

# What happened to euro-disney

Business



Senior Disney executives could hardly be faulted for believing that the Disney brand is a surefire success since it is a great global brand but their fault was in their execution plans. They overlooked something as obvious as opening a major theme park in the very middle of a recession when people would naturally be reluctant to spend on entertainment which is very discretionary in nature. They had also put blinders on their own eyes by engaging in hubris; it was stated in the case they were even afraid of being too successful (Hartley, 2010, p. 140). It was an instance of believing in their own publicity, much like the mistake committed by most entrepreneurs who think the world will beat a path to his door because of a better mousetrap. Disney executives did not take into account the lessons from three earlier French failures.

The French people is one of those rare instances in which they are bi-lingual; many of them can speak and understand English very well. The Americans, on the other hand, do not know a lot about the French language and culture. So there is clearly a cultural gap which is a cause of many misunderstandings on the part of the American executives. Tokyo Disneyland is a great success because the Japanese are obsessed and preoccupied with anything that is of American origin (ibid. p. 143). This can be contrasted with the attitudes of the French people who are fanatically proud of their culture; they do not want even their language to be polluted with American idiomatic expressions and slang terminology. Many French people consider it an invasion by Hollywood when American films were shown and most of them think Mickey & Minnie characters are cultural abominations which are fictional cartoon characters.

I believe that Disney executives made the right decision in choosing Paris as  
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a location; it is a major center point (geographically speaking) and is easily accessible by transportation. There might be other comparable locations in Europe such as Germany or Italy but France is a more favorable location. Mickey Mouse and the Disney Park concept theme are considered as cultural abominations because it is entirely fictional in nature; it does not even reflect the American culture itself but was created purposely for exclusive entertainment of kids only. It has nothing of redeeming value in terms of cultural aspects. A strong effort to entice both the European consumers and middlemen could have a big positive effect on revenues because it will encourage people to spend on something that is not very necessary (entertainment only). Travel agents, tour guides, and bus drivers can provide strong word-of-mouth advertising. The idea of raising admission prices when attendance figures are static and new attractions are not yet in place would be tantamount to business suicide; it will kill the Disney brand altogether. Europeans are frugal by nature and Disney's opening coincided with the recession. Any good business model to entice more visitors and increase spending is embark on promo campaigns.