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Mark Walker

Former EVP, Business Development & Sports Innovation
ESPN BET

Former SVP, Global Franchise Strategy & Planning
Disney Parks, Experiences and Products (NYSE: DIS)



Mark L. Walker is an accomplished and multifaceted former Fortune 100 executive with over three decades of experience in sports media, entertainment, and consumer technology. A lawyer and mechanical engineer by training, he went on to hold senior leadership roles at ESPN and The Walt Disney Company (NYSE: DIS), serving most recently as Executive Vice President, ESPN Bet, Business Development and Sports Innovation, and earlier leading the North American news and information business at Yahoo! Walker is adept at the questions that surface when a large company faces greenfield challenges and opportunities, having faced them as counsel, as an innovator, as a business development leader, and as a general manager. As an ExCo mentor, he works with executives who carry that mandate.

As Executive Vice President at ESPN, Walker directed the network's Center of Excellence for Sports Business, the group responsible for partnership development, new commercial models, and product concepts across the enterprise. He conceived and led ESPN Edge, an innovation program built with technology partners including Electronic Arts, Accenture, Microsoft, and Verizon, which enabled award-winning simulcast volumetric animated sports presentations such as Toy Story Funday Football and the Big City Greens Classic. During his tenure he also led ESPN's strategy in sports betting, including the launch of the ESPN Bet platform.

Prior to ESPN, Walker spent more than eight years at The Walt Disney Company in consecutively senior leadership positions. He most recently served as SVP of Global Franchise Strategy and Planning for Disney Parks, Experiences and Products, in which he directed segment-wide programs designed to deepen the relationship between audiences and the Disney, Marvel, Lucasfilm, and Fox franchises.

Earlier as SVP of Franchise Management and Business Intelligence for Disney Consumer Products & Interactive Media, he oversaw the division's largest properties, among them Star Wars, Avengers, Cars, Princess, and Mickey Mouse, across licensing, retail marketing, the Disney Store, interactive games, and worldwide publishing.

Walker joined Disney as SVP and later served as SVP & GM of its interactive media business. He led the consolidation efforts for digital content that became the Disney Digital Network, and work produced under his leadership earned a British Academy Award (BAFTA) for interactive achievement, Apple's iPad App of the Year, and multiple Webby Awards.

Walker served as Region Business Leader News & Information and earlier as VP of Business Development at Yahoo! to lead business development across its music, film, television, lifestyle, and sports verticals. He advanced the news business from wire-service aggregation toward original reporting, adding a Washington political bureau and expanding the blog network to more than 550M monthly page views.

Earlier in his career, Walker was co-principal of Oceanaix Ventures, an investment and advisory firm focused on media businesses built for digital distribution, and served as VP of International Legal and Business Affairs at BMG Entertainment. He also held senior business affairs and legal roles at Atomic Pop and PolyGram.

Walker earned a J.D. from Stanford Law School and an M.S. in Mechanical Engineering from Stanford University, following a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from MIT. He served on the Media Arts and Sciences Visiting Committee for the MIT Media Laboratory and was admitted to the bar in New York and California. Walker splits his time between New York and Lisbon, Portugal.