

WBD Debuts New Dune Series, Ad Products and One WBD System at Upfront

Mark your calendar for Mediaweek, October 29-30 in New York City. We'll unpack the biggest shifts shaping the future of media—from tv to retail media to tech—and how marketers can prep to stay ahead. [Register](#) with early-bird rates before sale ends!

Warner Bros. Discovery unveiled a slate of new content, ad products and consumption metrics at its TV upfront presentation in Madison Square Garden on Wednesday morning.

The pitch, whose theme was Make It Happen Here, centered on the iconic intellectual property WBD has at its disposal and a reenergized stable of television and film following last year's writers strike.

"Intellectual property is the engine that drives everything, and no one owns more valuable IP than WBD," ad sales chief Jon Steinlauf said during the event. "We also have tentpole franchises that drive local fandom and the ability to create experiences around them, deepening that connection."

Overall, the company sought to emphasize this upfront as the first for its fully realized WarnerMedia and Discovery merger that occurred in 2022. With the writers strike and pandemic fully behind WBD, its forthcoming slate of content, ad capabilities and reach are finally beginning to showcase the potential of the combined firms.

WBD's IP Upfront

Across its star-studded presentation, WBD made the case that its forthcoming content slate is one of the strongest collections of film and television series on offer.

In particular, news of a forthcoming spinoff series from the popular Dune franchise, called Dune Prophecy, aims to capitalize on audience interest in the property. The series, which takes place 10,000 years before the events of the films, will follow the rise of the Bene Gesserit.

The company also announced that its next Game of Thrones spinoff, A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms, will debut in 2025, and The Penguin, its extension of The Batman universe, will premiere later this year.

Likewise, follow-up seasons of hits including House of the Dragon, The Last of Us, And Just Like That and White Lotus rounded out WBD's IP Upfront.

WBD also plans to take further advantage of its film pipeline, offering marquee sponsorship opportunities to advertisers as its film products move from theatrical release to their debut on streaming service Max.

Forthcoming and recently released titles like Dune 2, Furiosa, Beetlejuice and Joker 2 will be marketed more prominently when they become available on Max. The product, called Screen to Stream, is one of several new advertising offerings WBD hopes to promote.

Expanded sports offering and new talent

Amid the fervor of the NBA Playoffs, WBD placed special emphasis on the breadth of its sports properties.

In particular, basketball legend and NBA on TNT host Charles Barkley reiterated the unique draw of live sports for advertisers. TNT Sports reaches more than 150 million fans across its portfolio, according to the company.

WBD pointed marketers' attention to its popular NCAA March Madness property, which drove almost \$1 billion in ad sales earlier this year. It also has a variety of new sports rights, including a multiyear deal with Nascar, and announced the addition of famed driver Dale Earnhardt Jr. as the newest member of its Nascar broadcast team.

Additionally, WBD announced the extension of its Hard Knocks series, an offseason version of the franchise that will follow the New York Giants.

New ad products

The company unveiled a host of new ad products at its upfront, whose connectivity throughout the WBD universe was emphasized by chief revenue and strategy officer Bruce Campbell.

"I'm very proud to announce that One WBD is officially here," Campbell said. "We're here for hundreds of millions of fans around the world."

As part of this new approach, the company debuted a host of new products. Underscoring the new capabilities offered by CTV technology, WBD touted its new shoppable ads, which will enable viewers to explore featured products during the show and find more ways to purchase.

It also joined a host of other streamers in touting its advanced contextual targeting products. These ads will tailor advertiser messages to match the emotional tone of specific content moments, all while ensuring brand suitability.

Finally, a new host of interactive ads will feature engagement opportunities like Click to Contact, Trivia and Polls, and Viewer's Choice.

"On average, WBD content is consumed by 85% of U.S. adults," Steinlauf said. "Our content and scale give us the power to penetrate the zeitgeist to shape pop culture and inspire consumer behavior. We call this the WBD Effect."

Recommended articles

<https://www.adweek.com/convergent-tv/wbd-upfront-2024-ad-products/>