

PlayStation

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1.0 Executive Summary

The purpose of this plan is to evaluate how PlayStation is faring within the current industry and what can be improved. As the industry is consistently changing, PlayStation must make changes to ensure the company will remain relevant and up-to-date on the latest market trends. PlayStation must maintain a consistent brand identity that is separate from competitors while offering something distinct to consumers. PlayStation will need to maintain a competitive edge amongst high-profile companies like Xbox and Nintendo; while also being aware of how indirect competitors, such as Sega, are impacting consumers. In order to perpetuate PlayStation's success, several marketing efforts will need to be implemented, such as increasing social media posts and hosting contests for consumers. This proactive outreach will instill a stronger sense of the relationship between PlayStation and its consumers. Consumers are pivotal to the success of the company and long-term relationships with consumers will increase PlayStation's value proposition. By focusing on building relationships through several avenues, our increase in owned media and paid media usage will also increase earned media promotion. To ensure PlayStation's endeavors run smoothly, several key personnel will be hired, and tools will be purchased to measure growth. These new hires will assist in ensuring brand messaging, PlayStation's brand image, and consumer outreach will all be uniformly maintained. In order to create consistent outreach initiatives, PlayStation will clarify its values, define their goals, establish a clear message, and create metrics to determine if the initiative was successful. This will include PlayStation improving its search engine optimization, search engine marketing, and social media optimization. Once each tactic is completed, PlayStation will evaluate its marketing efforts through key performance indicators and continue establishing forward-thinking strategies.

2.0 Situation Analysis

In order for PlayStation to remain relevant within the video game industry, it is imperative to have a well-thought-out plan of what products the company will provide, determine what consumers want and who the target demographic is, what the market looks like overall, and, most importantly, what kind of a company image PlayStation wants to have.

2.1. Brand Profile

PlayStation prides itself on being innovative and creative through its consoles, video games, and gaming accessories. In order to achieve these values, PlayStation employs knowledgeable and artistic digital marketers.

2.1.1. Brand Description

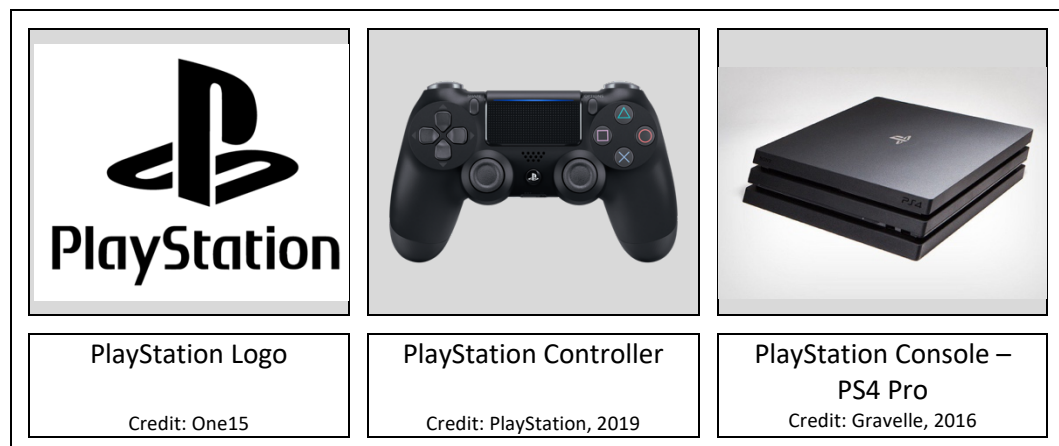
PlayStation was established in 1994 in Japan but has since expanded into a worldwide company. PlayStation is a company that provides digital entertainment in the form of video games, consoles, and gaming accessories.

2.1.2. Brand Positioning

PlayStation's target audience can view themselves as 'gamers' or 'casual gamers' and are males between the ages of 18 and 29 within the United States. However, the age groups are split between 18 to 25-years-old and 26 to 29-year-old (Appendix A). Both audiences are middle-class, have some college education, and are employed. The 18 to 25-year-old group consists of heavy users who play video games for entertainment and socialization, whereas the 26 to 29-year-old group consists of medium users and play for entertainment and relaxation. This target audience is separate from the target market due to their usage rate, as some consumers can be infrequent or light users.

2.1.3. Brand Assets

PlayStation made the decision to mainly focus on two colors when presenting its products. Predominantly, PlayStation products are black, which provides a sleek, formal look. When the console and controller are turned on, both emit a blue light. Once the console is powered on, the PlayStation logo and default screen are shown on screen, with a blue layout. The blue light evokes a sense of calmness to consumers.



2.2. Market Summary

PlayStation must be aware of what the market's needs are and how its competitors are responding to any changes. With this research and information, PlayStation will have a better understanding of how to react and compete to attract more consumers.

2.2.1. Demographics

PlayStation's target market would be young adult males aged 18 to 25-years-old. This audience would have some college experience, enjoy shooter and action games, and play for social interaction. These users are referred to as 'the newer generation'. PlayStation's other target market would be 26 to 29-year-old males who have some college experience and enjoy casual video games for entertainment and relaxation. These users are referred to as 'the older generation'.

2.2.2. Market Wants

The market wants more online cooperative survival games. Consumers are demanding something that they can play with hundreds of other players at any time while being strategically entertaining. Not only is this what consumers themselves are playing, but it is also what they are watching. Esports mainly focus on survival-type games in which several people vie to be the last person standing. Consumers also want portable systems that can be played at any time.

2.3. Market Trends

"Emerging trends ... include the development of augmented reality and virtual reality-based head mounted displays and heads-up display products and development of games for academic and skill development" (PR Newswire, 2019, para. 4). Augmented reality is the latest trend consumers want. PlayStation has created products and is continuing to develop products to satiate consumers while keeping up-to-date on the latest technology. PlayStation has developed controllers, headsets, video games, charging stations, and storage cases for the latest technology.

2.4. Market Size and Growth

The video game industry has been steadily increasing for several years. "The video game industry's value added to U.S. Gross Domestic Product is more than \$11.7 billion" (ESA, 2017, p. 14). Consumers have shown they will consistently purchase enticing video games, which resulted in the industry's growth. Colleges took notice and began offering game-related degrees or certificates. "Three-hundred and ninety colleges, universities, and other academic institutions in the United States now offer professional certificates and undergraduate or graduate degrees in video game design; an increase of more than 50% since 2009" (ESA, 2014, para. 1). As the industry grew, so did the need for video game-related careers. A survey conducted of graduates in game-related programs found that "84% [of graduates] were currently employed" (HEVGA, 2019, p. 14). The market has not become saturated with unemployed game developers though, as there is still a consistent need to produce video games for consumers. It is imperative for video game companies like PlayStation to employ graduates who will assist in creating the latest games and products to maintain their innovative brand image.

3.0 Competitive Analysis

Competitors are imperative within the video game industry, as it allows companies to determine what they are doing well and what needs to be improved. Understating who PlayStation's competitors are will allow the company to determine what reaction should be taken when new products are released. It is also integral for the company to have a plan of how to react to outside factors that will inevitably affect the company.

3.1. Primary Competition

Xbox is a direct competitor that believes consumers should have an expansive game library, that gaming should unite people, and promises to create quality entertainment (Spencer, 2016, paras. 5-8). Nintendo is a direct competitor that strives to create the best products and believes it is crucial to "treat every customer with attention, consideration, and respect" (Nintendo, 2019, para. 1). Sega is an indirect competitor that wants to provide consumers with a worthwhile, memorable gaming experience.

3.2. Competitor Products/Services and Pricing

Xbox sells consoles, video games, and gaming equipment. Xbox has status quo pricing, but their consoles are cheaper. Nintendo sells consoles, video games, gaming equipment, and toys/figures. Nintendo has penetration pricing for its 3DS and skimming pricing for its Switch and accessories. Sega sells a bundled console with built-in retro games and controllers. Due to Sega's lower status within the video game industry, their products have penetration pricing.

3.3. Competitor Positioning and Market Share

Xbox portrays its products as powerful and advanced. Nintendo presents its products as unique and fun. Sega portrays itself as diverse and quality-driven. Each company provides similar products, which is why keywords are crucial for differentiating between companies. PlayStation can be viewed as the company that will create innovative improvements to its products while maintaining a creative identity. Xbox wants to create powerful systems so heavy users can play for long periods of time. Nintendo is a company that continues to recreate iconic titles while maintaining their individuality. Sega provides consumers with nostalgic games in higher quality, which is different than what direct competitors are doing.

3.4. Competitor Marketing Analysis

It is critical for PlayStation to be aware of how competitors are conducting themselves on social media and what keywords they are using to attract consumers. With this information, PlayStation can ensure it will be separate from competitors and can develop an effective strategy to promote their marketing efforts.

3.4.1. Keyword Utilization

Xbox mainly advertises its action-shooter games. On Twitter, Xbox used a hashtag for the game, which would draw in audiences who search for it, as well as tagging Xbox's name itself. The company also provided a link to purchase the game on their website and had a picture of the Xbox console, controller, and the video game itself. When searching 'custom controller' and 'one x', Xbox's site will populate. Nintendo's advertisement when promoting the Switch console

tells consumers they can play at home, on the go, and with other people. Nintendo is showcasing the versatility of their console, while showing gameplay, and the ability to connect with other people. When searching, 'Mario', 'Switch', and 'portable game console', Nintendo's website populates. Sega did not advertise its Genesis Flashback much due to the company's decline. The company released that they would be distributing a console and game bundle to consumers. From there, consumers and news articles provided free publicity for the company. When searching, 'portable game console' the company's website populates.

3.4.2. Social Media Utilization

After viewing Xbox's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube channels, there were no comments interacting with consumers. Xbox likely has commented to consumers responses on some of their posts, but it is not as predominant as it should be. The company posts about once or twice a day on Facebook and Twitter, once every few days on Instagram, and has multiple posts per day on YouTube. Nintendo posts once a day on Facebook, a few times a day on Twitter, every few days on Instagram, and about twice a day on YouTube, but does not appear to interact much with consumers on any channel. Sega has sporadic posts on Facebook, a few times a day on Twitter, infrequently on Instagram, and a few times a week on YouTube, but minimal interaction with consumers on their channels. Predominantly, each company is the most active on YouTube. PlayStation can set itself apart from the competition by interacting with consumers on each of their branded channels.

3.5. STEEPLE Analysis

Social factors are consistently changing for PlayStation. Newer generations of consumers result in new entertainment desires. PlayStation has to consistently be researching what consumers want in order to develop products that suit their needs. Technological elements are also integral for PlayStation to consistently monitor. PlayStation will need to keep its systems up-to-date to avoid hackers stealing consumer information. In addition, PlayStation will need to evaluate the latest technological advancements available to ensure their products are relevant and in-demand. PlayStation must research consumer's economic health, as both an increase and decrease in income can affect how much of a product PlayStation would produce. Production also affects the company's green initiatives. PlayStation has responded by reducing console power consumption and making consoles slimmer. PlayStation must also be aware of the political elements that will affect them. Certain groups are opposed to violent video games and can lobby to create new laws that can hinder PlayStation's brand and growth. PlayStation must provide statistical data to dispel concerns. In order for PlayStation to maintain its transparency, the company must warn consumers if a video game is capable of causing health problems. (Reference Appendix B.)

4.0 Marketing Strategies

In order to properly allocate time, money, and resources, PlayStation must determine an effective strategy to reach and engage with target markets.

4.1. Promotional Goals and Objectives

PlayStation will improve owned media through search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine marketing. Objectives will include improving organic searches by 50%, decreasing the bounce rate by 40%, and increasing PlayStation site traffic by 40%, all within a year. PlayStation's SEO Specialist will play an integral role in achieving these objectives. PlayStation will ensure the links on their website can be accessed by search engine databases, will implement keywords onto their site and social media channels, as well as improve link building.

4.2. Marketing Action Plan

Tactic	Desired Outcome	Tasks	Timeframe
Employ PlayStation Influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase consumers. • Increase video game sales by 20%. • Increase brand awareness. • Promote consumer's favorite 'let's play' gamers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videos will be on YouTube and Twitch. • Promotions of PlayStation Influencer videos will be posted on PlayStation's social media channels (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter). PlayStation Influencers will promote the video on their respective social media channels (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube Community, Twitch Events). • PlayStation would begin with Markiplier, Jacksepticeye, and GameGrumps. • Emails will be sent to subscribers regarding the newest PlayStation Influencer. 	One Year (2020 – 2021)
Host Twitter Contests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase follower count by 5%. • Increase brand awareness. • Increase customer relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contest will be held on Twitter. Promotions of the event will be placed on branded channels, which would include PlayStation Influencer's channels. • Email subscribers would receive an email promoting the event. 	Two Years (2020 – 2022)
Sponsor Esports Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase 18-year-old target demographic by 10%. • Increase game sales. • Foster customer relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of the event would be held on all branded social media channels, including PlayStation Influencer's social media. • Send notifications to email subscribers. • Include ad placement in Game Informer. • Conduct exclusive interviews with reputable sites to promote the event. • Include banner on emails, on PlayStation's website, and PlayStation's YouTube channel. 	One Year (2020 – 2021)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include flyers at check-out desks of Walmart, Target, and GameStop. 	
E3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase brand awareness. • Increase sales by 10%. • Build customer relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a booth specifically showing and selling PlayStation games. • Provide handouts showing any sales or events PlayStation is having. If no events or sales are occurring, then provide handouts of the top PlayStation games of the year. • Have PlayStation signs around the event. • Have employees proactively reach out to potential consumers. • Show gameplay and trailers of PlayStation games to consumers. • The event will occur annually in June. 	One Year (2020 – 2021)
In stores (Target, Walmart, GameStop)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase sales by 5%. • Increase competitive advantage in PlayStation's favor. • Showcase PlayStation products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have signs to attract consumers to PlayStation games. • Have a console within stores to have consumers test PlayStation games. • Different games will be available monthly. • The latest console will be available. 	One Year (2020 – 2021)
Game Informer Magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase brand awareness. • Increase sales by 6%. • Foster customer relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include advertisements for PlayStation consoles, games, and accessories monthly. • Show specs of new PlayStation consoles and benefits to consumers. • Provide exclusive interviews to Game Informer about latest games. 	Two Years (2020 – 2022)
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase posts on social media channels by 25%. • Interact more with consumers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post gameplay. • Post behind-the-scenes content. • Post consistently with the assistance of Hootsuite. • Respond to consumer inquiries on social media. 	One Year (2020 – 2021)

5.0 Content Publishing Plan

Consumers need to have several avenues in order to obtain information from PlayStation. PlayStation must distribute information through a variety of means and facilitate interaction between and amongst consumers.

5.1. Distribution Strategy

PlayStation will post on several social media channels each day. Each platform will have daily posts either screened or posted by PlayStation's Social Media Specialist to ensure brand identity is maintained. Each channel will promote events and sales, showcase gameplay, video game creation, and products. Instagram would incorporate several hashtags to ensure search engines can easily find posts. YouTube will need to be high-quality and include keywords in the transcript of the video. Hootsuite will be the tool utilized in order for posts to be made on time amongst all platforms.

PlayStation will allow consumers to sign up for newsletters that feature industry news, new products, sales, and special events. All emails will be sent out at 8: 00 a.m. PST and frequency will vary depending upon what is being sent out. Newsletters will be sent out daily, sales information will be sent out monthly, and special events will be sent out annually and as the events get closer. The tone within PlayStation's email marketing tactics will be positive and excited. The 'from' line from the email will list 'PlayStation'. The subject line of the email would need to provide the enticing content to have consumers view the email.

At E3, PlayStation would have a booth specifically for the company at the event and provide game demonstrations. Within third-party retailers, there would be signs to attract consumers and a console within stores to have consumers test PlayStation games. Within Game Informer Magazine, PlayStation would include advertisements of consoles, games, and accessories and provide exclusive interviews to Game Informer about latest games.

5.1.1. Brand Key Messages

PlayStation wants to showcase to consumers how important they are, which is why the company will primarily be focusing on interacting with them and building their relationship. Specifically, for the Twitter contests, PlayStation's messages will be "PlayStation cares about its fans; that's why we are giving away a free PlayStation 4 Pro! To enter, you must post #PlayStationContest and follow PlayStation's official Twitter account". For the PlayStation Influencer campaign, PlayStation would state "Let us know who you want to be a PlayStation Influencer and what games you want them to play". For the esports sponsorship, PlayStation would state "PlayStation is sponsoring an esports event specifically for PlayStation gamers! Want more details before they are released to the public? Sign up for our email newsletters".

5.1.2. Message Targeting

PlayStation will be posting on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and Twitch (through PlayStation Influencers). PlayStation will have advertisements within Game Informer, at E3, within third-party retailers, and at the esports competition.

6.0 References

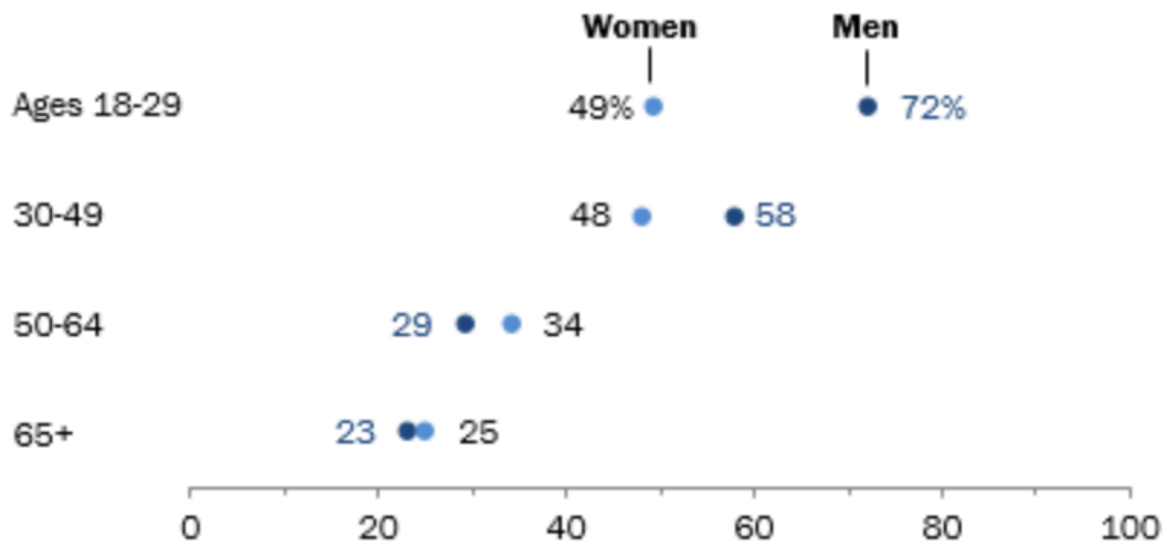
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7.0 Appendices

Appendix A:

A majority of young men often or sometimes play video games

% of U.S. adults who say they often/sometimes play video games on a computer, TV, game console, or portable device like a cellphone



Source: Surveys conducted March 13-27 and April 4-18, 2017.

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Appendix B:

Factor	What's Happening	Impact	Term	Options Moving Forward
Social	New generations of consumers result in new entertainment desires.	PlayStation would constantly need to update their products and be aware of what consumers want.	Short and long term	PlayStation would need to consistently conduct research to determine what consumers want and how to develop that to suit their needs and be viable to PlayStation.
	Consumers demand more virtual reality games.	With virtual reality gaming becoming more popular, PlayStation would need to divert more time and energy in order to be an industry leader with the latest products consumers demand.	Long term	PlayStation will need to analyze what consumers want in virtual reality games and develop new methods to meet the new product's standards.
Technological	Newer technological advancements can result in outdated equipment.	Consumers would not purchase outdated products, resulting in a loss of income for PlayStation.	Short and long term	PlayStation would need to ensure they have consumer's desires in mind. With this information, they can determine how much of a product to produce and provide to consumers.
	Hackers can bypass security systems and steal consumer information.	This can severely impact the PlayStation's relationship with consumers and harm PlayStation's brand image.	Short and long term	PlayStation will need to ensure its systems are constantly protected. If a security breach were to occur, PlayStation must announce to consumers immediately when a breach occurs and explain how they would protect their consumers.
Economic	Consumers may not be financially stable to purchase newer products.	If consumers cannot purchase products, it would result in a financial loss for PlayStation.	Short and long term	PlayStation must stay up-to-date on the state of the economy and hear feedback from their consumers.
	For consumers who have more disposable income, it will require more pressure for companies to create new products.	If consumers are able to purchase more, PlayStation would need to consistently make good quality games to meet consumer demand.	Short and long term	In addition to staying up-to-date on the state of the economy, PlayStation will also need to ensure they can develop enough products when consumers demand it.
Environment	PlayStation has reduced power consumption for their consoles.	By utilizing less power and creating energy-efficient consoles, PlayStation is assisting consumers by saving them money.	Long term	PlayStation will need to ensure its consoles can properly run with energy-saving initiatives and ensure they are energy-efficient.

	PlayStation has developed slimmer consoles.	By developing smaller consoles, less plastic is being used.	Long term	PlayStation will need to ensure its consoles will run properly with the new design. Consumers prefer slimmer designs and PlayStation cannot revert to bulkier systems.
Political	Certain groups are opposed to specific video game types.	These protests can result in a loss of income, as certain audiences would be unable to purchase certain games. These groups can also spread inaccurate information, hindering the company's brand and success. This can result in constituents impacting any laws that are presented to government entities.	Long term	PlayStation will need to obtain statistical data and have third parties conduct experiments to dispel people's concerns. Once any new laws are presented to government entities, PlayStation would need to voice their opinion and support it with data.
	Increases or decreases in taxes.	Every few years there are new tax laws for companies. This can either be an increase or decrease in how many taxes PlayStation must pay.	Short and long term	PlayStation needs to ensure they are up-to-date on the newest tax laws to ensure they would not break any laws. PlayStation also needs to protect itself and try to generate as much revenue as possible.
Legal	Consumers can illegally play video games.	When consumers illegally access video games, it results in a loss of income for PlayStation.	Long term	PlayStation must take a hard stance on how to combat those who illegally obtain video games. PlayStation can continue to develop methods to make it impossible for consumers to illegally play video games.
	PlayStation recently settled a class-action lawsuit.	For consumers who meet the qualifications to be a part of the settlement, this would be a financial loss for PlayStation.	Long and short term	PlayStation will need to ensure they compensate those who were affected by the lawsuit and that PlayStation legally protects itself to ensure less lawsuits will occur.
Ethical	PlayStation needs to be transparent about health issues that can arise from prolonged gameplay or certain events within games.	Consumers can have negative health implications during gameplay. PlayStation needs to ensure consumers are aware of certain health problems that may arise, so consumers can discontinue gameplay.	Long term	PlayStation will post warnings in the beginning of video games, before gameplay ensues, will post announcements when a new game is released, and will have warnings when promoting the games on social media outlets or other announcements.
	PlayStation provides several health and family benefits to its employees.	PlayStation needs to ensure its employees have reasonable access to healthcare, insurance, saving plans, and child care.	Long term	Providing these services allows employees to be more secure and reliable.