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## How Would You Remake Mickey Mouse?

Disney Giving Corporate Icon a Makeover  
Posted by [Juddan Pollack](#) on **11.05.09** @ **06:24 PM**

Mickey Mouse is getting a makeover.

The one-time "Steamboat Willie" star is coming up his 81st birthday Nov. 18 and it looks like his gift from Walt Disney Co. will be a much-needed overhaul. The small-world news was big enough that [even the august New York Times out the story on its cover](#):



Disney

Apparently, the plan is to put a bit more rogue in the rodent, making Mickey a bit more edgy in the likes of films and video games. To wit, the company is looking to recast the way he walks, talks and lives. "Holy cow, the opportunity to mess with one of the most recognizable icons on planet Earth," the metaphor-mixing Warren Spector, creative director at Disney game developer Junction Point, told the Times.

That got us thinking: This is an amazing opportunity for branding experts, so we throw the question out to you, dear reader, so you can strut your stuff: How would you remake Mickey Mouse?

Post your answers below or e-mail us at [AdAgeeditor@adage.com](mailto:AdAgeeditor@adage.com).

### 18 Comments

By Rodney33 | FRISCO, TX **November 6, 2009 06:17:13 am**

Audience - Millennials and Gen Z would be the audience.

Essence - Smart, self-effacing, stylish, peer driven, wired and connected, mashed up - timeless Old School Steamboat Willie in technicolor with a touch of environmental green and a good scoop of Michael Phelps.

Name/Handle - Change nick name to Mic or Michael and drop the Mouse in everyday conversation. Just use it in formal address.

In The Know - Tight fitting, ever changing t-shirts that speak in code - short messages with double meanings.

Healthy - Do push-ups and leg lift crunches to tone the pecs, triceps and abs.

Wired, Connected, Listens and Responds - Non-descript smart phone with big screen always in hand or back right pocket. Complete with small head set (at least one earbud in ear at all times) to multi-task - listen to music, watch video, talk to friends and tout out. This is the epicenter for cross merchandising and promotional opportunities.

Prepared for action and business - Gold shoes morph into tan, slightly muted leather work boots with matching work gloves. Deflate gloves and consider fingerless for more versatility to text, game, sign language, lift weights and get busy. Cut gloves tight to free up wrist for additional gaming flexibility and to make room for a mixed assortment of rubber and weaved wrist bands.

Jeans and Assets - Turn in the mom/Barack-fit pants with big buttons, for low rise, tight fit, tail hanging just over the top in back jeans. Make sure pockets have tears and shreds and the fabric weave has odd patterns that shimmer and change hues in the light. Must look faded and worn.

Black Lycra underwear band hanging low, but just above low rise pants. Note, t-shirt hangs just above underwear band to accentuate it.

Green fabric double buckle military belt with metal fittings.

Hat - Black with Big iconic mouse head black logo with silver outline on the side. Wear it on one ear turned off center, because nobody else can do that.

Hoodie - For blustery days - Black and gray stripe hoodie with oversized grey shoe strings in the hood. Big double pockets and zipper down the front that's always open to keep underwear in view. Mouse logo small on chest and just below hood/collar on back.

Backpack - Black acrylic with grey and silver accents and elastic pull tight, bungee cord weave in front. 6 zippered compartments provide space for every need including padded laptop holder in back. Small mouse logo at the bottom front of the bag. Adjustable padded straps include pocket to hold smart phone. Bag always worn on one shoulder only - never two.

Sideburns - Restyle sides to be bigger, more blunt shape, less point.

Eyebrows - Thicken up and move down - but still keep manicured.

Get some choppers - Nice and natural - not the overdone Hollywooders.

Scruffy whiskers - Scruff a little, not too much like your trying to scruff.

Tattoos - Back of neck and ankle. Cool and small. Change out often with secret game cheat codes.

Ear Ring - Optional. Single diamond stud if absolutely necessary.

Rodney Mason, CMO  
[www.mosylvania.com](http://www.mosylvania.com)  
[www.twitter.com/rodmooose](http://www.twitter.com/rodmooose)  
Permalink

By spieckmall | BENTONVILLE, AR **November 6, 2009 08:54:04 am**

Three words: Disney: Hire Rodney Mason!  
Killer ideas, Rodney, and I can't touch them.

Disney has morphed Mickey many times over the years and has always asserted the Mouse's relevance, even as other characters and icons have taken his place. My hope is that Disney will loosen its notorious death grip on Mickey by soliciting new non-Disney ideas. Maybe this will give Marvel something to do while Disney and Marvel wait for all of those existing licensing contracts to expire? Testosterone Mickey!

Carol Spieckerman / President / newmarketbuilders  
<http://www.nmbblog.com>  
Twitter: @retalixpert  
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By NORBERTO | SAO PAULO -SP **November 6, 2009 09:18:31 am**

Up-to-date youth clothing and 3D graphics, teaching environmental aspects to save the planet! Nuba-Norberto Isenghi,SP,Brazil  
Permalink

By Ichow | London **November 6, 2009 09:19:41 am**

Instant reaction: I will keep Mickey Mouse intact and invent a new one may be.  
Permalink

By grc1217 | Keene, NH **November 6, 2009 09:22:59 am**

Why not get the guys at Coca-Cola who came up with the brilliant idea to change the formula for Coke to the NEW Coke. The plan to reinvent that icon really worked!  
Permalink

By Kevin | New York, NY **November 6, 2009 09:30:34 am**

uh oh - crowdsourcing again.  
Permalink

By BenGin | MERIDIAN, ID **November 6, 2009 09:40:38 am**

get back to the original.... the very first drawings of mickey. do it. do it.  
Permalink

By Gary | Chicago, IL **November 6, 2009 09:48:23 am**

Rounder, softer, quieter. Why does everything has to be changed to be so, "loud?" Why not just keep an icon, an icon. After all, lack of change establishes it as an icon in the first place.  
Right Pillsbury Doe Boy?  
Permalink

By Bayard | Nashville, TN **November 6, 2009 09:50:29 am**

Mickey Mouse as a brand and as an iconic character has already proven its ability to "remake" itself (at least be re-discovered with the same awe and wonder as it was first received) by 4 or 5 subsequent generations now by my count. If the suits at Disney corporate can't figure out how to capitalize on magic like that, they don't deserve the legacy left by Disney the man. It's a slippery slope, Mr. Spector. Put down the pen and step away from the gel before someone gets hurt (specifically the generations of children yet to come). The NEW COKE is an apt warning, but, unlike a beverage, once a personality changes, you can't bring back the classic version or suffer that genie back in the bottle. Just ask Michael Jackson's former fans.  
Permalink

By mrspeepers | Montreal, QC **November 6, 2009 10:00:59 am**

Mickey was a rabbit before he became a mouse for copyright and legal issues. Maybe it's time for the rabbit to finally see the day and honor it's creator's original idea.  
Permalink

By Jenfrazer | AUSTIN, TX **November 6, 2009 10:06:22 am**

Let's start by putting him in the public domain where he belongs.  
Permalink

By tommyzman | Oak Ridge, NJ **November 6, 2009 10:13:41 am**

I think to make this work with today's media, Mickey has to go politically correct - therefore we will have to have a Caucasian Mickey, an African American Mickey, a Hispanic Mickey, an Asian Mickey, and a gay Mickey who hang around with each other where ever they go.

Of course we'll have to introduce a bevy of new pals not to leave any one out, including a handicapped Mickey (Sorry, I meant physically challenged), a midget Mickey, (jeez, I mean little person Mickey) an American Indian Mickey (the son of a casino owner), an emo Mickey (who the others constantly encourage not to cut himself,) and most definitely an earth friendly green Al Gore Mickey. I guess we'll need an anti-smoking zealot Mickey while we're at it.

The story lines are so exciting as no one ever gets in trouble, there's no arguing, they all get along amazingly swell, and when they play sports, there are no winners or losers as every game ends in a tie! Disney Life...milquetoast at its finest!

It's PC Mickey, people! Welcome the the Magic Kingdom!

Tommy Z • Publisher, PlanetZman  
The Last Great Bastion for REAL Men  
<http://www.planetZman.com>  
<http://twitter.com/planetzman>  
Permalink

By Yeldar | MARIETTA, GA **November 6, 2009 10:22:38 am**

As a parent, I don't think we need another hip, mashed-up, cool, fashionista character. My daughter watches enough and sees enough between what's on Hannah Montana, iCarly and the junk on the Cartoon Network.

Let's keep something good and clean and trustworthy. When Micky's Clubhouse is on, I know I don't have to monitor. I can trust it.

Were a hip, edgy, "cool" Mickey to emerge, I would feel less comfortable.  
Permalink

By bkstar | austin, TX **November 6, 2009 10:40:37 am**

Have you not checked out Epic Mickey - the new video game in the works - its a dark demented Mickey.

I would leave Mickey alone - he is recognized the world over. Millions go to the parks and watch the shows - leave it be!  
Permalink

By skeeran | Lake Orion, MI **November 6, 2009 10:49:05 am**

I have a 2 year old daughter and she is just being introduced to Mickey Mouse through the Mickey Mouse Clubhouse Cartoon. She seems to like it as much as Dora the Explorer, Handy Manny or any other recent character designed to appeal to children. Small updates to his wardrobe could work but to go beyond that would be huge mistake. Parents who take their kids to Disney Land and Disney World do it for themselves as much as their children...they identify with Mickey and the other characters because they grew up with them. If Disney chooses to completely overhaul Mickey they will be turning their backs on the parents who buy the movies, toys, etc. and encourage their children to embrace Mickey.  
Permalink

By k8wil | SPOKANE, WA **November 6, 2009 11:00:25 am**

First, I think any updates to this icon should be subtle. How about an update with a bit of "timeless" applied. The hoodie, low slung pants with underwear hanging out feels very circa 2005. I would hate to see Minnie trying to rock the exposed thong fashion disaster.  
Permalink

By detail1 | Oxnard, CA **November 6, 2009 11:18:26 am**

There's already a push to go back to the original, non-spokesperson Mickey. It's odd how quickly people have forgotten that Mickey originally could be kind of a jerk with a propensity for cruelty, somewhat in the vein of Bugs Bunny. THAT Mickey is starring in the upcoming Nintendo Wii title "Epic Mickey." <http://gameinformer.com/mag/mickey.aspx>

Otherwise, the last time we saw Mickey behaving like Mickey was when Bob Hoskins was falling down the side of a skyscraper and Mickey told Bugs Bunny to hand him a spare tire in "Who Framed Roger Rabbit." [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGfC\\_w1oXt8&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGfC_w1oXt8&feature=player_embedded)

I think, at this point, the original vision of Mickey is more stylish, edgy and iconic than anything else. Just embrace the fact that you wouldn't want your kid holding this mouse's hand.  
Permalink

By FatimaOlvera | Chicago, IL **November 6, 2009 11:19:38 am**

I wouldn't. You don't mess with PERFECTION.  
Permalink

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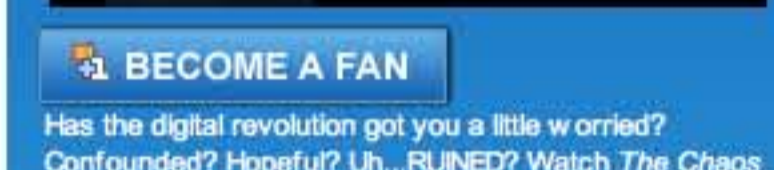
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