

# Development And Future of The Walt Disney Company

Chensu Yang \*

Zhengzhou Foreign Language School, Zhengzhou, 450000, China

\* Corresponding Author Email: ycs070814@asu.edu.pl

**Abstract.** Since its founding in 1923, The Walt Disney Company has expanded into a major player in the worldwide entertainment industry, producing films, theme parks, television networks, and streaming services. Disney's robust brand, extensive intellectual property (IP), and creative commercial strategies are the main drivers of its success. Its well-known figures, including Mickey Mouse and the Marvel heroes, have fuelled the success of films and television shows as well as a plethora of goods and theme park attractions. With a number of theme park resorts and a rapidly expanding streaming service, Disney+, which overtook Netflix in 2022 in terms of members, Disney has expanded internationally. Disney does, however, confront difficulties such as market competition, policy uncertainty in different locations, and significant investment expenditures in its theme parks. Opportunities include the expansion of the cultural sector, the digital revolution, and the rise of the theme park business. Disney needs to improve IP creation, investigate new technologies, deepen its digital transformation, and use creative and adaptable tactics to combat market competition if it wants to keep its position as the industry leader. Maintaining the company's leadership position in the entertainment sector while juggling these opportunities and challenges will be essential to its future success.

**Keywords:** Disney; Marketing strategies; Intellectual property.

## 1. Introduction

The Walt Disney Company, founded in 1923 and headquartered in Burbank, California, USA, is named after its founder, Walt Disney. The Disney Company is a large multinational company with businesses in entertainment production, theme parks, toys, books, video games and media networks. Its main subsidiaries include Pixar Animation Studios, Marvel Studios, Touchstone Films, Miramax Films, and others. With its rich IP resources and strong brand influence, Disney has become a leader in the global entertainment industry [1].

The history of the Walt Disney Company dates back to 1923, when Walt Disney co-founded the Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio with his older brother Roy Disney. The company began by producing short cartoon films and gradually developed into a globally renowned entertainment brand. Disney's iconic characters include Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, The Lion King, etc. These characters have not only achieved great success in the field of animation, but also derived a wealth of peripheral products and theme parks. As of 2024, the company has several theme parks resorts worldwide, including Los Angeles Disneyland Resort, Orlando Walt Disney World, Disney Resort Paris, Tokyo Disney Resort and Shanghai Disneyland Resort. These parks not only provide a rich entertainment experience for visitors, but also become an important source of revenue for Disney. In the streaming space, Disney launched the Disney+ platform and surpassed streaming giant Netflix for the first time in 2022 to become one of the world's most subscribed streaming services. In addition, Disney has continued to expand its business scope into cable TV, sports channels and other areas, further consolidating its position in the global entertainment industry. Disney continues to innovate and expand its influence worldwide [2].

## 2. Analysis of Disney's Market Path and Products

Disney's main businesses are divided into film production, theme parks, television network and streaming media service.

Disney film production business distribution and marketing capabilities are very strong. In terms of technology and production, Disney has a world-class production team of special effects, photography, editing and so on. The company continues to introduce advanced production technology and equipment to enhance the visual effects and viewing experience of the film. In addition, Disney also focuses on post-promotion and marketing, through social media, advertising and other channels to promote the film works to the global audience. For example, in 2019, Disney released a movie *The Lion King*, Disney released posters with great features, and the release of promotional films was also very strategic. For example, the first poster shows Simba the lion cub leaning out of his hole and stepping into the giant paw prints of his father Mufasa; The second poster shows Mufasa and Simba sitting side by side on the edge of a cliff, looking out at the vast African landscape. The first trailer was released during a Thanksgiving Day NFL game and immediately became a huge hit, racking up more than 224 million views in 24 hours. The company brings its film works to the global market through cooperation with major theaters and streaming platforms. Such as Hulu and Disney+ [3]. At the same time, Disney also pays attention to the interaction and communication with fans, through social media, fan activities and other ways to enhance the loyalty and stickiness of fans. For example, Disney has developed different activities and products for audiences of different ages, promoted them through different channels and platforms, and used data analysis technology to understand each customer's needs and preferences, so as to provide personalized services and experiences. In general, Disney's film production business has a high status and influence in the industry. Its success is inseparable from the strong IP resources, superb production technology, diversified business layout and innovative marketing strategy and other advantages. For example, in terms of production technology, Disney's *Steamboat Willie* is the first cartoon with synchronous sound. Through the "Cinephone" technology, music and sound effects are precisely integrated with images, bringing a new viewing experience to the public. In terms of diversified business layout, Disney's business includes multiple models of entertainment, experiences, sports and technology culture strategies. However, with the intensification of market competition and the diversification of audience needs, Disney also needs to constantly innovate and improve its own strength to meet future challenges [4].

Disney's theme park business is huge, covering many countries and regions around the world. At present, Disney has a number of theme parks around the world, including the United States Disneyland, Hong Kong Disneyland and so on. With their unique themes and storylines, these theme parks offer visitors a rich and varied entertainment experience [5]. In addition, Disney has also actively expanded its online business, including online ticketing, virtual reality experience, and further expanded its business scale. Disney theme parks have a wide range of customers, including families, couples, children and so on. Among them, family customers are the main consumer group, and they usually bring their children to experience various amusement facilities and performance activities. But in a highly competitive travel market, Disney's theme parks face competitive pressure from other theme parks and tourist attractions. In general, Disney theme parks with its unique IP image, rich amusement facilities and wonderful performance activities, attracting tourists from all over the world. Through innovative business models and operational strategies, Disney theme parks hold an important position in the market. However, in the face of fierce market competition and environmental pressure, Disney needs to constantly innovate and improve in order to maintain its competitive advantage [6].

Disney has always been a significant entity in the TV network business. Through its multiple television networks and channels, Disney has successfully translated brand power into business value and continues to drive innovation in the television industry. With the popularity of the Internet and mobile Internet, more and more viewers turn to streaming media platforms, Disney promotes digital transformation, expands its share in the streaming media market, and has spread its business to many countries and regions around the world. Such as India and Brazil. In short, Disney's TV network business has a high market position and influence on a global scale. Through continued content innovation, marketing strategy and technology innovation, Disney will continue to maintain its competitive edge and drive innovation in the television industry.

With the development of science and technology and the popularity of the Internet, streaming media services are rising rapidly around the world. As a world-renowned entertainment company, Disney has also made remarkable achievements in the field of streaming media services with its rich IP resources and strong brand influence. Disney's streaming service has a broad audience of children, teens, families and adults. Through content positioning and differentiation strategies across different platforms, Disney has successfully attracted this segment of the population. At the same time, Disney's streaming media service adopts an advanced technology platform to ensure the audience's high-definition and smooth viewing experience, and also stabilizes its customer base in disguise. In short, Disney's streaming media service business has achieved remarkable results in terms of user groups, content resources, technology platforms and marketing strategies [7].

### **3. Analyzes the Development of Disney Based on SWOT Model**

Disney exhibits a range of significant strengths, which contribute to its competitive advantage within the entertainment industry.

Disney has a brand advantage, the Disney brand enjoys high visibility and reputation around the world, is synonymous with joy and dreams. This brand loyalty has brought about a broad customer aggregation effect for Disney. At the same time, Disney's IP resources are rich, with many classic animation images and stories, such as Mickey Mouse, Snow White, Marvel heroes, etc. These IP resources have high commercial value and development potential. Disney also has a diversified business model, Disney's business covers film and television entertainment, theme parks and resorts, media networks, consumer goods and interactive media and other fields, forming a strong synergy and anti-risk ability. Based on these foundations, Disney also has a strong ability to innovate. Disney pays attention to content innovation and product development, updates entertainment content and facilities every year, constantly gives tourists fresh feelings and meets customer needs.

Disney is confronted with several weaknesses that may pose challenges to its strategic objectives. The construction and operation of Disney amusement parks require high investment, and the need for long-term maintenance and renewal leads to high financial pressure and a long return cycle. At the same time, the geographical restriction is also a big problem for Disney Park, Disney Park cannot buy and consume anytime and anywhere like other products, and the geographical restriction affects the number of users and pricing ability. Disney lacks innovative thinking, although Disney has rich IP resources, in some periods, enterprises rely too much on the original IP products.

The lack of new innovation, resulting in a single product.

There are three main areas of opportunity for Disney. The first is the growth of the theme park market: the global theme park market is in a recovery and stable growth stage, especially the Chinese market. The theme park tourism is booming, which provides a huge development space for Disney. The second digital transformation: With the rise of streaming media platforms, Disney has actively laid out its streaming media business, expanding new channels of content consumption and increasing revenue sources through platforms such as Disney+. The third is the development of cultural industry: the cultural industry is getting more and more attention around the world, and Disney, as a leader in the cultural industry, is expected to benefit from this trend [8].

There are three main threats to Disney. The first market is highly competitive, the theme park and film and television entertainment market are highly competitive, and competitors continue to pour in and compete for market share, posing a threat to Disney. The second policy uncertainty is that the policy environment in different countries and regions has an impact on Disney's business operations, such as the "retaliation" behavior of the Florida government against Disney, which adds to the policy uncertainty. The third is the impact of emerging media: the growing power of streaming media platforms has eroded the bargaining power of traditional IP parties such as Disney, forcing them to invest a lot of resources in the layout of their own streaming media platforms.

Based on the analysis of SWOT model, it can be seen that Disney has significant advantages in brand advantages, IP resources, diversified business model and innovation ability, but it also faces

disadvantages such as focusing on asset model, geographical restrictions and lack of innovative thinking. In terms of opportunities, the growth of the theme park market, digital transformation and the development of the cultural industry provide a broad space for Disney to develop. However, threats such as fierce market competition, policy uncertainty and the onslaught of emerging media cannot be ignored.

In the future, Disney should continue to give full play to its brand advantages, strengthen the development and utilization of IP resources, and promote digital transformation and the development of cultural industries. At the same time, it is also necessary to pay attention to market competition and policy changes, and flexibly adjust strategies to meet challenges and threats. When focusing on Disney's investment value, investors should consider its competitive advantages, disadvantages, opportunities and threats to make an informed investment decision.

#### **4. Suggestions for the Future Development of the Disney Company**

Disney, as a giant in the global entertainment industry, has been widely recognized and loved around the world for its unique creativity, rich story content and excellent brand influence. In the face of a rapidly changing market environment and technological innovation, the Disney Company needs to constantly adapt its strategy to maintain its leadership position and achieve sustainable growth.

The author thinks Disney can deepen its digital transformation and enhance the user experience. First of all, Disney can strengthen the construction of streaming media platforms and continue to optimize the user interface and user experience of Disney+, increase the personalized recommendation system, and improve the diversity of content, including original series, movies, animated short films and interactive content, to meet the needs of users of different ages. Second, Disney can use augmented reality or virtual reality technology to explore the application of AR and VR technology in theme parks and online entertainment, such as virtual Tours, interactive games, to provide visitors with an immersive experience. Then Disney can also apply big data and AI, use big data to analyze user behavior and precision marketing; At the same time, artificial intelligence technology should be used to optimize content creation, distribution and customer service processes [9].

The author thinks Disney can also strengthen IP development and cross-border cooperation. First of all, Disney can deepen the existing IP mining, continue to dig and enrich the classic IP such as Mickey Mouse, Disney Princess, Marvel Universe, Star Wars and other story lines, and launch more derivatives and experience projects. Second, Disney can innovate the IP incubation mechanism, establish a more open and diversified IP incubation platform, and encourage internal creative teams to collaborate with external creators to develop new and unique original content. Then, Disney can strengthen cross-border integration, cross-border cooperation with fashion, technology, education and other fields, and broaden brand influence, such as the launch of co-branded goods, online education courses [9].

The author thinks Disney should pay attention to sustainable development and social responsibility in the process of development. First of all, environmental protection measures should be strengthened, and environmentally friendly materials and technologies should be used in theme park construction and film shooting to reduce carbon footprint. It can promote circular economy and green supply chain management. Second, Disney can increase social responsibility projects, increase investment in education and public welfare undertakings, and pass on positive energy through Disney stories to promote children's growth and social progress. Then, Disney should also respect cultural diversity, pay attention to cultural diversity and inclusion in content creation, reflect the cultural characteristics of the world and enhance the affinity of the international market [9].

The author think Disney should be flexible in responding to market changes and strengthen its localization strategy. First of all, Disney can strengthen market segmentation and customized content, according to the market characteristics and consumer preferences in different regions, launch customized content and services, and enhance market penetration. Secondly, Disney can flexibly

formulate pricing strategies, adjust subscription prices and package combinations according to market feedback and competitive situation, and attract more user groups. Then, Disney strengthen the localization operation, strengthen the cooperation with local partners, in-depth understanding of the local culture, improve the brand affinity and market response speed.

The author thinks Disney continues to innovate and set trends in the industry. In terms of technological innovation, Disney continues to pay attention to and invest in emerging technologies such as block chain, meta-universe, to explore their applications in the entertainment industry, and to maintain its technological leadership [8]. Disney is enhancing innovation in business models, exploring new profit models, such as digital collections on block chain, virtual goods trading, etc., and increasing revenue sources. In terms of content innovation, content creators are encouraged to carry out experimental creation, try different themes and styles, and keep the content fresh and attractive [10].

In short, the Disney Company should continue to uphold its innovative spirit, combining digital transformation, IP deepening, social responsibility, market flexibility and continuous innovation and other multi-dimensional strategies to meet future challenges, seize development opportunities, and ensure that the global entertainment industry continues to lead the trend and create more value.

## 5. Conclusion

The Walt Disney Company is a large multinational corporation headquartered in Burbank, California, United States. Disney's business segments include media networks, parks, experiences and products, studio entertainment, and direct-to-consumer and international businesses. Disney's streaming business returned to profitability in fiscal year 2024. In the future, people will continue to look forward to its future development by optimizing the streaming business, driving the recovery of the entertainment business, addressing the challenges of the experience business, and maintaining strong financial performance.

## References

- [1] Smoodin, E. (2013). Introduction: how to read Walt Disney. In *Disney discourse* (pp. 1-20). Routledge.
- [2] Luebering, J. E. (2024, April 1). Disney company. [Www.britannica.com. https://www.britannica.com/money/Disney-Company](https://www.britannica.com/money/Disney-Company)
- [3] Freeman, M. (2017). A World of Disney: Building a Transmedia Storyworld for Mickey and his Friends. In M. Boni (Ed.), *World Building* (pp. 93–108). Amsterdam University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1zkjz0m.8>
- [4] Walt Disney Archives. (2024). *Disney History. D23; Disney.*
- [5] Carson, C. (2004, November). "Whole new worlds": Music and the disney theme park experience. In *Ethnomusicology Forum* (Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 228-235). Taylor & Francis.
- [6] Shen, J., Xu, M., & Yang, S. (2021, December). Disney marketing strategy review. In *2021 3rd International Conference on Economic Management and Cultural Industry (ICEMCI 2021)* (pp. 764-770). Atlantis Press.
- [7] Zhu, X. Use SWOT to Analyze and Study the Enterprise of Disney.
- [8] Zhou, R. (2024). Analysis and Prospect of capital management of Listed Companies in the United States-Taking Walt Disney Company as an example. *Highlights in Business, Economics and Management*, 24, 2559-2566.
- [9] Disney Experiences. (2023, November 7). *Disney & Technology: A History of Standard-Setting Innovation*. Disney Experiences.
- [10] South, J. (2024, December 2). Walt Disney Company (DIS) Price Prediction and Forecast 2025-2030. 24/7 Wall St. <https://247wallst.com/forecasts/2024/12/02/walt-disney-company-dis-price-prediction-and-forecast-2025-2030/>