

The Future of Play in a Digital World With Jason Bunge, CMO of Hasbro

Welcome to this episode of the Marketing Vanguard podcast. Today, Jenny Rooney speaks with Jason Bunge, CMO of Hasbro, in a conversation that challenges traditional notions of marketing leadership and explores the future of play in a digital world.

Jason brings experience from technology companies including Skype, Microsoft, Riot Games, and EA before joining Hasbro two years ago. The conversation explores Hasbro's transformation from a traditional toy company to a diversified entertainment portfolio spanning physical toys, digital gaming, and trading cards through Wizards of the Coast.

Jason discusses how the company navigates generational shifts in play patterns and how marketing must adapt to serve different audiences across multiple business lines.

Jason Bunge serves as chief marketing officer at Hasbro, where he leads marketing strategy across the company's diverse portfolio of toys, games, and entertainment properties. Previously, he held senior marketing roles at EA Games, Riot Games, Microsoft, Trulia, and Skype. He holds an MBA from Harvard Business School and brings experience across both B2B and consumer marketing in technology and entertainment industries.

Episode highlights:

[03:10] Defining Marketing's Strategic Role – Jason emphasizes

the need for marketers to move beyond tactical execution to strategic leadership. He argues that marketing leaders must proactively define their role rather than let others do it for them: “If you’re not putting in front of them a different point of view, a different way to think about it, a different lens to use, it’s really difficult for a CMO or any marketer to find both impact opportunities, but also joy in the profession.”

[06:42] The Challenge of Universal Marketing Opinions – Jason addresses the unique challenge marketers face where everyone in the organization thinks they understand marketing: “Marketing is one of those interesting disciplines where one of its unique attributes is that everyone else in the company thinks they know marketing better than you do. And it’s because they’re consumers, and they’re like, ‘I know what good ads are.’” He emphasizes the need for marketing leaders to establish their expertise and strategic perspective.

[13:59] Hasbro’s Multi-Business Portfolio Strategy – Jason explains Hasbro’s transformation into a diversified entertainment company with three distinct business lines: traditional toys, Wizards of the Coast (Magic: The Gathering and D&D), and upcoming video games. He discusses the marketing challenge of serving different audiences efficiently: “The role of marketing in each of those is quite different. And so from an intellectual standpoint, it’s super fun. But then also from just a business challenge standpoint, how do you scale?”

[18:19] Generational Shifts in Play – Jason shares insights on how different generations engage with play, noting an interesting inversion: “What we’re seeing is, and Lego would say this too and Mattel as well, it’s the adults that are going back to the physical side. The millennials as they age and even Gen Z a little bit, there’s all this data around them seeking out tactile experiences outside of screen.” This insight drives Hasbro’s strategy for lifetime engagement across age groups.

[22:49] Building Franchise Value – Jason discusses the complexity of building franchises, emphasizing the need to identify core brand value before expanding: “You’ve got to first build to clearly define where your brand gets its value from. There has to be a core, a center of gravity. And then your concentric circles around that, basically, is the ecosystem you build.” He uses Disney as an example of successful franchise building with clear core value propositions.

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