

# THE ART OF MARKETING: HOW THE BARBIE MOVIE BECAME A BRAND AND CULTURAL EVENT

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## ABSTRACT

The film industry has long been recognized as one of the most competitive and dynamic sectors in the world of entertainment. The entire process of filmmaking, from script development to screen distribution, is subject to significant external and internal influences. However, one of the most captivating and critically important aspects of this industry is its marketing strategy. It is precisely this component that shapes the perception of the film in the eyes of the audience and determines its commercial success. This aspect becomes particularly intriguing when it comes to films based on popular brands, such as "Barbie." In this article, we will explore the marketing history of the "Barbie" movie and examine the contribution marketing has made to the success of this franchise.

## FEATURES OF THE BARBIE FRANCHISE

The "Barbie" franchise is not just the story of a doll, it is a story of a style and culture icon that has had a profound impact on millions of girls and women worldwide. The characteristics of this franchise can be divided into several key aspects.

Firstly, it is the long history and legacy: Barbie was first introduced in 1959, and since then, she has become an icon in the world of toys. Her long history instills a sense of trust among consumers and adds cultural significance to the franchise.

Secondly, it is the diversity of characters and accessories: One of Barbie's key features is her ability to take on a multitude of different roles and personas. From a nurse to an astronaut, from a princess to a businesswoman, Barbie can always reinvent herself. This allows the franchise to appeal to a diverse audience and create various doll collections and accessories.

The third aspect is the positive message: The "Barbie" franchise aims to instill positive values and teach girls about self-respect, friendship, and the possibility of being anything they want to be. This message makes Barbie not just a toy but also a role model.

Of course, there are other important aspects within the franchise, such as:

**Fashion and style:** Barbie has always been associated with fashion and style. Her clothing, accessories, and even homes set trends and inspire girls and women to care about their own style.

**Media and entertainment:** In addition to toys, the "Barbie" franchise also encompasses the media and entertainment industry. There are animated series, movies, music albums, and even video games associated with Barbie.

**Global presence:** Barbie is widely recognized worldwide and has many local adaptations and versions, allowing the franchise to adapt to various cultural contexts.

## THE EMERGENCE OF THE BARBIE FRANCHISE IN MOVIE INDUSTRY

In the 2000s, Barbie entered the digital era, and Mattel's President, Richard Dickson, spearheaded the creation of Barbie Entertainment. In 2001, the first full-length film featuring Barbie was released—an animated movie titled "Barbie and the Nutcracker." Barbie.com, her inaugural website, also made its debut in the same year. It is important to note that producing a

film based on such a popular brand necessitated a meticulous and well-thought-out marketing plan.

Following the successful release of the animated film "Barbie and the Nutcracker" in 2001, the Barbie franchise in cinema embarked on a robust development trajectory. Mattel and Barbie Entertainment capitalized on the brand's popularity and continued to create new films that resonated with children and families.

In 2002, the next film, "Barbie in the Nutcracker," was released. Subsequently, numerous animated films followed, including "Barbie in the 12 Dancing Princesses" (2006), "Barbie: Starlight Adventure" (2008), and many others. These films often emphasized themes of fashion, friendship, and family values, making them popular among girls and teenagers.

In addition to animated films, Barbie also ventured into live-action cinema. In 2009, the film "Barbie and the Three Musketeers" was released, with actress Tiffany Thornton portraying Barbie. This experience proved successful, prompting the franchise to further experiment with live-action films.

An integral part of the marketing strategy was the promotion of national and international tours dedicated to "Barbie," where children and their parents could meet their beloved character in person and immerse themselves in the world of Barbie.

Over time, the Barbie franchise remained relevant and popular, continuously releasing new products, animated films, and collaborating with partners to create enchanting narratives. This allowed Barbie to maintain its status as one of the most recognizable and successful franchises in the world of toys and entertainment.

## **MARKETING CAMPAIGN FOR THE FULL-SCALE MOVIE BARBIE (2023)**

### **1. Audience Engagement**

Certainly, one of the pivotal and foundational elements in the comprehensive marketing campaign for the film "Barbie" revolved around the critical concept of audience engagement. This multifaceted strategy was not merely about advertising; it was about forging a deep and lasting connection with an array of diverse audiences.

Foremost among the considerations for the marketing team was the acknowledgment of the mature and devoted fan base of the "Barbie" brand. These individuals had grown up alongside Barbie dolls, animated series, and interactive games, forming an emotional attachment to the brand that spanned generations. Recognizing the potential of this dedicated audience segment was essential, as their nostalgia and affinity for Barbie provided a unique opportunity to create buzz and anticipation around the film.

To effectively engage this adult demographic, the marketing team embarked on a journey of nostalgia-driven marketing. They tapped into the sentiments of those who had fond memories of playing with Barbie dolls, watching Barbie cartoons, and immersing themselves in the imaginative world of Barbie games during their formative years. By evoking these cherished memories, the team aimed to rekindle the enthusiasm of adult fans, offering them a chance to relive the magic of Barbie on the big screen.

Moreover, the marketing campaign strategically appealed to the inner child of these adult fans. It emphasized that, regardless of age, the allure of Barbie's world, filled with glamour, fashion, and adventure, was still as captivating as ever. This approach not only engaged the nostalgia of the audience but also stirred a sense of excitement about experiencing Barbie's timeless charm in a new and cinematic dimension.

In addition to targeting the nostalgic sentiments of adult fans, the marketing team also recognized the potential for cross-generational appeal. They understood that many parents who had grown up with Barbie themselves would be keen to introduce their children to the beloved character, creating a shared experience that bridged generations. This insight led to a multifaceted

marketing approach that emphasized the enduring and universal appeal of Barbie, positioning the film as an event that could be enjoyed by both parents and their children, thereby fostering family engagement.

## 2. Collaborations with Popular Brands

To garner attention for the "Barbie" film, the marketing team employed a strategy of collaboration with well-known brands. Mattel orchestrated a multitude of collaborations. Xbox released limited-edition pink consoles with a Barbie-themed stand, ALDO designed pink shoes in classic Barbie packaging, one of the largest clothing retailers, Forever 21, created a clothing collection, and cosmetic brand NYX launched a Barbie-themed makeup line. Barbie Crocs and many other brands also took part in collaborations with Mattel.

## 3. Involvement of the Lead Actress Margot Robbie in the Marketing Campaign

Right from the inception of the project, the cast and crew fully immersed themselves in the captivating world of the "Barbie" movie. This dedication extended even to the set assistants, who enthusiastically donned vibrant pink attire, becoming an integral part of the film's vibrant and colorful production. This commitment to bringing the essence of Barbie to life on and off the screen underscored the passion and attention to detail that characterized the entire filmmaking process.

As the film approached its global premieres, the commitment to the Barbie aesthetic reached new heights. Special outfits were meticulously crafted, each one an exact replica of iconic Barbie ensembles. These bespoke costumes were not just clothing; they were works of art that paid homage to the timeless and ever-fashionable Barbie doll.

For Margot Robbie, who portrayed the iconic character, these meticulously designed outfits were more than costumes; they were a transformation into the living embodiment of Barbie herself. With every premiere, Margot Robbie stepped onto the red carpet, not just as an actress but as a real-life Barbie, captivating audiences with her striking resemblance to the beloved doll and adding an extra layer of excitement and authenticity to the film's promotion.

The dedication to recreating Barbie's iconic fashion in real life was a testament to the film's commitment to paying homage to the beloved character and bringing her vibrant personality to the forefront. It was a way of celebrating the enduring appeal of Barbie, not only as a toy but as a cultural icon whose influence transcends generations. In doing so, the film managed to bridge the gap between nostalgia and contemporary entertainment, making it a must-see for fans both young and old.

This meticulous attention to detail and commitment to authenticity in every aspect of the film's production, from the set design to the costumes, underscored the dedication of the entire team to creating a cinematic experience that would resonate with audiences and capture the essence of Barbie's enduring charm.

## 4. Barbiegamer

The hallmark of the marketing strategy for the 2023 "Barbie" film was undoubtedly the unconventional juxtaposition with another major cinematic project, Christopher Nolan's film "Oppenheimer." Both films were scheduled for the same release date - July 21, and despite this, neither studio saw fit to alter their premiere plans. "Barbie" presents a direct and contrasting counterpoint to the serious and conservative drama of "Oppenheimer." The bright and comedic adventures of the animated doll stand in stark contrast to the biographical film about the creator of the atomic bomb. Social media users quickly seized upon this information and began developing theories about which film to watch first: experience the dramatic depth of "Oppenheimer" and then relax with the colorful and lighthearted "Barbie," or vice versa, start with "Barbie" and then immerse themselves in the world of "Oppenheimer." This competition between the films gave rise

to a phenomenon known as "Barbiegamer," in which people created collages using frames from both films, designed posters, and even released T-shirts for the release date.

Social media indicates that quite a few viewers are indeed planning to see both films on the same day. While the marketing campaign for "Oppenheimer" adheres to a more traditional approach, considering the nature of the plot, which is less amenable to merchandise, the marketing strategy for "Barbie" focuses more on generating hype around the film, potentially boosting the box office performance of its cinematic neighbor.

The marketing campaign surrounding "Barbie" represents a unique phenomenon that combines the pleasant nostalgia of childhood, meticulous attention to detail, a high-quality film, and competition with Christopher Nolan's cinematic project. After the excitement subsides and the invested capital is recouped, this marketing strategy for "Barbie" will be etched into the annals of pop culture and will be remembered as one of the significant events of the summer of 2023.

## 5. Results and Success

The marketing history of the "Barbie" film influenced its success. Through well-planned campaigns and audience engagement strategies, the film had the potential to achieve favorable box office results. Furthermore, the film could have become popular among "Barbie" brand enthusiasts, contributing to the sales of associated products and merchandise.

## CONCLUSION

The marketing journey of the "Barbie" film serves as a compelling case study in the realm of film marketing. It offers a fascinating exploration into how marketing strategies can be leveraged effectively within the film industry, particularly when the film is based on a well-established and beloved brand. The "Barbie" film stands as a prime example of how marketing can be harnessed to engage and captivate audiences, ultimately playing a pivotal role in the film's success.

This film underscores the indispensable role that marketing plays in the contemporary cinematic landscape. It showcases how well-executed marketing campaigns have the power to transform movies into cultural phenomena, making them more visible and commercially prosperous. The case of "Barbie" vividly illustrates how strategic marketing initiatives can transcend the traditional boundaries of filmmaking, propelling a beloved character from toy shelves and animated series into the realm of blockbuster cinema.

Moreover, the "Barbie" film exemplifies the synergy between nostalgia and innovation in marketing. By drawing upon the deep well of nostalgia that adults have for the brand while simultaneously captivating the imaginations of younger generations, the film managed to create a multi-generational fanbase. This unique blend of marketing tactics demonstrated that the resonance of a cherished brand like Barbie can extend across time, generations, and mediums.

In essence, the marketing story of the "Barbie" film offers valuable insights into the evolving landscape of film marketing. It highlights the enduring power of established brands and their ability to inspire creativity, as well as the potential for marketing to bridge generational gaps and unite audiences of all ages. Above all, it reinforces the notion that, in the ever-evolving world of cinema, marketing remains a dynamic force capable of shaping not only the fortunes of a film but also the cultural zeitgeist.

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