

What is cirque's product?

Business



Delong and Vijayaraghavan (2002) prepared a case discussion with reference to Cirque du Soleil. The discussion elaborated the product with which Cirque has been offering to their audience, or should we say their customers, since 1984. Accordingly, Cirque is the "first and foremost a circus without animals". It combined street performers, clowns, acrobats, and gymnasts to enliven and to create a so-called "magic" in their performances. They incorporated Latin-sounding music designed to transcend cultural boundaries.

They were then situated in Montreal and eventually became "the Cirque" that they are right now when they crossed to Los Angeles, thus achieving globalization. Their multimedia expansion in films, through "Alegria", their first feature film in 1999 and television through "Cirque du Soleil Presents Quidam", their first television special and their IMAX large-format Sony pictures distributed movie, "Journey of Man" strengthened their brand in presenting their cross-cultural message.

Further, the diversification of their commercial activities was intensified through publishing and merchandizing, which led to the opening of their first store in 1998. Hence, as quoted in the case, Mario D'Amico, the executive vice-president of marketing, said that Cirque is not a product company, but rather an "artistic work" company, wherein creativity is at the core.

2. What is Cirque's strategy? Through the years, Cirque has not been focusing on what business strategy they will use to market their product.

Rather, their continuing approach is to build up their artists, who serve as their frontline in every show that they present. They make their

artists' environments as conducive as it can be, in order for them to maximize their artistic and creative potentials. As quoted in the last few lines of the case, " Murielle Cantin, the casting director, wondered if there was a strategy in place at all, but perhaps Cirque did not need a strategy other than to focus on its artists. That approach had certainly served Cirque well in the past. "

3. How has Cirque structured and supported its casts to deliver superior performance? In line with their artists-centered approach, Cirque values its casts as its prized possession. Even during their casting auditions, they uphold two key measures aside from pure talent: " can they continue to develop? " and " can they be generous in the show? " This exemplifies how Cirque structures its cast even at their beginnings. Moreover, Martin Dumont, interior tour director of " Dralion", expressed that Cirque creates the best possible conditions for their artists in order to activate their adrenaline with every performance.

D'Amico also shared that " Cirque is about letting pure artists work the way they want to work; they have something to say, they express themselves. " Therefore, the aforementioned statements undeniably bring out the best in their artists with every performance.

4. What are the challenges to Cirque's continued growth and/or diversification? As Cirque continues to grow and globalize, challenges are inevitable. One of those is the issue on staff and compensation when they had decentralized their profit centers and headquarters into three areas? North America, Europe and Asia. Read also SWOT Analysis Cirque Du Soleil

Since they are growing, they thought that decentralization could be a good action to take but it became a cause of some dissatisfaction on employees' part. But then again, recentralization to Montreal resolved those issues. Nonetheless, it lessened the urgency to develop overseas market. On the other hand, they also struggled with competition with Cirque Oz in Australia, which even hindered them to get permits. However, Cirque looks at it in a different view. Cirque affirms that they must not work as rivals since they are building the market.

In addition, their growing business status tends to invite people in their company's upper rank. But Cirque asserts that " they must not kill the soul of Cirque" and since they are a big business making more money, " they must make good decisions as well". Consequently, Cirque reinvents the circus often to keep the artists' excitement about their work and to carry on their passion.

Reference: DeLong, T. J. ; Vijayaraghavan V. (2002). Cirque du Soleil. Harvard Business School Publishing, 67-78.