Disney Brand Audit:
the power behind the mouse

An Honors Thesis (HONORS 499)

by

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Abstract

Disney is one of the most popular and well-established brand names today. But what makes up a brand, and why is Disney so successful? This project examines and evaluates Disney as a brand. The entire corporate brand hierarchy is briefly explored, but the primary focus is on Disney as a family level brand. The project is comprised of a brand inventory exploring the brand’s positioning and the management of the brand, a brand exploratory in order to describe the Disney brand image from the consumers’ perspective, and finally recommendations based on the brand’s evaluation. Overall, Disney is a well managed brand that can act as a model for others. It is, however, important to note Disney’s potential challenges as a brand due to its complex portfolio and its long run popularity. Regardless of the possible struggles for the brand, readers will see that Disney is a brand that is able to captivate and build connections with a wide market of consumers.

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success. Disney is related to entertainment and exciting experiences, which transfers to the development of positive associations with brand in consumers’ minds. It also allows the brand to be more memorable. An individual might forget something he eats or something he hears, but he will likely remember the entertainment he experiences and the memories that he creates.

When analyzed by Interbrand, Disney was rated “exceptionally strong” in stability, internationality, trend and protection, and the brand was rated “very strong” in leadership and support (113). A lot of Disney’s brand strength has resulted from its success in cross-branding. “Cross branding—Look it up in the dictionary and you should see a picture of Walt Disney. He practically invented the idea.” (Haig 65). The Disney brand is known for enhancing itself by taking inspiration and characters from films to create attractions in the company’s theme parks. The concept works both ways; today, Disney theme park attractions also inspire movies such as The Pirates of the Caribbean and The Haunted Mansion (Haig 65). Disney is able to strengthen its various brand elements and characters through the synergy of its business units. When a new Disney film is released, it is reinforced with an attraction in the theme parks, music from the film on Radio Disney, and advertisements on the company’s various television stations.

Aside from being built on experiences, Disney also holds the advantage of being built on characters (Ries 21). It is easier for a person to relate to a character over purely a product—even if that character is just an animal like a mouse or a duck. Seeing these characters in films and park attractions, individuals, especially children, form attachments to the characters and their personalities. By being built on characters and stories, consumers instantly build a relationship with these elements which leads to a relationship with Disney as a brand. Disney’s ability to stimulate this close bond between brand and consumer is what allows the brand to dominate its market and achieve its success.

A Brief History of the Brand

Today, the Walt Disney Company comprises a portfolio of brands related to various forms of media entertainment, and this complex web of brands is all on the small shoulders of a mouse and one man’s dream. Walt Disney struggled through years of unsuccessful characters
and creations, but his luck changed with the creation of Mickey Mouse in 1928 (Haig 62). After Mickey’s début in Steamboat Willie, the first Mickey Mouse animated feature to be released, he was immediately trademarked in order to keep the mouse and the heart of the Disney brand protected (Drawbaugh 251). In order to build on the momentum from Mickey Mouse, he was extended through a licensing agreement to be printed on writing pads (Drawbaugh 251). Originally named Mortimer Mouse, Mickey had a kind-hearted happy-go-lucky attitude that captured family’s hearts. Walt’s wife found “Mortimer” to be too pompous and the name was changed to Mickey; a perfect fit for the Disney image (Haig 62).

The Disney brand was built on characters and animated features, but in 1955 the Disney brand extended far beyond cartoons and animated shorts with the opening of Disneyland. The theme park expanded Disney’s positive associations past simply film and animation to also include life experiences (Haig 62). The theme parks allow the brand to build associations through multiple senses and make a powerful impact on consumers’ interactions with the brand.

The company continually became involved with more media opportunities such as television, music, live action filming and distribution, along with animated movies and theme parks. The company became a massive media corporation with its purchase of ABC networks in 1995. Today, Disney is able to use its assortment of brands and business units to support one another and cross-brand through various promotions (Drawbaugh 256). The Disney brand value was estimated by the consulting firm, Interbrand, in 2000 at being worth $33.5 billion (Drawbaugh 249). That’s quite substantial for a brand that was sparked with a simple sketch of a mouse.

BRAND INVENTORY

Brand Hierarchy

The Walt Disney Company manages a complex portfolio. Under the corporate level brand, Walt Disney, the company is organized into two family brands: ABC and Disney. Under the ABC family level brand, there are a few individual level brands and sub-brands related to
television and production. The Disney family level brand is a massive umbrella with individual brands involved in a breadth of various businesses. Each individual brand under the Disney family brand also includes sub-brands and modifiers. For example, under the Walt Disney Pictures individual brand, there are various modified brands specifically relating to particular types of film production, such as Walt Disney Feature Animation. Technically, every movie title, character, hotel resort, and theme park attraction is a brand under Disney. It was impossible to include every trademarked brand in the following hierarchy, but examples are provided along with some of the key Disney characters. The company also manages television group brands jointly under both the Disney and ABC family brand umbrella, such as Disney ABC Domestic Television. Outside of the two family brands, the company also manages various individual brands—Touchstone Pictures and ESPN among others. The brand inventory and exploratory, beyond the hierarchy outlines, focus on the branding strength of Disney as a family brand and the various individual brands it represents.

**Brand Hierarchy Outlines**

Corporate level Brand: The Walt Disney Company

Family level Brands: Disney

                      ABC

Individual Brands under the Disney Family Brand and their sub-brands:

Walt Disney Pictures

            Walt Disney Feature Animation

                     Cinderella
Aladdin
The Little Mermaid
Disney and Pixar
Toy Story
Finding Nemo
Disney Nature
Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment
Disnec Consumer Products
Disney Publishing Worldwide
Disney shopping.com
Disney Interactive Studios
The Disney Store
Disney Parks
Disneyland Resort
    California Adventure
Walt Disney World Resort
    Magic Kingdom
    Epcot
    Hollywood Studios
    Animal Kingdom
    Blizzard Beach
    Typhoon Lagoon
    Downtown Disney
Disneyland Resort Paris
Tokyo Disney Resort
Hong Kong Disneyland
Disney Cruise Line
Disney Vacation Club
Adventures by Disney
Disney Theatrical Productions
Disney on Broadway
Disney on Ice
Disney Family Live Entertainment
Walt Disney Imagineering
The Disney Channel
   Playhouse Disney Channel
   Toon Disney Channel
Radio Disney
Walt Disney Internet Group
   Pirates of the Caribbean online
   Disney Fairies Pixie Hallow
   Disney’s Club Penguin Online
Mickey and Friends
   Mickey Mouse
   Minnie Mouse
   Donald Duck
   Daisy
Goofy
Pluto

Individual brands under ABC brand family and their sub-brands:

ABC Studios

ABC family

ABC Newsroom

Jointly under the Disney family brand as well as the ABC family brand is Disney ABC television group

Under Disney ABC television group are two sub-brands:

Disney ABC domestic television

Disney ABC International Television

Individual level brands not under a family brand:

Buena Vista Distribution

Buena Vista Online Entertainment

Touchstone Pictures

Touchstone Television

Hollywood Pictures

Hollywood Records

Miramax Films

SOAP net
Current Positioning in the Market Place

One crucial aspect of managing a successful brand such as Disney is building and maintaining an established position in the market place. Among all brands worldwide, Disney is ranked 10th based on weight. Brand weight is used to describe a brand's ability to dominate a particular area of the market. Recognition in brand weight suggests that Disney is a market
leader and is a brand that develops standards for competitors. Disney is also ranked first based on brand length, which Interbrand defines as a brand's ability to expand into new categories and tackle new markets (Kochan xxvii).

**Target Market**

Originally, Disney targeted children with cartoons and exaggerated characters. As Disney's popularity quickly grew, so did its reach to appeal to a broader target market. Rather than targeting children, Disney attempts to inspire the "child" in people of all ages. Walt Disney found it important to keep that sense of adventurous excitement and appreciation of fantasy in everyone. He considered losing that spark of youth the equivalent to losing one's sense of humor ("Children"). Disney's target market includes anyone that can remember what it feels like to be a kid and has the ability to be young at heart.

Disney is referred to as a "distraction brand."(Haig 52). Distraction brands used to be geared towards children because children had the imagination that allowed them to be distracted from reality and transported to a fantasy world. Now, Disney, and other entertainment companies provide "distractions" for all ages. The packaged entertainment experience helps to stimulate the imagination and escape from reality for all ages of individuals who are interested and willing (Haig 52).

Although Disney conveys through its various promotions that it strives to inspire the child in everyone, children and families with children tend to be the core target market for the Disney brand. When asked about the target market of his films Walt Disney explained, "I say I make movies for a family audience. For all our audience. I can't reach them all. You can't always do it. Some of my pictures will have a little more appeal to the children, and some of them will have less appeal and more appeal to the adults." ("Children"). The Disney Web site will lead users to various branches of the businesses related to Disney, including new movie releases, the Disney Channel Web site, and resort Web sites. All of these Web sites have children and families at the focus. Photographs and information is geared towards children and parents (Disney.com). In the Interbrand evaluation of Disney, the brand was appraised on various
elements including the breadth of the brand. Rather than refereeing to the breadth of products and services the brand represents, Interbrand referred to breadth as broadness of appeal across various age, social, and cultural groups. Although Disney attempts to appeal universally to everyone, Disney was not ranked among the top ten brands achieving high breadth, despite the fact that it was ranked so highly overall (Kochan xxviii).

**Competitors**

Because the Walt Disney Company is flourishing in a multitude of various businesses, the Disney brand faces immense competition from a myriad of different companies (Haig 64). Some of the major corporations managing brands competing with the Disney brand include CBS Corporation, NBC Universal, and the Disney Corporation's top competitor—Time Warner Co. CBS Corporation, like the Walt Disney Company is a mass media company that operates in television media, radio, advertising, publishing, theme parks, and consumer products (“CBS Corporation”). As of fall of 2006, CBS Corporation has a joint venture with Warner Brothers (“CBS Corporation”). Warner Brothers is the source of Looney Tunes, which is considered to be one of the Disney brand's major competitors. Looney Tunes and Disney both have a core cast of characters that help to define the brand; Looney Tunes has a bunny and Disney has a mouse. CBS Corporation is predominantly television driven but also represents other media and entertainment forms that directly compete with Disney. NBC Universal also operates a portfolio of brands involved in media and entertainment. One of Disney's top competitors, when compared as a brand, is Universal Studios. Disney is strongly supported by its theme parks, which are often compared to Universal Studios theme parks. Finally, Time Warner operates various brands that, like Disney, work together to support one another. Another brand that is often compared to the Disney brand is Nickelodeon, which is driven by a television station. Both are youthful brands that inspire imagination and spirit.

As a global brand, Disney is forced to compete on an even grander scale that encompasses entertainment brands across the world. The Disney Parks brand extension will most likely find that its biggest struggle in dominating the family entertainment market lies overseas with the development of Dubailand. Located in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, this massive
tourist attraction will be comprised of multiple theme parks, shopping centers, and resorts (Hill). Dubailand is rivaling to be the most ambitious and extravagant tourist attraction on the planet. With a plot of land almost five times the size of Manhattan, this mega hot spot will have a Six Flags theme park, a DreamWorks theme park, and many others parks directly competing with the offerings of Disney (Hill). Some attractions are already up and running in Dubailand, but the majority are still in developmental stages ("Know Dubailand"). Dubailand is hoping to offer a dynamic source of family entertainment that transcends gender, culture, interests, and age—much like that of Disney ("Know Dubailand"). Competition is already immense for the Disney brand, and it will soon take a sharp incline even further with the completion of Dubailand.

**Points of Parity and Point of Difference**

As a brand dedicated to providing entertainment, Disney is associated with fun and excitement. This, however, is an association that is a categorical point of parity and is common among all brands associated with entertainment. The entertainment products and services Disney provides, such as television programs, theme park attractions, animated and live action films, and online entertainment are all shared among the majority of Disney’s corporate level competitors. Involvement in most if not all of these services mentioned is expected by entertainment brands and, therefore, a categorical point of parity. However, in a business that is fueled by creativity and imagination it is easy to separate competitors based on entertainment content and style.

Although Disney has always been a unique brand with concrete differences, brands often attempt to compete by following the success of competitors using competitive points of parity. The Disney brand is manifested through its theme parks, and one of the parks biggest competitors, as mentioned, is Universal Studios. The two acts as rivals due to the fact that both brands’ most successful theme parks share a home in Orlando, Florida. Universal Studios uses adventure and intensity to create excitement rather than magic and imagination. Disney, however, also wants to provide intense and adventurous experiences and continues to add attractions that do so. For example, in the last decade Walt Disney World has constructed Rock’ N’ Roller Coaster, Expedition Everest, the Lights, Motors, Action Stunt Show, and many other attractions in hopes to prove that it can be just as adventurous as its Orlando neighbor. Disney’s
new additions of adventure and suspenseful excitement in its theme parks are used as competitive points of parity against other theme park resorts.

Disney's real source of competitive edge is found in its ability to set itself apart and above competing brands. The most powerful point of difference for Disney juxtaposed to its competition is the Disney name itself. The name immediately generates strong, positive associations that set it apart from other entertainment companies that are impossible to copy. Although the Walt Disney Company is a complex corporation, individuals recognize "Disney" as a beloved brand first, and a business corporation second. "[Disney] is an authentic American icon -- which is to say that over the years it has come to stand for something real and meaningful and worthwhile to millions of people of all ages and backgrounds around the world." (Johnmoore). When the Disney name is attached to a product or experience, it holds a promise of uniqueness and quality. Roy E. Disney, Walt Disney's nephew, recently explained, "I believe our mission has always been to be bringers of joy, to be affirmers of the good in each of us, to be -- in subtle ways -- teachers. To speak, as Walt once put it, 'not to children but to the child in each of us.'" (Johnmoore). Although other entertainment brands such as Universal, DreamWorks, and Nickelodeon are all bringers of joy, Disney is set apart. Disney holds a point of difference with associations related to goodness and innocent fun, like that of a child. Disney possesses the powerful capability of transferring people of all ages into a fantasy world of unique storytelling and experiences that cannot be recreated by any other brand (Johnmoore). Former CEO of the Disney Company, Michael Eisner explained that the brand's strength and uniqueness are built on the creative, incomparable entertainment. When a parent sits down with a child at Fantasmic in Disneyland, or a child attends the opening of Tarzan, those experiences enhance the brand (Drawbaugh 2001). As long as the Disney name continues to make that promise of unique and unmatched entertainment, the brand will be strengthened.

Other than the unique, intangible associations that the Disney name generates, the brand holds a cast of characters that extends from the brand offering it a major point of difference against competition. This is a powerful tool because the characters are trademarked and, therefore, cannot be copied by competitors. The characters help to define the Disney brand. As
previously mentioned, the Disney brand name was practically built on the shoulders of Mickey Mouse. According to one consumer blog source, Mickey is considered the most recognized fictional character ("Most Recognized"), and according to another source, he is second (Pagfloyd). Under all accounts examined, he is easily recognized by people from all around the world and immediately linked to Disney. Mickey Mouse may be the most successful brand character ever created and acts as a symbol for the Disney brand.

**Marketing Mix**

**Product**

Disney has a number of products included under the Disney brand name from animated features, to television entertainment, to theme parks, to consumer products. Regardless of the particular product associated with the Disney name one thing remains the same—the brand prides itself on providing high quality in all products and all experiences (Haig 64). The name "Disney" guarantees an experience of wholesome family fun with the highest level of excellence (Drawbaugh 254). Any product or experience associated with the Disney name is to be consistent with the company's image and of the highest quality in its particular market. Disney regularly surveys consumer attitudes toward Disney; however, the company feels that as long as the services and products consumers interact with are exceptional and meet their high standards, the brand will be strengthened (Drawbaugh 261). Michael Eisner said, "Our brand is related to how good an animated movie is, how good a live-action movie is, how good a theme-park ride is, how good a T-shirt or a sweatshirt is. Some of it's licensed; some of it's produced solely by ourselves; some of it's on television' some of it's in theaters; some of it's on Broadway or the West End. Every single piece that has the Disney brand, whether it's a piece if stationary or the Lion King in London, has to be excellent. As long as it's excellent, it enhances the brand." (Drawbaugh 262).
Price

As with many brands that offer high quality products, the Disney brand is associated with a premium priced strategy. Brands are able to charge higher prices as long as the brand maintains a strong following and positive associations. According to Martin Lindstorm, author of *Brand Child* (2003), Disney is an Olympic brand—strongest of all brand categories, and this strength allows for premium pricing (Haig 64) Disney theme parks, resorts, and consumer products command significantly higher prices than competitors’ offerings. Disney is able to charge prices that are two to three times more than a generic version of a given product or service (Haig 64). The premium pricing strategy is successful, provided the brand never sacrifices the corresponding high quality. Disney, as a premium priced brand, needs to be aware of potential issues if quality were to diminish. According to Roy E. Disney, consumers can figure out when they are being cheated the value of their money. Disney must never take the cheap route (Johnmoore)

Promotion

One of the most useful tools Disney has to build its brand equity is its ability and mastery of cross-promotion. The company is able to use its various media outlets to correlate promotion of new theme park attractions, movies, television shows, etc. The company has a strong marketing department that focuses on connecting and leveraging the different businesses whenever possible. A synergy group releases reports and creates projects that can connect different aspects of the company (Collis, Levine, and Rukstad). This group has representatives from every business, allowing all areas to be represented to take full advantage of one another’s resources. Disney enhances itself by pulling from resources within the company to create “inherent Disney synergy” and encourage business units to support and build off of one another (Collis, Levine, and Rukstad). For example, when releasing a new film, the company is able to use its TV presence for advertisements, host special promotional events in the theme parks, and promote various consumer products in order to build hype and awareness of the film’s release. The company integrates its branches of business to reinforce the Disney brand as a whole
This also allows for a multitude of impressions of the Disney brand to be made on individuals in numerous forms.

**Distribution**

As a globally recognized brand, Disney-related products and services are distributed on a global scale. Disney consumer products are available in various retail outlets worldwide as well as Disney Store chains throughout North America, Europe, and Japan. Disney consumer products are also available to order through Disneyshopping.com. One of the strongest branches of the company associated with the Disney brand is Disney theme parks. These too are offered worldwide with theme parks operating in various locations across the globe: Disneyland Resort in California, Walt Disney World Resort in Florida, Disneyland Resort Paris, Tokyo Disney Resort, and Hong Kong Disneyland (“Company Overview”). The Company also distributes films and broadcasts media entertainment worldwide. Disney’s worldwide distribution has fueled global awareness of and expanded access to the brand.

**Brand Alliances**

Because of Disney’s strongly defined associations and massive consumer awareness, numerous brands have been interested in being associated with Disney throughout the years. In fact, Mickey Mouse was the first licensed character to appear on a cereal box when General Foods printed him on a box of Post Toasties in the early 1930’s (Drawbaugh 251). Today, Disney characters are found on a number of different products. In order to better control these brand alliances, the company has a recently redefined licensing program to permit greater control of the brand’s licensing agreements. The Disney brand has become more specific with its selection of distribution and products it associates itself with. It has also recognized the need to monitor the target market of its partnering brands and products involved in its various license agreements (Drawbaugh 257). There must be a connection with the Disney brand element licensed and the product. For example, it would be sensible to put Nemo on a school folder, because Nemo is popular among younger children. It would not make sense, however, to put Nemo on a can of Folger’s coffee. Disney often finds itself rejecting ideas brought to the
company for proposed agreements. Some rejected ideas include Mickey being involved with insurance for children's college education and Disney branded automobiles (Drawbaugh 258). Insurance is not connected to the fun and entertaining image of Disney, and with automobiles, there is a potential development of negative associations to accidents or poor safety. Therefore, both concepts are misfit for the Disney brand (Drawbaugh 258).

One marketing alliance that Disney has long been involved with is that between Disney and McDonald’s. The most popular promotional strategy used by the partnership was the distribution of Disney figurines and toys in McDonald’s Happy Meals accompanying the release of a new film. However, as of 2006, the contract with McDonald’s came to an end and was not renewed. Disney and Pixar’s *Cars* and Disney’s *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man’s Chest* were the last two films to be a part of the Happy Meal. Some believe the termination of the long rooted relationship was to disassociate Disney from McDonald’s issues and accusations of poor health and links to obesity (Huffman).

Perhaps the most commonly known and recent brand partnership is that with Disney and Pixar. With the help of high-tech Pixar computer animation, Disney has been able to create classics such as *Toy Story, Monsters Inc., Cars*, and is celebrating the recent release of *Wall-E*. The two first teamed up in 1991 with an agreement to create three full-length animated feature films (“Pixar”). After the success of the first film, *Toy Story*, the team developed a new agreement in 1997 that promised five full-length films to be released (“Pixar”). With such acclaimed achievement resulting from the creative duo, it was only sensible to make the partnership permanent. Pixar was officially acquired by Disney in May of 2006 and is now a subsidiary of the Walt Disney Company (“Pixar”).
BRAND EXPLORATORY

Consumers’ Brand Associations

The most important element connected to Disney is the magic and fantasy associated with the brand. “Magic” is a unique and exciting concept that leads to other positive associations of happiness and excitement. In a 2008 focus group study conducted at Ball State University, consumers were asked to share immediate associations that came to mind with the mention of “Disney.” The first words mentioned were: “magic,” “princess,” “expensive,” and “fun.” Other than an “expensive” association, the first few thoughts from consumers are clearly favorable. It is evident through Disney’s various advertisements and products that magic and happiness are key elements that Disney wants to associate with its brand. The immediate mention of magic and fun illustrate the brand’s success in establishing favorable and strong associations.

The other associations mentioned by consumers can be collapsed into key categories representing the brands values: characters, theme parks and resort locations, movies, and brand image (Focus Group). Numerous associations were mentioned that depict Disney’s brand image such as “dreams,” “magic,” “happiness,” “happy tears,” “Walt Disney,” “the man and the mouse,” and many more (Focus Group). These brand values and their associations work together to make up a complex network that is represented by the Disney brand in the consumers’ minds. These brand values can be condensed even further into a brand mantra: fun (and magical) family entertainment (Keller 127). All participants agreed that this brand mantra was an accurate representation of the Disney brand (Focus Group).

Consumer Opinions of the Disney Brand

As previously stated, “expensive” was an association quickly triggered by the Disney brand in the 2008 focus group study. To be sure that this was indeed a common association and not just a single person’s opinion, the subject was explored further. The majority agreed and found Disney to be too expensive, especially in regards to the theme parks’ various expenses. Because Disney is targeted to individuals across all demographics, focus group participants felt that it needed to be more accessible to the average family (Focus Group).
Focus group members also determined that Disney can be old fashioned, but in a positive light. This relates to a common issue for brands that have been strongly established for a long time: the challenge to balance heritage with staying contemporary and competitive. Disney, today, sticks to its roots and its original core image, which is important. Consumers find it crucial that Disney always keeps a firm connection with the characters that define the brand such as Mickey and Donald Duck. Rather than refer to the brand as old fashioned, which can hold negative connotations and relate to an out-dated image or poor branding, the brand is viewed by consumers as traditional and well established (Focus Group).

Overexposure is always a potential issue for brands that represent such a diversified company as the Walt Disney Company. Focus group participants, when questioned, agreed that they did not consider overexposure to the Disney brand an issue at this time. If it were to be an issue, however, it would most likely stem from redundant offerings of Disney related consumer products. The consumers questioned, were college students and, therefore, not the primary market for the majority of Disney branded products. A large amount of Disney products such as toys, Disney themed bedding, or Disney themed school supplies are targeted to kids and families; the students questioned in the focus group are not as exposed to those products. One possible source of Disney brand overexposure mentioned was products branded with the Disney Princesses. They are featured on a variety of products of all sorts and could be bombarding children and families. However, as long as the princesses are connected to a product that could be “princess” related, consumers consider it a successful branding relationship (Focus Group).

As a large corporation with a complex portfolio of brands, the average consumer is not always aware of the various connections within the brand structure. In the recent focus group study, only about 25% of the individuals were aware of the Walt Disney Company’s ownership of ESPN and Touchstone films; all but two, however, were aware of the company’s connection to ABC. In regards to family branding structure, everyone agreed that collapsing ESPN, ABC, Touchstone, and Miramax Films under the Disney brand and possibly renaming them to include the Disney name would have a negative impact on all the brands involved. It could attach a more childish and innocent image to the previously mentioned brands. One individual, a proclaimed
fan of ESPN, explained that it would make the network seem less credible and less legitimate. The Disney family brand would also suffer. As a conservative brand, it could weaken its family-oriented image by directly associating with brands that feature more adult content. Although directly correlating these brands with Disney may prove to be destructive, minor associations and cross-promotions support the various brands. Individuals agreed that knowledge of Disney's ownership of the different brands did not tarnish their images or affect their brand equity. Also, small correlations, such an ESPN restaurant chain at Disney parks and Disney sponsored sporting events televised on ESPN could indeed support the separate brands. Although ESPN, ABC, and Miramax should remain separate, the company's distribution business labeled Buena Vista Distribution did not generate the same reactions. Consumers seem to be unaffected by the name and image associated to Buena Vista. It is a brand name more commonly used in "the business," one of which numerous consumers are not even aware (Focus Group).

When questioned about the heart of the Disney brand, in a business sense, respondents agreed that animated movies are still the hub of the Disney brand web. The movies help generate attractions to the theme parks and concepts for consumer products. The respondents also felt that Disney was still producing quality animated features, but not quite at the level it once was. Consumers enjoy the innovative creations emerging from the partnership with Disney and Pixar, but also feel that animated cartoon classics cannot be overlooked. Today, the parks are also considered almost as important and considered a focal point of the Disney brand. They capture the intense experience of the brand and help to manifest the Disney fantasy image into a reality. Although the parks are continuously updating the resorts with new and exciting attractions, consumers are often unaware that the park offers more than just child-related experiences. On more adult oriented channels, consumers suggested Disney advertise and highlight the fun offered for all ages, and show that people can enjoy Disney outside of a family unit. Although this is a valid and potentially profitable proposal, Disney needs to still maintain the clean-cut image, which could present a potential challenge (Focus Group).
**Consumer Brand Equity Pyramid**

**Salience**

According to polled consumers, everyone regardless of cultural background, age, or geographical location is aware of the Disney brand and the core basics of the brand's common associations. The only exceptions mentioned were possibly those living in undeveloped regions and without access to any form of media. Not only is brand awareness well-established worldwide, awareness is established at an early age. Most people know of the Disney name and have a basic image for the brand by age two, three, or four. Because salience is established at a young age, it sets a strong base to allow the structuring of the complete consumer brand equity pyramid (Focus Group).

**Performance**

As mentioned under product description, the Disney brand is dedicated to offering high quality products and experiences. Consumers seem to be satisfied, if not overly satisfied with the performance of the Disney brand (Focus Group). With all entertainment based companies, consumers expect to be entertained and have an exciting experience. But Disney goes further and attempts to dazzle audiences and customers beyond expectations. Disney is viewed as having reliable brand performance; consumers trust that their experience with the brand will meet expectations with every encounter.

One challenge Disney faces in brand performance is its premium pricing. With high prices, consumers instantly set high standards for product quality, which means Disney has to overcome incredibly high standards that it sets for itself. Although consumers feel Disney exceeds expectations and have favorable associations with the brand, many still see Disney as being slightly too expensive in pricing (Focus Group). A few members of the focus group claimed that with such a large company demanding high prices a greedy attitude association with the brand can result (Focus Group). There is a fine line between pricing that suggests high quality and pricing that is just too high.
Image

Disney's image is clearly defined in most consumers' minds. When the focus group was asked to describe the image of the Disney brand, the members explained it was youthful and inspired a child-like innocence. Magical, fantasy, popular, and thrilling were other terms used to depict the core brand image of Disney. These associations are all concepts that Disney wants to represent with its brand; through advertisements and exciting quality products and services, Disney has successfully embedded the desired brand image in the minds of consumers. The majority of focus group members also described the brand as innovative and high-tech. This image results from the new attractions being added continuously to Disney parks as well contemporary films with innovative technology. Disney maintains a commitment to innovations and continuous development in order to maintain its high-tech image. In fact, this image is considered so crucial to the Disney brand that it developed its own term, dating back to the 1950s, that depicts the creation of imaginative and innovative ideas called Disney Imagineering. In order to maintain a premium image, Disney keeps high ticket prices to their theme parks along with updating attractions and constructing new parks or resorts (Drawbaugh 257).

Often linked with an innocent and family-oriented image, is a clean-cut, conservative image. Consumers believe that because Disney related products and experiences are supposed to be family-oriented, the brand is also under close watch to stay appropriate and live up to highly conservative standards. The Disney brand is sensitive to possible criticism for the slightest slip-up or unorthodox action. For example the Southern Baptist Convention called for a boycott of Disney, claiming that it supported homosexuality by holding Gay Days at the theme parks and that its movies spread anti-family and anti-Christian messages. In response, Disney met with Southern Baptist leaders and, today, claims that the issue has died down (Drawbaugh 261). Other recent examples that the focus group recalled and discussed include recent scandalous photographs posted on the Internet of Disney Channel stars Vanessa Hudgens and Miley Cyrus (Focus Group). Even Walt Disney himself found him and his brand ridiculed for various events or products accused of being slightly indecent. After the release of The Parent Trap in 1961, the studio received numerous letters complaining about the scene involving martinis, despite the fact
that the movie was a major hit. Some claim that Walt Disney sometimes felt frustrated that he had been locked into such a strict image; however, although it is a strict image, it is strongly defined which fuels the brand’s success ("Parent Trap").

Using projective techniques, the focus group attempted to describe the Disney image as if it were a person and as if it were an animal. Of the group of 10, 7 felt the Disney brand would be grandfatherly, with a personality much like that of Walt Disney himself, someone who was friendly, outgoing, and possessed a strong imagination. The others saw the Disney brand as a kid packed with energy and excitement. Disney clearly attempts to capture imagination in young and old. When asked to choose an animal to represent the Disney brand individuals mentioned a mouse (inspired by Mickey), a unicorn (to symbolize magic), a monkey (suggesting fun and excitement), and a teddy bear (symbolizing innocence and youth) (Focus Group).

**Judgment**

Consumers in general have a favorable opinion of the Disney brand. Only one individual in the focus group claimed to have a neutral opinion of the brand; all others claimed to enjoy the Disney brand and what it represents. Brand quality is not an issue because Disney continues to offer high quality products. Consumers also consider the brand credible and able to ensure energetic entertainment. Disney is also seen as a leader in the entertainment brand category. The only issue related to judgment is brand consideration. Those involved in the focus group feel that Disney is target primarily to families; and therefore, as a young, single adult, there is little consideration for purchase related to the Disney brand (Focus Group).

**Feelings**

As an entertainment brand, Disney has an advantage because it is automatically associated with feelings of fun and enjoyment based purely on its brand category membership. The six most important feelings needed to build a strong emotional brand base are warmth, fun, excitement, security, social approval, and self-respect (Keller 69). Disney is able to generate warm emotion because of its family-oriented image. It also often evokes memories of childhood and innocence (Focus Group). Fun and excitement are two feelings often associated with any
entertainment brand, and there is no exception with Disney (Focus Group). “Excitement” and “playful” were the first two emotions mentioned when consumers were asked how Disney made them feel (Focus Group). Security is also an emotion the Disney brand can generate, although not as strongly as the others. Feelings of security are, however, another by-product of the family-oriented image Disney portrays (Focus Group). Social approval can also be achieved through the Disney brand because it is viewed as a premium brand (Focus Group). Finally, self-respect is the feeling a parent receives when he or she gets to share Disney World with his or her children for the first time. Disney is able to create positive emotions in its customers, and these emotions set the tone for truly developing a deep relationship.

**Resonance**

Disney begins with salience at an early age and continues to build the brand equity pyramid throughout consumers’ lives, hoping to lead to brand resonance. Consumers feel that people are easily able to build relationships with the Disney brand because it generates such positive and touching emotions. Disney is unique because it manages such a strong collection of brand characters. It is almost like the Disney brand is built of a “cast of performers” (Drawbaugh 263). The characters, along with Walt Disney himself, help to give the Disney brand almost a human or super-human personality. With such a strong personality, it is easier to establish a relationship, much like one would have with a real person (Drawbaugh 263). According to a branding analysis performed by Interbrand, Disney was ranked second among other strong brands on brand depth. In this analysis, brand depth referred to the magnitude of commitment, degree of loyalty, and feelings of intimacy customers have for a brand (Kochan xxviii).

Those that establish a strong connection to the Disney brand are not alone. Some of the most dedicated Disney fans blog and communicate on message boards called the Dis boards. They label themselves by wearing lime green when they attend the Disney parks. Individuals that share a passion for Disney have an instant connection to one another. Although most feel it is easy to establish a loyalty to Disney, some members of the focus group explained it is difficult to have a relationship with the brand because it is so strongly connected to the corporate brand. The company is involved with such a breadth of products and services that it makes it difficult for
some consumers to relate to it as an entire entity. Those that felt this way were the individuals that were already aware of the various brands and businesses under the Walt Disney company umbrella (Focus Group).

Survey Results Summary

A survey was conducted based on a convenience sample of Ball State students in order to gather better insight into the minds of consumers and their thoughts on the Disney brand. Survey respondents, like the focus group members, were asked to provide immediate associations with the Disney brand. Responses mostly mirrored those discovered in the focus group discussion. Over 75% of survey respondents associate "Mickey Mouse" and "Movies" with the Disney brand (Survey 2008). Along with movies in general, numerous respondents instantly recall specific movie titles and particularly associate animated movies with the Disney brand (Survey 2008). Other popular thoughts sparked by the Disney brand include theme parks—both general and specific park names—princesses, and a magical image. Survey results also unveiled other common associations that were not mentioned in the focus group discussion. The phrase "company empire" was used to refer to the complex size and structure of the overall corporation (Survey 2008). This shows that by some consumers the Disney brand is not only evaluated as an entertainment brand on a family branding level, but also on a corporate branding level. Respondents also associate the Disney brand with Pixar, most likely because of the Pixar brand’s involvement in many of the recent animated films (Survey 2008). Consumers’ associations with a brand go beyond simple thoughts and objects to include personal experiences and memories. All respondents were able to recollect childhood memories of various Disney movies or family vacations to Disney parks and resorts (Survey 2008). Disney is fortunate to be able to stimulate such cheerful images in consumers’ memories.

As a brand involved in such a vast portfolio of businesses, it is questionable which brand names and businesses consumers attach to the Disney brand. All respondents were aware of the brand’s involvement in movies, merchandise, theme parks, television, and music. However, over 50% of respondents associate Disney as a cable provider. Although Disney offers television programming, it is not involved in providing cable services. Most individuals are aware of
Disney's connection to ABC television network; but a few survey respondents falsely associate the Walt Disney Company as also owning FOX and CBS networks (Survey 2008). About 60% also falsely connect the Disney brand to competitors Universal Studios and DreamWorks (Survey 2008). Although these brands were wrongly connected to Disney, some independent brands that the Disney Company does own are not commonly associated with Disney. For example, Buena Vista, Disney's distribution company, as well as Miramax films and Touchstone Pictures, was only associated with Disney by two respondents (Survey 2008). It is also important to consider the likelihood that multiple respondents may have been guessing, which could mean little to no consumers associate Disney with these brands.

Finally, survey respondents were asked to mark how strongly they agreed or disagreed with various opinions of the Disney brand. Disney is sometimes accused of being a childish brand; however, only one individual somewhat agreed that Disney was only for kids. Overexposure, in contrast, did seem to be a potential issue. There were mixed views on the topic, but the highest concentration of responses somewhat agreed that Disney seemed to be everywhere. In regards to Disney's creation of feature films, most respondents strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that Disney still produced high quality films. All but one respondent consider animated films to still be the heart of the Disney brand. Overall, everyone agreed to have a favorable opinion of the brand (Survey 2008).

RECOMMENDATIONS

**Balancing Heritage with Innovation**

As discovered through exploratory research, Disney is a brand that sparks memories dating back to consumers' childhoods (Survey 2008). Disney has been a well-established brand for many decades and has a defined heritage. All tradition-based brands struggle with maintaining established brand equity while simultaneously expanding the brand to keep it fresh. As the Walt Disney Company grows and becomes involved with various new services, it is easy to lose brand focus. The simple solution is to fall back on the brand's foundation and over exploit
existing brand associations. Some accuse Disney of relying too heavily on Mickey Mouse as a mascot for the brand and label the brand as old fashioned (Haig 64). In comparison, competitors are looking forward for new opportunities (Haig 64). If Disney does not continue to expand and innovate, it will become “fossilized” and eventually, forgotten (Drawbaugh 250). The last thing any entertainment company wants is to be a museum or an archive of dated family programs from previous generations (Drawbaugh 250). The brand is strengthened and enhanced with new additions of unique, quality entertainment.

This issue has haunted Disney throughout the years. After the death of the founding Disney brothers, the brand lost its focus. In the early to mid 70’s Robin Hood, one of Disney’s less popular animated films, was the only animated feature released, along with a few live-actions films and shorts (Drawbaugh 252). In ‘77 many of Disney’s top animators left the company claiming Disney had lost “Walt’s spirit” (Drawbaugh 252). The company was aware of Disney’s value as a brand and was apprehensive to take any action that risked diminishing any of that value. But without innovation and growth, a brand’s value will wither away. Nearly two decades after Walt Disney’s death, the Disney brand had begun to seem awkward, old-fashioned, and directionless (Drawbaugh 254). That is when new management brought change to the company in hopes “to bring back the magic, to dress Disney up in more stylish clothes and expand its reach,” as Michael Eisner put it (Drawbaugh 254).

Current consumers do not seem to agree with accusations of the brand still seeming old-fashioned today. There was clearly a problem following the years after Walt Disney’s death, but since then the brand has become, once again, more closely associated to innovation. About 40% of survey respondents strongly agreed that Disney is an innovative brand (Survey 2008). The balance between heritage and innovation, however, still needs to be recognized as a potential issue and be constantly monitored. With a brand that is already securely defined like Disney, it is important to not grow it in directions that conflict with its already established image. Disney is a brand with established brand resonance for numerous individuals, and any notable variation from its core image could weaken those consumer relationships. In contrast, innovation that builds from Disney’s heritage keeps the brand competitive. For example, Disney often updates its park
attractions or characters. Mickey and his friends have been redesigned and given updated makeovers 20 times of the last 75 years (Drawbaugh 263). As long as Disney maintains commitment to its roots along with commitment to creative innovation, it will continue to be a leading entertainment brand. Roy E. Disney claims, “The creative process is the lifeblood of the Disney Company. If it is to thrive, we must do everything possible to establish an environment in which it can once again flourish.” (Johnmoore).

Avoid Overexposure—Keep it Special

Disney is a globally recognized brand that releases numerous impressions on consumers every day. Children receive approximately 3 billion impressions of Mickey Mouse alone, per year (Keller 307). Former CEO Michael Eisner said, “Since the world is getting pretty small, we are looking to be everywhere. A Disney theme park in China may not be a cash cow until our 150th anniversary, but it will probably happen a lot sooner.” (Haig 65). Global expansion is a key element to company growth in today’s competitive environment. However, brands being “everywhere,” as Eisner put it, can bombard consumers and diminish brand strength. Overexposure is a concern because it can dilute the integrity of a brand (Drawbaugh 257). This is especially true for Disney as a brand related to fantasy and special experiences. It loses its majestic, special image if it is everywhere.

Overexposure is currently less of an issue for Disney than in the past, but it still demands the company’s attention. Exploratory research revealed that consumers hold mixed opinions on Disney’s overexposure. The focus group participants did not see overexposure as a major issue from their perspective, but saw potential for overexposure in Disney related consumer products. Survey results also showed mixed responses on the subject, but the majority somewhat agreed that Disney seemed to be everywhere. The key to managing overexposure is being sure there is a fit with every licensing agreement and every consumer product connected to Disney brand elements. Disney is taking steps in the right direction, but a concrete brand equity management system will help Disney to regulate its exposure. The size of the Walt Disney Company causes it to be difficult to monitor everything, particularly the smaller projects that might be easily
forgotten. Building a new theme park attraction is hard to overlook, but a princess branded lip-gloss may get lost in the clutter.

Along with a strict brand equity management system, the brand must keep all products and brand alliances associated with Disney special. This will help to stay consistent with Disney’s special and unique brand image. An excellent marketing strategy that Disney has already implemented to keep the brand extraordinary and special is the Disney Vault concept. Classic Disney movies are only distributed on home video when they are “released from the Disney vault.” For example, Aladdin is unavailable on the shelves at any video store because it is currently locked in the Disney Vault. This adds to the magic of the Disney movies and makes the films seem special since they are not always readily available to own. Consumers almost feel as if they are part of an exciting secret when movies are released from the vault. Also, the company can build off of earlier popularity by bringing back old classics and introducing them to new generations.

**Corporate Branding Structure**

As previously explored, Disney not only has a family-oriented profile to maintain, but a conservative, traditional image that can easily be tarnished by any questionable or unconventional association. In order to expand into new markets, the company uses other brand names to represent more adult content and to protect the image of the Disney brand. The Walt Disney Company manages a complex web of brands, described in the brand hierarchy. Because of the company’s complexity, it can be challenging to manage such a range of brands. Disney is considering restructuring its brand hierarchy in order to simplify its management. By examining past successful Disney branding strategies and exploring consumer opinions, it is clear that some brands can be collapsed, but others should remain separate from the Disney family brand.

**Strengthening Through Separation**

In the early days of Disney, most new business ventures enhanced the family brand such extending into merchandise and music labels. However, when the Disney brand began to take on new challenges that conflicted with the distinct Disney Image, it was fortunate to recognize the
need to introduce some brands separately. One of the best examples was the release of the 1988 film, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (Drawbaugh 248). The film was more adult-oriented and involved one of sexiest characters ever created by Disney’s animators: Jessica Rabbit. In order to protect the Disney image, the film was released under Touchstone Pictures—Disney Co.’s more mature alter ego (Drawbaugh 248). Once Disney realized the success of releasing more adult movies under the Touchstone Pictures name, the company released other successful films including *Three Men and a Baby, Good Morning Vietnam*, and *Dead Poets Society* (Drawbaugh 255). These movies raked in big bucks at the box office, but kept Disney from losing its light, fun, family image. Along with protecting the Disney image, releasing films under Touchstone Pictures, or other Walt Disney Co’s brands such as Miramax Films or Hollywood Pictures, helps to better position the mature films in the market. New titles released under these brand names also benefit by not being associated with Disney’s contrasting child-like image.

Disney also can successfully use other brand names to expand into other markets; the average consumer is usually unaware of Disney’s connections to the complete list brands in the company’s portfolio. “Our research shows that 99% of the world didn’t even know that we owned anything other than Disney until we bought ABC in 1995. That was such a public moment that I think the knowledge of our multiple ownership of things is probably up. Maybe now 90% think we only own Disney. That’s a guess.” (Drawbaugh 256). As discovered through the focus group discussions, even once participants were made aware of Disney’s ownership of brands such as ESPN, ABC, and Miramax, their opinions of the brands were not affected (Focus Group). However, they explained the difference between being aware of ownership and connecting various business units in a branding sense (Focus Group). Knowledge of Disney’s ownership of ESPN may not be an issue, but changing the name to Disney’s ESPN negatively impacts both brands significantly. ESPN’s credibility as an entertaining, yet reliable source for sports news is weakened by a direct connection to Disney. Collapsing separate brands can also affect brand resonance if both brands have strong brand equity. If someone has developed feelings of intimacy with the Disney brand, that relationship could be jeopardized if he or she does not feel the same about ESPN. Because of Disney’s often restricting and rigid family-
oriented image, some brands under the company's umbrella are more powerful when branded as a separate entity.

**Strengthening Through Simplification**

Although brands targeting an older audience may profit from disassociating directly with the Disney name, brands that share the same positioning or image can benefit from building on the power of the Disney brand. Brand analysts, Al and Laura Ries, claim that when companies or brands extend into television, cable channels will be more successful if they are branded with a separate identity and name (108). For example Nickelodeon is successfully branded as a children's network and powerfully stands as a brand on its own. (Ries108). However, when the Walt Disney Company decided to also enter the child's entertainment market it was much more practical to use the momentum from the Disney family brand for the television channel than to develop a separate brand.

The Disney brand, on a corporate level, can benefit from simplifying its brand structure which would simplify brand management. The current CEO, Robert Iger is hoping to reduce costs and reduce brand management by collapsing other brands into three primary family brands: Disney, ABC and ESPN (Fixmer). This is a step in the right direction for the company, and should be pursued immediately. The company does, however, need to be cautious with which brands to include under the three proposed family brands. For example, consumers feel that mature brands such as Touchstone or Miramax should not be linked directly to the Disney brand name. These filming studio brands would fit and perhaps even benefit from being collapsed under the ABC brand name (Focus Group).

The Company is also investigating how to best manage the Buena Vista brand name and the effects if it were to be collapsed into the Disney family brand name. Impacts that could potentially alter the Buena Vista name and the Disney name must both be considered. Buena Vista dates back to 1953 and was named by Walt and Roy Disney after the Burbank, California, street address of Disney's corporate headquarters (Fixmer). Fortunately, Buena Vista is a brand name with low salience. Focus group participants held a neutral opinion of brand image and
brand associations attached the Buena Vista name (Focus Group). Similarly, survey results proved that very few people are aware of Buena Vista and its connection to the Walt Disney Company (Survey 2008). Buena Vista distribution is a brand more commonly used in “the business” and, therefore, can benefit from associating with the entertainment powerhouse Disney brand name. "With Disney we think we have a durable brand that gives us a competitive advantage," Iger said, "I guarantee millions of people don't know that [Buena Vista] is even owned by Disney, outside of the industry, it's not widely known." (Fixmer). The Disney brand can be strengthened and properly managed by a mix of simplifying and maintaining separation within the overall branding structure.

**Broaden Positioning of Brand Extension: Walt Disney Parks**

One of the only negative associations mentioned in the focus group discussion was “expensive.” Disney is a premium priced brand and, therefore, it is expected to be viewed as expensive by some consumers. Although, if an association of being over-priced overshadows the positive associations the brand wants to promote, it becomes an issue. “Expensive” was the third word mentioned when consumers were asked to name the first thoughts connected to Disney that came to mind (Focus Group). This suggests that consumers think of Disney as over-priced before they consider it exciting or fun. The main reasoning behind the pricey association is the high expenses required at the Disney parks (Focus Group). Consumers felt that ticket prices, hotel rates, and food expenses were all over priced at the Disney theme parks (Focus Group). Disney attempts to share the magic with one and all, but the parks seem inaccessible to many families in the mid-lower class and lower class. Disney does not need to dramatically drop prices to allow everyone to easily afford to come to a Disney park. However, offering just slightly lower prices can help the brand to stay competitive while maintain its premium image.

Another issue consumers found with the positioning of the Disney theme Parks is its target market. Again, Disney claims to be for one and all, but the theme parks are often targeted more towards families and those with children (Focus Group). As mentioned, Disney uses competitive points of parity by also offering exciting and adventurous park attractions like its competitors. These more adventurous attractions help to draw in a slightly older market. Disney
also has the “Down Town Disney” areas in its parks with shopping centers and restaurants that transform into night life hot spots after the sun goes down. The average consumer, however, is not aware of what Disney has to offer to older individuals and those without children (Focus Group). Disney could benefit from developing a campaign highlighting some of these exciting attractions. However, it is crucial that throughout promoting its entertainment for adults, Disney still maintains its clean, conservative image. Disney already successfully accomplishes this through its cruise ship promotions. It is clear that the ships create a family-oriented atmosphere, but also offer many activities available to do for adults, without the kids. Disney should extend this concept to all of its Theme parks and resort locations to show that there truly is something for everyone to enjoy at Disney theme parks.

**Keep the Focus on Animated Classics**

As a continually growing brand, expanding with both depth and breadth, a brand’s true, original focus can become hazy. The Disney brand was built on animation; and therefore, Disney needs to stay focused on creating imaginative cartoon features. Roy E. Disney agreed by saying, “In my view, the essence of who we are lies in the business of film -- especially animation -- and the stories, characters, music, and humor that well-made films generate. This is the engine that drives the train, and everything we do as a company basically flows from it.” (Johnmoore). As described in Disney’s promotional strategies, Disney’s feature films tend to be the hub of the cross-promotion methods used throughout all business units under the Disney family level brand. The majestic movies Disney creates act as a spring board to push all other ideas into action (Haig 2004). Granted, survey results revealed that consumers strongly agree or somewhat agree that Disney still makes good movies (Survey 2008). However, the focus group explained that current Disney movies are indeed entertaining, but do not quite measure up to the standards of some of the old classics (Focus Group). The Disney brand experienced a rebirth with the release of numerous animated hits a few decades ago with *The Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast, Aladdin, The Lion King, Pocahontas, Toy Story, A Bug’s Life*, and *Mulan* to name a few (Drawbaugh 256). Disney does an excellent job of investing creativity in various developments
throughout Disney’s multiple business units, but the brand must stay strongly focused on the heart of the brand and what keeps the other branches pumping—animated features.

A new possible opportunity for the Disney brand to help rededicate itself to its animated classics is to develop a Disney Movie Channel. Disney’s entrance into television with The Disney Channel has proven to be profitable. Disney Channel programming has hoarded attention with popular creations such as *Hannah Montana*, *High School Musical*, and *The Cheetah Girls*. Disney could continue capture home audiences by creating a channel dedicated to Disney movies. This would reconnect consumers to some of the forgotten classics that built the Disney brand, along with tightening the brand’s focus on its creative strength of animated film making.

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

Disney is recognized globally for its immense success as a brand. Fewer brands have such strong connections to positive images and feelings, distinctly embedded in consumers’ minds. Perhaps the true measure of the brand’s success is Disney’s ability to fully construct the consumer brand equity pyramid. With a firm base of close to 100% global brand awareness established and loyal relationships with numerous consumers, Disney has built itself for long-lasting triumph as brand. Overall, Disney is avoiding major collapses and problems that come along with such immense success stories, and it has been able to reinvent itself over time. The biggest challenge for the Disney brand is to be aware of potential issues and protect the brand from any possible problems that could develop. Overall the brand must stay true to its roots and stay true to its core brand image. Disney is an inspirational brand allowing those of all ages to briefly escape reality and take part in the pure joy of life, and it seems Disney will be bringing magic to one and all for generations to come.
Appendix A: Consumer Associative Brand Network

Character
- Mickey Mouse
- Tinkerbelle
- Princesses
- Jiminy Cricket
- Goofy

Theme Parks
- Magic Kingdom
- Walt Disney World
- Orlando, Florida
- Disneyland Paris

Movies
- The Lion King
- Toy
- Beauty & the Beast
- The Pirates of the Caribbean
- The Fox and the Hound

Brand Image
- Dream
- Youthful
- Magic
- Fun
- Man and the Mouse
- Expensive
- Happy
- Walt Disney
Appendix B: Brand Equity Pyramid Model

Consumer Brand Equity Pyramid Model

The Disney Brand

- **Salience**: 100% brand awareness
- **Performance**: Quality entertainment that exceeds expectations
- **Judgment**: Majority hold favorable opinions of the brands
- **Resonance**: Dis Boards forum for Disney fans
- **Feelings**: Warmth, fun, excitement, security, and social approval
- **Image**: Magical, fun, youthful, innovative, classic, and family-oriented

The Disney Brand is magical, fun, out full, innovative, classic, and family-oriented.
Appendix C: Sample Survey

Brand Survey

1. When you hear “Disney” what comes to mind? (Please list your immediate reactions; adjectives, products, phrases etc.)

2. Of the items you listed above, please circle the top three that you relate the strongest to the Disney brand

3. Do you have any strong Disney related memories? If yes, please give a brief description.

4. How would you describe the Disney brand image?

5. What feelings are generated by the Disney brand?

6. Do you have any negative feelings or associations linked to the Disney brand? If yes, please give a brief explanation.

7. Which businesses are Disney involved in that you are aware of? (Check all that apply)
   - Movies
   - Merchandise
   - Sports Teams
   - Theme Parks
   - Restaurant Chains
   - Television
   - Music
   - Cable Company
8. Which brands are owned by the Walt Disney Co? (Check all that apply)

- CBS
- ABC
- FOX
- ESPN
- Universal Studios
- Dora The Explorer
- Shrek
- Buena Vista
- Hannah Montana
- Touchstone Pictures
- Miramax
- DreamWorks
- Busch Gardens
- Toy Story

Please respond to how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by checking the appropriate box.

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<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<td>Animated films is the heart of the Disney company</td>
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<td>I personally feel a connection or relationship with the Disney brand</td>
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