

Women in Gaming: An Overlooked Audience

In 2020, women accounted for nearly 41% of all gamers in the United States, according to Forbes. After the Covid pandemic, this number has only grown as women continue to use video games as a medium for connection and community. However, despite gaming's growing female audience, women are still overlooked and underrepresented in the video game industry, both as creators and consumers.

Archaic Marketing Practices

The marketing strategies currently in place primarily seek to engage and resonate with men, according to research conducted by Deloitte. While this approach may have proven successful in the past, ignoring that the consumer base demographic has shifted is ineffective and unsustainable. Furthermore, not investing in this untapped audience of women gamers harms the likelihood of the gamer audience expanding, limiting the industry's growth and integration into mainstream culture. The key to preventing this outcome is to tailor communication strategy to engage and support more female gamers through narratives and products that align with their unique values.

Women in Esports

Despite nearly three-quarters of women playing video games in America, most esports players are men, according to Mintel. This disparity reflects both the harmful misogynistic narrative perpetuated against female gamers and the lack of support provided to women in professional gaming. In fact, despite more men than women viewing esports as a "meritocracy", both equally believe that men are offered more encouragement and support in the professional gaming industry than women, according to Mintel. To address this lack of support provided to women in esports, the industry must collectively address the underlying toxicity harbored towards women in gaming created by misogynistic stereotypes that produce an unwelcoming environment.

Women in STEM & The Gaming Industry

Another factor that has contributed to the lack of engagement and support for female gamers is the male-dominated video game development industry. Women in

STEM have received an influx of empowerment in recent years as the field expands, however, this support has failed to reach women interested in video game development. Only about 30% of video game developers identify as female, according to Statista. The disproportionate representation of women game developers to women gamers inhibits the ability of the industry to craft messaging and game narratives that resonate with the growing audience of female gamers.

This disparity is even worse at the top of leadership, with only 23 out of 144 executives in the top 14 gaming companies identifying as female, according to a report by HitBerry Games. Empowering more women to join the video game development industry will create a ripple effect that could eliminate lingering biases and overlooked audiences.

Gender Bias That Extends to Content Creation

As gaming audiences grow, video game live streaming has also grown and begun matriculating into mainstream media. Recent data has shown that across all major streaming platforms, women only make up 9% of leading streamers worldwide, according to Statista. The cause for this stark disparity has various factors, however, an underlying reason for these factors is the lack of endorsement and support from industry partnerships, according to Dexerto. If video game companies were to demonstrate a commitment to empowering the female content creators who enjoy their products, a clear message of understanding and solidarity would resonate with the untapped female gamer market. Investing in female content creators will also add a new dynamic to the streaming industry that will call for the inclusion of more perspectives and broader appeal.

Ultimately, the gaming landscape is vastly different from what it was a decade ago thanks to a boom of female gamers. However, years of disproportionate gender representation in the video game industry have caused this emerging audience demographic to be consistently ignored. To tap into this overlooked consumer base, video game companies must make a systemic effort to empower and support women in gaming, from casual gamers to professional hopefuls.

Media Contact: Luke Hurtado, lukej.hurtado@gmail.com