

Could gaming be used as a marketing channel?

Written by News Feature Team



Video gaming is something that has gone from being perceived as a hobby for ‘nerds’ to an activity that has been embraced by the mainstream. This means that it has a bigger audience base than ever before and, for that reason, many top brands have been seeking ways to work with the cutting edge games publishers and developers to reach this new gaming audience.

One of the most recent examples of gaming being deployed as a tool for marketing a particular product, was the ad campaign by fashion house [Louis Vuitton that featured Lightning](#) . Everyone is used to models being the face – and body – of these campaigns, but Lightning is a character from the video game franchise Final Fantasy. It was certainly the first time that a fictional, pixellated character from a game had fronted a major fashion campaign, but – aside from being innovative – it also made sound business sense. The character has a huge following in Japan, a market that Louis Vuitton is keen to break into, and is massively popular with female gamers – and this campaign was squarely aimed at women. Of course, although it deployed a character from the game, this campaign did not actually see Louis Vuitton become involved in the in-game world of Final Fantasy – but this sort of marketing campaign has happened. One good example of it is the collaboration between Atari and Coca-Cola that led to the creation of the game Pepsi Invaders. This happened way back in 1983 and the game was a variant on the classic Space Invaders title that Atari developed, only this time the invasion consisted of the word ‘Pepsi’ and the weapon used to fight it off looked like a bottle of coke. This is one of the first, and best, examples of in-game brand marketing and yet remains fairly unknown by most

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people. This is mainly because it the game was only made available to those who attended a sales convention held that year, although it has gone on to be extremely collectable.

This sort of in-game marketing has remained popular, with Hollywood movie studios and sporting teams making use of it through things like [themed online casino games](#) . These feature real-life sports leagues and players, or current blockbuster films, in a games environment – and seek to reach gamers who might not have paid much attention to sports or movies before. Another recent example of it was the amusing collaboration between noodle brand Cup Noodle and the makers of Final Fantasy – Square Enix. Less serious than its Louis Vuitton link-up, this one saw another of the game's main characters, Prince Noctis, sporting [a hat shaped like a Cup Noodle](#) in special downloadable content. It doubled as a competition to publicise the brand, which was already featured heavily within the games franchise, with FF 15 having a Cup Noodle mission as part of the game.

These marketing link-ups between the games world and other sectors are leading to fun, creative ideas and are sure to continue, because gaming is only getting more popular.