



Warcraft Arclight Rumble at BlizzCon 2023: Marketing and Communications Strategy



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Warcraft Arclight Rumble at BlizzCon 2023:

Marketing and Communications Strategy

Blizzard Entertainment's Warcraft franchise is expanding to mobile platforms with the worldwide launch of Warcraft Arclight Rumble (WAR) at BlizzCon 2023. While BlizzCon attendees are older than WAR's 13-24 year old target demographic, it is a great opportunity to reach existing Warcraft players and springboard to wider audiences. Our marketing and communications strategy aims to drive downloads and spread word of mouth via digital and traditional approaches pre-BlizzCon, at BlizzCon, and post-BlizzCon.

Industry overview

The global games market was estimated to generate \$184.4 billion in 2022, down -4.3% from 2021 with 3.2 billion players all over the globe (Wijman, 2023). Among different types of games (downloaded/boxed PC games, browser PC games, consoles, etc.), mobile games generate the most revenue at around \$92.2 billion in 2022, accounting for 50% of the gaming industry. Experts believe the decline in 2022 was caused by the economic recession, leaving people with less disposable income, but forecast an increase in the global games market. It is projected to reach \$211.2 billion by 2025 with mobile games generating \$103.1 billion and the US generating \$69.59 billion alone (Wijman, 2023; Statista, 2023).

In American mobile gaming culture, popular genres of mobile games include (ranked by descending popularity): puzzle/breakout, card/casino, word/number/brain games, action, adventure, hidden object, farm/city/island simulation, party/board games, empire-building/strategy, and battle card/collectibles.

Among these games, puzzle/breakout games have the biggest gender disparity; in the US, 22% of female gamers played them in the past month while only 12% of male gamers played them (Ahmed, 2021). For action games, only 6% of female gamers play while 10% of male gamers have played in the past month. 8% of male gamers and 5% of female gamers have played adventure games on their phone in the past month.

Historically, there has been a condescending attitude toward casual mobile games and “bro gamers” or “dudebros” from so-called core gamers. They criticize gaming publishers for making games that pander to casual players (Clark, 2013). However, as more mobile games are published and make up a greater percentage of the market share, more gaming companies are focusing on mobile games rather than traditional games.

In the future, IP-based mobile games will have a larger share of the market, as companies compete with quality console and PC games. Multiplatform core games – real-time online, Player versus Player (PvP), and cross-platform games – will be more popular, as will esports-friendly games. Esports audiences reached 523 million globally in 2022, generating nearly \$1.38 billion, and are expected to keep growing (Salz, 2023). Therefore, it’s only natural for mobile games to further infiltrate the esports market.

Company overview: Blizzard

Blizzard Entertainment (originally Silicon & Synapse) was founded in 1991 by three UCLA graduates (Ray, 2023). The company is most widely known for its Warcraft franchise, as well as Diablo, Starcraft, and Call of Duty franchises.

In its early years, the company’s main focus was creating ports for other companies/studios. They converted existing video games for different computer systems, “porting” them to a different platform (Ray, 2023). In 1993, the company developed its own games: Rock n’ Roll

Racing and The Lost Vikings. In 1994, they became officially known as Blizzard and released the first game of the Warcraft franchise (Ray, 2023). In 1998, Blizzard became part of video game publisher Vivendi Games. The Warcraft franchise continued to grow, including four more titles and several expansion packs.

In 2006, with the growing online multiplayer game market, third-party video game publisher Activision Publishing, Inc. was eager to have a multiplayer game title under its belt. At the same time, Vivendi Games, owner of Blizzard Entertainment, was not performing as viably as they would have liked. After deliberation, Activision and Vivendi merged in 2008 with Activision as the senior partner, forming Activision Blizzard. Subsidiaries under Activision Blizzard include: Activision Publishing, Blizzard Entertainment, Major League Gaming, and Activision Blizzard Studios.

Activision Blizzard works to connect with its global audience through its franchises: Warcraft, Diablo, Overwatch, StarCraft, Call of Duty, Candy Crush. Blizzard has eight core values that guide the company every day (Blizzard, 2020). These consist of:

1. Gameplay First - Blizzard aims to make its games as fun an experience as it can and make sure that every aspect of the company reflects this interest.
2. Commit to Quality - Blizzard approaches all tasks with care in order to ensure the best quality of all games and the gaming experience overall.
3. Play Nice; Play Fair - Blizzard wants to make sure that all interactions with people involved in the company, from individual players to business partners, are respectful. Both online and offline interactions and relationships are important to the overall success of Blizzard.

4. Embrace Your Inner Geek - Every Blizzard employee has their own unique passions that drive them, they are encouraged to embrace these passions.
5. Every Voice Matters - Blizzard wants its employees to be vocal about their opinions and speak up when they feel strongly about something.
6. Learn and Grow - Blizzard encourages its employees and the company overall to be there when others need help or support.
7. Think Globally - Blizzard is a global brand and respecting the cultural diversity of its audience base and employees is important.
8. Lead Responsibly - Making ethical choices and decisions and keeping the best interest of its audiences at its core is important to Blizzard.

In terms of financials, revenue is generated across three main channels; digital online, which makes up the most revenue at 82%, followed by retail and other sources (Browne & Kharpal, 2023). Each gaming platform also generates revenue, with video game consoles at 27% of revenue, followed by PC entertainment, mobile, and other sources (Browne & Kharpal, 2023).

In early 2022, plans were announced that Activision Blizzard would be acquired by Microsoft for nearly \$70 billion (Microsoft, 2022). This followed with Microsoft's growing presence in the gaming industry across mobile devices, PC, and consoles (Microsoft, 2022). However, the UK Competition and Markets Authority blocked the acquisition for reasons concerning competition in the cloud gaming space (Browne & Kharpal, 2023). They claimed, "Allowing Microsoft to take such a strong position in the cloud gaming market just as it begins to grow rapidly would risk undermining the innovation that is crucial to the development of these opportunities" (Browne & Kharpal, 2023). Moving forward, Microsoft's Vice Chair and President plans to appeal the decision.

Brand analysis: World of Warcraft

Blizzard introduced the Warcraft franchise in 1994 and it is one of the highest-grossing video game franchises of all time. The core games of the Warcraft franchise include Warcraft, Warcraft II, Warcraft III, WoW, and Hearthstone. Warcraft, Warcraft II, and Warcraft III are real-time strategy games; WoW is a massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG); and Hearthstone is an online digital collectible card game. WoW is the best-selling title of the franchise and is one of the most popular MMORPGs of all time, reaching its peak number of subscribers in 2010 at over 12 million, though the number has declined over the years (Ferjan, 2023).

WoW is known for its rich storytelling, immersive gameplay, and strong community. Immersed in a fictional world called Azeroth, WoW players can engage in adventure, exploration, camaraderie, and competition as orcs, humans, elves, and the undead. WoW has a high level of brand awareness, with millions of players and fans worldwide. It has spawned multiple sequels, expansions, novels, comics, and a feature film, so even non-players might know about WoW or at least the Warcraft franchise.

SWOT analysis: World of Warcraft

Strengths: The Warcraft franchise has existed for nearly 30 years and WoW has existed for nearly 20, garnering critical acclaim and establishing a strong fanbase and audience, as previously described. WoW has been featured in countless forms of media and played and reviewed by celebrities.

Weaknesses: Although WoW has a strong fan base, it is also an aging fan base, and the number of players have declined significantly over the years. In terms of mobile development Blizzard has experience with mobile ports and mobile development partnerships, Blizzard does

not have prior experience building a mobile game from the ground up. Given that WAR will be Blizzard's first, we have limited context for how fans may react.

Opportunities: Mobile gaming captures the largest share and fastest-growing market of players (more than game consoles and PC), proving great market opportunity. Mobile gaming allows the Warcraft franchise to target a whole new audience of players while giving existing fans a new way to engage with their community. It also offers fans a new way to engage with their favorite characters in bite-sized moments without having to be tied to a console. Given that WoW is nearly 20 years old, the aging fanbase may not have as much time on their hands.

Threats: In line with weaknesses, WoW is nearly 20 years old, the original audience/fanbase has aged since the game launched. The players may have families and obligations now that they did not when the game first emerged. Another potential threat is resistance to mobile gaming. We must consider if long-time fans and gamers will be hesitant to adopt this new mode of play. On the same accord, the new art style is different from the style that's existed for nearly 20 years on PC. Fans may be upset about the change.

Competitive analysis: Clash Royale & Marvel Strike Force

WAR is the most recent expansion of the Warcraft franchise and its gameplay is completely different from that of WoW. WAR is a mobile game that combines the genres of mobile strategy and hero collector. WAR's competitor in the mobile strategic game arena is Clash Royale, and its competitor in the hero collector arena is Marvel Strike Force. However, Clash Royale stands out as the main competitor, as those following WAR's announcement have been quick to draw comparisons about the similar cartoonish art style. As such, it will be critical to distinguish WAR from Clash Royale in the marketing strategy. While the distinction between

WAR and Marvel Strike Force may not need to be communicated directly in the marketing strategy, it is still helpful in order to understand the value that WAR brings.

Clash Royale was released in 2016 and quickly became the highest-grossing app on the US iOS App Store (Mukherjee, 2020). It is a PvP tower defense game with bite-sized gameplay. It is easy to start and offers a large variety of cards and flexible ways to organize decks. However, the singular gameplay can become repetitive, particularly as the amount of new content is limited. When developers do expand the card pool, the functionality of previous cards might be adjusted or weakened, and players may need to take extra time reorganizing their decks. WAR expands on the gameplay, offering both PvP and Player versus Environment (PvE) campaign maps, as well as conquests, dungeons, raids, and co-ops. Furthermore, WAR is more of a tower offense game than tower defense.

Marvel Strike Force was released in 2018 and benefits from an expansive IP. The consistent and frequent updates on characters attract audiences who are passionate about Marvel heroes. However, the one-dimensional gameplay is less interactive and oftentimes fails to engage a broader range of players, especially those unfamiliar with Marvel heroes. Over time, collecting heroes can feel time-consuming and robotic. On the other hand, WAR devotes a lot of effort to character designs to keep the heroes relevant and the collection meaningful over the long term.

Audience analysis

Over 30 years, Warcraft has cultivated an extensive community. To understand our audience more precisely, we have segmented them by their level of activity.

Active players

Currently, WoW has approximately 1 million daily players and 8.5 million monthly players (Tooker, 2023). Though the player base has declined since its peak in 2010, the franchise had a revival with the release of WoW Classic in 2019 (Live Player Count, 2022).

Geographic: China makes up the greatest share of WoW's player base at about 50% and the US is a close second (Ferjan, 2023). Notably, WoW does not have a subscription-based model in China like it does in other countries.

Demographic: The average WoW player is 31.29 years old (Ferjan, 2023). The majority of players are male. Interestingly, 93.12% of female players choose to play female characters in the game, while only 65.73% of males play male characters. By ethnicity (excluding the player base in China), the majority of players are white (over 80%), followed by Hispanic/Latino at 8%.

Psychographic: WoW players have a love for fantasy and are interested in technological subcategories including video games, adult, computer electronics, and programming. Topics of interest include news, games, and shopping (Similarweb, 2023). BattleNet and Twitch are popular platforms they engage on.

Behavioral: WoW's average daily playtime is 3.7 hours per day, with approximately 75% playing for more than 1.9 hours/day and 25% playing for more than 4.9 hours/day. 50% of players are subscribed for more than 500 days, and their loyalty proves the success of the game.

Lapsed players

The number of WoW players has declined significantly over the years, from over 12 million subscribers at its peak in 2010 to an estimate of less than 5 million now (Ferjan, 2023). Many players who grew up playing WoW are older now with family and obligations. They are in a different stage in life and don't have as much time to play games.

New players

Mobile gaming captures the largest share and fastest-growing market of players, proving great market opportunity for WAR. With WAR, Blizzard is interested in expanding from their maturing audience to target new players 13-24 years old. This demographic is different from WoW's existing player base. Furthermore, WAR is very different from WoW in terms of gameplay and aesthetic. Thus, our strategy is not focused on converting WoW players so much as to simply reach new WAR players via WoW players and other methods at BlizzCon.

Strategic objectives & success metrics

Our marketing and communications strategy is focused on the worldwide launch of WAR at BlizzCon, including campaigns leading up to BlizzCon, at BlizzCon, and afterward. While BlizzCon attendees are older than WAR's 13-24 year old target demographic, it is a great opportunity to reach existing Warcraft players and springboard to wider audiences. Warcraft players are a fantastic fanbase and make up a large portion of the audience at BlizzCon, so the borrowed equity of WoW will give WAR a winning advantage from the start. Furthermore, there is additional excitement around BlizzCon going offline for the first time since the pandemic to take advantage of. BlizzCon can finally bring this digital fantasy back into the physical world, and we have the opportunity to powerfully integrate digital and traditional marketing strategies.

Our objectives for BlizzCon are to drive downloads from in-person and virtual attendees, as well as leverage word of mouth via these attendees to ultimately drive more downloads from wider audiences outside of BlizzCon. As such, the KPI we are most interested in is total number of installs, with a target of downloads by at least 60% of in-person BlizzCon attendees and at least 20% of remote audiences (including non-BlizzCon attendees). This should be measured in the weeks leading up to BlizzCon (as there are rollouts prior to the worldwide launch, as well as

pre-registration for automatic downloads once the game is launched), during BlizzCon, and after in order to gauge the effect of our campaigns at BlizzCon on the rate of installs. Other relevant install-related metrics are app store conversion rate, web-to-app conversions, click-through rate (CTR), click-to-install (CTI), non-organic installs (NOI), and organic installs. Engagement and revenue-related metrics are also useful to evaluate the quality of those installs post-BlizzCon. These include retention rate, average sessions per user, uninstall rate, daily active users (DAU), monthly active users (MAU), lifetime value (LTV), and average revenue per user (ARPU).

To measure word of mouth, we are interested in the volume of #WarcraftRumble mentions, share of search, and social media reach. The target KPI is 10% increase in hashtag mentions from BlizzCon 2019's relevant hashtags, 10% increase in share of search, and 10% increase in social media reach in the weeks immediately following BlizzCon. Other useful metrics include website pageviews, sessions, users, and new visitors, as well as social media impressions, and audience growth rate. The website metrics would be particularly informative regarding the download pre-registration link on the website.

Strategic approach (digital and traditional)

Pre-BlizzCon

BlizzCon ticketing: web advertising & zero party data. We recommend integrating WAR advertising into the BlizzCon ticketing page. This is an easy opportunity to increase awareness and brand recognition for the mobile game. Additionally, given that attendees have to purchase tickets through Blizzard's platform, this is the ideal time to collect consumer data.

Ticket giveaway contests. Ticket giveaway contests can help garner earned media and publicity, and can be announced on social platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, TikTok, Discord, Reddit). Participants are encouraged to share on these platforms as well.

Mural spotting contest. An LA-based artist with ties to the gaming community can be hired to create a physical mural in the city. This activation will use the new WAR art style to reinforce recognition of the new game. Geolocation features will confirm a participant's location and make the art come to life through their smartphone camera. The mural will also incorporate a QR code, which will prompt participants to enter the ticket giveaway contest. Participants can earn extra entries for each social platform they share the mural on, as well as for downloading or pre-registering to download WAR (depending on where the game is in development). The ultimate goal of this activation is to increase brand awareness and social buzz for the mobile game, promote downloads, and set up an Instagram opportunity for earned media.

Social media meme contest. Memes are a form of expression shared among cultural groups and steeped in pop culture references. While memes have existed long before their popularization by Gen Z, Gen Z are what others think about when they think of meme cultures. Growing up consuming visual media on digital platforms, Gen Z are particularly attuned to culture (Arboleda, 2022). Their memes are surreal, absurd, iconic, and created as a way of self-expression, as well as to cope with mental health (Arboleda, 2022; Pallawarukka, 2022). Good memes can be short, snappy, and eye-catching.

Memes are great for marketing. They are inexpensive, and when used effectively, can boost engagement, create a strong sense of community within a cultural group, and humanize brands (Arboleda, 2022). Therefore, in order to create social relevance among our 13-24 year old target demographic, it would be useful to have a pre-launch campaign on social media leveraging meme culture in any kind of way.

We also realize that if the humor is inappropriate or does not align with Gen Z values, it can lead to potential backlash. One way to avoid this issue is to have users generate memes

themselves so that their memes can fit their sense of humor and be authentic in their community, rather than appearing as a corporate tactic to please the younger generation. Therefore, in addition to the mural spotting contest, we can host a meme making contest on WAR's website, focused on comparing WAR's and WoW's aesthetics in a lighthearted and playful way.

Our website would provide a library of meme templates, WAR stickers, and WoW stickers, as well as options to upload custom templates and stickers. Participants would be able to create memes and submit them all in one place on our website, and earn extra contest entries by sharing their creations on social platforms with #WarcraftRumble and #WarcraftRumbleMeme.

Apart from engaging younger audiences, the meme contest also serves to promote the new WAR art style even before the game's worldwide launch, as contest participants would voluntarily go through the WAR sticker library and embrace the new art style.

Social media filters. Apart from the meme contest, social media filters are another way to create buzz online around WAR before the worldwide launch. We would like to introduce sets of social media filters on different platforms such as TikTok, Snapchat, and Instagram.

While fancy beauty filters are some of the most popular types of social media filters, they also face controversy regarding beauty standards. We believe that game filters and quiz filters with more lofi or campy styles are more likely to be shared, especially by teenagers and young adults, and would have a better chance of creating virality online because they are funny and elicit positive emotional responses. At the same time, they can convey the new WAR art style and its lighthearted and playful tone, as well as WAR's gameplay. Examples of quiz filters and game filters we can design are: "What Mini are you?," "What Mini do you look like?," WAR-style background filters, sticking faces on WAR-style chickens running across WAR-style game fields, PvP face-off filters for selfies of multiple people.

In general, we want our social media filters to show off the fun and casual aspects of WAR to appeal to casual mobile gamers rather than core gamers. With these filters, we could leverage the power of word of mouth on social media, attract potential new users who are not as familiar with the Warcraft IP, and drive downloads when we officially launch.

Influencer activations. We recommend collaborating with gaming influencers with ties outside the traditional gaming community (such as sports, beauty, books, interior design, etc.), as we are interested in attracting new audiences. Data shows that 61% of sports fans play action-adventure games, 41% play fighting and strategy games, and 40% play battle royale (GWI, 2021). Capitalizing on the reach of prominent influencers can help extend awareness to new target audiences and acquire new users from similar games in our competitive category.

Leading up to the event, we will have influencers publicize our pre-BlizzCon campaigns such as the ticket giveaway contest, as well as post WAR game streams on their social platforms, highlighting WAR's unique features such as the multi-dimensional gameplay modes. To ensure authenticity to their channels, we will collaborate with influencers on more content ideas. For example, influencers can post influencer package unboxings featuring a pocket arcade game, build-it-yourself figurines, a tankard, and other special items inspired by the cinematic trailer; they can tier-rank characters; host a Warcraft movie watch party or even a marathon of video game-to-movie adaptation watch parties, given their recent popularity; sports influencers can collaborate on designing and giving away WAR-inspired sports gear; beauty influencers can film a series of looks inspired by different Minis and locations. With cross-industry influencers, the possibilities are endless. Influencers would also be invited to BlizzCon and integrated in our at-BlizzCon strategies, outlined in the following section.

To reach our traditional audience, we also suggest launching a micro-influencer campaign, comprised primarily of mobile gaming influencers on popular platforms for gamers, such as Twitch, Reddit, Discord, and YouTube. Micro-influencer campaigns are effective in targeting niche communities, are more cost-effective for smaller budgets, and have notoriously high engagement. Additionally, micro-influencers are often more accessible as they're more willing to work with new products and services. Similar to the sports and beauty influencers, we recommend inviting select micro-influencers to BlizzCon to create content and engage with fans.

At BlizzCon

Goody bag & exclusive rewards. Goody bags with BlizzCon-exclusive digital (in-game) and physical items will be given out at the entrance of the conference center. In addition to putting the BlizzCon logo on some of the bags, the WAR logo can also be used on some of the bags to generate more awareness among attendees. Some physical WAR-related gifts can be added to the goody bags, such as phone charms with WAR elements on them and blind boxes with WAR Mini toys.

Giving out phone accessories would emphasize WAR's identity as a mobile game, and blind boxes would emphasize Warcraft's IP and the hero collection aspect of the game. Inside each blind box, attendees will find a randomized Mini from WAR with an information card. The info card will have the name of the Mini and a QR code on it. When the game is officially launched at BlizzCon, people will be able to download WAR on their phones and scan the QR code to add the Mini they got from the blind box to their in-game collection. To leverage the influence of BlizzCon and encourage more people to celebrate the launch of WAR, exclusive rewards will be given out. Anyone who downloads and plays WAR during the span of BlizzCon will have access to a BlizzCon-themed loot box that can be found nowhere else.

Mini Quest. In a well-designed strategic game, players are not just playing against the opponent, but also working through the unique map design to best allocate resources. To highlight this aspect, we propose a treasure hunt event called Mini Quest. It is an interactive AR experience with similar logistics as Pokemon Go. The event will transform BlizzCon into a game arena where people can search for and collect WAR Minis.

Posters will be hung at the entrance and also inside BlizzCon, encouraging people to join Mini Quest. People can scan the QR code on the poster and access the event through the prompted web page. As people walk around BlizzCon, they can hold up their phones to scan the floor and air to find and collect WAR characters. After each collection, an information card will be displayed, indicating the name and special qualities of the character. A QR code will also be shown, which people can scan with their WAR app to get additional in-game rewards.

In addition to driving downloads and highlighting the hero collector aspect of WAR, Mini Quest will also work as a way to guide people walking towards our WAR booth at BlizzCon. Collectible characters will be placed at specific locations so that after people engage in the event, they will find themselves standing next to the WAR booth, where they can explore more about the game.

PvE hands-on phone demos. For the booth, we recommend having a separate booth for WAR and placing it a little bit farther from WoW. Even though these two games share the same IP, they are inherently different. WoW is an MMORPG PC game while WAR is a mobile strategy and hero collector game. Placing them next to each other might confuse attendees.

Once attendees arrive at WAR's booth, they will see demo phones for them to try out the PvE mode of WAR. We want to highlight the PvE mode of WAR because it differentiates WAR from its main competitors like Clash Royale. Demo phones also allow attendees to try WAR

without requiring them to download the game. Although we do want to drive downloads, we also want to remove barriers that might discourage attendees from taking the game for a trial run. This is especially important to draw in attendees who are unfamiliar with WAR and might feel unsure or skeptical about the game.

Digital incentives will also be offered to encourage downloads. After each round, a QR code would appear on the phone screen, which people can save and scan in their WAR apps to get additional rewards.

PvP tournaments. PvP is a social way to play WAR and BlizzCon is a social event, so BlizzCon offers a special opportunity to showcase and enhance the PvP experience for attendees. This can be done via tournaments in collaboration with the influencers involved in our pre-BlizzCon strategies. Tournaments would be organized by influencer vs. attendee as well as influencer vs. influencer. Additionally, attendees are welcome to informally organize their own competitions.

Tournaments with influencers would be streamed on the influencers' Twitch channels and featured on WAR's Twitch front page takeover. All official collaborations and any streams tagged with #WarcraftRumble would also be featured on the page. Most importantly, the page would feature a link to drive downloads. Influencers we collaborate with would also have their own unique download links that they can put in their stream descriptions so that they can be motivated and compensated for the downloads they drive from their own audiences. This digital strategy would be particularly effective for reaching our younger target audience that is not in attendance at BlizzCon.

The influencer vs. attendee tournaments would take place at our booth during a set time period, and attendees would be able to sign up for time slots in a virtual line. By nature, these

tournaments would also double as meet-and-greets, helping us reach a larger audience. To reiterate, the tournaments would be streamed on the influencers' channels, so some attendees may be motivated by a feature on the channel. In cases where attendees are interested in competing against influencers but not as comfortable with being on camera, the stream can be restricted to the influencer for that round, ensuring an inclusive experience for all personalities.

Throughout the day, attendees and viewers can get more familiar with how WAR works via the influencer vs. attendee tournaments and hands-on phone demos. Then, we would have the main influencer vs. influencer event later in the day, which would be streamed and projected at BlizzCon. Viewers would be able to engage in the tournament through Twitch chat polls to help their favorite influencer make strategic decisions or to sabotage the other influencer, which players have fun doing, too.

Photo opportunities. We want to provide BlizzCon attendees with plenty of photo opportunities to take home happy memories and spark user-generated content and word of mouth that lasts after the convention ends. These posts can be curated by the #WarcraftRumble hashtag that is already being used by Blizzard in ongoing campaigns.

The photo opportunities are a key strategy to lean into WAR's visual aesthetic and showcase the new art style by leveraging visual motifs including but not limited to: arclight, lightning, explosive clouds, collectible Minis, accessories, towers, platforms, gears, arcades, taverns. This is particularly important as the initial reception to WAR's new art style has not been positive. Comments on the cinematic trailer criticize the new cartoon style as childish. This is not an unexpected response, given that Warcraft's existing audience is older. The challenge of greater concern is the negative association of the cartoon art style in the context of mobile games, due to an oversaturation of low-quality mobile games that use cartoon styles. However, by showcasing

the new cartoon art style in a meaningful context at BlizzCon – or at least in a new context that isn't on a mobile phone or any other kind of screen – we can start to create positive associations with it. What is convenient about the new cartoon art style is that it is inherently novel to see cartoons in a real-life context, whereas a realistic art style would require something extra to stand out in real life.

Installations for set design. Installations inspired by WAR's maps and other visual motifs – such as foliage, gold, and towers – in the new art style can be placed throughout the convention. These installations can include QR codes to drive downloads. Strategic locations to place them would be anywhere people are waiting in lines at BlizzCon, as people may seek entertainment while they're bored in line and welcome mobile gaming.

Arclight installation. We also want to create a major Instagrammable moment around a main installation. The arclight installation is inspired by the cinematic trailer, in which a Mini is thrown into a machine and caught by a beam of light. The installation would be made up of a platform large enough for a person and a few friends to stand on, designed just like the platforms that the Minis stand on, and would be surrounded by a large beam of light. If the installation is located in a dark room, then the light can shoot all the way to the ceiling. If the installation is located in a bright room, then a dark covering can be built around it – such as a cave installation in the new art style – in order to make the beam of light pop. The installation must be large and impressive enough so that everyone who comes to BlizzCon will want to come and take a photo in it, post about it on social media, and show off about themselves whether or not they are interested in Warcraft. We envision that it will be like an attraction at a contemporary art museum with a broad appeal. At the same time, it very clearly uses distinctive assets from WAR,

so that when people see these photos circulating online and are curious to find out more about it, they can very easily tell what the story is.

Traditional photo booth. A traditional photo booth with cartoon style props can showcase WAR's new art style more explicitly. This would most likely appeal to existing or prospective WAR players. Like the installations for set design, it plays with the novelty of cartoon style props in a realistic photo. Additionally, the photos would be bordered by a printed frame in the style of WAR's character cards, so attendees may enjoy the novelty of creating a custom character card.

Social media filters. We would continue to use the social media filters launched pre-BlizzCon during and after BlizzCon as well.

Post-BlizzCon

Coverage of the event should be publicized immediately following BlizzCon via press and social media. Journalists from major news outlets and gaming magazines as well as gaming bloggers who attended the event will publish articles about the event and share more information about WAR for both attendees who want refreshers as well as wider audiences who were not in attendance. On social media, partnered influencers who attended the event will recap their BlizzCon experience on social platforms, and attendees who took advantage of the photo opportunities we provided will post on social platforms as well. All this user-generated content will be curated by the #WarcraftRumble hashtag and featured on Blizzard's and WAR's own social accounts (such as via Instagram Story highlights) for the chance to win a Blizzard and WAR ultimate fan pack including merch, a PC, and a gaming mouse and keyboard.

Social platforms popular amongst gamers like Discord and Reddit are also good ways to keep the community engaged post-BlizzCon. A BlizzCon 2023 channel on a community Discord

server can be created, where members are able to share photos from the event or just chat. On Reddit, similar discussions can be facilitated through a BlizzCon 2023 megathread. Additionally, people from the Blizzard team like developers can engage with community members in a natural way by commenting on relevant topics; Redditors are notably averse to promotion but enjoy the novelty of engaging with official persons on this relatively informal platform. This is also beneficial for developers seeking user feedback to improve the game.

Ultimately, driving downloads is our key objective and we want to make sure that we're encouraging audiences to download the game and continue to play whether or not they attended BlizzCon. BlizzCon is only the first step to launching WAR worldwide. The intention for our campaigns pre-BlizzCon and at BlizzCon are to build momentum, carry it through after the event, and have a lasting effect. Attention on BlizzCon will naturally wane over time, so future strategies will be focused on WAR more broadly to ensure longevity rather than on BlizzCon specifically, and thus are outside the scope of this plan.

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