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The Lessons Walt Disney Learned Still Apply Today

By Stephen Schochet

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Contrary to popular belief, Walt Disney spent more time as a struggler than a success. Described at a various times as a visionary and a genius there were actually many occasions he could not foresee the results of his ideas, and they nearly brought him to financial ruin. Yet the lessons he learned through the years are useful and timeless.

1) Ownership is key: Early in his career, Walt created a character on behalf of Universal Studios named Oswald the Rabbit. When he tried to negotiate better payments for himself, Walt was informed that Universal had the copyright on the character and he was entitled to no compensation. From then on Walt owned everything he created.

2) Have passion for your product: Walt worked three long years on Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs which was originally budgeted at a \$500,000 an extraordinary amount considering the average cartoon in the 1930s cost \$10,000. His competitors, his wife and his brother all predicted Disney would be ruined. During the filming, Walt was plagued with both health and financial problems as Snow White ran way over budget. Needing an additional half million to complete the picture, he acted out the story in front of a tough-minded banker and got the loan he needed. The result was a classic that made \$8,000,000 at a time when movie tickets cost 25 cents for adults and a dime for kids.

3) Make timeless products: Pinocchio, Fantasia and Bambi all failed in their first releases. World War II cut off international distribution. The national mood turned away from public sentiment. Disney plunged four million into debt and it looked like Bank Of America would cut off his line of credit. In a dramatic meeting, the founder of the bank, A.P. Giannini stood up and told the board members that Disney made great movies and that the war would not last forever. They voted unanimously to keep Disney afloat after the old man's speech. He was proven right years later when all three films became profitable classics.

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4) Test market: Walt could not get distribution on his first nature film Seal Island. After several frustrating months watching it sit on the shelf, he found one movie theater in Pasadena willing to show it. Seal Island, achieved full distribution, won the academy award for best short subject and led to a series of highly popular nature films.

5) Sometimes you need to pull the plug: Walt was determined to have a circus at Disneyland despite his staff's advice not to. The idea failed. A pretty trapeze artist lost her top while performing in front of the kiddies helpless to prevent it. The camels kept spitting into the crowd. The llamas got loose and ran down Main Street scattering customers every which way. More than one performance of this poorly attended venture ended with Walt burying his face in his hands. He decided to kill it.

By learning lessons from each of his entrepreneurial attempts, Walt always moved forward, which is a timeless business model.

Stephen Schochet is the author and narrator of the audiobooks Fascinating Walt Disney and Tales Of Hollywood. The Saint Louis Post Dispatch says, " these two elaborate productions are exceptionally entertaining." Hear realaudio samples of these great, unique gifts at

Planning Your Walt Disney World Vacation

By I Henman

While it's always thought that children are the ones who dream of Walt Disney Vacations, there are adults that think of Walt Disney World as their ideal vacation spot as well. The greatest appeal for families to Disney has to be the ability to find something for everyone to do. Of course we're not just talking about group activities, but things for every individual too. This is probably one of the big reasons that families will go back each year, yet they never seem to get bored.

If you're seriously considering taking a Walt Disney vacation you should start your research on the Internet. Of course you can book a vacation right on Disney's website, there are other online travel sites that also have special family destination packages that might include Walt Disney world, as well as airfare, and hotels.

An important thing to keep in mind is that Walt Disney world vacations vary in price depending on the time of year you want to travel. Disney is also busier at particular times of the year than others. Choosing to go to Disney in the off season will often mean you'll get a better deal. It's a funny thing really, Disney never has a shortage of visitors whether it's peak season or not, yet you can always find a deal. This is likely another one of the big attractions as a vacation spot, there is always a good deal to be found.

There are a few ways to book your trip to Walt Disney world. First off you can book it online, via a travel agent or by phoning Disney. Each option has benefits, when calling the operator on the other

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end might be able to dig a bit deeper and find you a better deal than is available online or at your regular travel agent. If you do intend on calling to book your trip you should either call in the evening or early morning. Calling throughout the day is the busier time, and you'll be more rushed to book and get off the phone so that operators can serve other clients.

Another attraction to consider when planning your trip to Disney is the special events they hold. While you likely won't find a deal during those special events it can make your vacation that much more enjoyable. Attractions such as concerts for children under five, or special character appearances often occur but aren't part of Disney's regular attractions. Also keep a watch for Disney anniversary specials. Catching specials that don't happen all the time can create wonderful vacation memories, and be that much more fun for you and your family.

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