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The World Needs Heroes: How Blizzard Entertainment Entices its Readers

In its press release “OVERWATCH™ READY FOR ACTION SPRING 2016” from November 2015, a well-established videogame company known as Blizzard Entertainment reveals new information about its latest game, *Overwatch*. Blizzard’s goal in this press release is to inform both potential customers and press sources about their latest game and its developments. Though the document has no specific author, it has been written for one of the most successful videogame companies in the world that spends hundreds of millions of dollars on advertising and understands how to convince readers to purchase their products. As such, it is important to understand how the press release’s style and language, organization and content, and transparency and comprehensiveness have made it successful in getting readers to purchase the product.

Throughout the document, it is evident that the style and language is geared toward exciting its audience rather than objectively informing. The very first sentence sets the tone of the entire release, stating, “The world needs heroes... and *Overwatch*™ is recruiting starting today!”^{1(par. 1)}. The use of ellipses and exclamation points is typical of advertisements and not of informative research papers. Although this style is not used professionally, it induces a level of suspense and excitement that gets consumers and subscribers interested in what follows. The release also describes the game with words that excite the reader. For example, the document is full of buzzwords like “unique,” “iconic,” and “critical.” It even proceeds to describe *Overwatch* as a game in which, “the action is intense, with a focus on immediacy and fun”^{1(par. 2)}. As such,

the release is targeted toward an audience that enjoys fast-paced action and entertainment; these types of gamers will get excited to hear that the action in the game is intense. It is clear that the goal of using such language is to create excitement in readers that inevitably translates to sales for Blizzard Entertainment.

Though the language can excite readers, there is little value for Blizzard Entertainment in this excitement unless the readers can actually purchase the content being advertised, and for this reason, the formatting and content of the article is carefully designed to have readers pre-purchase the game. The press release does not have any images to attract attention, but there are several hyperlinks placed throughout the article. These hyperlinks lead either directly to the page where customers can pre-purchase the game, or to the game's home page, which contains several large images and links to the pre-ordering page. Regardless of how far the reader is in the document, there is quick and easy access to purchasing the game. Making it very easy for the reader to convert to sales is clearly an important thing to consider for a press release. If the exciting language wasn't enough for readers, Blizzard Entertainment has even offered an exclusive in-game vanity item for those who order the game early, providing even more reason for readers to make an impulsive purchase. It's important to note that the mention of this special vanity item, along with a link to the pre-purchase page, is provided at the start of the release. This way, readers know exactly where to go if they find themselves interested in purchasing the product at any point while reading.

It's important to note how informative and revealing the press release is about *Overwatch*. Many times, games and other medias in their early stages will reveal as little as possible in order to create hype. Though *Overwatch* was not necessarily in its early stages when the press release was written, there were still a few months before the official release of the

game. The article reveals very much information about the game, describing new characters in detail such as, “D.Va is a former pro-gaming superstar who pilots an experimental military mech in defense of her home country”^{1(par. 4)}. The detailed descriptions of characters in an otherwise short and concise piece of writing may be valuable for readers who are very interested in the game and wish to learn more. The large amount of information may also be for other press sources to be able to focus on any part of the press release in their coverage of the game. The press release also has an entire section dedicated to the details of pre-purchasing in which Blizzard Entertainment describes the price of the game, information about other editions of the game, and general info such as its “T for Teen” rating by ESRB. There is almost no significant information that is left out of this press release about the game’s details. This indicates that Blizzard Entertainment wants to be as open as possible about their product in order to give readers the information and background they need to purchase the game. The transparency of the press release is clearly important in helping to achieve Blizzard’s goal of getting readers to purchase *Overwatch*.

Press releases are a very significant part of the promotion of a videogame; as a developer of games myself, it is very important for me to understand how the top videogame companies get readers and followers to actually purchase their games. I have created several games in the past, but did not know how to effectively reach out to my target audience with my writing. Analyzing the discourse of Blizzard’s press release has certainly given me insight into how to write documents targeted toward a specific audience. The ability to communicate information about your work effectively is important in any field, whether it’s neuroscience or videogames. It’s clear that communicating information about a videogame in order to get readers to purchase the product requires careful thought and planning.

Reference

1. OVERWATCH™ READY FOR ACTION SPRING 2016†—PRE-PURCHASE NOW FOR CONSOLE AND PC [Internet]. Blizzard Entertainment; [2015 Nov 6, cited 2016 Jan 19].

Available from: <http://blizzard.gamespress.com/>