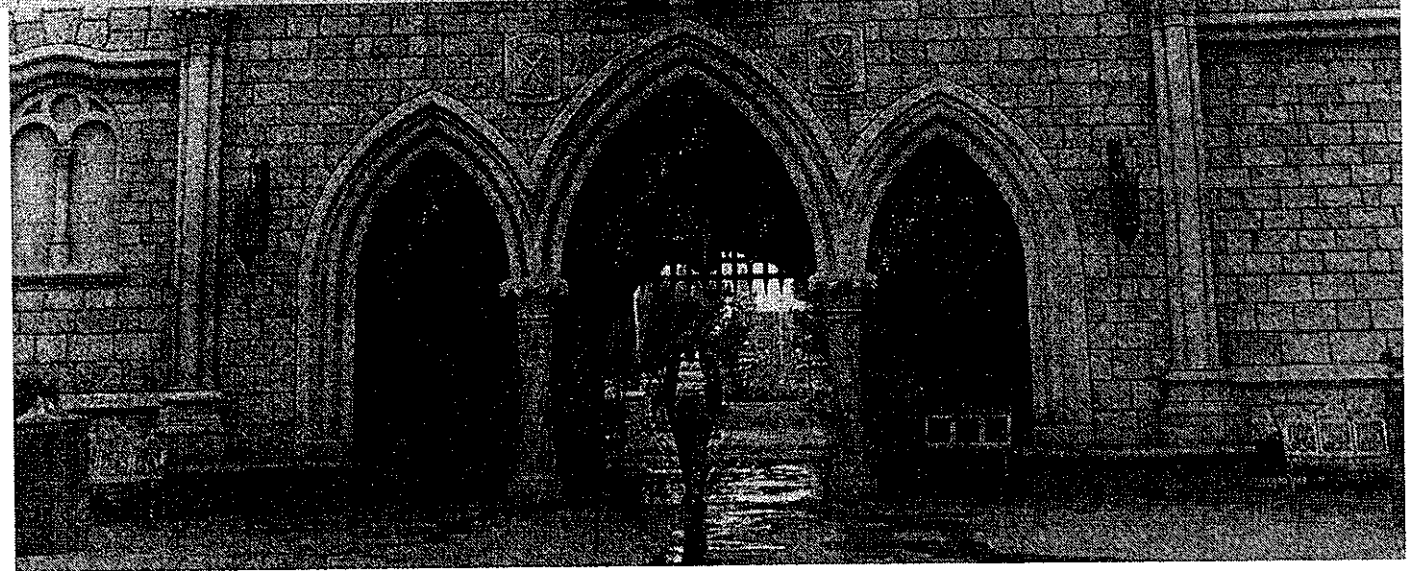


THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DISNEY



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## **"If you can dream it, you can do it."**

An extraordinary young entrepreneur once said "if you can dream it, you can do it," an expression that has guided millions all over the world. His films, animation, TV productions, merchandise, entertainment, and theme parks, are just a handful of this man's dream that have been made into reality. His company now has a world renown brand image of 19<sup>th</sup> most recognized in the world, and without his imagination, motivation, and persistence, the entertainment industry, and ultimately the world, would never be the same. That dreamer was Walt Disney.

The start of his professional career began in 1919 when Walt Disney was recognized for his skill as a cartoonist and hired by Pesman-Rubin Commercial Art Studio. He was hired by Pesman-Rubin as an apprentice along with another young artist by the name of Ub Iwerks to prepare for the holiday brochure season. When they were both let go in November of 1919 they teamed up to create Iwerks-Disney Commercial Artists, which lasted a month before Disney took a job with the Kansas City Film Ad Company in 1920 where he was introduced to primitive animation. He remained at the Film Ad Company until 1921 where he joined his first cartoon company, Laugh-O-Gram Films, Inc.

Although Walt had a very creative imaginative mind, economic affairs were certainly not considered his forte. His brother, Roy Disney, had taken care of them in the past, and without his assistance with Laugh-O-Gram Films, Inc., the company was quickly on their way to bankruptcy, despite the quality of Walt's films. By 1923 Walt was desperate, and pooled all of his resources to create a film called *Alice's Wonderland*. This film used a real life Alice, whom he

surrounded with animated cartoon animals with the help of a small group of animators, including Iwerks. Unfortunately the efforts were too late, and could not save Laugh-O-Gram Films, Inc. from ruin. The company filed for bankruptcy in the spring of 1923 to which Walt kept a copy of the Alice film to solicit future work. All other assets were seized by creditors.

After a move to California, and an unsuccessful job search, Walt set up a make shift cartoon studio in his Uncles garage, and found a New York distributor to order twelve Alice Comedies. He and his brother Roy began a partnership to complete this endeavor and were extremely successful, creating what could possibly be considered Walt Disney's first big break.

In March of 1924 the Disney Brothers Studio was established and Iwerks is asked to join their team of animators. After a successful launch of the first 8 Alice comedies, a contract was drawn up for 18 more films, and more animators and inkers were needed at the studio. Lillian Bound, who later became better known as Lillian Disney was an important addition to their team. In 1926 the Disney Brothers needed more space and moved their studio to Hyperion Avenue, which later became known as the Walt Disney Studio. The Alice comedies saw moderate success, but the need for a new character slowly arose.

In mid-1927 the Walt Disney Studio sold an *Oswald the Lucky Rabbit* Series to Universal distributors featuring a loveable ball of fluff, dressed in ill-fitting pants, with a lot of brains and mischief. Oswald's popularity did not take long to grow, and was quickly recognized on multiple different merchandise products sold in stores. The Walt Disney Studio saw great success with the series, but when Roy and Walt approached Universal for more money to create the cartoons, they came to a heated disagreement. Universal was not willing to pay the Studio as

much as they had been in the past to create the series and essentially wanted to seize possession of the whole operation. Animators, staff, and rights to the cartoon rabbit were all taken by Universal in 1928, and Walt was left to start all over in finding a new character to draw.

**“It all started with a dream, and a mouse.”**

After the loss of Oswald, Walt and Iwerks began working in secret for a new series about a mouse. Inspired by an actual mouse that used to prowl Walt’s office in Kansas City, came the beginnings of Mortimer. Mortimer the mouse. It wasn’t until he revealed the name to his wife in which she suggested the switch to Mickey. Mortimer sounded too “sissy.” In his first cartoon, Mickey makes his appearance in *Plane Crazy* which made its debut as a sneak preview in a Hollywood Movie House. It was pleasantly received by the public, and Disney took the initiative to put a second Mickey cartoon in production. *Gallop in’ Gaucho* was drawn out, and Disney and Iwerks began experimenting with synchronized sound and music.

In the fall in 1928 Walt found a sound technology called Cinephone and implemented it into *Steamboat Willie*. Being the first animated cartoon to debut with sound, its premiere at New York’s Colony Theatre was naturally a smash hit. Due to its success, Walt went on to adding Mickey’s voice to future cartoons, and even created a few brand new series based on musical themes.

Four years later in 1932, Walt began implementing the use of Technicolor into one of his *Silly Symphonies* called *Flowers and Trees*. This cartoon went on to win the first Academy Award

given to a cartoon, and was a giant step for animators all over the world. The studio grew to encompass a staff of 200 animators and went on to release several more colored *Silly Symphonies* and other various cartoon series.

In 1935, when the studio gained another 300 animators, Walt began toying with the idea of a full length animated film, and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* began to take fruition. On December 21, 1937 it premiered at Carthay Circle Theatre and brought in over 8 million dollars in its first release. It became an overwhelming success and even received an Oscar in 1939. Since its debut, the now named Walt Disney Animation Studios has produced 51 films, only two using previously established character creation.

**“To all who come to this happy place, welcome.”**

On a Sunday afternoon in the early 1940’s, Disney began developing a new dream. Disney, who was disgusted by the filthiness and unfriendly nature of amusement parks, wanted to create a place where families could have fun together in a clean and welcoming environment. Disney’s imagination took off and formulated one of the biggest projects of the era. By 1955 Disneyland, a bustling utopia of fantasy and magic, was born. This first ever theme park demonstrated a unique entertainment concept, a focus on detail, an intentional layout, and a family-friendly character, all of which now shape the modern day theme park prototype.

Disney’s concept was very unique. He wanted to depart from the typical merry-go-rounds and beer vendors and create a live movie-set of attractions where guests could escape reality and feel like part of the show. He fashioned multiple themed areas, each with unique

elements that reflected the theme, such as architecture and sounds. By using his imagination, Disney was able to establish an elaborately detailed park while maintaining a clean, family-oriented atmosphere. These elements brought on overwhelming success and laid the groundwork for an ideal model theme park. The "Disney model," became very intriguing and has been imitated in a multitude of amusement parks around the globe to this date.

One major element that makes Disney stand out from its competition is its focus on details. Having worked on cartoons all of his life, Walt Disney had developed a keen sense for detail, which he applied directly to his theme park. Emphasis was put more so on the physical location of an area or attraction rather than the attractions themselves. A specifically themed area has architecture, attractions, landscaping, and sounds all working in harmony in order to create a make-believe environment. The important thing that Disney kept in mind was understanding his subject. By asking questions such as, "who lived there?" and, "what activities would have occurred?" Disney was able to develop a strong sense of how a themed area should be planned out.

One particular example of detail is: in Frontierland there are old western houses built to look like those of the 1700's. Back then, the window shutters were hung with leather hinges, often with a slightly crooked result. Disney has re-created this minor detail and hung the window shutters crooked on several buildings. Props are also littered all around Frontierland. The incorporation of elevated, wooden walkways, the use of flickering, cold-blast lanterns and the posting of rustic graphics all contribute to transforming this area into a plausible western town. It is examples like these that prove the depth that Disney went into in order to achieve

his final product. Each little detail helps guests become more wrapped up in the park and helps to captivate their own imagination.

The intentional layout of Disneyland also displays Disney's brilliance. As guests approach the park, they can catch a glimpse of Cinderella's castle, but nothing more. This is an attempt to heighten anticipation for what is in store. Upon entering the park, guests are funnelled through a tunnel under the train station. This tunnel acts as the portal from reality to fantasy: on one side is a mundane reality and on the other is a magical dreamland. After travelling through this tunnel, the Castle is still not fully visible to guests, who continue to be herded onto Main Street. This is where guests finally get the full, breath-taking view of the Castle and the climax of entering the park is reached. This layout was intentionally created to be cinematic in order to set the stage for the rest of this family-friendly park.

A family-friendly park was one of the most important focuses of Disney. Disney once said, "The one thing for me... the important thing... is the family, and keeping the family together with things. That's been the backbone of our whole business, catering to families." Family was a very important aspect of Walt Disney's own life and implementing a family-oriented park was perhaps one of his most important priorities. Prior to Disneyland, parks were unclean, vulgar, dirty, and, for the most part, inappropriate for children. Disneyland was built with the idea of it being a playground for both adults and children. The themes were chosen with care in order to create a strong sense of comfort and familiarity. They were common themes that children understood and that adults could recall from their own experiences as children. The physical settings, such as castle courtyards, old western towns, and thick jungles,

also provide a sense of adventure in children and implement a sense of nostalgia in adults. This results in a greater appeal for all ages. A key ingredient to the success of Disney's family-oriented ideas was the deployment of his cartoon characters in the park. Disney's movies were popular around this time period and the majority of his movies were meant for families. By adding familiar characters to the setting, another form of entertainment is added for park guests. Disneyland was the first amusement park to focus on a family setting and the positive response of the public had others soon following this idea.

All of these elements work with each other to create the ultimate experience within the walls of Disneyland. With these elements in mind I am able to dwell on my own experiences in Disneyland. Each time I go, I become more deeply intrigued by the overall product. Details that were unimportant to me as a child are rising to the forefront of my excitement. I notice its appealing environment and ability to satisfy children and adults alike. From firsthand experience with Disney and other theme parks like it, I have been able to witness an emphasis on all of these elements. I have also been able to see their effects and more clearly understand why they are successful. The product of these elements creates a lasting impression on individuals. Upon exiting the magical grounds, guests have a long-lasting sense of euphoria. Personally, I reminisce for days on end, longing for the moment when I will be able to return. I have only ever experienced this feeling after leaving a Disney park. It is this idealized euphoric state that other parks have attempted to establish by following the Disney model.

These elements had never been thought of or used in combination until the unveiling of Disneyland. As soon as they were deemed successful, other parks began imitating these simple



ideas and reproducing this new style of amusement park. Disney elements are now present in a vast majority of locations. From attention to detail to distorting reality, theme parks have become extremely popular destinations. Six Flags over Texas was the first park to follow in Disney's footsteps and be successful. Up to this day parks are still being modeled after Disney.

Although Walt Disney passed away many years ago, his vision lives on leaving a legacy for the international community to enjoy. Walt's dream revolutionized family-entertainment and modern day theme parks. His exquisite deployment of unique and original elements led to a complete re-modelling of amusement parks. After the success of Disneyland, other parks have been erected all over the globe following the "Disney model," which was inspired from Disneyland's many accomplishments. These Disney elements have not only grabbed the attention of fellow theme parks, but have expanded into other aspects of society. Themed restaurants, water parks, and even shopping malls are becoming more common in society. The Disney phenomenon is growing and continues to expand its influence. In the words of Walt Disney, "Disneyland will never be completed. It will continue to grow as long as there is imagination left in the world."

**"You can design, create, and build the most wonderful place in the world.  
But it takes people to make that dream a reality."**

The success of Disneyland brought great confidence to Walt and Roy's endeavors and in 1965 they bought 27,443 acres in the Florida orange groves for a special project called "The Florida Project." Walt and Roy designed a prototype theme park based off of Disneyland, with the inclusion of a much larger variety of parks, attractions, and resorts to offer guests. Since its

opening in 1971 with *Magic Kingdom Park*, the resort now offers four theme parks, two water parks, and over twenty different resorts for visitors.

An entirely new generation has had the opportunity to grow up with Disney since this project and has proven to be one of The Walt Disney Company's greatest successes. Bringing in billions of dollars a year in tourist attractions, the park is constantly being updated and expanded. Currently being worked on is *Magic Kingdom's* biggest expansion. *Fantasyland* will be increasing its size by \_\_\_ sq. ft. and will provide guests with a plethora of new attractions.

These expansions have not remained simply to the Florida Project either. The major successes of the Disney's Theme Parks can now be experienced all over the globe. With parks in Paris, Tokyo, Hong Kong, and now Shang Hai, Disney's magic now has the opportunity to touch people throughout the whole world.

The Animation Studio has continued to flourish with classics such as *Aladdin*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Tarzan*, and the last film Walt got to work on, *The Jungle Book*. Its purchase of Pixar Animation Studios and partnership with them has created such hits as *Toy Story*, *Finding Nemo*, and *Cars*. The Disney brand has also purchased a multitude of other entertainment companies. *ABC*, *ESPN*, *Marvel Comics*, *The History Channel*, *Lifetime*, *Touchstone Pictures*, and *Hollywood Records* are just some, to name a few.

The impressive resume The Walt Disney Company currently holds provides a great inspiration to entrepreneurs everywhere and can be all thanks to one man and his amazing dream. Without his confidence and persistence and without the hard work of thousands of Cast

Members throughout the years working to make his dream a reality, the company never would have gotten to where it is today.

"If you can dream it, you can do it."

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