

The Pixar Touch - The Making of a Company by David A. Prince: Disney Book Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

I have greatly enjoyed all the Pixar films to date, and have always wondered about the company's origins.

So when I saw *The Pixar Touch* available in book stores, I decided it was the perfect time to find out everything I'd ever wanted to know about Pixar!

The Pixar Touch, by David A. Prince, is described as a "lively chronicle of Pixar Animation Studios' history," and that's certainly not wrong, as the story itself is a pretty lively one. However, it doesn't start off that way, and I think it's important to say that at the outset. The first, very short chapter, sets the scene of a hugely successful company, and takes you back to 2006, when Pixar were bought out by Disney. Then for chapter two, you return to the very beginning to explore the long road that got them to where they are today.

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□ This is the point where you do need to stick with it, because trust me, it is a thoroughly rewarding read, but there is a lot about computer graphics and computer science in general, as you go through the early days. Alongside all the innovative technology being used, there are some fascinating stories of the individuals involved, and you can tell this is a thoroughly researched book. As you go through, you'll regularly see references that take you to the back of the book, where there's a notes section, providing even more detail.

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□ At points, there are photos of the people being referred to, and I found that really useful, to be able to put faces to the names I was reading about. A lot of the time these were either groups of students or workers, taken no doubt by a close friend or a member of the team. I felt really privileged to see these images, as they looked just like a photo taken from a family album. Perhaps my favourite of all of them is the shot of the Pixar staff lazing around in their screening room, just before the release of *Toy Story*. It really does look like a little family, with everyone obviously comfortable in the company of those they're with.

The chapters on Lucasfilm and Steve Jobs show just how much potential some of the world's most influential people saw in Pixar, and although these chapters were some of the more heavily weighted technology chapters, I was still compelled to keep reading, as I wanted to see how

the story developed.

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□For me though, the book came truly alive when we come to the introduction of Pixar to Disney. After all, this is what every Disney fan wants to read about! From this point forward, you're taken through the creation of the various films, and there are some lovely anecdotes to enjoy here. You can play "spot the difference" when you read the original story line of Toy Story, read about the legal battle over the creation of Monsters Inc., learn how the animators managed to make the stars of Finding Nemo so lifelike (or maybe fish like?), and how one scene that never made the cut in The Incredibles had to be ditched, as it would have taken too many months to create. The lengths these guys go to, ensuring that their films are as realistic as they can be, is truly amazing, and it left me with an even bigger admiration than I had for them when I started reading the book.

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□As you progress through the various iterations of how Pixar came into existence, one thing that keeps coming through is how human relationships change. It's almost a constant of the story that people leave, and sometimes return. Sometimes you see it coming, but at other points, you don't. Part of the issue is that, for a long time, it wasn't a career that was earning huge amounts of money, and if you had a family to support, you couldn't necessarily stick around forever.

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□That's something else that really came through to me throughout the book -- how much commitment those who stuck with Pixar had to have. It's easy to think, when you see a successful company, that it's always been that way, but it certainly wasn't in this case. It was a really tough struggle, and the fact that those who stuck with it the whole way through are now reaping the benefits felt right to me, now that I fully appreciated what they had been through over the years.

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□The book concludes with a list of Pixar's Academy Awards and nominations, and it does take some time to read through those, which tells you something about the quality of work they produce. Compare that to their filmography on the next page, and you'll be even more impressed.

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□All in all, I'd thoroughly recommend *The Pixar Touch* to anyone who wants to learn more about the Pixar story. Just be prepared for some harder reading during the first half of the book, but you will be rewarded if you stick with it.

About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland

Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

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