

Earned Media

Mattel, Inc. (NASDAQ: MAT) is one of the leading players in the global toy and family entertainment industry, owning an iconic product portfolio that engages consumers across various segments and motorsport enthusiasts through franchise brands such as Barbie®, Hot Wheels®, Fisher-Price®, and American Girl®. The American multinational company has garnered significant media attention in recent years, particularly after the Barbie movie premiered successfully in 2023. Mattel's market perception, investor confidence, and media sentiment can be inferred from five current industry publications on the enterprise's industry performance or market offerings.

Positive Sentiment Mattel Coverage

Over the last three years, several mainstream media outlets have published favorable news about Mattel's market performance and overall financial health, portraying the 80-year-old company as a thriving enterprise. In a 2023 Forbes article, Joan Verdon writes about the Barbie movie, highlighting how the American comedy and fantasy film boosted Mattel's sales despite investors' indifference. The publication praised the toymaker for its remarkable market performance, noting that the entity's net sales rose 9% to \$1.92 million in the last quarter of 2023, while adjusted earnings per share were \$1.08. Furthermore, Thomas Buckley's 2024 article in Bloomberg noted that Mattel's revenue increased to \$1.99 million in 2024, indicating a 3.9% growth from the \$1.92 million reported in the previous year. Additionally, Alex Barasch's write-up in The New Yorker (TNY) portrayed Mattel as a vibrant, creative, and influential organization that has successfully bridged the gap between the sentimental value of toys and Hollywood storyline. The article highlighted investors' growing admiration for the brand, which is attributed to the company's long-standing positive social values, including inclusivity and gender empowerment. Therefore, for TNY, Mattel is not only an innovative and culturally inspiring business but also an artistically engaging enterprise with a significant impact on the global toy and family entertainment industry. The positive market performance and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives of Mattel during the 2023-2024 period may foster a favorable brand attitude and enhance investor confidence.

Neutral or Negative Sentiment Coverage

Despite the positive remarks about Mattel in recent years, the media have also published negative or neutral news about the company, which might generate unfavorable brand attitudes and erode investor confidence. Ben Glickman's Wall Street Journal (WSJ) article, published in February 2024, adopted a more cautious stance on the global toy market's performance, highlighting declining sales in traditional segments, such as American Girl. The WSJ observed that while Barbie-related revenues increased between 2023 and 2024, "Mattel's overreliance on a single franchise risked predisposing the venture to volatility as consumption patterns shift." However, in October 2024, the WSJ published another article by Connor Hart explicitly stating that the company's sales decreased by 4% to \$1.84 billion in the third quarter of 2024, falling short of the \$1.86 billion that Wall Street analysts had predicted. The periodical also raised concerns about soaring manufacturing costs and frequent supply chain disruptions, noting that these developments are likely to affect the entity's future profitability. Thus, media sentiment can harm Mattel's corporate reputation and deter shareholders, as news portrays the multinational as a struggling venture in an uncertain market.

Conclusion

Recent publications by Forbes, The New Yorker, Bloomberg, and The Wall Street Journal express positive and negative sentiments about Mattel's market performance, potentially influencing brand perception and investor confidence in different ways. Nonetheless, the articles have been predominantly favorable, focusing on Barbie's blockbuster success, the company's strategic transition, brand revitalization, CSR initiatives, and rising revenues, which depict the enterprise as a promising venture for shareholders. However, some reports express uncertainty about the enterprise's sustainability, raising concerns about rising production costs, supply chain disruptions, shifting consumer patterns, and the associated decline in future sales. Therefore, Mattel's earned media narrative advances a compelling recovery story, strategically positioning the company in the global toy market as a rejuvenated entertainment leader that prioritizes its legacy brand and innovative products.

References

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