

DISNEY CONSUMER ELECTRONICS

Challenge

Disney, the world's foremost storytellers, wanted to bring serious consumer electronics to its target demographic: kids. Industry observers had already dismissed this market segment as a dead end but given its strong brand recognition, emotional resonance, and unique customer loyalty, Disney recognized it was uniquely suited to address this market. The challenge was to bring new ideas to life and infuse an entire line of products with Disney magic. The project was immense in scope: end-to-end product development and distribution, from initial concept and brand strategy to product packaging and multimedia retail distribution.

The Depth of Disney

When this project began, there were no consumer electronics for kids. "My First Sony," an unsuccessful attempt to break into this market 10 years earlier, provided valuable lessons: it was too expensive, lacked breadth, and looked too much like a toy.

Disney is a content company. To make its offerings unique, it was important to leverage its brand identity, integrate content elements, and expand the world of its beloved characters through the products — but not in superficial ways such as inserting DVDs, or scaling back the functionality of the products. In this way, Disney could create products that emotionally resonate with kids, and have features that get parents to buy the product.

Delving deeper into the "wonderful world of Disney" revealed things that most people never consciously notice, such as the perfect position of Mickey Mouse's ears — they never move, regardless of the position of his head, to deliver a consistent silhouette. There are many common elements of Disney characters, such as a pervasive sense of asymmetry that gives them a feel of constant movement, creating a sense of urgency and excitement.

Practical Magic

These details informed the early conceptual work around the new products. The goal wasn't to create a "Mickey Mouse phone," but a phone that lives in the same universe that created Mickey Mouse.

Establishing an exciting visual design language laid the foundation for the entire product family. The products feature unique graphic user interfaces and sounds that blur the lines between the device, the interface, and the Disney content. Compelling graphic design and packaging, as well as in-store displays featuring animated video loops with music, capture



ABOVE

Bold colors and soft shapes perfectly capture the magic of Disney, positioning it as a powerful leader for children's consumer electronics.

the magical Disney content and bring these products to life in the retail environment.

Bringing Businesses Together

Disney started out with the 'bare necessities' of an idea for a line of products. After formulating the product development and distribution strategy, it was time to meet with manufacturers, retailers and select partners to make the idea a reality. Motorola partnered with retailers in the actual conceptual design process for the Disney cordless phone and the FRS 2-way radio, and worked closely with frog and Disney every step of the way until the products appeared on store shelves. The close nature of this work enabled engineers to talk with manufacturers every step of the way and show how innovative concepts could be realized at a low cost.

Result

These whimsical products were built for children to love, but the process that created them has an equally important business impact. The products are distributed worldwide and will yield \$500 million in sales this year. This partnership empowered Disney to leverage its brand in a whole new, more meaningful way. Rather than passively deal with licensing its content to third-party design and manufacturing companies, Disney now drives every aspect of its new products. They control what the products look like and how they act in the marketplace. As a result, Disney expanded the reach of its brand, its resonance with consumers, and its role as a product company delivering consumer electronics.