ROBERT IGER

Robert Iger was appointed The Walt Disney Company's CEO in 2005, after previously having served as Chief Operating Officer. As CEO, Iger established a new vision and strategic direction for Disney; he articulated three pillars of strategy that he felt were aligned with Walt Disney's original intent, that is invest in: 1) creative content, 2) technology innovation, and 3) international expansion.[27] Taken together, Iger envisioned a Disney that uses advanced technology to produce creative content with global reach.

To implement his strategic pillars, Iger proceeded to make some major changes in the company beginning with reconciliation with board members who had led the shareholder revolt against his predecessor, and to end other conflicts. Next, Iger worked to change the perception within Disney of technology as a threat, to viewing it as an opportunity.[28]

Iger also decentralized decision making by empowering individual business, while reducing the role of Disney's central strategic planning.[29] Instead of micromanaging, he took a hands-off approach and was effective in delegating. This change in structure restored the eroded trust among upper management and made each business unit accountable to be as creative as possible while optimizing results. Trust and accountability were cascaded through all levels of management and frontline workers.

Iger articulated a corporate strategy to pursue billion-dollar franchises, which generally begin with a big movie hit and are followed up with derivative TV shows, theme park rides, video games, toys, clothing such as T-shirts and PJs, among many other spin-offs. Rather than churning out some 30 movies per year as it did prior to Iger, Disney now produces about 10 movies per year, focusing on box office hits.

Iger implemented his strategic vision to build billion-dollar franchises by making a number of highprofile acquisitions, including Pixar (2006), Marvel (2009), Lucasfilm (2012), and 21st Century Fox (2019). In particular, former CEO Robert Iger led a group of about 20 executives whose sole responsibility is to hunt for the next billion-dollar franchise. This group of senior leaders decides top-down which projects are a go and which are not. They also allocate resources to particular projects. Disney even organized its employees in the consumer products group around franchises such as *Frozen*, *Toy Story*, *Star Wars*, and other cash cows.

Disney's annual movie lineup is now dominated by such franchises as *Stars Wars* and Marvel superhero movies and also live-action versions of animated classics such as *Aladdin*, *Cinderella*, and *Beauty and the Beast*. Some of biggest Disney franchises that started with a movie hit include the *Pirates of Caribbean* (grossing more than $4 billion), *Toy Story* (over $2 billion), *Monsters, Inc.* (close to $2 billion), *Cars* (over $1 billion), and *Frozen* (over $1.5 billion).