

PUBLIC RELATIONS SPECIALIZATION REPORT

Kimberly Hurd



The WALT DISNEY Company



Photo Credit: disney.co.uk

INDUSTRY

For my report, I have selected the entertainment industry. This industry broadly describes the companies responsible for the distribution and manufacture of mass media entertainment. “The entertainment industry provides a wide spectrum of media, including movies, music, amusement parks and other attractions that audiences worldwide have grown to love.” (Debenedetti, 2016, par. 1). Over the past few years, we have seen changes and improvements through the ways producers get their content out. With the overwhelming amount of platforms currently trending through television and the Internet, consumers are granted the ability to have more of a choice over what they watch. I chose this industry because every day I interact with programs created and monitored by entertainment workers. In our ever changing society, I think it’s important to understand how a company takes notice of the way the world is moving and implements that into their future work.

Five popular companies in the entertainment industry include The Walt Disney Company, Netflix, Warner Bros., DirecTV and CBS. **The Walt Disney Company**, referred to as Disney, began as an animation company before evolving into live-action film production, television and theme parks. In addition to being affiliated with all organizations that have Disney in the title, The Walt Disney Company also owns Pixar, Marvel Studios, Lucasfilm, 20th Century Fox, Fox 2000 Pictures, Fox Searchlight Pictures and Blue Sky Studios.

Netflix started as a DVD rental service in 2010 that later evolved into a subscription-based streaming service. Starting in 2012, Netflix started producing its own content. **Warner Bros.** is classified as one of the “Big Five” major American film studios and operates through film, television and video games. **DirecTV** is a broadcast satellite provider launched in 1994. As of 2017, the company has 21 million subscribers. **CBS** started as a radio network formerly titled United Independent Broadcasters. It has now evolved into one of the Big Three American broadcast television networks.



Photo Credit: disney.fandom.com

COMPANY OVERVIEW: THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY

When the Walt Disney company was founded in 1923, the original name was Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio. Walt Disney signed a contract with M.J. Winkler to produce an animated series. Since then, The Walt Disney Company evolved into a diversified international family entertainment and media enterprise. The company operates in four business segments. The Disney Company's media networks include cable and broadcast television, television production and distribution operations, and radio networks and stations. When it comes to the Parks Experiences and Products segment, the Walt Disney Imagineering unit designs and develops concepts for new theme parks, resorts and attractions. Under studio entertainment, the company produces live-action and animated films, live stage plays and musical recordings. The fourth segment, Direct-to-Consumer and International, takes responsibility for apps, books, magazines and comic books. (Reuters, n.d.).

“The mission of The Walt Disney Company is to entertain, inform and inspire people around the globe through the power of unparalleled storytelling, reflecting the iconic brands, creative minds and innovative technologies that make ours the world's premier entertainment company.” (The Walt Disney Company, n.d., par. 1). **Robert A. Iger**, the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of The Walt Disney Company, focuses his strategic vision on three fundamental pillars: “generating the best creative content possible, fostering innovation and utilizing the latest technology, and expanding into new markets around the world.” (The Walt Disney Company, n.d.) **Christine M. McCarthy** is the company's Chief Financial Officer. Just a few of her duties include overseeing brand and franchise management, corporate real estate and corporate strategy. The former Chief Operations Officer was **Thomas O. Staggs**, who served from 2015 to 2016 before parting ways with the Disney company. **Susan P. O'Day** works as the Chief Informations Officer.

The Disney corporate headquarters is located at The Walt Disney Studios in **Burbank, California**. Its target audience is families -- people of all ages get the chance to enjoy the films, theme parks and more. The reasoning behind the creation of Disneyland, the first theme park associated with the company, is that Walt Disney wanted an amusement park that appealed to both children and adults. He didn't want to just spend his weekends watching his daughters ride the carousel without getting to have fun of his own. The company has a code of ethics, as well as standards for business conduct. Disney highlights on giving and receiving respect through every department and every individual. Contents for their standards of business conduct include integrity, trust, teamwork, honesty, playing by the rules and respect. “Disney's leadership team oversees the world's premier entertainment company, the home of the most respected and beloved brands around the globe.” (The Walt Disney Company, n.d.) Between the board of

directors and the executive leadership, the company holds high standards for the quality of people representing it.



Photo Credit: thewaltdisneycompany.com

The site's "Investor Relations" section provides details of the company's stock, with information ranging from one day to the past five years. The page also includes links to events and presentations, including Disney's quarterly earnings via webcast. Further down, you find press releases relating to the financial state of the company and yearly/quarterly reports. Disney puts all of this information onto their website for the public to see, which justifies how transparent the company aims to be with its publics.

CURRENT NEWS

Frozen 2:

The Walt Disney Company sees great success in the box office after *Frozen 2*'s opening weekend. As of November 27, the film brought in \$127 million domestically. It appears likely that *Frozen 2* will reach \$1 billion, which would make this the sixth film Disney released this year to do so. "This only goes on to prove how strong the Disney name and value-creation strategy are." (Jones, 2019, par. 1) While seeing the film thrive looks good for the company, it's almost unnecessary. Disney is an "entertainment ecosystem." If the movie doesn't do well in

theaters, the company still profits off of it by featuring the film at resorts, selling toys, creating video games and streaming. (Jones, 2019, par. 7).



Photo Credit: bbc.com

Catherine Powell Personal Statement:

Catherine Powell served as the president of the Disney Parks Western Region. These parks include Walt Disney World, Disneyland Resort and Disneyland Paris. The company eliminated her position and now one president of each park reports to Chairman of Disney Parks Bob Chapek. She posted a personal statement on her LinkedIn where she reflected on her fifteen years of experience with the company. While upset due to her removal, she takes Walt Disney's advice to heart. She quoted the founder of the company and ended her statement saying, "Maybe Walt was right, and this will be the best thing in the world for me!"



Photo Credit: wdwnt.com

Star Wars Rise of the Resistance:

The Walt Disney Company opened a second Star Wars ride on Thursday, December 5, at Hollywood Studios in Orlando, Florida. This ride seems to be one of the most ambitious the company produced so far, as guests sign up in a virtual queue system as opposed to actually waiting on standby lines. The ride already sold out of seats by 8:30 a.m., however, it broke down

at 7 a.m. opening day, causing guests to be given a paper FastPass to return later with. While fully booked before the time of traditional park opening, the company bet big on Star Wars this year, yet theme park attendance “was flat for the fiscal year ending in September.” (Palmeri, 2019, par. 4). CEO Bob Iger doesn’t seem worried. He responded that he believes many guests didn’t want to book their trips during the early months of the Star Wars: Galaxy Edge launch to avoid crowds or that families could be waiting for this section of the park to open in its entirety.



Photo Credit: [bloomberg.com](https://www.bloomberg.com)

Cast Members Service Celebration:

Walt Disney World Resort honored cast members at Magic Kingdom Park after hours for their 40th annual Service Celebration. The 4,200 cast members in attendance were given the red-carpet treatment to celebrate their dedication to the company. “Disney Parks, Experiences and Products has a long-standing tradition of recognizing Cast Members, Crew Members and Imagineers for the talent and hard work, stemming from the earliest days at the animation studio and continuing into the launch of Disneyland and beyond.” (PR Newswire, 2019, par. 2). This event shows how important internal relations is to Disney. The company really values its employees and is grateful for the work they do year-round.



Photo Credit: [PRNewsfoto/Walt Disney World Resort](#)

Successful Marketing:

With the release of multiple highly-anticipated films as well as the new streaming service, Disney comes in at Number 6 for Markets of the Year according to Ad Age. Disney+ was only released one month ago, yet the consumers were prepared months prior. “It was a kingdom-wide movement that touched nearly every part of the Disney universe, including parks and resorts, cruise lines, consumer products, retail stores and the company’s portfolio of broadcast and cable networks. Ultimately, Disney says the campaign reached more than 100 million households.” (Poggi, 2019, par. 4). With all of the murmurings and posts directly from Disney’s social media accounts, Disney+ received most of its hype from free publicity as opposed to paid advertisements. Even one month after the release, viewers can’t stop talking about “Baby Yoda,” a character featured in “The Mandalorian.” This situation is a great example of how Disney followed the public relations template of research, planning, implementation and evaluation. The company saw the success of Netflix and researched how it could create something comparable. All over social media, people post about how they want the old Disney Channel back. Disney listened and evoked nostalgia over those who have been begging to see the Disney Channel classics on TV. When it came down to planning, Disney strategically placed advertisements. For example, when Tom Bergeron gave Disney+ a shoutout on “Dancing with the Stars,” he triggered a major increase in pre-enrollment numbers. (Powell, 2019) As for implementation, the content is all there on one site. Instead of paying for everything individually, you pay one price for it all.



Photo Credit: [adage.com](https://www.adage.com)

“Outdated Cultural Depictions” Warning:

When Disney+ was first released on November 12, 2019, the company crisis-managed the situation regarding inappropriate content before criticism from the public could unveil. As the Disney company has been producing films dating back to nearly 100 years, some of the scenes and references in the earlier films could be deemed culturally insensitive. To counter that, Disney placed a warning on certain films such as “Dumbo,” “Peter Pan” and the Mickey Mouse shorts. The warning reads “This program is presented as originally created. It may contain outdated cultural depictions.” In addition to the label, the film “Song of the South” aged very poorly and presents itself as far too inappropriate for today’s time so Disney decided not to release it onto the platform. (Libbey, 2019) Good move, Disney.

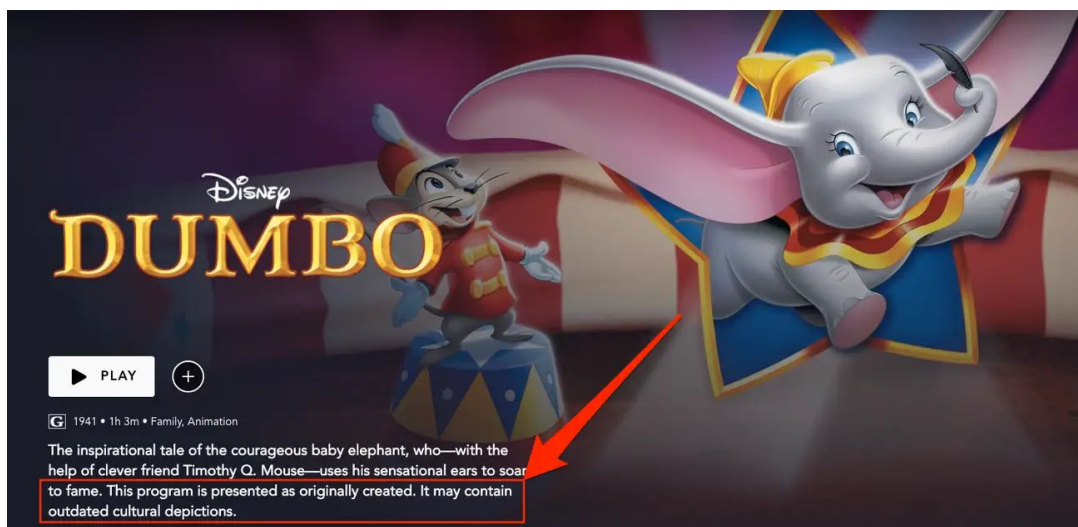


Photo Credit: [businessinsider.com](https://www.businessinsider.com)

WEBSITE REVIEW

The website for The Walt Disney Company (thewaltdisneycompany.com) is very simple to navigate, which assures that visitors can find exactly what they're looking for without getting lost. On the homepage of the website, a header photo of the Disney headquarters lays across the top. The site is cohesive when it comes to font and color scheme, making it look appealing to the eye. Beneath the photo sits a bar detailing stock information, and the visitor can click on the bar for further stock details. Next, a title labeled Recent News is displayed accompanied by articles and photos discussing each news topic. The headlines for the week of December 2 include the opening of Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance at Walt Disney World, Frozen 2's movie theater debut, the art and technology behind Frozen 2, and new trailers for the Disney's "Mulan" and Marvel Studios' "Black Widow." As you scroll down through the homepage, you are exposed to the About page, followed by Investor Relations, Careers, Environment and Philanthropy.



Photo Credit: thewaltdisneycompany.com

On the menu bar across the top of the site sits a section labeled "News." After clicking "News," there is a link to the article discussing the details on the opening of Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance. If you scroll past that, you reach the press release section. The site provides links to the three most recent press releases, but there's a "view all" link under the title. Many of the releases discuss the news and findings of financial aspects of the company. On December 4, 2019, a press release came out discussing how the company's Board of Directors announced a semi-annual cash dividend of \$.88 per share. On November 25, the company announced expiration and final results of registered exchange offer for notes issued in connection with prior private exchange offer. In contrast to the financial news, on November 13, Disney+ gained 10 million subscribers after just one day of the streaming platform's launch. While the site has few

video and audio resources, the designer included photos of each member of the Executive Leadership team and the Board of Directors. By doing so, when you visit the site you get to see the faces of the company. This shows a sense of professionalism.

If you click the label “Environment” on the top menu bar, you reach the page where the company informs the public about their sustainability efforts. The section starts with the headline “a commitment to the planet.” “At Disney, our commitment to environmental stewardship focuses on using resources wisely as we operate and grow our business. We also provide philanthropic grants and expertise to save wildlife, inspire action, and protect the planet.” (The Walt Disney Company, n.d.) As you scroll through the page, the company provides statistics on their environmental impact and includes their objectives for the next year. In 2018, they reduced net emissions by 44% and plan to reach 50% by 2020. In 2018, they diverted 54% of waste from landfills and incineration and plan to divert 60% by 2020. Through the Disney Conservation Fund, the company directed \$85 million to saving wildlife and protecting the planet. The site provides a [YouTube video link](#) discussing their commitment to conservation efforts.

The website lists the company’s media contacts under each press release. Contacts notably include Chief Communications Officer Zenia Mucha, Vice President of Corporate Communications David Jefferso and senior VP of Communications Karen Hobson.

Overall, the website provides resources to every news article, press release and document relating to Disney that any viewer could imagine. The company aims to be very transparent with the public by putting all of its financial and CSR reports on the Internet. Walt Disney created the company over 100 years ago, and the team knows how to create trust with its clients, which is the most important factor to any organization.

PURPOSE AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The website’s “About” page features details on corporate social responsibility for the Walt Disney Company. By making this section present on the company’s about page, the team over at Disney really wants to prove how much they value CSR. “At Disney, corporate social responsibility refers to our commitment to operate our businesses in an honorable and ethical manner along with our efforts to bring comfort, inspiration, and opportunity to families around the world.” (The Walt Disney Company, n.d.) Following the statement defining their CSR falls links to the company’s environment and philanthropy pages. The website displays a presentation of their annual CSR report for 2018, which was reported in six different languages -- making it accessible and inclusive to most visitors. The report includes a message from Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Christine M. McCarthy. The presentation goes further

into performance targets labeling their progress on the environment, healthy living and volunteer hours. The company is on track with all of their targets. Following the details on the 2018 progress, the page lists the company's 2020 goals under each segment. The report ends with a data table and a link to the twitter account @DisneyCSR.

2018 PERFORMANCE ON TARGETS

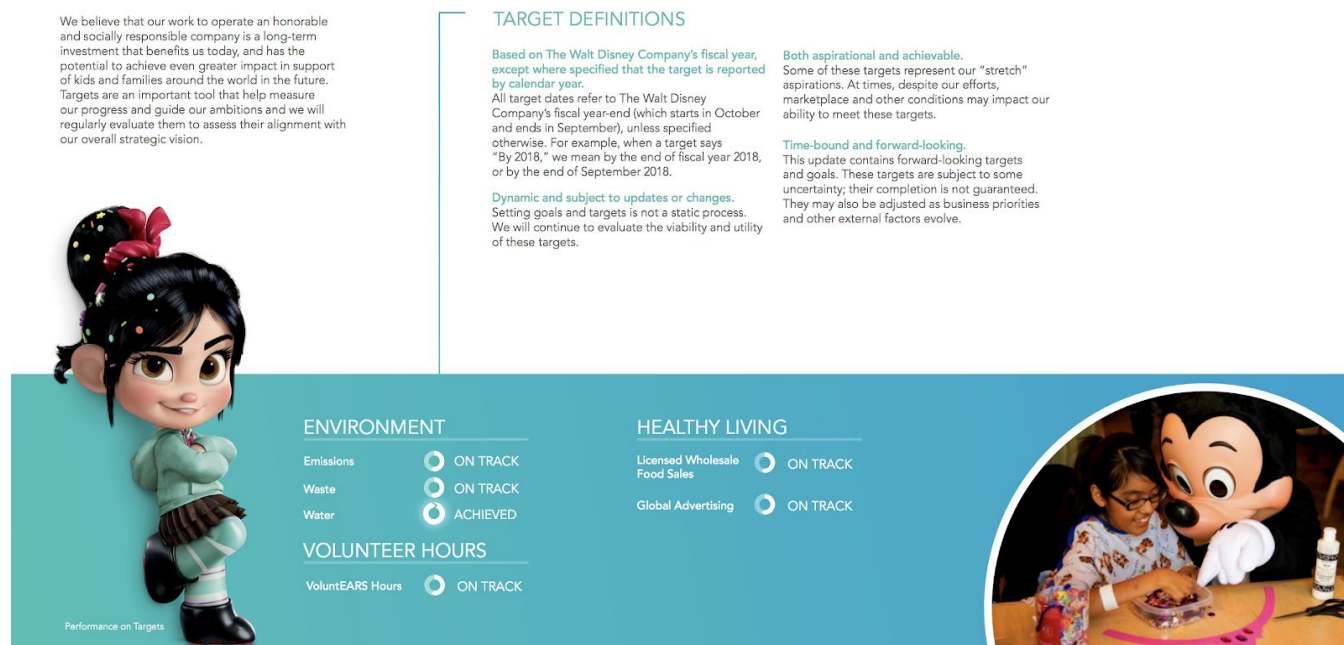


Photo Credit: thewaltdisneycompany.com

Beneath the report link lays an email address used to contact the corporate social responsibility team. Links to data tables from previous years are also included. The Walt Disney Company tries to be transparent and honest with its publics. The website provides resources discussing the company's policies and approaches with links that could be of any interest to its stakeholders. The section also includes a brief page regarding International Labor Standards. "Disney's International Labor Standards (ILS) Program evaluates and helps improve the working conditions in facilities producing Disney-branded products." (The Walt Disney Company, n.d.) The company touches on the fact that with such a large and diverse audience, its products get produced in tens of thousands of facilities in nearly 100 countries. How does the company monitor labor on a scale this large? "We work collaboratively with our licensees and vendors to educate them about labor rights expectations, require social compliance audits to assess labor conditions, and work with external organizations to foster safe, inclusive and respectful workplaces wherever Disney-branded products are made." (The Walt Disney Company, n.d.)

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Walt Disney Company owns an extensive amount of social media accounts. Each platform has an account for Disney, as well as specific accounts for Disney+, Walt Disney World, Disneyland, Disney Channel and more. The @Disney page on each platform encompasses all of the breakdowns from the movies, parks and television shows into one account. While each account is used to promote the company's latest projects, Disney always shows how it values its roots by making sure to post images and gifs of classic Disney characters. While Disney's target publics are families and people of all ages, social media interactions mainly occur between younger children and tweens

Facebook:

The page @Disney on Facebook has 52 million likes. Its header already seems interactive to the audience, as most pages use a photo. Disney uses a video promoting the new streaming platform Disney+. Posts are very frequent, as viewers see an average of five a day. Topics range from celebrations, such as the day Walt Disney was born, announcements of new rides, such as Mickey and Minnie's Runaway Railroad set to open in March, and photos of celebrities on the red carpet, such as at *The Spies in Disguise* movie premiere. Each post displays some sort of image or video. All uploads are cohesive, as the media elements appear to fit in with each other. The posting usually occurs between the hours of 12 p.m. and 7 p.m. ET. Likes range between 300 and 45k. Comments are very happy and positive, especially when it comes to Disney+. Facebook users commented "Lots of awesome shows and movies I didn't expect to be on there and I'm super excited to watch them all!!" and "I just watched Mulan with my great granddaughter on Disney Plus! So amazing! Thank you Disney." This demonstrates how the public sees Disney, which is very favorable and appreciative towards something as small as a streaming site.



Disney

December 5 at 12:00 PM · 🌐

...

Today takes the cake! Happy Birthday to [Walt Disney](#), born on this date in 1901.



Photo Credit: [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/disney)

Instagram:

21.9 million accounts follow @disney on Instagram. The same content is posted on Instagram as the Facebook page posts. The general theme over the past few weeks is movie trailers, announcements of ride openings, Disney+ advertisements and Disney character-themed holiday posts to ring in the season. The majority of images range between 100,000 and 200,000 likes. However, on both platforms (Instagram and Facebook), the Walt Disney birthday post received the greatest amount of engagement. This shows how Disney's audience always remembers it's foundations. Between all of the film and theme park promotions, the public always remembers how the company got where it is now. The account doesn't communicate directly with followers, but it provides interactive content. For example, the page posted an image of a collection of magical objects with the caption "Enchanted objects galore! Name that Disney movie." After this post, over 1,800 people took to commenting "Beauty and the Beast!" On other Instagram posts from Disney, followers comment lots of emojis and express their excitement for the upcoming Disney projects.



Photo Credit: [instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com)

Twitter:

@Disney on Twitter has 6.5 million followers. On both Instagram and Twitter, the account follows less than 100 people, including the accounts of partner companies and the specific accounts for Disney TV shows and movies. The header for this page is an advertisement for Disney+, along with the page's pinned tweet. The account tweets between three and six times a day, following the same theme as the previously-mentioned platforms. The content ranges from holiday wishes from Disney characters, advertisements for new films including *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* and details on new ride openings in the Disney parks. Most tweets receive between 100 and 500 retweets, 1,000 to 2,000 likes and less than 100 comments. However, some tweets are outliers, as once again the Walt Disney birthday post engagement with 2.3k retweets and 9.4k likes. Another big post for the Disney Twitter account was the trailer for *Mulan* posted on December 5, 2019. The video received 5.7 million views, which almost equals one view from each of Disney's followers. The post also earned 8.4k retweets and 22k likes.



Photo Credit: twitter.com

While the data makes the post appear popular among the account's followers, the comments poorly reflected the film. Many tweeters used the hashtag #BoycottMulan. One user, @kenforkenneth, commented "Loyal, brave and true? So disgusting. The new Mulan supports police brutality, it is so ironic when I see how Disney describes Mulan! #BoycottMulan." Another user, @OomlesArt, said "The real Mulan would stand with the protestors of China. The lead actress's statement about the people of Hong Kong is disgusting and should not be condoned. #FreeHongKong #BoycottMulan." Disney has not formally responded to the controversy surrounding the film. In contrast to the negativity, most of the other comments on the account are receptive to the posts. Users comment on film trailers saying what they like or with cute Disney gifs. The baby yoda gif is very popular. On a photo of Stitch celebrating the holiday season, tons of followers commented, "I want this on a t-shirt!" The tweets that tag Disney are also very positive. Tweeters ask when Frozen 2 will be on Disney+, businesses give insight to the new hotels opening and many people ask for a new Tinkerbell movie.

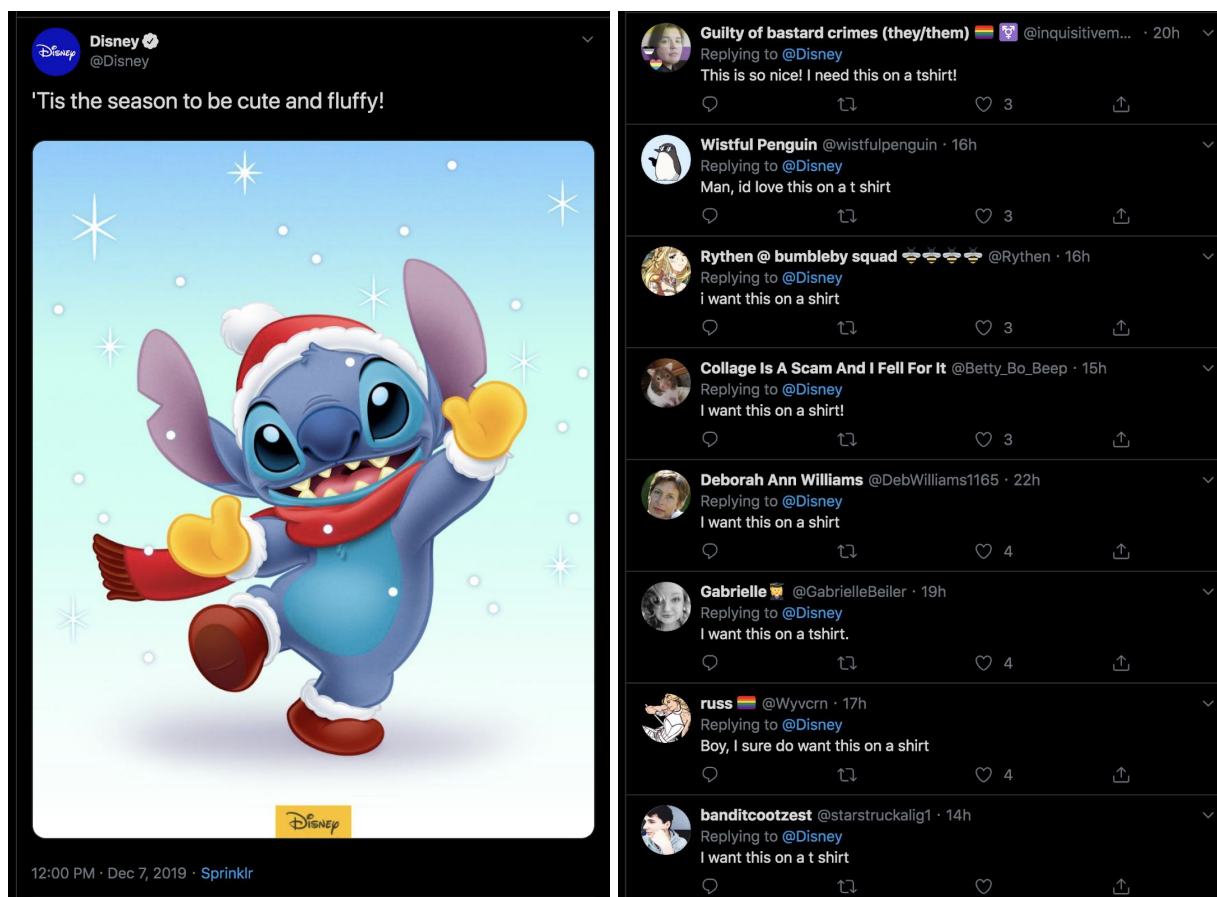


Photo Credit: twitter.com

Overall, users of social media love Disney and are excited for new launches of projects that the company is planning. The #BoycottMulan controversy roots from political opinions and anger over the lead actress' support of Hong Kong police, which have been accused of police brutality. Disney does a good job of steering clear of politics and controversy, which is probably why they are staying silent until they know how to properly handle the situation.

YouTube:

Walt Disney Studios on YouTube has 3.34 million subscribers. This account uploads movie trailers for upcoming films being released, while also featuring a series of special looks and features from recently released films such as Aladdin and The Lion King. Videos range from 100k views to 1 million. One special look at Aladdin from February 10, 2019 received 9 million views. On this specific video, fans went from not being excited for the film to an instant change of heart. Plenty of watchers commented "Who knew we would change our minds so fast?" Each video has such a different amount of likes/comments that it is hard to find a specific range.

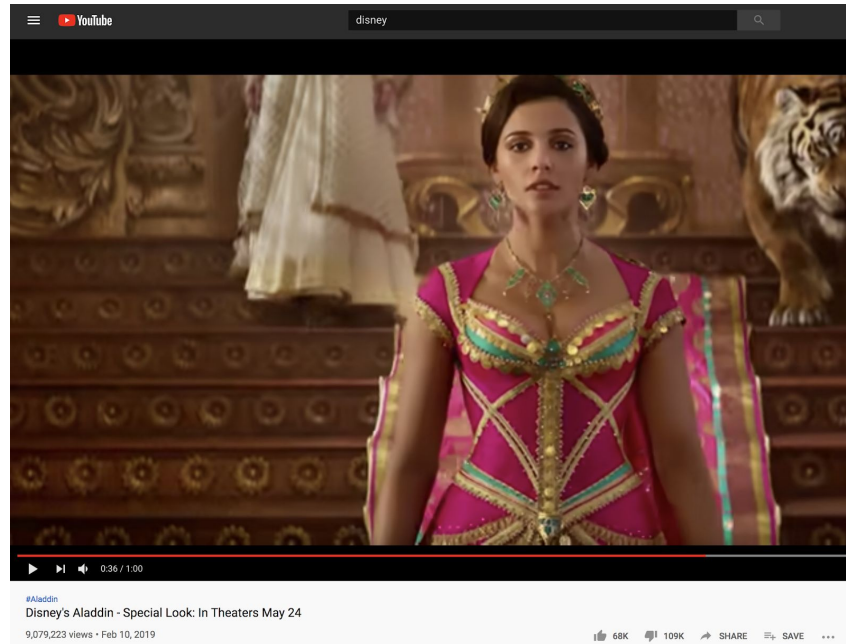


Photo Credit: [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

Pinterest:

Disney on Pinterest has 10m+ monthly viewers. The account's biography reads "The official Pinterest for Disney. Cook, craft, and create some magic today." The boards mainly focus on Disney-themed snacks and crafts. An entire recipe is provided for *Winnie the Pooh* popsicles. On Pinterest, viewers visit a particular board posted by an account and then pin the recipe to their own boards.

...

~fall 2019~
Save

di.sn

Winnie the Pooh Popsicles

Serves 8Cool down with the whole Hundred Acre Wood crew!

15 ingredients

Produce

- 2 Bananas
- 1/2 cup Blueberries or blackberries, fresh or frozen
- 1 Mango, fresh or frozen
- 1 Orange
- 6 Strawberries, fresh or frozen
- 1 Strawberry, juice

Condiments

- 1 Honey

Baking & Spices

- 1 Dark chocolate chips

Dairy

- 2 cups Vanilla yogurt

Frozen

- 1 Popsicle molds like these
- 1 Popsicle sticks

Tools & Equipment

- 1 Parchment paper

Other

- Blender
- Yellow, pink, orange, and blue candy melts
- Toothpicks

Photos 4 comments

Tried this Pin?
Add a photo to show how it went

Add photo

Photo Credit: [pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com)

The featured board “Oh My Disney” has 2,311 pins and 517,799 followers. The board is tagged under the following categories: quizzes, news, art, video, nostalgia and high levels of Disney magic. Disney saves pins of images and articles relating to the company onto this board, but most pins receive less than 2 comments. Many kids -- who are the target audience of Disney films -- don’t use Pinterest, so their followers and engagement count seems lower compared to other sites. Another board “Disney Style” has 2,270 pins and 510,460. This count is very similar to the numbers on the previously-mentioned board. “Disney Style” shares nail ideas, outfits and jewelry all corresponding to a Disney character or concept.

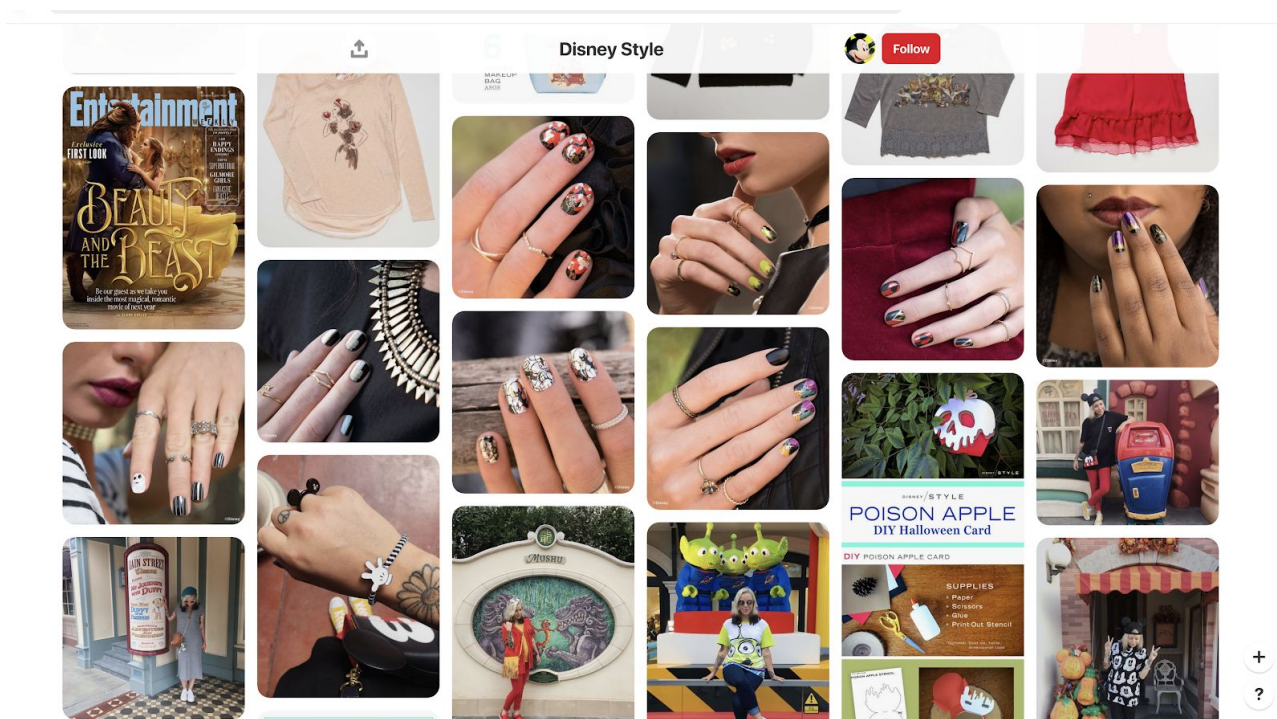


Photo Credit: [pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com)

Works Cited

- DeBenedetti, J. (2016, October 26). Analysis of the Entertainment Industry. Retrieved from <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/analysis-entertainment-industry-78237.html>.
- DIS.N - Walt Disney Co Profile. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/companies/DIS.N>.
- Disney - Leadership, History, Corporate Social Responsibility. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.thewaltdisneycompany.com/about/>.
- Robert A. Iger. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.thewaltdisneycompany.com/leaders/robert-a-iger-2/>.
- Jones, D. (2019, November 27). The Walt Disney Company's Frozen Success. Retrieved from <https://seekingalpha.com/article/4309341-walt-disney-companys-frozen-success>.
- Figueroa, J. (2019, December 2). Former Disney Parks President Catherine Powell Issues Personal... Retrieved from <https://wdwnt.com/2019/12/former-disney-parks-president-catherine-powell-issues-personal-statement-on-being-ousted-from-the-walt-disney-company/>.
- Disney's Second 'Star Wars' Ride Quickly Sells Out for Day. (2019, December 5). Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-12-05/disney-s-second-star-wars-ride-quickly-sells-out-for-the-day>.
- Resort, W. D. W. (2019, December 5). Walt Disney World Cast Members Get the Red-Carpet Treatment at Magic Kingdom Park with Annual Service Celebration. Retrieved from <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/walt-disney-world-cast-members-get-the-red-carpet-treatment-at-magic-kingdom-park-with-annual-service-celebration-300970087.html>.
- Poggi, J. (2019, December 9). Marketers of the Year No. 6: Walt Disney Co. Retrieved from <https://adage.com/article/media/marketers-year-no-6-walt-disney-co/2221176>.
- Powell, L. A., Denton, A., Brown, A., Cho, R., & Olivia. (1969, December 11). Taking PR Inspiration From the Launch of Disney . Retrieved from <https://prsay.prsa.org/2019/11/15/taking-pr-inspiration-from-the-launch-of-disney/>.

Libbey, D. (2019, November 12). Disney Plus features a warning on some of its older content with 'outdated cultural depictions'. Retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.com/disney-plus-warning-on-older-content-outdated-cultural-depictions-2019-11>.

Disney - Leadership, History, Corporate Social Responsibility. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.thewaltdisneycompany.com/about/#responsible-supply-chain>.