.

3.5. Generation Z and Generation A: Future-oriented Consumption Trend Capture

Disney's strategy for young consumer groups focuses on experience, personalization and digitalization.

Product innovation: Launch intelligent toys and AR/VR interactive products, integrating technology and physical experience, which also offer potential applications in children's education and immersive learning, catering to the needs of Generation Z for "sense of technology" [10].

Social marketing: meet the 'collection desire' and social needs of young people through blind boxes and fashion toys, aligning with the notion of social currency in youth consumer behavior and other categories. For example, the Stitch blind box forms a communication boom among young people.

Content adaptation: Launch more content in line with the aesthetics of Generation Z on Disney+ (such as Marvel Youth series), and launch UGC challenges (such as "Disney character imitation makeup") through social media (TikTok, Instagram) to enhance interaction.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, The Walt Disney Company has built an unparalleled entertainment empire through multi-faceted strategies. It has expanded its IP portfolio significantly via acquisitions of Pixar, Marvel, and Lucasfilm, covering animations, superheroes, and epic franchises. In theme parks, starting with Disneyland, it has globalized with parks in Florida, Tokyo, Paris, Hong Kong, and Shanghai, offering immersive experiences.

Disney's sales strategy is a well-coordinated system. Its STP strategy segments markets by age and consumption scenarios, targeting all age groups and converting consumers across content, experience, and commodity domains. IP authorization is a high-profit engine, with massive retail sales, and it has evolved from simple licensing to business empowerment, expanding through cross-border collaborations. The multi-channel collaboration creates a closed loop of content production, experience scenes, and commodity realization, encouraging repeated cross-platform interactions.

In global expansion, Disney adopts a "core model standardization + regional details localization" approach, replicating its successful model while adapting to local cultures, like launching Spring Festival-themed products in China. For young consumers (Generation Z and A), it focuses on experience, personalization, and digitalization, with innovative products, social marketing, and content adaptation to stay relevant.

In essence, Disney's success lies in its ability to create emotional connections with consumers of all ages through high-quality content and a systematic, innovative sales strategy, making it a symbol of joy, dreams, and creativity worldwide.

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