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## **Disney in talks to buy Pixar**

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**20 January, 2006**

## THE ARTICLE

### **Disney in talks to buy Pixar**

There are widespread reports that Apple boss Steve Jobs is in talks to sell the Pixar Animation Studios to Disney. Jobs is also CEO and chairman of Pixar, makers of classic movies such as *Toy Story* and *Finding Nemo*. The deal could mean that Jobs would get a seat on the Disney board. Disney wants to keep its relationship with Jobs, who has raised the level and quality of animation. Pixar is one of the industry's most cutting edge and successful companies. Disney and Pixar have worked together for the past twelve years. However, Jobs wanted to cut relations last year and search for a new partner.

Mr. Jobs never saw eye to eye with Disney's former CEO Michael Eisner. The two had a difficult working relationship. A new CEO, Robert Iger, took over as Disney boss last October and Pixar-Disney relations are now warmer. Iger has done his best to keep Mr. Jobs happy. To soften Jobs up, Iger allowed Disney TV shows to be made available for download to Apple's video iPods. He has been successful in continuing the profitable relationship between the two companies. Jobs is the largest shareholder in Pixar. His stake is worth around \$3.4 billion, which is set to increase if the latest deal goes through.

## WARM-UPS

**1. BUSINESS SALE:** You have to negotiate with a CEO to buy a famous company. Decide what company you are going to buy, the reasons you want to buy it and your plans for its future. Talk to the other business buyers in the class about your plans. Give each other advice and warnings.

**2. MAGIC WANDS:** With your partner(s), decide on how a magic wand could be waved to help the following companies:

- Disney
- Livedoor
- Boeing
- Sony
- McDonalds
- Ford Motor Company
- Merck
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**3. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*CEOs / Steve Jobs / Pixar / Disney / "Finding Nemo" / magic wands / seats / cutting edge / cutting relations / working relationships / softening people up / iPod*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**4. MERGERS:** In pairs / groups, talk about the following mergers. Do you think they would be very successful? What problems might there be?

- Disney and Pixar
- Boeing and Airbus
- Toyota and Hyundai
- Sony and Nintendo
- McDonalds and Starbucks
- Shell and Yukos
- Chanel and Burberry
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**5. SOFTENING PEOPLE UP:** In pairs / groups, agree on how effective each of the following are in keeping people happy in business. Would keep you happy?

- Nice words in public
- Nice words in private
- Expensive dinners and presents
- A seat on the board
- Promotion and a flashy job title
- An under the table cash payment
- Being asked to be a consultant
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**6. NEGOTIATING:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "negotiating". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. Apple CEO Steve Jobs is also the CEO of Pixar Animation Studios.              | T / F |
| b. Disney made the now classic movies <i>Toy Story</i> and <i>Finding Nemo</i> . | T / F |
| c. Pixar and Disney have worked together for twelve years.                       | T / F |
| d. Disney's CEO wanted to cut relations between the two companies.               | T / F |
| e. A new Disney CEO has improved relations with Pixar.                           | T / F |
| f. The new CEO made Steve Jobs happy with fast cars and chocolates.              | T / F |
| g. Disney's CEO allowed Steve Jobs to use Disney TV shows on iPods.              | T / F |
| h. Steve Jobs' stake in Pixar is worth around \$340 million.                     | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| a. widespread     | valued      |
| b. in talks       | agreed      |
| c. deal           | leading     |
| d. cutting edge   | friendlier  |
| e. cut            | worldwide   |
| f. saw eye to eye | happens     |
| g. warmer         | sale        |
| h. allowed        | sever       |
| i. worth          | negotiating |
| j. goes through   | permitted   |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                       |                               |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. widespread                         | relations last year           |
| b. makers of classic                  | on the Disney board           |
| c. Jobs would get a seat              | working relationship          |
| d. one of the industry's most cutting | movies                        |
| e. Jobs wanted to cut                 | goes through                  |
| f. never saw eye to                   | are now warmer                |
| g. The two had a difficult            | edge and successful companies |
| h. Pixar-Disney relations             | worth around \$3.4 billion    |
| i. His stake is                       | reports                       |
| j. ...if the latest deal              | eye with Disney's former CEO  |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**WRONG WORD:** Find the five incorrect or least likely words from the eight in bold. Agree on better words with your partner(s).

### Disney in talks to buy Pixar

There are widespread **resorts** that Apple boss Steve Jobs is in talks to sell the Pixar Animation Studios to Disney. Jobs is also CEO and chairman of Pixar, makers of **classic** movies such as *Toy Story* and *Finding Nemo*. The **deal** could mean that Jobs would get a **bed** on the Disney board. Disney wants to keep its relationship with Jobs, who has **lowered** the level and quality of animation. Pixar is one of the industry's most **blunt** edge and successful companies. Disney and Pixar have worked together for the **next** twelve years. However, Jobs wanted to **cut** relations last year and search for a new partner.

Mr. Jobs never saw eye to **cheek** with Disney's former CEO Michael Eisner. The two had a difficult working relationship. A new CEO, Robert Iger, took **under** as Disney boss last October and Pixar-Disney **relations** are now warmer. Iger has done his best to keep Mr. Jobs **happy**. To **harden** Jobs up, Iger allowed Disney TV shows to be made available for download to Apple's video iPods. He has been successful in **continuing** the profitable relationship between the two companies. Jobs is the largest shareholder in Pixar. His **steak** is worth around \$3.4 billion, which is set to increase if the **earliest** deal goes through.

## LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### Disney in talks to buy Pixar

There are \_\_\_\_\_ reports that Apple boss Steve Jobs is in talks to sell the Pixar Animation Studios to Disney. Jobs is also CEO and chairman of Pixar, makers of \_\_\_\_\_ movies such as *Toy Story* and *Finding Nemo*. The \_\_\_\_\_ could mean that Jobs would get a \_\_\_\_\_ on the Disney board. Disney wants to keep its relationship with Jobs, who has raised the level and quality of animation. Pixar is one of the industry's most cutting \_\_\_\_\_ and successful companies. Disney and Pixar have worked together for the past twelve years. However, Jobs wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ relations last year and search for a new partner.

Mr. Jobs never saw eye to \_\_\_\_\_ with Disney's former CEO Michael Eisner. The two had a difficult working relationship. A new CEO, Robert Iger, \_\_\_\_\_ over as Disney boss last October and Pixar-Disney relations are now \_\_\_\_\_. Iger has done his best to keep Mr. Jobs happy. To \_\_\_\_\_ Jobs up, Iger allowed Disney TV shows to be made available for download to Apple's video iPods. He has been successful in continuing the \_\_\_\_\_ relationship between the two companies. Jobs is the largest shareholder in Pixar. His stake is worth around \$3.4 billion, which is \_\_\_\_\_ to increase if the latest deal goes \_\_\_\_\_.

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'cutting' and 'edge'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. WRONG WORD:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers.

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT "BUSINESS NEGOTIATIONS" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about business negotiations.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |           |                |
|-----------|----------------|
| • reports | • eye          |
| • classic | • working      |
| • seat    | • best         |
| • cutting | • soften       |
| • twelve  | • largest      |
| • search  | • goes through |

## DISCUSSION

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Do you like to know what's going on with Disney and Pixar?
- c. Which company do you like better, Disney or Pixar?
- d. Why do you think Steve Jobs wants to sell part of his stake in Pixar?
- e. What do you know about Steve Jobs as a CEO?
- f. What are the biggest differences between Pixar and Disney?
- g. Do you think Pixar without Steve Jobs would be as successful as Pixar with Steve Jobs in the future?
- h. Has anyone ever done their best to keep you happy?
- i. What kinds of things would be successful in softening you up?
- j. Have you ever cut relations with anyone, either in your business or private life?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What are the differences between Apple CEO Steve Jobs and Microsoft CEO Bill Gates?
- d. Which movies do you like best, Disney, Pixar or DreamWorks?
- e. How do you think Steve Jobs might raise the level of quality at Disney?
- f. Do you think Steve Jobs could be a successful CEO in other industries?
- g. What do you think the average day of a powerful CEO is like?
- h. What questions would you like to ask Steve Jobs?
- i. What do you think his answers would be?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?



## SPEAKING

**RAISING THE LEVEL:** You have a magic wand. With your partner(s), decide how you will wave your wand on the following Disney, Pixar and Apple related products to make them better. Decide what is missing with the present product. Discuss what things your magic wand waving will change. Describe the finished products.

PRODUCT	MISSING	CHANGES	END PRODUCT
Disney movies			
Pixar movies			
Disneyland			
iPods			
Computers			

Change partners and share and compare your ideas. Give each other feedback on your changes.

Return to your original partner(s) and talk about what you discussed with your other partner(s).

Change partners again and make presentations based on your ideas. Vote on the best ones.

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on Steve Jobs. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

**3. NEGOTIATING:** Write an essay about the kinds of negotiating skills you need to be successful in business. Show your essay to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

**4. A DAY IN THE LIFE:** You are Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple Computers and Pixar Animation Studios. Write an account of one day in your life. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone have similar days?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T      b. F      c. T      d. F      e. T      f. F      g. T      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| a. widespread     | worldwide   |
| b. in talks       | negotiating |
| c. deal           | sale        |
| d. cutting edge   | leading     |
| e. cut            | sever       |
| f. saw eye to eye | agreed      |
| g. warmer         | friendlier  |
| h. allowed        | permitted   |
| i. worth          | valued      |
| j. goes through   | happens     |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                       |                               |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. widespread                         | reports                       |
| b. makers of classic                  | movies                        |
| c. Jobs would get a seat              | on the Disney board           |
| d. one of the industry's most cutting | edge and successful companies |
| e. Jobs wanted to cut                 | relations last year           |
| f. never saw eye to                   | eye with Disney's former CEO  |
| g. The two had a difficult            | working relationship          |
| h. Pixar-Disney relations             | are now warmer                |
| i. His stake is                       | worth around \$3.4 billion    |
| j. ...if the latest deal              | goes through                  |

### WRONG WORD:

#### Disney in talks to buy Pixar

There are widespread **reports** that Apple boss Steve Jobs is in talks to sell the Pixar Animation Studios to Disney. Jobs is also CEO and chairman of Pixar, makers of classic movies such as *Toy Story* and *Finding Nemo*. The deal could mean that Jobs would get a **seat** on the Disney board. Disney wants to keep its relationship with Jobs, who has **raised** the level and quality of animation. Pixar is one of the industry's most **cutting** edge and successful companies. Disney and Pixar have worked together for the **past** twelve years. However, Jobs wanted to cut relations last year and search for a new partner.

Mr. Jobs never saw eye to **eye** with Disney's former CEO Michael Eisner. The two had a difficult working relationship. A new CEO, Robert Iger, took **over** as Disney boss last October and Pixar-Disney relations are now warmer. Iger has done his best to keep Mr. Jobs happy. To **soften** Jobs up, Iger allowed Disney TV shows to be made available for download to Apple's video iPods. He has been successful in continuing the profitable relationship between the two companies. Jobs is the largest shareholder in Pixar. His **stake** is worth around \$3.4 billion, which is set to increase if the **latest** deal goes through.