



Universal Studios is the second oldest surviving film studio in the United States.

The company was initially established as a way of breaking with the monopoly of the Motion Picture Trust who controlled distribution.

Universal became a vertically integrated company in 1912 with movie production, distribution and exhibition venues all a part of the same corporate entity.

Dreamworks and Working Title are part of the Universal studios production unit.

The company has active distribution deals with Dark Castle and Blumhouse.

Universal was bought by the media conglomerate Comcast in 2009. This meant that Universal was now part of a corporation that, according to revenue, is the largest broadcaster in the world.

Comcast also owns controlling stakes in the NBC Television Company (which includes E!, Syfy, Bravo and Universal HD)

Website

Universal's website focuses heavily on promotion of current films, spotlighting critical acclaim of productions and featuring trailers and other P.R. content.

There are intriguing legal details, however, including parental guides and Universal's 'tobacco policy'.

There are links to affiliations such as NBC and the theme parks.



Success and Brand Values

Early on, Universal, through its highly successful adaptations of Frankenstein and Dracula, became associated with the horror genre (the eventual interaction of these monsters also forms the first 'shared' cinematic universe!). This has been proven over time with other successes such as Jaws and the Jurassic Park franchise (which has given Universal its biggest 'hits').

In 2015 the success of films such as Jurassic World, Minions and Fast & Furious 7 meant that Universal Pictures set a record for the highest annual gross taken by a single Hollywood studio, a total of \$5.53bn (£3,66bn).

Theme Parks

Across the globe, Universal have four theme parks which feature rides and attractions based on existing cinematic properties- the most infamous is the *Jaws* ride, which, via a mechanical shark, allows visitors to recreate scenes from the film.

During Halloween, the parks host 'Horror Nights', which provide an interactive experience based on horror films.

These interactive experiences serve to further mythologise existing films, extending their appeal.

Marketing

Early on, Universal broke with established tradition and began to name performers in their productions.

This gave certain actors name recognition and led to a star system. Performers such as Lon Chaney were used prominently in publicity materials.

Universal still pioneers where marketing is concerned, fully utilising digital avenues.

See:

<https://www.fastcompany.com/3050984/pitch-perfect-how-universals-digital-marketing-helped-it-have-the-best-year-ever>