

Bringing the Magic to Social Media:  
An Overview of Walt Disney World's Social Media  
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Brand: magical, sentimental, people-centric, responsible, and innovative

Primary Target: Families

Families with younger or more adult children who love Disney. They most likely have an average to above average income in order to afford coming to the parks.

Secondary Target: Adults

Adults in their 20s to 30s who continue to love Disney. They don't have kids of their own but are still in love with Disney. Often referred to as "Disney Adults"

Intro to Public Relations

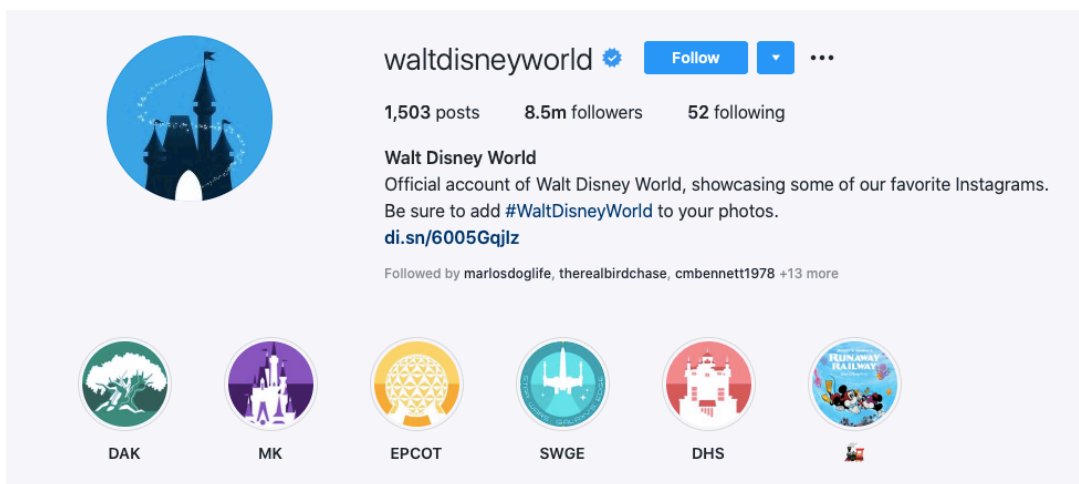
Professor Klein

28 October 2020

## *Bringing the Magic to Social Media: An Overview of Walt Disney World's Social Media*

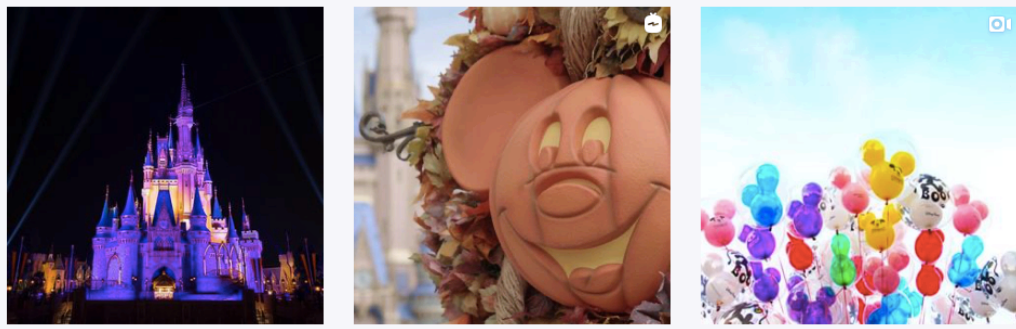
In 1965, Walt Disney World (WDW) opened their doors and has served as place where magic floods from every corner and where dreams come true. Not many companies have been able to create such a brand identity that has led to the great successes WDW has enjoyed. People all over the world have a memory associated with Disney, and this is what the current social media strategies strive to capture. The current social media usage displays the magical brand and appeals to WDW's audiences. Such audiences include families and adults who have grown up with Disney. However, there are some ways to increase the engagement and reach of Walt Disney World's social media pages based on competition and target audiences.

### **Walt Disney World's Instagram**



Instagram is a great place to best capture the beauty and unique features of Walt Disney World. According to Statista, the users who are predominately using the app are between the age range of 25-34 years old (33.2% of users), with the age range of 18-24 following close behind (22.9% of users). WDW's Instagram is used to primarily attract Millennials and Generation Z (Gen Z) audiences with stunning images that will make them long to visit Walt Disney World parks. Instagram should be used to focus on special aspects that are only

available in Disney World, and their social media reflects this strategy throughout their highest performing posts.



Some of the highest performing posts include (as of November 2020):

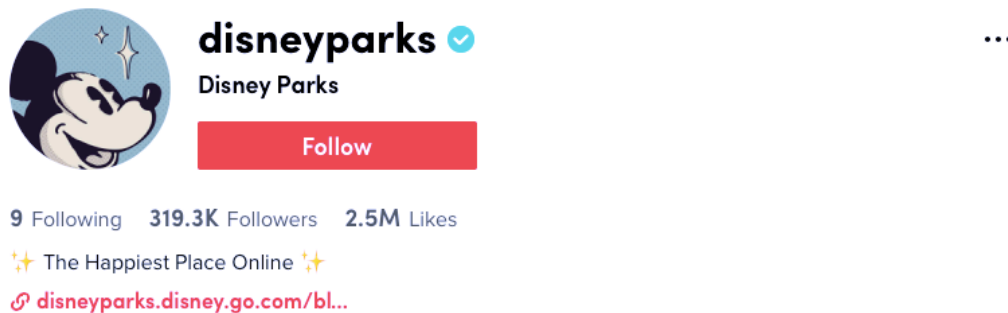
- Longer videos on IGTV called: “Behind the Magic,” “Disney Family Game Nights,” “Hit Lists,” and “Ride and Learn”
- Short videos about events, updates, and character interactions
- Stunning images of the parks, new products, or food

The amount of likes or views per post ranges from 155K to 1.5M per post, with most posts ranging around 500K likes/views. An important goal to keep in mind while using Instagram is to interact one-on-one with your audience. Although Disney is not actively responding to comments, they do not fail to advertise the one-of-a-kind guest experience. For example, there was a video posted on Walt Disney World’s Instagram where guests are the stars and get the chance to show off their Halloween costumes for Mickey’s Not-So-Scary Halloween Party. Posts that showcase the guests and cast members emphasize Disney’s people-centric brand, which never fails to put their guests first. Such posts are well-received through the high engagement with comments ranging from 150 to over 3,000.

Disney’s Instagram strategy works to attract Millennials and Gen Z, as stated Gibson who explains, they “respect companies that encourage innovation. Disney is known for translating creativity and pioneering products and services and their values are centered on the idea of innovation.” By utilizing social media to showcase the innovations of WDW, younger audiences

will continue to be attracted to the brand since “93% of millennials are also utilizing social media” as stated in Gibson’s data. Instagram is being used to show off the photogenetic side of Disney and invites their younger audiences to plan an unforgettable trip to the parks. WDW’s Instagram strategy is well-thought out as it appeals their target audience through posts of the one-of-a-kind attractions, foods, and experiences that you can only get at a Walt Disney World park.

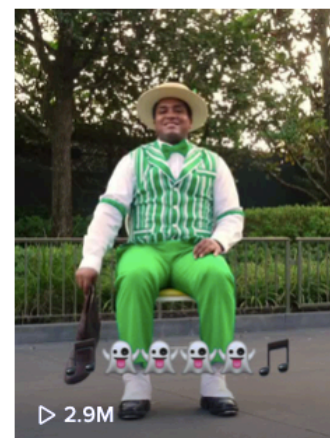
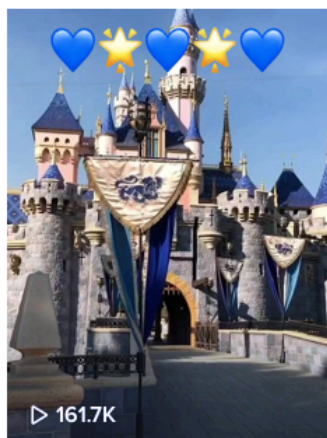
### Walt Disney World’s TikTok



TikTok is a new social media network that demanded attention and has quickly gained popularity with over 800 million active users worldwide, as stated on TikTok’s website. According to Oberlo, 41% of these users fall between the ages of 16 and 24, making TikTok an essential platform to attract younger audiences. Among the list of popular content, singing, dancing, comedy sketches, tutorials, and challenge videos result in high engagement and views. Disney’s TikTok reflects such content which will attract a younger side of their audience. Additionally, the Walt Disney World account adheres to TikTok’s practices and uses these to their advantage by acting as creators rather than a corporation. Companies receive high engagement for creating videos rather than reposting the same content on different social media platforms. This is a trend I have noticed on Disney’s different social media pages, however, TikTok is the exception as they create original videos on the app. This social media

network is built by a community of creators, and audiences will appreciate the original content for TikTok.

Based on Disney's TikTok, one can see that they are participating in trends, like other TikTok users. By participating in popular trends, Disney is incorporating themselves into the conversation. One such trend is a transition video where you kick a shoe and transform into a new outfit. With nearly three million views, Disney's most popular TikTok featured the Barber Shop Quorate Singers of Magic Kingdom making a transformation from their usual outfits into spooky zombies for Mickey's Not-So-Scary Halloween Party. The comments and likes show how this video is well-received by the audience, while reinforcing the brand identity. Other videos include fun facts about the parks and tours of the Disney experience that "Disney Adults" are sure to appreciate as they long to return to the parks.



Disney is also using TikTok to engage with their audiences unlike other social media platforms, like Instagram or Facebook. WDW put out a video in response to a comment asking for an update on the "Disney Ducks." Walt Disney World took advantage of this opportunity to create a funny clip that made people miss the parks more and build connections with their audiences. Although this app is still developing, Disney is utilizing it in a great way to continue to build their brand. I do believe that the brand should ensure that they keep posting and creating

content that appeals to the TikTok community, since 29.5B people have watched videos with the Disney hashtag (#disney).

### Walt Disney World's Facebook



**Followers: 16.3M**

**Likes: 16.9M**

Facebook has maintained its role as one of the most popular social media platforms in the United States with 1.73B active users, according to Oberlo. Middle-aged adults make up the majority of Facebook users. In fact, according to Facebook, 84% of 25 to 30 year-olds and 79% of 30 to 49 year-olds use the social media platform. Facebook is a great tool to reach Walt Disney World's primary target market, families, specifically the parents who will be booking the trips.

The content on Facebook mirrors similar content that has also been posted on Instagram and TikTok. However, there is also content that focuses more on family and longer videos that would not be supported on the other social media platforms.

Such content includes (as of November 2020):

- Longer videos called: "Behind the Magic," "Disney Family Game Nights," "Hit Lists," and "Ride and Learn"



- Pictures of guests around the parks (especially families or young children)
- Stories about Make-A-Wish children and other heartwarming family stories
- Links to stories on the Disney Parks Blog for additional information
- Current promotions and new products



Another feature of Facebook that differs from the other platforms is the ease of sharing your own story in response to a post. Throughout Disney’s Facebook posts, there was very high engagement from people who would share their experiences at WDW in the comments section. The comments section was full of detailed stories of users’ trips to Walt Disney parks and pictures of their favorite moments. Recently, Disney posted a picture of the Headless Horseman at Walt Disney World and followers took to the comments to share their pictures with the Headless Horseman. WDW’s Facebook page encourages their followers to share their memories from the parks in their posts or by using the #DisneyMagicMoments. These posts are well received with comments ranging from 400 to 650, hundreds of shares, and well over 3K to 5K likes/reactions. However, Disney does not often respond to these comments, which is something I will address in the suggestions section.

Disney’s Facebook strategy revolves around the family and showing that aspect of their brand, while starting conversations in the comments section. Additionally, Walt Disney World uses Facebook for their powerful advertisements. According to the Wall Street Journal, “Disney

was Facebook’s top U.S. advertiser for the first six months of 2020.” By combing the powers of Facebook and WDW’s strategy, they continue to drive conversation and people’s desires to return to the amazing Walt Disney World parks with their families.

### **Walt Disney World’s Top Competition**

Walt Disney World has park locations across the world with their biggest attraction located in Orlando, Florida. Not even 10 miles way, sits one of their competitors, Universal Studios. Disney Parks must continue to separate themselves from other attractions, while giving consumers reasons why they should visit “the Happiest Place on Earth.” Yet, Universal Studios emphasizes a more exciting and high-trills vacation, which may lead customers away from Walt Disney World.

Universal and Walt Disney differ greatly in their brands, yet they are essentially competing for the attention of a similar target audience. Universal uses parallel strategies to Disney by posting images of the parks, their guests, and special features (such as food and rides). However, Universal’s posts include more images of friends and individuals, rather than families. Additionally, the posts usually feature more fun, high-trill moments rather than Disney’s family-centric, magical moments. Such posts as the ones below illustrate their branding.





One strategy that Universal has employed is a focus on connecting with their guests. Unlike Disney, who creates conversations about their parks, Universal will talk directly with their guests. In fact, “Guests can tag the theme park on Twitter, using the handle @UniversalORL or hashtag #AskUniversal, to easily connect with the parks' social media team. The team will respond to mentions on Facebook and Twitter between 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday through Friday,” according to Universal. This would be a great strategy for Disney to utilize, especially on Facebook. This is highly relevant since a large share of their target audience uses Facebook daily.

### **Suggestions for Walt Disney World Social Media**

I believe a missed opportunity with Disney’s social media is not featuring the hotels and resorts. Despite the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, these resorts are truly stunning. By showcasing the hotels, audiences will see the gorgeous rooms and potentially feel willing to splurge on the extra costs of staying at a Disney Resort. The best ways to feature these rooms would be through Instagram stories and TikTok. Parents of large families may not feel the need to stay at the resorts, but adults may be willing to pay the additional cost for the beautiful room, decreased hassle (which would lead to more time in the parks), and helpful cast members. Millennials and Generation Z audiences crave one-of-a-kind experiences. According to Forbes, “what does work, however, is delivering authentic and quality experiences every time the customer has an interaction with your brand, no matter where the encounter happens.” The Disney resorts create this authentic and quality experience, so this strategy would attract their younger audiences’ attention. For families, I would show the more affordable Disney resorts on Facebook and focus on the fun extras that come with those rooms, such as family bonding opportunities, fun activities for the kids, and relaxing breaks for the parents.

Additionally, I suggest that Disney Parks incorporate monitoring their social media in their strategies. While reviewing their social media, I noticed comments where people had

questions or complaints and there were no answers from Walt Disney World. I think this is a missed opportunity to continue expanding the hospitality and kindness of the brand. Other users usually respond to comments with their answers, however, having an answer from the source would benefit guests and followers. Although Disney has a Twitter account for this specific purpose, @WDWGuestService, this isn't necessarily replicated on other platforms or well-known. Their target audience may not always use Twitter or have access to it, so they should ensure there are other ways to get in contact when a question or concern arises.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the research and my analysis, I believe social media should continue to be a key strategy for Walt Disney World. Their picturesque parks and resorts should continue to be used to remind customers of their love of Disney, while inviting new guests to enjoy the magic for themselves. The current social media strategy is being used to reinforce Disney's brand, while promoting new products and experiences. However, there should be some changes to ensure the brand is being reinforced in every aspect of social media. Overall, Disney does a fantastic job of maintaining their brand and showcasing the same magic from 1965 in 2020.