

Social Media Analysis Paper:

Lucasfilm

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PART I: Introduction

Growing up, I was a massive Star Wars fan and, in general, impressed with many of the products produced by the firm Lucasfilm. Lucasfilm is an American entertainment production company that was founded by George Lucas in 1971. Lucasfilm is best known for creating and producing the legendary Star Wars and Indiana Jones movie franchises (*Lucasfilm Company history: Lucasfilm Ltd.*, 2021). Lucasfilm and its divisions Industrial Light & Magic and Skywalker Sound and the once ran division known as LucasArts have produced and provided television series, games, toys, and books as well as offered groundbreaking visual effects and sound design and presentation (*What we do, lucasfilm: Lucasfilm Ltd.*, 2018). I used to collect anything I could get my hands on that was made by the company. However, my love for the company quickly began to fade after George Lucas sold the company to Disney Inc. and handed the reigns over to American film producer Kathleen Kennedy. Since the company's acquisition by Disney Inc. and the appointment of Kathleen Kennedy as the new president, Lucasfilm's social media strategy has drawn much criticism from its fans, myself included. Despite having a dedicated VP of Social Media and Digital to address fan criticisms and put out company fires, it instead has taken on a movie marketing strategy known as "Fan-Baiting" while also becoming, at times, radio silent when it comes to social media presence leading to being ineffective at providing positive, engaging content to their massive fanbase as a whole. Therefore, this paper aims to assess the current state of Lucasfilm's social media strategy. This paper will detail its analysis based on the criteria listed in the table of contents below while also providing recommendations for improvement that Lucasfilm should take based on practical social media marketing principles.

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PART III: Description of Lucasfilm Target Market and Social Media Platforms

Lucasfilm's target market primary consists of fans of its various franchises, most noteworthy are its Star Wars and Indiana Jones franchises. Their fans are typically those who enjoy science fiction, adventure, and action within their entertainment choices. Because Lucasfilm's franchises have been around for several decades, its target market spans across different age groups, ethnicities, and geographic locations.

In terms of social media, Lucasfilm has a presence on many various platforms to engage with its target market. Lucasfilm has its official website where the company gives information on the company, its history, divisions, leadership, current and past productions, previous innovations and achievements, as well as career opportunities. Lucasfilm has a Facebook page, an Instagram page, and a Twitter account, and a LinkedIn page that are frequently updated with news about upcoming products and content, behind-the-scenes and company "approved" fan interactions, as well as recruiting advertising for current employment opportunities. Lucasfilm also runs an official YouTube channel, where it releases trailers, behind-the-scene content, and interviews from its many cast members and employees. The company also has a dedicated Vice President of Social Media and Digital who is responsible for overseeing Lucasfilm's social media strategy, content programming, digital content creative, and editorial strategy.

PART IV: Lucasfilm's Social Media Usage

In observing Lucasfilm's social media posts through their various platforms, the frequency and consistency of their posts vary widely across their platforms; however, the style of content is primarily publisher-generated instead of user-generated. On Facebook with 901,737 followers (*Lucasfilm Facebook*) and Instagram with over 583 thousand followers (*Lucasfilm Instagram*), Lucasfilm seems to post regularly with several posts in a day or per week. Their

official Twitter account, the one linked from their official website, interestingly enough, seems to be Lucasfilm Recruiting, which appears to have the focus of recruiting efforts for the company. However, other than their employment opportunity tweets, the content mirrors what is on their Facebook and Instagram, with much less frequency, with an average of one or two tweets per week. Upon further research, I found that Lucasfilm has another official Twitter account; however, it has only 8,600 followers and hasn't tweeted anything (*Lucasfilm Twitter*). Upon even further research, I found that the company maintains social media accounts for many of its various franchises. Lucasfilm's Star Wars Twitter account page, with 6.3 million followers, had very frequent updates with multiple posts per day; unfortunately, the type of content provided was among the same lines as Lucasfilm's other social media accounts in being mostly publisher-generated content (*Star Wars Twitter*). Lucasfilm's LinkedIn page, with 486,498 followers, had content that generally matched its Lucasfilm Recruiting Twitter account (*Lucasfilm | LinkedIn*). Lucasfilm's YouTube channel has about 118 thousand subscribers, with a total of 103 videos averaging about one or two videos uploaded per month. The content presented is various; however, the focus on the type of content provided on the channel seems to shift almost every year. Although not having much user-generated content is a problem, I would say the number one major problem I see is that on every post I clicked on, whether it was a Facebook post, an Instagram reel, or a tweet, I didn't see a single instance of Lucasfilm engaging in commentary or conversation with their followers.

PART V: Lucasfilm's Social Media Strategy Evaluation

Although Social Media engagement can be a great indicator of a company's social media strategy, a better analysis requires assessing the company's use of social media analytics and metrics. Return on Investment (ROI) is probably the most telling regarding whether a company's

marketing effectively delivers the right products and services to the target market. According to a Forbes article, the most profitable movie Lucasfilm under Disney has made was the first one, *Star Wars The Force Awakens*. With every film in the trilogy making less and less money, and in the individual story movies, the second one made by Lucasfilm, *Star Wars Solo*, actually lost the company money (Reid, 2023). Because of this, Lucasfilm shifted its focus on making Star Wars television series and hasn't made a Star Wars movie since 2019. Because I couldn't find the ROI data for the Star Wars television series, another great indicator of marketing strategy is the audience viewership rate and engagement rate. According to Parrot Analytics presented in an article by The Direct, *The Mandalorian*, Lucasfilm's first television show to come to Disney+ saw the most demand, with each season showing less demand than the previous one. The same seems to be true when regarding the live-action series produced by Lucasfilm as well (Hargrave, 2023). Both of these metrics should've proven to Lucasfilm that their current marketing strategy is failing. It had been over ten years since there was a Star Wars Movie to hit theaters when Lucasfilm put out *Star Wars The Force Awakens*, and there had never been a Star Wars live-action television series of Star Wars before *The Mandalorian* Season 1 came out, so it should've come to no surprise that these productions would garner much attention. It is not hard to gain an audience for a new product or service based on brand recognition alone. The Star Wars brand has been around for over three decades, so what should be an indicator of if Lucasfilm's marketing strategy is paying off is whether or not Lucasfilm is able to maintain and even raise its ROI and demand.

While Lucasfilm has a large following on social media, the company's social media posts appear to be infrequent and inconsistent. Furthermore, Lucasfilm's social media content appears to be primarily focused on promoting its products and not engaging with its followers.

What's even more distressing is how it has been noted by fans Lucasfilm's response to their criticism. For example, Lucasfilm's Star Wars Twitter account tweeted, "There are more than 20 million sentient species in the Star Wars galaxy, don't choose to be a racist" (Price of Reason, 2022). This was tweeted after supposedly Lucasfilm's cast member Moses Ingram received some hateful comments from its fans. The problem with this tweet is that Lucasfilm has millions upon millions of fans, and that by tweeting something like this based on an extremely low minority of fans that responded this way toward their cast member, calls out all of their fans as if needing to be told how to be decent human beings and delegitimizes other criticism that should be considered legitimate from its fans. This kind of response drives a wedge between the company's fans. However, this may be a very alarming marketing tactic that Lucasfilm has decided to pursue called "Fan-baiting." According to LastMovieOutpost.com, "Fan-baiting" is a new form of marketing that is done with the intent of stirring up controversy to gain free publicity and as a way to explain or write off any negative reviews of a new product. Therefore, when fans criticize the company's product quality, the company can claim that the fan is just being racist, sexist, or hateful in other ways to disregard the criticism while also causing fans to take a side and debate the issue creating free publicity as the controversy stirs up free hype on a new product (Stark, 2022). It's unclear if Lucasfilm actively engages in this type of behavior on a consistent basis; however, it is clear that they have short-term benefitted from it.

PART VI: Conclusion

Overall, I would say Lucasfilm's social media content is generally of high quality regarding its publisher-generated content, showcasing impressive visuals, attractive colors, and clean and clear design. However, because lack of user-generated content and the apparent one-

way conversation between the company and its customers, the company gives the impression throughout its social media platforms that it is too focused on promoting its products than engaging with its followers and customers. My guess is that this is because fan criticism keeps stacking up; as the company doesn't engage with its fans, it doesn't learn from or work with its customers to create the content that its target market wants to consume. Even more concerning is that some of Lucasfilm's social media engagement can be considered "fan-baiting" just in the hopes of stirring up controversy toward its products and allowing the company to escape having to respond to criticism.

However, because Lucasfilm hasn't been correctly addressing fan concerns, negativity among their social media followers has caused the company to become almost radio silent, fearful of causing even more criticism. However, this solution is not a good one and has caused even more criticism, as the fires that a company should put out through social media have instead let the fires grow and become almost uncontrollable.

Lucasfilm should first utilize its content's ROI and demand metrics to recognize a problem. Lucasfilm should create more interactive content such as Q&A sessions, polls, and giveaways to engage better and understand its target market's interests. Lucasfilm could also begin addressing fan criticisms more openly and directly with honesty about possible missteps and ways they are working on fixing them. Lucasfilm has possibly some of the most passionate fans that love their franchises and would appreciate transparency from the company.

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