Walgreens and Mattel Share How Their Brands Have Evolved at CES 2021

In a special edition of CMO Moves from the CES C-Suite track, Adweek Chief Community Officer Nadine Dietz sat down with Vineet Mehra, Global Chief Marketing Officer and Chief Customer Officer-Walgreens Boots Alliance, and Lisa McKnight, SVP and Global Head of Barbie & Dolls Portfolio-Mattel, Inc. who not only pivoted their communication strategies during the pandemic, but also shifted the focus of their product offerings to meet the new needs of their consumers.

Owning the Growth Agenda

Even with the general operator mentality, Lisa proudly specializes in owning the growth agenda at Mattel. She works closely with all partners to find ways to expand the legacy brand. Touching on the potential of growth for a brand that spans multiple generations, she touched on the different areas the brand is exploring today—social media, editorial partnerships, gaming, etc.

“To me, the ultimate barometer is when a CFO recognizes a CMO is a growth driver.” Vineet dove into recent examples such as Walgreens Advertising Group which has created a new revenue stream for the company by leveraging their first party data.

Revamping the Consumer Experience

As discussed on the 150th episode of CMO Moves with Vineet, he believes strongly in the power of collaboration between the CIO and the CMO. Humorously acknowledging his Chief

Information Officer as his “digital soulmate,” Vineet noted how they are currently working together on new innovations centered around the most important consumer needs to solve for right now, in addition to product and experience roadmaps for what’s to come.

In terms of tending to consumer needs in the modern day, Mattel, Inc. makes sure to stay on top of it while ensuring the brand stays close to its’ roots, in particular the Barbie brand. Lisa and the team tailored a lot of the content to reflect what was going on in the world. “As we went into quarantine, so did Barbie. She started wearing a mask. She started baking banana bread. She participated in all sorts of challenges. So, we wanted it to bring some levity and entertainment and comfort, but also teachable opportunities.”

Nadine and the speakers went on to close the session by discussing what they are most optimistic for in 2021: leadership with empathy at the forefront, companies addressing the DEI needs of today, and the next generation of marketers. “I think we have an up-and-coming group of marketers that I think are going to make our industry that much stronger and that much better,” said Vineet. “And I’m really excited for the future of our industry because of them.”

This episode is also available on Spotify, iHeartRadio, and Apple Podcasts.

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