

EARNED MEDIA - Xinyue Zou

Option 1: Mattel ESG Initiatives for Thought-Leadership Piece

Not Child's Play: Why Toymakers Must Embrace Sustainability

Every parent has experienced the joy of their child opening a new toy, but what follows is a mountain of plastic packaging and broken toys. This undoubtedly reminds us that although the beloved toy industry is renowned for bringing joy, it is also striving to deal with the scourge of plastic pollution.

In fact, 78% of parents say that the sustainability of toys is of vital importance to them. They hope that toys can not only make children happy but also conform to their values. As consumer expectations change, our industry must transform the way toys are designed and manufactured. Sustainable innovation is not a fleeting trend but the future of toys.

As a global leader in the toy industry, Mattel is facing this reality with ambitious goals. Our company is committed to using 100% recyclable or bio-based plastics in our products and packaging by 2030. It is not easy to achieve this goal, but we have made significant progress. Just last year, we launched a matchbox toy car based on a Tesla sports car, made from 99% recycled materials. This toy has even obtained CarbonNeutral® certification, proving that the carbon footprint of the toy car can approach zero.

In our Barbie collection, we have launched inspiring products such as Dr. Jane Goodall Barbie for women. Its feature is that it has no plastic packaging and is mainly made of recycled Marine plastic. This eco-friendly doll was named one of the best inventions of the year by Time magazine, proving that sustainable development and innovation can go hand in hand.

Making more environmentally friendly toys requires not only new materials but also a change in mindset. We are committed to considering how to recycle our products when their service life comes to an end when designing them. For instance, our PlayBack program encourages customers to return old toys so that we can recycle and reuse these materials. We have also established toy repair services, such as the American Girl Doll Care Center. These measures not only educate children to use toys in an environmentally friendly way, but also greatly extend the lifespan of toys.

Trends in various industries around the world also emphasize the importance of ESG. The automotive industry worldwide - and the main source of inspiration for our toy cars - is accelerating towards an electric and low-carbon future. Sustainable development is no longer optional in any industry. It has built consumer trust, met increasingly strict regulatory standards, and frequently driven innovation, reducing costs in the long run. But apart from data and regulations, this also concerns leadership. As one of the world's largest toy manufacturers, we are eager to set an example and lead the industry to completely transform the way toys are produced, used and disposed of, turning this traditionally plastic-dependent industry into a model of a circular economy.

More importantly, embracing sustainable development is fully in line with our core mission: to enrich children's lives. If we make tomorrow's Earth uninhabitable, then what's the use of stimulating children's imagination? While they exert their innate curiosity, they also expect us - parents, businesses, and leaders - to make the right choices. It is time for all toy manufacturers to step up their efforts, as building a more environmentally friendly future is not a child's play.

Strategy Note

In crafting this thought leadership piece, my strategy was to position this executive as a responsible industry leader taking a firm stance on plastic waste and sustainable innovation within the toy sector. This focus aligns with core themes of Mattel's current ESG initiatives and directly relates to the company's public environmental commitments, thereby enhancing the credibility and weight of this commentary. The tone remains approachable, sincere, and hopeful, reflecting Mattel's family-centric brand ethos while emphasizing its professionalism and accountability. I avoid promotional language, instead framing Mattel's actions as exemplary solutions to broader challenges rather than marketing gimmicks. The compelling headline is designed to capture the attention of mainstream media editors and readers. In summary, this sincere and insightful commentary explores how play can drive environmental stewardship. It not only elevates Mattel's brand credibility but also engages stakeholders in critical discussions shaping the future of the toy industry.