Strategic Communication Plan for The Walt Disney Company

COMM 251- Principles of Strategic Communication

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Situation Analysis

*History and Product Situation:* The Walt Disney Company is a vast company that provides a wide range of services and consumer products based on the dream of Walt Disney when he started the Disney Brothers Studio with his brother in 1923. The Walt Disney Studios is the smaller subset of the Walt Disney Company and has been the foundation of the company for over 85 years. The Walt Disney Studios is responsible for releasing movies, music and stage productions. They are most well-known for the movies released by Walt Disney Animation Studios. Disney’s current product through the Walt Disney Studios is their animated and computer animated features. Though the Walt Disney Studios is responsible for many of different productions, they are most famous for their animated features, including The Little Mermaid.

*Competitive Situation:* The Walt Disney Studios is mainly competitive with DreamWorks Animation SKG. This company has an average gross of $430 million and is still behind the Disney-Pixar name as far as computer-animation. Disney has the competitive advantage of being a much bigger company. The Walt Disney Company has expanded greatly beyond feature films into other areas, where DreamWorks has not as much.

Some internal and external factors that may diminish the voice of our campaign for The Little Mermaid in 3D, is that the movie has come out before. This means we will have to convince people that it is worth seeing again in 3D. Also it will be affected by the other re-releases of movies in 3D that may take away the novelty of The Little Mermaid being released in 3D.
SWOT Analysis - The Walt Disney Company

S- Strengths: Credibility, trustworthy, been around for a long time, good reputation

W- Weaknesses: Newer competition, may seem old fashioned as a company, movie ('89) may seem stale

O- Opportunities: Reach new generation of kids with the same movie, capitalize on what people already know about Disney, can take risks because they’ve been around for so long

T- Threats: DreamWorks Animation (especially with new movies they’ve been coming out with), if they take too much risk, they may be unrecognizable, recent change of CEO

SWOT Analysis: Marketplace Analysis

S- Strengths: Solid place in the market, stocks on an upward trend, recent new movie success

W- Weaknesses: Recent success may make complacent, spot in market could change quickly, and market is changing all the time for movies

O- Opportunities: To keep growing with mergers and purchases of other companies, always going to be movies

T- Threats: New animation studios, other talent in competitors, digital age of handheld devices (have to change)
Objective

By September 1st, the release date, of The Little Mermaid 3D on Blu-ray Disc, we will increase the percentage of young families in the Midwest by 15% who are aware of the re-release of The Little Mermaid in 3D.

Public

Most commonly the Walt Disney Studios is viewed as a producer of movies that appeal to young audiences. However, the movies produced by the Walt Disney Studios such as, The Little Mermaid, can in fact appeal to a very wide audience. No matter your age, you are never too old to enjoy the adventure and excitement of the classic story of The Little Mermaid. All those who dream can appreciate this timeless tale. Since The Little Mermaid can appeal to an audience of both young and old, we will target an older public in our strategic communication campaign for the re-release of The Little Mermaid in 3D. The main public we will focus on in our campaign is young families who live in the Midwest United States. This will give us the opportunity to appeal to an audience of parents who may know about The Little Mermaid, but to also appeal indirectly to the new generation of kids who’ve never experienced The Little Mermaid before. Given that the original release of The Little Mermaid was in 1989, 24 years ago, the 3-12 year olds of yesterday are the young families of today. The original audience of The Little Mermaid will now be likely to want to share a movie from their childhood, with their own children.
Strategy 1: Childhood Creativity

Childhood creativity is something that young parents are particularly interested in. This is due to the benefits of outlets that allow children to be creative. When children are allowed to express their own ideas and thoughts through a creative medium, they gain skills in communication and critical thinking. Imagination is also very important for children. Since children naturally have active imaginations, it is important to reinforce that by encouraging those types of ideas or behaviors in proper settings. Parents will want to encourage things that enhance their children’s learning and stimulate original ideas. The Little Mermaid is predominately a fairy tale. Many fairy tales can be seen as creative outlets for children and stories that parents can use to teach valuable lessons. The Little Mermaid 3D will promote childhood creativity for young viewers.

Tactics:

• Press Release- The first tactic that will focus on childhood creativity is a press release (see pg. 8). In this press release we will describe what the movie, The Little Mermaid, has to offer as far as allowing kids to be curious and creative. It will address the curiosity of kids and how they are willing and able to imagine entire worlds. The body of the press release will align both the Walt Disney Company and the release of The Little Mermaid in 3D with imagination and childhood creativity. This press release will go out on February 1st, 2013.

• Event- The second tactic which will focus on childhood creativity is our ‘Create!’ event. This event will be held at the Walt Disney World Resort in Florida and the Disneyland Resort in California. We will allow young artist to come and create
their own original character from Ariel’s world, there will be prizes and the winner(s) will get a free trip to a Walt Disney Resort or a Disney cruise liner. ‘Create!’ will take place January 22nd, 2013. With a media alert going out on announcement day, January 1st, 2013.

- Print Ads- Then we will release a series of print ads in parenting magazines and newspapers.
- TV Ads- There will be television ads featuring The Little Mermaid 3D release date, and the creative work of the young artist(s) who win ‘Create!’
- Previews- We will have both 30 second previews hinting for The Little Mermaid 3D and longer teaser trailers of about 2 minutes. These will appear before DVD and Blu-ray releases during the duration of the campaign.
- Twitter and Facebook- On our Twitter and Facebook campaigns for childhood creativity we will focus on works children have submitted.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Disney to Re-release Animated Classic The Little Mermaid in 3D

BURBANK, Calif., May 1, 2013— The Walt Disney Studios will continue its tradition of encouraging the creativity of young minds with the re-release of The Little Mermaid in Disney 3D on Bu-ray Disc on September 1, 2013.

“The Little Mermaid is a magical fairytale that people of any age can enjoy. Every Disney Animated Feature is infused with the humor and heart of the company to provide young fans with a springboard for their own imaginations,” said Robert Iger, CEO.

The creativity of children is important to every coming generation. Those who dream are destined to succeed because they are willing to take risks. While dreaming big is hard work, children can be some of the most creative people in the world. Letting children use their imaginations to create worlds beyond our own is a great exercise in teaching them that their ability to think, is their most important quality.

The innocence of youth allows for a carefree showing of dreams and emotion. It also allows for a large amount of creativity. The idea for The Little Mermaid, 3D technology, and Blu-ray Discs were all ideas born of imagination. The Walt Disney Studios encourages teaching young people the importance of creativity and innovative ideas.

About The Walt Disney Company
The Walt Disney Company, together with its subsidiaries and affiliates, is a leading diversified international family entertainment and media enterprise with five business segments: media networks, parks and resorts, studio entertainment, interactive media, and consumer products. Disney is a Dow 30 company with revenues of over $40 billion in its Fiscal Year 2011.

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Strategy 2: Family Time/Togetherness

For the second strategy we will focus on the importance of quality family time. Family time is important for a family to be a healthy and proactive team. They say that the family that has fun together stays together. This is a thought that every parent can stand behind no matter what age their children are. Due to the fact that parents are concerned with spending quality time with their family, we will be able to show them how they can do that with a family movie night of The Little Mermaid in 3D. Our public of young parents will come to recognize Disney as family focused and Disney features as family films. Even if those in our public, young parents, don’t know about Disney at all, they will be able to agree with the importance of family togetherness.

Tactics:

- Print Ads- The first tactic we will use to show that The Little Mermaid 3D is a great way to bring the family together is printed ads (see pg. 11) in magazines and newspapers. These will show that it is a family event to watch The Little Mermaid in 3D. We will release a new ad roughly every two weeks. They will appear in Parenting magazine, Parents magazine, and Family Fun magazine. We will also release our ads to newspapers. In this campaign we will focus on city-wide newspapers in the Midwest, such as the St. Louis Post Dispatch and the Chicago Tribune.

- TV Ads- We will also use television ads that show young families enjoying The Little Mermaid for the first time in 3D.

- Press Release- Our press release for family time will focus on the Walt Disney Studio’s long tradition of family friendly productions.
• Facebook- We will use a Facebook campaign for this strategy to reach our target audience of young families and show them that the best thing they can do for their family is spend time with them, and these posts will be about how they can do that with The Little Mermaid 3D.

• Previews- We will also have family focused previews running in front of other Disney features.
Now your whole family can have a Disney 3D adventure, “Under the Sea”!

For the first time ever, The Little Mermaid will be available on Blu-ray in Disney 3D, September 1st--For a Limited Time Only!

Scan here for the trailer for the Little Mermaid in 3D!
Strategy 3: Nostalgia

Nostalgia is a very important idea in our campaign for The Little Mermaid release on Disney Blu-ray in 3D. Since The Little Mermaid is being re-released in 3D, there is already a group of people who know they enjoy the film. This group of people might remember The Little Mermaid from their childhood. In order to capture our audience of young families, we are going to use nostalgia to appeal to the young people of yesterday. This strategy will be a good way to convince those who have prior knowledge about the film. This nostalgia strategy will also portray Disney as nostalgic, and then even if those in our target audience don’t know about The Little Mermaid, they can still get behind Disney as a company and remember their experiences with other Disney features, when they were young.

Tactics:

- Twitter- The first tactic we will use to promote the nostalgia of The Little Mermaid is a twitter campaign (see pg. 14). This series of tweets will refer to iconic scenes and songs of the movie to remind young parents what the movie was all about when they saw it about 20 years ago. These tweets will include links to articles, videos, and will include multiple recognizable photos from the movie, and from the movie posters. There will also be many tweets that provide opportunity for interaction, such as asking followers to tweet back their favorite parts of the movie.

- Facebook- The Facebook campaign for nostalgia will focus on interaction from the fans. This will be done through likes and comments. A lot of the posts on
Facebook will be similar to the tweets. However, there will be an added number of fun facts about the movie itself for the Facebook posts over the tweets.

- Press Release- In this press release we will focus on remembering childhood and bringing back traditions to celebrate with your children.

- TV Spot Ads- The television ads used in the nostalgia strategy will focus on a ‘do you remember?’ theme. This will allow for shorter ads and will leave the audience thinking about The Little Mermaid’s re-release in 3D.
We seek to estimate the future and its bearing on our existence, as well as dwelling fondly on the past or indulging in escapist dreams. - Walt Disney

https://facebook.com/Disney
Relive the dream. #LittleMermaid3D

The danger. #LittleMermaid3D

Which #DisneyMovie moments are you most excited to see? #LittleMermaid3D

Reply to @Disney

Mike Wilton @mwilton13 17 Apr

@Disney "Part of your world" The best Disney song

Hannah Matthau @HannahMatthau 17 Apr

@Disney The shipwreck and Ariel's song to Prince Eric! So romantic.
The absolute best part, the happy ending @Disney

The romance. #LittleMermaid3D

Rediscover Ariel’s journey like never before #LittleMermaid3D
Reimagine the wonder. #LittleMermaid3D

The fun. #LittleMermaid3D

♫ Life is the bubbles! #underthesea. ♫ #LittleMermaid3D
Return to the magic of life under the sea #LittleMermaid3D

♫“Look at this stuff, isn’t it neat?”♫ #LittleMermaid3D

#LittleMermaid3D comes out September 1, 2013; pick up your Blu-ray Disc today!
Calendar

This timetable for the release of content is a general outline of what kinds of things we would release each month of the campaign. Though we will not need a press release to come out every month, when we do release one we will want to send it out in the beginning of the month. The calendar is a general outline of The Little Mermaid 3D strategic plan.

Key:
New Content Release Dates
◉ = Announcement (Jan. 1st) of The Little Mermaid 3D on Blu-ray release date Sept.1st
♦ = 1 Facebook post
♦ = 2 Twitter posts
■ = Press Release
○ = Media Alert
♥ = Event
☼ = Print ad (run for 2 weeks each)
♣ = Television ad/Trailer (run for the duration of the campaign once they are released)
♠ = Radio Ads (run for duration of campaign once they are released)
▲ = Preview (not exact dates, run in front of related movies in time period DVD/Blu-ray releases only)

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*Note: Some months do not have 31 days, on the shorter months Facebook posts will be moved back one day and print ads will not be released.

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Budget

- $35 Million budget total budget
  - Salaries
    - Director (Emily Blackshear): $200,000
    - Team Members (10): $100,000 per member= $1,000,000 total
  - Event
    - $2,225,000
  - Print Ads (23)
    - $2,575,000 total
  - Television Ads/Trailers (10)
    - $1,500,000 each= $7,500,000 total
  - Trailers on Blu-ray Disc (17)
    - $1,000,000 each= $19,725,000 total
  - Radio Ads (16)
    - $1,775,000
Evaluation

In order to measure our the results of our strategic communication campaign we will employ both formative research tactics to measure our results in the middle of our campaign and summative research at the end to evaluate our progress and success. During our campaign we will measure our social media success. Including how our likes, follows, replies and retweets have grown on Twitter, and how our likes and shares have increased on Facebook, since we started our campaign. Also we will use the turn out from our March 22nd event for children artists to gauge the public and how aware they are of the 3D re-release of The Little Mermaid. Depending on how the results of these tests go, we will have to decide to maintain the campaign, or to adapt our processes. After the campaign is complete we will measure how aware the target public of young families was by how many Blu-ray copies of the movies are sold in the first month. If the amount surpasses the average of Blu-ray Discs sold to young families in the Midwest by 15% or more, then we will have succeeded. But, even if the sales numbers don’t match up with our goal of a 15% increase, we will still be able to calculate if our awareness campaign was effective through the use of questionnaires and polls. These results will be easy to calculate and immediate. These types of research will also help us stay within our target market zone, given that; social media doesn’t always immediately show that information. The main goal and objective of our campaign is knowledge gain, to let them know that The Little Mermaid is coming out in 3D on Blu-ray Disc on September 1, 2013.

The first strategy is childhood creativity. While this strategy has been used in many different places, it has rarely been used to promote the re-release of a 3D film. With the use of the event as the main catalyst for this strategy, we can evaluate the effectiveness of that part of it by recording how many guests are attending the event, but also what they are planning on doing afterwards
with the knowledge they have gained. During the event we can poll guests and record the efforts of those results. We will also be using a press release for this strategy. By aligning the Walt Disney Company with childhood imagination and creativity they are able to not only use this to raise awareness of The Little Mermaid 3D, but also to pair the Walt Disney Company with their main consumers.

The second strategy is family time and togetherness. Though this one is touched on a lot, it is important to remember how far you go to reaching more people with family oriented ads. We will use focus groups to learn if the print ads that we are using as our main tactic, are helpful and highly touted by the customers. We will mainly be using a family focused ad, and also some television ads will run with this same strategy as well.

The final strategy we will employ in this campaign is nostalgia. Nostalgia is the feeling of remembering the past. Those who saw the movie when they were children will now have the opportunity to share it with their own children or family members. However, it is not only the same story over again, it is in 3D which will draw in an audience of parents who have already seen and know the movie, and also their children will be interested because the movie will be brand new to them. Nostalgia will be promoted on Facebook and Twitter. The target audience of young parents is part of the largest group on social media sites. By using all of these evaluation tools we will be able to monitor the advancement of the awareness of the re-release of the movie, The Little Mermaid in 3D on Blu-ray Disc.
References