

Semester Long Project — Wizards Of The Coast

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I. Company Overview

Wizards of the Coast (WotC) is an American game publisher primarily focused on fantasy or science fiction settings. Founded in 1990, it was acquired by Hasbro in 1999 and became a subsidiary of the toy company. They create and sell tabletop roleplaying games, card games, board games, and more. According to the [WotC website](#), the company's mission statement is "We create entertainment that inspires creativity, sparks passions, forges friendships, and fosters communities around the globe." The company also states "Our games seek to harness the boundless energy and imagination of our players. In every pursuit our mission is to inspire a lifetime love of games." WotC wants to create communities for everyone to have shared purposes and create experiences that people will find fun.

The official Wizards of the Coast website states that they have five values that define them. Be Legendary, Build A Well-Rounded Crew, Delve Into Dungeons, Don't Split The Party, and It Takes A Multiverse. All of these are perfectly themed ways of saying that they are determined, inclusive, respectful, creative, and driven. They strive to practice excellence, prioritize inclusivity, embrace challenges with openness, have respect for others, and give lifelong satisfaction to players everywhere.

II. Key Audience

According to the [company's website](#), they state that they “celebrate diversity because we believe that rich, varied perspectives generate the best ideas, experiences and games.” While that is a wonderful statement to make it doesn't narrow down a guaranteed target audience. The information needed to find out the target audience was found on [similarweb.com](#) where they tracked who is visiting the company's website and where they are coming from. They state that the two largest groups who go onto the WotC website are the 18-24 age range with 31.46% and the 25-34 age range with 46.2%. Of all visitors, 69.62% are male and 30.38% are female. The most popular country to look up the website was the United States of America with 51.01%.

The company's internal target audience of employees, according to the [Zippia report](#), seems to be white men but to reiterate the company's website states that they want to change that by creating a more inclusive and diverse space. Out of the 1,500 employees at Wizards of the Coast, 28% are women and 72% are male. The most common ethnicity is white with 68%, 11% are Hispanic/Latino, and 11% are Asian. The average employee makes \$76,349.

Understanding the target audience for both external and internal of a brand is important to PR because it allows the brand to create statements and content that is best suited for the people interested in their products. The brand would be able to guide themselves in what are the best trends to follow and what is most important if they pay attention to the people who would be consuming the content they created. While Wizards of the Coast focuses on their plan to include a diverse audience, as a public relations officer it would be helpful to find one group to target and then be able to expand it to others later. Obviously, there are more than just white men in America that use WotC products, however now that it is understood that they make up a good portion of consumers the brand can make efforts to expand their market.

III. SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Wizards of the Coasts has many strengths as a company and brand that continues to improve and grow each year. Being a subsidiary company of Hasbro means that they are a giant in the world of board and card games. According to [multiple Statista reports](#) Hasbro is one of the key players in both categories holding 9% of card games brand shares and 12% of board games brand shares.

WotC also has a wide variety of products most of which are reasonably priced and contribute a significant proportion of Hasbro's main revenue. According to a Statista report, [Hasbro: global revenue by segment worldwide 2023](#) they have been steadily increasing their portion of the total revenue. In 2023 alone they brought in \$1.46 billion out of the total \$5 billion.

These products such as Magic: The Gathering and Dungeons & Dragons, have both a physical and digital version creating multiple avenues for people to get the product. For the physical aspects they have also cultivated relationships with the stores that sell them to hold events and tournaments for people to play in to best highlight anything new with the games or just a regular Tuesday at a comic book store which then creates a sense of community at these locations. The digital copies create the perception of accessibility and ease for people who want to practice their skills before they go to a tournament or allow users to experience the same aspects of the game without needing to leave their house if they're less social.

These games are also definitive of community culture. For example, with the latest release of Baldur's Gate 3, which is a online roleplaying game that simulates Dungeons & Dragons, it has

become the new way to introduce consumers into the TTRPG and allows them to have something in common with the people who have been playing for years before.

Weakness

As someone who works for the brand, it can be easy to let the weaknesses slip through the cracks. But from an outside perspective, it's easy to take one mistake and blow it widely out of proportion. One of which has been the ability to overcompensate for the months when there were strikes with SAG-AFTRA and WGA. Mentioned in the [Hasbro 2024 Proxy Report](#), they even mention the hit that their entertainment industry took during this time. They also stated that they have since started the process of recovering as well as keeping prices as low as they can even with the current economic situation.

There were also the controversies that started to pop up a couple of years ago that must be taken into account. Back in 2023, when they were beginning to announce that there were going to be rule changes to Dungeons & Dragons, players of the game were starting to voice out that there were certain rules that they did not want changed which wasn't that big of a deal until the brand released the information that players would not be able to opt out of the rule change on things like their online resources. These changes have since been reworked according to [The Verge](#) but they still left a sour note in the consumer's mouth that is hard to get rid of.

There was also the problem of when Wizards of the Coast used AI Art in one of their sourcebooks. According to [Polygon](#), the brand stated that they did not know of why the artist used AI in their product, they still decided to work with the artist again for future products. This caused a slight scene in the Dungeons & Dragons community but the brand once again decided to handle the problem by stating that they would "revise our process and update our artist

guidelines to make clear that artists must refrain from using AI art generation as part of their art creation process for developing D&D art.”

Opportunities

The biggest opportunity to focus on is the company’s diverse content. Representation matters to people because it allows them to form deep and empathetic connections with the media they are consuming, according to a study that was done by the [Perception Institute](#). Plus it has to be genuine and authentic. When talking about representation in digital media such as movies and TV shows, [New America](#) states that when production companies are disingenuous to their audience they tend to tank in the box-office.

By creating diverse characters that go beyond the fact they are different species all together, the audience will become more empathetic to the stories they try to create or play. As someone who plays these games, it has become obvious that people use these games almost therapeutically. They create characters that either resemble them physically, emotionally, or morally and use the games as a means of escape from the reality of today.

Threats

2023 was not the best year for Wizards of the Coast. Not only did they have multiple PR nightmares that left a bad reputation with their consumers, Hasbro laid off 1,900 employees most of which were from the WotC branch, according to [Forbes](#). Which may have been a “smart financial move” it was not one that went well with the public.

Forbes also stated that while Hasbro was struggling one of their main competitors Mattel was having a great year. One of their main products, Barbie, was seeing an uptick in sales due to

the renewed popularity after the box-office hit movie *Barbie* came out last July. While WotC also released a movie back in March 2023 they had less success at the box-office and Hasbro decided that they will be selling their stake in eOne, which helped produced the movie.

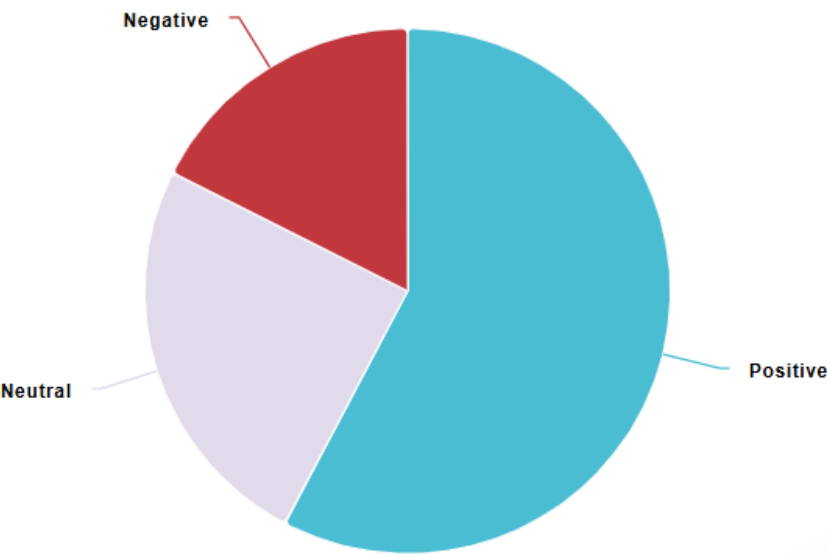
From a PR perspective the best way to get ahead of these is to regain the public's trust by reinforcing the things that does work well for the brand. Partnering with other IPs to collab on products that target both audiences to merge together, creating a safe and fun environment to play the games that have the tools to tell some of the greatest adventure stories mankind has ever known, making the audience feel supported by allowing more freedom on their digital platforms that hold their character information, and finally making fun games and stories that people will find unrealistically relatable.

IV: Media Analysis and Report

A. Media Analysis

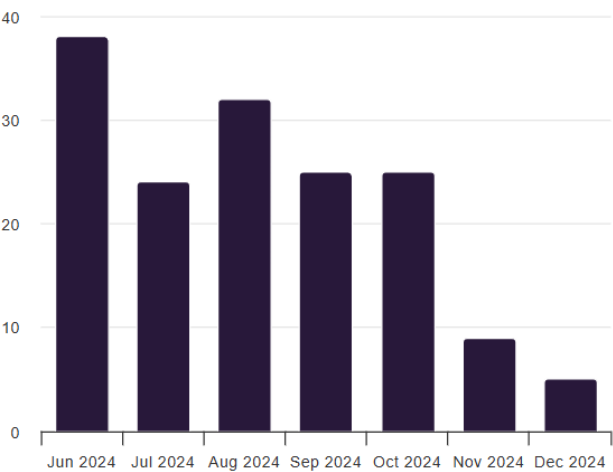
Sentiment ⓘ

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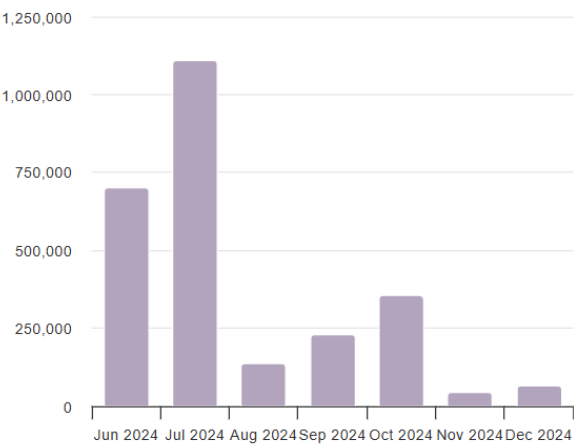
Shares By Journalists ⓘ

Export ▾



Journalist Reach ⓘ

Export ▾



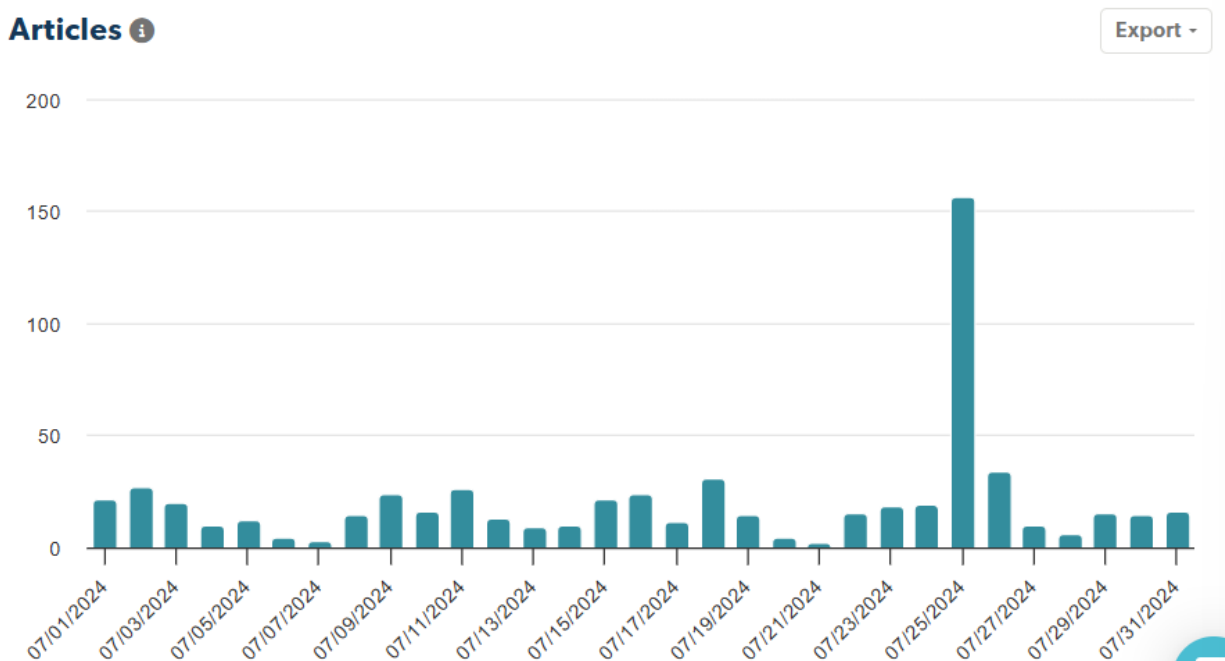
Based on finding in [Muck Rack](#), there was a decent amount of media coverage for Wizards of the Coast within the past six months. According to the report, from June 1, 2024 - December 16, 2024 there were 3,318 articles posted about the brand.

As stated by the graph above the coverage was mostly positive with the exact number being 57.7% (or 1,916 articles) were positive. The neutral articles made up 24.7% (or 819 articles) covered and the remaining 17.6% (or 583 articles) were negative.

There was a spike in article engagement in August 2024 even though that was the third lowest month to write articles. The total number for that month of engagement was 33,567 which is roughly a third of the total engagement of 100,220 for the entire six months. These numbers include the number of shares, reactions, and comments for the articles. After some further research, this may be due to the fact that on August 26, 2024 [Magic: The Gathering](#) announced their list of banned and restricted cards and rules for the different formats of the game.

However, on August 8, 2024 the article that created the highest amount of engagement with a total of 20,312 was an article published by a company called Boing Boing where they wrote an article stating how the [Vice President-Elect JD Vance tried to blame Magic: The Gathering as the reason why girls thought he was a creepy teen](#). This turned out to be the real reason why that month had the highest engagement.

The highest month that created articles was in July with a total of 619 articles. There was one day in particular that had 156 articles posted, July 25, 2024.



This was the day that WotC announced that they were starting a new publishing line in collaboration with Dark Horse Comics.

Most of the articles were produced by sites like WARGAMER, Screen Rant, The Gamer, CBR, and Game Rant being the top five. Honorable mentions go out to sites like Comicbook.com, Yahoo Entertainment, and Polygon who were numbers 8, 9, and 10 of the top 10 article publishers.

B. Media Coverage Report

Press Releases / Statements:

- Announcing the partnership between the Rules Committee of Magic: The Gathering Commander Format and the game design team of Wizards of the Coast, September 30, 2024
 - <https://magic.wizards.com/en/news/announcements/on-the-future-of-commander>
- Announcing the banned and restricted list for Magic: The Gathering, August 26, 2024
 - <https://magic.wizards.com/en/news/announcements/august-26-2024-banned-and-restricted-announcement>
- Hasbro revealing new Magic: The Gathering Secret Lair Cards at New York Comic Con, October 18, 2024
 - <https://newsroom.hasbro.com/news-releases/news-release-details/hasbro-reveals-magic-gathering-secret-lair-cards-new-york-comic>

Media Publication:

- Hasbro names Wizards of the Coast president, Retail Dive, July 19, 2024
 - <https://www.retaildive.com/news/hasbro-wizards-of-the-coast-president-digital-gaming-john-hight/721852/>
- Dark Horse, Wizards of The Coast Team for Publishing, July 26, 2024
 - <https://www.licenseglobal.com/publishing/dark-horse-wizards-of-the-coast-team-for-publishing>
- Magic: The Gathering plane name changed to avoid racist connotations, Polygon, December 11, 2024
 - <https://www.polygon.com/mtg-magic-the-gathering/495034/wizards-coast-avishkar-kaladesh-name-change-aetherdrift>

- Wizards of the Coast Goes All-In on Videogames, Wants to Ship 1-2 Games per Year Starting Late 2025/Early 2026, Wccftech, July 27, 2024

- <https://wccftech.com/wizards-of-the-coast-goes-all-in-on-videogames-wants-to-ship-1-2-games-per-year-starting-late-2025-early-2026/>

V. Conclusion

Wizards of the Coast has produced multiple games and products that have touched the hearts of millions worldwide. Despite having some dissonance over the past couple of years the brand still has an honest and genuine core that can relate to people in every way. The brand name means something to millions in the world and when they put their stamp of approval on something people tend to give that thing merit. Take for example whenever Magic: The Gathering partners with another piece of media to create Secret Lair cards and sets that relate to a separate fandom. When they collab their respective audiences tend to want to buy the new products and learn about each other's fandom. If the company were to find more opportunities to include other people and provide a safe space to learn than the brand's image will surely skyrocket.

While some of the coverage is less than stellar, the company is celebrating an anniversary with Dungeons & Dragons turning 50 this year. This should create some goodwill that even though the brand and game is getting older and changing a little bit, it still has the same core as before just in a new light. WotC should acknowledge that while change is a terrifying thing for both the company and their audience it can also bring a new adventure that is waiting to be experienced.

WotC relies a lot on their name and their parent company, but they also rely on earned media whether they want to or not. Creating goodwill with content creators, influencers, and journalists can go a long way in upholding a specific image they want to convey. Having a list of people to have announce certain products or events that the company can rely on to paint in a positive light or at least be able to receive feedback from will give an image of the company taking notes from the public and actually listening to their ideas.

They also should try to make events easier to run while at local stores. This can be helpful in multiple ways including that it creates a good relationship with their vendors, customers will have an enjoyable time playing with the products they sell in a safe space, and also it will leave a better impression on new customers that they will want to continue to come to these events and purchase the products.

Wizards of the Coast needs to show the audience what is at their core and be as genuine and empathetic as possible if they want to create a more inclusive and diverse space for people from all backgrounds can sit around a table, roll some dice, and create some of the best memories of their lives by going on an adventure with their best friends.