

**The marketing world  
has turned pink**



Image Source: monacolife.net

Mattel's Barbie influencer marketing campaign is a huge success. Here are 7 lessons to ponder.

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A timeless icon, Barbie has left her mark on several generations. In the digital age, which is full of ephemeral trends, how has this doll created in 1959 managed to regain centre stage? A large part of this success can be explained by the marketing strategy put in place to promote the film. According to various sources, the marketing budget was 150 million dollars, more than the film's production (145 million).

The communications agency Marques & Films handled the entire communications strategy for the launch of the film, with two objectives: 1) to increase toy sales (Mattel's sales fell by 22% in the first quarter of 2023); 2) to raise awareness of the film.

Mattel has decided to be omnipresent on the market, opting for a hype strategy by multiplying partnerships and collaborations in the media, outside the media and on all social networks.

The huge commercial success of 'Barbie movie' (over 1 billion in sales 17 days after its release) and the pink wave that has swept over us since the film's launch are food for thought and inspiration. What can we learn from it?

### Lesson #1 —

## Riding the nostalgia wave

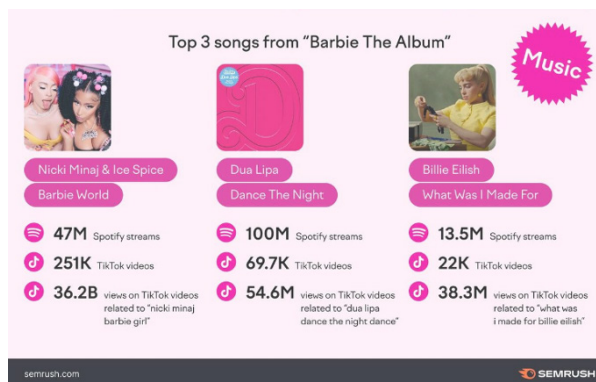
While we live in a futuristic age, the Barbie film played on nostalgia. The marketing experts behind the Barbie film tapped into the emotional goldmine that is Barbie. By evoking memories of the past, they created an intergenerational bridge. Parents and grandparents, once huge Barbie fans, have been reunited with the doll that shaped their childhood, and can share that emotion with their children and grandchildren. It wasn't just a question of promoting a film, but of reviving past experiences and creating new ones. This nostalgia is the cornerstone of the marketing campaign. It is this flashback that is the real innovation of the campaign. The Barbie film is not the only one to have exploited the nostalgic dimension. The Pokémon franchise, with the launch of "Pokémon GO", is an example of a brand that has capitalised on this feeling. By transporting millennials back to the days of the Game Boy, this augmented reality game became an overnight global phenomenon, demonstrating that the past, when repackaged in innovative ways, can resonate with a young audience.

### Lesson #2 —

## Identifying and understanding your target audience

A clear definition of your target audience is the basis of any successful marketing campaign. The promotional strategy for the Barbie film was no exception. While the Barbie brand has always been associated with young girls, the marketing of the film broadened its scope to include a wider audience. For children, the campaign presented a world of imagination and adventure. For adults, it was a journey into the past, a reconnection with childhood friends and family.

The use of social media platforms played a key role in effectively engaging these different audiences. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok became places of interaction where the marketing team could measure reactions, preferences and comments in real time. Polls, competitions and interactive 'posts' helped to understand what the audience wanted, allowing the team to adapt content accordingly. By recognising Barbie's multi-generational appeal and actively engaging with different target audiences, the campaign resonated both broadly and deeply. These results show that knowing your audience allows you to develop relevant messages, whatever the generation.



### Lesson #3 —

## Innovating and thinking outside the box

At a time when we're all inundated with marketing campaigns, it's more important than ever for brands to stand out from the crowd. This requires more than a good message; it requires innovation. And in this area, the Barbie film marketing campaign is a real masterclass. Traditional advertising methods were complemented by innovative techniques that captured attention and imagination.

One of the most remarkable strategies was the integration of immersive digital billboards, transforming urban landscapes into Barbie's world and offering passers-by a glimpse into her world. In a world where consumers are inundated with content, the Barbie marketing team demonstrated that creativity, combined with technological prowess, can create campaigns that not only stand out, but stay in the public's mind.



#### Lesson #4 —

### Favouring strategic collaborations and partnerships

No brand can stand alone. And in today's interconnected world, strategic collaborations can amplify the reach of a campaign exponentially. The marketing strategy for the Barbie film made brilliant use of this principle. By signing partnerships with brands that resonated with the film's main message, they extended the reach of the marketing campaign to audiences they might not otherwise have reached. One of the most remarkable collaborations was with Crocs, which fused the world of fashion with the magic of Barbie. But it's not just about product partnerships. Influencers, with their vast bases of engaged 'followers', have become ambassadors for the film, creating an organic and authentic buzz. By aligning itself with the brands and personalities who share the film's philosophy, the campaign has transformed these partners into powerful allies, effectively amplifying the marketing message.



#### Lesson #5 —

### Consistency of message and brand image

Consistency in marketing and messaging builds trust in a brand. In a world of choice, consumers turn to brands they recognise and trust. The marketing campaign for the Barbie film illustrated this principle by maintaining the same image and messages across all platforms. From social media posts to immersive digital billboards, every touchpoint echoed the same narrative, reinforcing the brand's identity. Barbie's iconic pink brand image, a hue that has remained unwavering over the decades, played a key role in this consistency. It is an unmistakable benchmark, instantly evoking memories and associations with the brand. This strong commitment to the brand's colours and message meant that the film was seen as a harmonious extension of the Barbie brand heritage.

The same consistency can be found in the Coca-Cola brand. Its red and white signature, combined with its unique logo, has remained virtually unchanged for over a century. Keeping the same image and the same message has made Coca-Cola one of the most recognisable brands in the world. Apple is another big name that reaps the rewards of consistent messaging. Its commitment to simplicity,

innovation and design is evident in all its products and campaigns. Whether it's the minimalist design of its products or the distinct tone of its advertising, the consistency of Apple's brand image has played a crucial role in building a loyal customer base. By drawing inspiration from these iconic brands, it becomes clear that while trends come and go, the consistency of the brand's image and marketing message allows it to stand the test of time and fashion, remaining firmly in the consumer's mind.

#### Lesson #6 —

### The role of technology and interactivity

The digital age has transformed the way brands interact with their audiences. Passive consumption has given way to active engagement, and the Barbie film marketing campaign has been at the forefront of this change. Harnessing the power of technology, the campaign created immersive and interactive experiences that went beyond traditional advertising. Augmented reality (AR) filters, social media challenges and interactive pop-up shops blurred the boundaries between the digital and physical realms, allowing audiences to enter the world of Barbie. These technological integrations made each interaction personal, memorable and shareable, transforming the public into brand ambassadors. What's more, the use of AI to personalise the user experience demonstrates a deep understanding of modern consumer behaviour. In an age of information overload, personalised content stands out, creating a deeper connection between the brand and its audience.



#### Lesson #7 —

### The importance of timing and adaptability

In the complex art of marketing, timing is everything. If you launch too early, you risk being forgotten; if you launch too late, you risk missing the boat altogether. The marketing campaign for the Barbie film demonstrated masterful management of this delicate balance. By aligning its promotional activities with strategic dates, it ensured maximum visibility and engagement. But ideal timing isn't just about choosing the right moment to launch a product. It's also about adapting to constantly changing consumer behaviour, trends and global events. The Barbie marketing team demonstrated an uncanny ability to pivot its strategies in response to real-time feedback and changing circumstances. This ability to adapt ensured that messages were relevant, resonant and in tune with current trends.

Oreo's famous tweet during the Super Bowl in 2013 is a classic example of impeccable timing combined with adaptability. When a power outage interrupted the game, Oreo's marketing team quickly tweeted "You can still dunk in the dark", capitalising on the unexpected event. The tweet went viral, demonstrating the power of real-time marketing and the importance of adaptability. The marketing success of the Barbie film shows that while planning is crucial, the ability to adapt to events can make all the difference. In a world where change is the only constant, the brands that can navigate the ebb and flow of trends, while remaining true to their core message, are the ones that leave a lasting impact.



## Conclusion

The marketing campaign for the Barbie film demonstrates the many facets of modern marketing. The film's campaign is a blend of nostalgia and innovation, tradition and technology, consistency and adaptability. But beyond these strategies and tactics, there is a deeper truth: successful marketing is about understanding your target audience and getting closer to them. It's about evoking emotions, sparking conversations and building relationships. The lessons learned from the promotional buzz of the Barbie film are not just about how to market a product or a film. It's about how to resonate in a world overflowing with content, how to stand out in the cacophony of messages and how to create moments that stick in the collective memory. Ultimately, the marketing success of the Barbie film is a benchmark for all brands and campaigns.

## For further information

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