



Case study

**Disney & Simexinter
engage consumers with
online food adventures**



Disney

Founded in 1923, the Walt Disney Company, together with its subsidiaries and affiliates, is a leading diversified international family entertainment and media enterprise with four business segments: media networks, parks and resorts, studio entertainment, and consumer products. Disney Food, Health & Beauty, in the Consumer Products segment, offers products for all ages inspired by beloved Disney characters, Disney films, and Disney Channel shows. Today, the entire company employs over 130,000 people worldwide and earns over \$35.5 billion USD in revenue annually.

Simexinter

Simexinter GmbH specializes in the development and production of 100% unique food products that it markets under brand licenses. It holds licenses for Walt Disney food products in France, Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. In France alone, it markets over 45 products under Disney and Nickelodeon brands for children between the ages of 3 and 17. With headquarters in Euskirchen near Cologne, Germany and a branch in Strasbourg, France, the company has a broad understanding of European markets and intends to expand its reach into Skandinavia, as well as England, Italy and Portugal.

Seeking innovative techniques for marketing food products

Using its strong brand recognition, the Walt Disney Company recently adopted a new strategy and food licensing program to offer healthy foods for families. Disney franchisees such as Simexinter have been at the forefront of this movement, developing nutrition foods and marketing these products using innovative techniques.

Disney has more than sixty years of experience appealing to children and now holds a powerful position in the market. In 2006 it was ranked as the number 8 most valuable brand, worth 27.9 billion USD.¹ And in 2004, Forbes Magazine rated Mickey Mouse and Friends and Whinnny the Pooh as

¹ Business Week, August 2008

the number one and number two most valuable franchise characters.²



Healthy Disney products for kids, developed by Simexinter

As childhood obesity rates began to rise around the world, Disney issued an official statement saying that it would only use its brand name and characters on foods that met strict nutritional guidelines. Leveraging the brand name, the Disney Food, Health & Beauty group began offering parents healthy alternatives to typical junk food.³

² Forbes Magazine, October 2004

³<http://dcpcareers.disney.go.com/dcpcareers/business/foodhealthbeauty.do>



Disney breakfast cereal for teens developed and marketed by Simexinter

Now the responsibility for meeting the new standards rests on Disney food license holders such as Simexinter. Before going to market, all of their products are tested by independent labs for fat and sugar levels, as well as the presence of key vitamins and minerals. Products for each age group must meet daily calorie requirements and packages must contain in appropriate portion sizes.

And, while Simexinter doesn't compete with other Disney license holders, it operates in highly competitive markets. Many other brands fight for the attention of young and adult shoppers using familiar characters, offering games, or claiming to be nutritious.

Simexinter therefore made the strategic decision to be the first company of its kind to offer an on-line food traceability portal for consumers. The objectives were to **boost sales**, to create a **critical competitive advantage** and to **promote the Disney brand** by educating and entertaining customers through an interactive website with live product information.

“Check it out!”

Simexinter was first introduced to TraceTracker in the summer of 2007. At that time, the company was just beginning to develop Disney foods and recognized that a



food traceability system could support the Disney slogan, “Check it out!”

Martial Lender, CEO, Simexinter

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the idea of traceability and the healthy food products we were developing," said Martial Lender, CEO, Simexinter.

"I was looking for the ability to show consumers where their products came from in a simple and clear environment which was not overly technical. In addition, I sought a unique way to differentiate our products and leverage our high nutritional standards," he confirmed.

A solution emerges through collaboration

At first Simexinter considered using the interface included in TraceTracker's standard solution, TraceTracker Global Traceability Network, or GTNet®. This global, online information platform allows brand and private label owners to exchange product information with trading partners along the entire supply chain, creating a 'food passport' that tracks products details from the farm to the fork. However, the interface was designed for the food industry and the number of features would overwhelm consumers.

With this in mind, TraceTracker began developing a unique solution with a simple, interface, linked to the traceability data in GTNet. First, the team worked with Simexinter to identify the most relevant product information for kids and parents. Then, they began building a new portal,

inspired by Disney's other health and fitness web sites.

During the development period, Google released Google Maps API for Flash which provided a number of utilities for embedding and manipulating map applications in web sites. Google Maps became a skin for the GTNet enriched by dynamic content from Disney and familiar navigation buttons. Disney products could guide users on tour of a product's story supported by live information from GTNet. And, Simexinter could add games, movie clips, or nutrition content.



Dynamic map in the consumer portal

The portal is unveiled

On May 12, 2009, the first version of the consumer interface portal was unveiled complete with interactive product maps for Disney food products. Consumers in the German market can now enter best before dates from product packaging and launch their own, personalized food adventure.



Login page of the consumer portal

Benefits

As a unique solution Simexinter is paying a one time fee for development and set up. From then on, a yearly subscription fee based on the business' turnover will cover ongoing use of GTNet which feeds product information into the application.

"..above all, the portal will reassure consumers. Finally, they will be able to know what they are eating."

Based on the features, and the potential for adoption among other franchisees, it is expected that the application will **boost sales**, create a **critical competitive advantage** and **promote the Disney brand**. As an education tool, the new portal introduces nutritional guidelines and explains how food is made and where it comes from. For fun-seeking kids, it showcases their favorite Disney snacks and leads them to engaging content. For Simexinter it provides

a new marketing platform where it can communicate directly with their consumers.

"The advantages are clear," said Lender. "This portal will stimulate sales, create enthusiasm around our products and draw consumers. At the same time, we can promote the Disney brand with content, games and promotional material. But above all, the portal will reassure consumers. Finally, they will be able to know what they are eating."

Possibilities for the future

Looking forward, Simexinter sees that the portal can be used in cooperation with manufacturers, producers, and other franchisees to target more consumers. Due to the flexible nature of the interface, any type of content can be added including food test results and promotional activities supporting other product lines. And the website can include links to manufacturer webpage or interviews with farmers.

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"The consumer portal will open a world of possibilities for us beyond our direct product lines. We can bring in other franchisees, sell advertising space to suppliers, and obtain additional support directly from Disney. There is no limit to the type of data we can show in the portal or the number of products we can feature. Since the product



information is linked to the GTNet, it is a direct reflection of information from real products.”

For more information

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