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ENG 100 Writing 1

22 March. 2013

For the Love of Disney

If you ask a young child where they want to go, Disneyland is probably one of the top choices. It is like a whole new planet filled with a child's favorite princesses and talking toys. The new Disney movies and the old movies just released from the vault create big buzz every time they come out. Disney movies seem almost as valuable as gold, with adult audiences wanting the older movies to relive their nostalgia and younger audiences wanting the brand new DVD with the bonus disk because "mom it's totally a one time thing!" ESPN, Lifetime Network, and the History Channel are all popular TV stations we've heard of if they aren't household names. So what's the big deal about some popular TV station and magical land that costs \$89 for one day (Disney Parks Blog)? They are all owned by The Walt Disney Company! With theme parks, websites and tv stations, and their family vibe, the Walt Disney Company is probably the most successful entertainment company's in the past 100 years.

With 11 theme parks (Shelton), Disney has one of the most successful theme park industries in the business. Parks include Disney California Adventure Park, Magic Kingdom, Epcot, Disney's Hollywood Studios, Walt Disney Studio Park, Disney's Animal Kingdom, Tokyo DisneySea and 5 Disneylands worldwide (Theme Parks and Water Parks). All of these parks have attractions and mini-parks within them like Fantasyland, Dinoland, Toon Studio, Ariel's Lagoon, and Cars Land (Theme Parks and Water Parks). Along with amazing attractions and

rides, Disney has more than 120 characters (Walt Disney World) walking around their parks to meet guests and grant a child's dream of meeting Princess Ariel or Buzz Lightyear. For years their slogan has been "Happiest Place on Earth" and for good reason! What else would you call the place where millions of children and adults get to meet their all-time favorite characters they thought just existed in the movies? All of this wonder has to cost some money though, right? Disney can definitely afford it. Disney ended 2012 with a revenue of \$3.2 billion, an increase of 10% from previous years despite the shrinking economy (Barnes). Increasing by 18%, Disney's operating income was at \$553 million, all from theme parks (Barnes). I know what you're saying, what does this even mean? It means that Disney is making a lot of money! In fact, they are making so much money that they are considered the largest entertainment corporation in the world, with a revenue of \$38,063 million (Fortune 500). That's \$5 million more than News Co. who was ranked number two (Fortune 500).

Disney owns 6 television groups, including ABC Family, ESPN Inc., and ABC Television group. Also owning Hyperion Books, Disney has one of the largest media networks in the business. History Channel, A&E, Lifetime, and ESPN kids are just a few of the individual TV stations Disney has rights to. Including websites like Disney Channel, Disney also owns Club Penguin, Go, and Miramax (The Walt Disney Company). The wide variety of their media network gives them lots of audiences to appeal to. The more people like something, the more they'll watch or use it of course. Since they have such a wide variety of good entertainment, it keeps multiple audiences coming back for more. All in all these assets add up to a whopping \$952 million operating income (Reuters). "Overall, Disney's media networks...saw revenues increase by seven percent to \$5.1 billion" (Reuters). That's a lot of TV watching for that amount

of money! Despite the lack of money families have right now, Disney is up thanks to their wide fan base. Tons of websites and TV stations keep Disney at the top of their game, but movies are what brought Disney into the limelight. With its first animated feature, Snow White, Disney has gone on to make 83 animated films such as Peter Pan (1953), The Jungle Book (1967), Mulan (1998), and most recently Monsters Inc. 2 (2012). Anyone can make movies though. Granted, they don't have to be good movies, but a film is a film. With all this money Disney is making off theme parks and websites you would expect they'd dabble in other areas, but not much pay attention to them because of their already successful industries. Disney has not only "dabbled" in the art of movie making, they've done it with extreme success. Disney has beat out any other company with 59 Academy Award nominations, 22 Oscars, and four honorary Oscars (Wikipedia). Still holding that record today, Disney has been one of the top movie makers and is still going strong. Releasing Monsters Inc. 2, a prequel to the famous Monsters Inc., Disney brought in both kid and adult audiences alike.

I know what you're thinking. Just because Disney has a bunch of money and statues of tiny men doesn't mean they're a great company. What if I told you they donate some of that money towards charity?

I didn't know what to expect the first time I visited a hospital as a Disney VoluntEAR. Mickey, Minnie and I walked in the door with toys in hand. The smiles we witnessed were priceless. I could see that the young patients were able to forget their worries — even if just for a moment — and be kids again (Gill).

David Gill visited a hospital to witness the wonder that is Disney. The Walt Disney company donated to over more than 600 children's hospitals in February (Gill). They gave DVDs, books, and Disney care packages with items like the new Marvel action figures and Disney princess dolls (Gill). Disney has also donated \$700,000 to 34 different non-profit organizations including

the Bridges of Light Foundation, New Hope for Kids, and Harbor House of Central Florida (Santich). Besides spending their money on people in need, Disney grants people's wishes and makes their dreams come true. They grant around 7,000 wishes each year and donate \$7 million in cash and donations to Make-A-Wish Foundation (Corporate Sponsors). Disney grants adults dreams by throwing 2,300 weddings every year at their grand parks (Walt Disney World Resort). Walt Disney's reputation has brought them to the very top and they have no intention of coming down. Today's grandparents can talk about their favorite Disney movies, along with parents and kids, giving a feeling of togetherness and some common ground on which multiple generations can connect. Everyone knows what Disney is, there's no keeping up with the latest version, or trying to figure out the next big invention. Disney is Disney, and everyone knows that it is a trustworthy company.

Walt Disney was a man with dreams and his legacy still lives on today. Disney World is "the happiest place on earth," the place "where all your dreams come true." Time and time again Disney comes out with the next big hit, bringing young and old generations together. Disney realizes how their audience appreciates their older films, releasing them from the "vault," allowing people to relive their childhood. Popular websites and TV shows we watch and log on to every day are owned by one of the largest companies and we didn't even realize it. Your kids or younger siblings watch Disney Channel every day to see the new "Shake it Up Chicago" or "Dog with a Blog" while young adults reminisce about "Hannah Montana," you know, the good ol' days. Disney's family oriented atmosphere brings in lots of money, allowing them to do good deeds like help people in need. Even if Disney didn't make a bunch of money, they would still be considered in of the most successful companies in my book.

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