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### Journey into Squid Game: Virtual Experience

“Squid Game” has become the most watched TV show on Netflix and officially reached over 111 million fans as of Oct. 12, 2021. “Squid Game,” a Korean series, made its debut on Netflix on Sept. 17, 2021. It is a nine-episode series that reached the No. 1 spot in just four days. “Squid Game” is a thriller story where desperate people sign up to play familiar childhood games where one person will win a large cash prize. The show has brought the nostalgia of childhood games back, such as red light green light, Dalgona candy challenge and tug of war. Netflix is determined to bring fans of the show an immersive experience to play. Netflix is launching a new product activation called Journey into Squid Game: Virtual Experience. Participants will be able to play a simulated game through virtual reality in 2023, touring in cities in the United States. This will be an exclusive event for Netflix members where fans can get tickets through a waiting list that will launch in Spring 2022.

Journey into Squid Game: Virtual Experience is targeting an audience of adults 18 to 34. This demographic is from Generation Z and Millennials. It was found that 58.65% of viewers are between 18 to 34 with a slight male viewership skew of 53 percent to 47 percent female (Katz, 2021). Generation Z are digital natives and are connected to media now more than ever. Millennials consume similar rates of media and are technologically led. Both Generation Z and Millennials will be best reached through social media. Netflix will utilize the PESO model of paid, earned, shared and owned messaging to ensure effective communication for current and potential “Squid Game” fans to buy tickets for this exclusive event. In order to maximize each channel, the message that will be shared through each to the target audience will be “Will you seize the opportunity to join the game?” Ultimately, this message will be used to generate buzz and ticket sales when it is effectively used across all channels.

For Journey into Squid Game: Virtual Experience, there will be a push on paid media in non-digital and digital media. This product activation will be launching first in major cities in the United States in Los Angeles, New York City, Chicago, Austin and Washington, D.C. In each of these cities,

Netflix will buy and utilize billboards with short messages and visuals. Each city will have a different game from the series highlighted. The billboard will read, “Will you seize the opportunity to join the game?” with “Coming to (insert city) 2023” and our signature “Only on Netflix” at the bottom. For example, in Los Angeles on Sunset Boulevard, a very high traffic area for tourists and locals, a billboard with the animatronic doll from red light green light will be used with “Coming to Los Angeles 2023.” Billboards are a way to use traditional media that will create buzz but show more than tell. This is a proper fit for paid media because Netflix is paying for these advertisements to appear. This type of paid media will directly boost exposure to these cities and amplify the message to seize the opportunity to buy a ticket. In addition to billboards, Netflix will also be paying for advertisements on social media platforms, specifically on TikTok, one of the most popular social media platforms today. On TikTok, the use of hashtags is vital for users, primarily when used by influencers. Netflix will utilize a hashtag campaign with #JourneyintoSquidGame and sign five influencers to promote the hashtag and the product by experiencing the event before the public. With influencers using the hashtag it will bring viral content and recognition among young Millennials and Generation Z.

Next, shared media will be a vital part of connecting with our target audience of Generation Z and Millennials because of their reliance on digital and social platforms. The social media apps Netflix will use are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and TikTok. As previously mentioned, Generation Z and Millennials will be best reached on social media platforms. That being said, this audience responds best to digestible, short and casual writing and content on media platforms. Millennials have modified the English language through expressive language rather than written through emoticons or Emoji (Talkwalker.com, 2019). This writing style and tone reflect the target audience and our company's voice on media platforms through social media and Netflix's Newsroom. However, it is important to note that Netflix uses short and formal writing and tone for Facebook. For example, on Netflix's Instagram uses captions like “if u haven't watched squid game yet, wyd ????” but on Facebook captions like “Squid Game invented the most terrifying version of tug-of-war possible” are used. This change in writing is used to appeal to older Millennials, Generation X and Boomers on Facebook. That being said, Facebook

is the most used social media site among U.S. Millennials, making the platform important for shared messaging.

Journey into Squid Game: Virtual Experience will be announced on social media platforms, Netflix will post a thriller trailer using clips from the “Squid Game” and a fan using the virtual reality experience. This trailer will include a phrase mentioned from the series, “Doing something is always more fun than watching,” with Journey into Squid Game: Virtual Experience as a header and “Tickets available Spring 2022.” This phrase is important as a call to action for this channel because the content will be on digital platforms where users and fans are literally watching. This is a proper fit because it will resonate with the user to want to be involved. After the product is launched, the content created on Instagram, Twitter and TikTok will be memes. These images usually depict humor about a cultural event and will reach Generation Z and Millennials. These memes will continue to create relevant images with witty captions with reminders to be on the lookout for updates and push fans to our owned media. Netflix will additionally post content relative to the launch date where users can see and preview the experience to build anticipation through these social media platforms.

As Netflix pushes billboards, influencers, memes and hashtags, earned media is crucial in reaching our target audience. On Oct. 4, Facebook and Instagram had an outage, resulting in a social media frenzy where fans flooded Twitter with “Squid Game” memes. Due to the growing popularity of “Squid Game,” fans of our series created their own memes to laugh at the drama. This unpaid coverage helped reach users to watch the series and will continue to be valued when launching this product. Earned media will generate mentions with fans but it can also reach new users. An important aspect of fandoms for users are to feel a part of a community, so this activation will bring a sense of belonging to the “Squid Game” universe. Using the message to seize the opportunity, especially after COVID-19, continued mentions about an in-person experience will resonate with our target audience. In addition, anticipation around the billboards are planned to be shared on social platforms, and one of the biggest media publications that report viral entertainment and video content is BuzzFeed. BuzzFeed also reaches our target audience, GWI (n.d.) reported in a case study, “1 in 2 internet users between 18-34 in the U.S.

engage with BuzzFeed on a monthly basis” (GWI, n.d.). For earned media, our message will resonate through the exclusivity of this event towards Netflix users to want to buy tickets for this experience.

For owned media, Netflix will utilize websites and social media content to continue the communication about this launch. Netflix created [journeyintosquidgame.com](https://www.netflix.com/journeyintosquidgame) as a hub for direct information about the product activation and directly speaks to the fans wanting to know more. This is a proper fit for owned media because Netflix will create and control the content under direct control while simultaneously creating and sharing this content on our media channels. Owned media will control and maintain the aesthetic of the experience by creating and maintaining content that is reflective of “Squid Game.” Owned media has to have direct control over the content being produced, especially regarding the content on social media platforms. Through owned media, Journey into Squid Game: Virtual Experience is able to use and produce credible and consistent content. The video and image content will show fans why they need to attend and experience our activation. Owned media is the proper channel to ensure our message is delivered and reflects our target audience’s need for visuals.

Ultimately, Journey into Squid Game: Virtual Experience will be successful through this messaging strategy due to the need for an immerse and thrilling experience exclusive to Netflix. These messages in paid, earned, shared and owned media work together to help Netflix achieve sales for these virtual experiences. Each of these channels work together using our unique message of “Will you seize the opportunity to join the game?” This targets our audience of Netflix fans of “Squid Game” and will create a piqued interest for those who do not know what that means. The content created in all channels helps Netflix integrate a central message from all areas of media that will reach our target audience. For Journey into Squid Game: Virtual Experience, paid and owned media through physical and digital content marketing of videos, billboards and hashtags boosts our brand and experience’s image through direct and controlled audiences. In collaboration with shared and earned media, this content can reach our target audience and potential users and fans. “Squid Game” has become a global sensation without any pre-release hype, and there is no doubt Journey into Squid Game: Virtual Experience will be as successful, if not more, with the PESO model.

## Works Cited

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