Marketing the Millennia Era: A Strategic Reset for Disney's Star Wars Franchise

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MKTG600: Marketing Management

Week 7 Final Marketing Plan

American Military University

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August 24, 2025

Section 1: Executive Summary

This marketing plan proposes a strategic relaunch of the Star Wars franchise through the introduction of a new "Millennia" era, positioned thousands of years before or after the Skywalker timeline. The goal is to restore fan trust, reestablish Star Wars as a premium entertainment brand, and align content with evolving audience expectations. The plan emphasizes narrative coherence under a single creative lead, ensuring consistency and quality that fans feel has been missing in recent years.

The primary market includes adults aged 18–45, supported by research showing this demographic is most engaged with Star Wars content through Disney+, merchandise, and theatrical releases. Secondary audiences include younger, digitally native viewers who value expansive worlds and immersive experiences. Fan surveys and industry data show these groups respond best to authentic storytelling, community involvement, and exclusive access, which will guide both content and outreach. To meet these expectations, the Millennia launch will use a theatrical-first distribution for its flagship trilogy, complemented by Disney+ exclusives for side content. Pricing will align with industry standards while offering accessible entry points through streaming and digital engagement. Communication strategies will focus on digital-first campaigns, influencer partnerships, and experiential fan events, with TV used selectively to amplify peak cultural moments.

Overall, this plan seeks to balance premium positioning with renewed accessibility. By combining theatrical spectacle, streaming integration, and fan-driven engagement, Disney can reignite enthusiasm for Star Wars while achieving sustainable growth and loyalty across generations.

Section 2: Situation Analysis

Market Overview

The entertainment market has been reshaped by both the pandemic and the rise of streaming. According to the Motion Picture Association, theatrical admissions remain an important source of global revenue, although consumer spending is shifting steadily toward digital formats (Motion Picture Association, 2020). Disney's 2024 Annual Report shows that streaming growth has offset volatility in theatrical revenue, with Disney+ surpassing 180 million subscribers worldwide in 2025 (The Walt Disney Company, 2025; Gaines, 2025). Gower Street Analytics reports that international box office revenue rose 4% in 2024, showing cautious improvement, although SlashFilm cautions the global market may never fully return to pre-pandemic levels since many audiences now prefer streaming (Mitchell, 2025; Scott, 2025). Warner Bros Discovery outlines a similar hybrid strategy combining theatrical spectacle with recurring streaming engagement, confirming that the industry now depends on both event films and subscription-driven platforms (Warner Bros Discovery, 2025). Therefore, the Millennia era will be positioned as both a must-see theatrical event and a cornerstone of Disney+ subscriber retention to maintain competitive advantage.

Target Market Segmentation

Demographic Profile

The Star Wars fanbase is concentrated among adults aged 18–44, which aligns with Disney+'s strongest subscriber segment. According to Evoca.tv, in 2025, 24.7 percent of U.S. Disney+ users were 25–34, 19.2 percent were 35–44, and 16.7 percent were 18–24, so more than 60 percent fall into this core range (Gaines, 2025). According to survey research by Mark H.

White II, PhD, the audience skews slightly male, with men comprising about 55 to 60 percent of respondents (White, 2019). According to a separate Reddit survey originally conducted by u/PumpyChowdown and later preserved and analyzed by Obversa, the gender skew is similar while women remain an active and influential part of the fandom (U/PumpyChowdown, 2018; Obversa, 2018). According to Box Office Mojo, engagement is global, although North America and Western Europe deliver the most consistent box office performance (Box Office Mojo, n.d.).

Geographic Focus

Disney's 2024 Annual Report shows North America remains the company's largest revenue generator, followed by EMEA and Asia-Pacific, which reflects where it prioritizes distribution and marketing (The Walt Disney Company, 2025). Streaming data further reinforces this, with subscriber growth strongest in North America, Western Europe, and Asia-Pacific, making these markets essential for new launches (Pangarkar, 2025). Historical box office results confirm the overlap, as Star Wars films consistently perform best in North America and Western Europe (Box Office Mojo, n.d.).

Behavioral Insights

Star Wars fans demonstrate behaviors that go far beyond casual viewing. White's survey of over 1,600 fans shows that repeat viewing, merchandise collecting, and forum participation are among the most common practices (White, 2019). The PumpyChowdown survey, preserved by Obversa, similarly highlights strong involvement in conventions and online sharing (U/PumpyChowdown, 2018; Obversa, 2018). GWI identifies the "Fandom Menace," a vocal segment that drives both excitement and backlash across digital platforms (Morris, 2025). Stat Significant adds that many fans devote time to fan art and fan fiction, reflecting deep emotional investment (Parris, 2024). On the commercial side, Disney Movie Insiders rewards purchases and engagement, reinforcing repeat transactions (Beans, 2022). Streaming data further shows that over 60 percent of Disney+ subscribers aged 18–44 engage daily or weekly with platform content (Gaines, 2025). Together, these behaviors reveal a loyal yet vocal base that Disney must manage carefully to maintain momentum.

Psychographics

Star Wars fans treat their fandom as part of identity and community. Stat Significant notes that loyalty depends on immersive storytelling and consistent lore, keeping audiences engaged across decades (Parris, 2024). GWI adds that authenticity and a sense of ownership drive participation, as vocal fan groups often shape the broader cultural conversation (Morris, 2025). The Extended Transportation-Imagery Model shows that emotional immersion in stories increases satisfaction, persuasion, and loyalty (Van Laer et al., 2014). White's survey highlights inclusivity, nostalgia, and creative expression as motivators, a pattern reinforced by the PumpyChowdown survey preserved by Obversa (White, 2019; U/PumpyChowdown, 2018; Obversa, 2018). Taken together, these insights suggest that the Millennia era must deliver coherent storytelling and give fans room for participation to align with audience expectations.

Section 3: Market Needs

The current Star Wars franchise faces a credibility and loyalty gap among segments of its fanbase. According to GWI's report on Star Wars' influential fanbase, negative sentiment often emerges when long-term fans perceive inconsistency in storytelling or when their feedback is ignored (Morris, 2025). The Millennia era will directly address this core market need by delivering cohesive, high-quality narratives that respect the audience's intelligence and deep investment. Fan surveys support this point. White (2019) found that many fans express frustration with divisive creative choices and want new stories that expand the universe while retaining familiar elements such as Jedi, Sith, and the Force. A separate Reddit survey by user PumpyChowdown, later analyzed by Obversa, echoes these concerns while emphasizing that women and minority groups remain active and influential within the fandom (White, 2019; U/PumpyChowdown, 2018; Obversa, 2018).

Another important need is ensuring that premium pricing feels justified by the content offered. Fans increasingly expect large-scale, immersive experiences when attending theaters and equally demand strong value when consuming content on Disney+ or through merchandise. According to Market.us Scoop, younger audiences in North America, Western Europe, and Asia-Pacific represent the strongest growth segment, particularly those less attached to the Skywalker saga (Pangarkar, 2025). Our strategy will therefore design accessible entry points for new fans through standalone storytelling, while simultaneously reinforcing loyalty among the core fanbase with deep lore and authentic characters.

Section 4: Market Trends

Advertising strategies in entertainment are moving quickly toward digital. According to the Interactive Advertising Bureau’s 2024 Video Ad Spend Report, advertisers are shifting budgets to digital video formats because they provide measurable ROI and interactive features (Bruderle et al., 2024). Comcast Advertising explains that television now works best when paired with digital, since digital delivers precise targeting and faster optimization while TV still provides cultural reach during major events (Singletary, 2023). Research published in SHS Web of Conferences shows that film marketing has evolved into digital-first models, with short-form video and platform-native content as primary drivers of awareness (Xue, 2024). Territory Influence also highlights that influencer partnerships are central to building authenticity and sustaining momentum in fan communities (Vigener, 2024). Market.us further reports that streaming is expanding across global regions, especially among younger audiences, signaling that hybrid release and digital engagement strategies remain critical for major franchises (Pangarkar, 2025). Together, these studies show that successful campaigns must combine digital-first promotion, influencer collaboration, streaming-driven growth, and selective TV support.

Section 5: Market Growth

Streaming expansion and modest box office recovery suggest cautious growth opportunities. Disney+ continues to be a core driver of engagement, with more than 180 million subscribers worldwide in 2025, reinforcing streaming as a stabilizing pillar for revenue (Gaines, 2025; The Walt Disney Company, 2025). On the theatrical side, Gower Street Analytics reports that international box office revenue grew four percent year-over-year, although SlashFilm cautions that recovery may never fully reach pre-pandemic levels since growth is tied more to higher ticket prices than attendance (Mitchell, 2025; Scott, 2025). Competitors are pursuing similar strategies, as Warner Bros Discovery emphasizes multiplatform IP development to sustain engagement across both theaters and streaming platforms (Warner Bros Discovery, 2025).

Section 6: SWOT Analysis

Strengths

A major strength of the Star Wars brand is its global recognition and multigenerational fanbase. Research shows it is among the most recognizable franchises worldwide, with fans engaging not only through films but also through merchandise, conventions, and online communities (Parris, 2024). The franchise benefits from Disney's robust streaming growth, which provides a stable revenue base even when theatrical performance fluctuates (The Walt Disney Company, 2025). Finally, Star Wars remains a merchandising powerhouse. Programs like Disney Movie Insiders connect collectibles and rewards directly to fan engagement, encouraging repeat purchases and ongoing loyalty (Beans, 2022).

Weaknesses

A significant weakness of the Star Wars brand has been inconsistency in storytelling and uneven fan reception since Disney's acquisition. Research on fandom shows that backlash over divisive creative choices has created polarization and eroded trust among long-term fans (Morris, 2025). Financially, some recent films have underperformed compared with earlier installments, and analysts caution that continued reliance on nostalgia-driven narratives risks audience fatigue (Scott, 2025). The brand has also struggled with overextension. As noted in film marketing research, saturating audiences with too many spin-offs and side projects reduces perceived value and accelerates franchise fatigue (Xue, 2024).

Opportunities

The franchise has several opportunities for renewed growth if it aligns more closely with fan expectations. Modest box office recovery shows audiences still respond to premium theatrical events, offering potential for blockbuster-driven releases (Mitchell, 2025). At the same time, Disney+ surpassing 180 million subscribers allows space for side stories and specials to sustain engagement between theatrical releases (Gaines, 2025). Marketing opportunities also exist in digital and influencer channels, where creators can translate studio messaging into trusted conversations that build credibility and strengthen fan relationships (Vigener, 2024).

Threats

The franchise faces threats from both competition and shifting audience behavior. Rival franchises like Marvel, DC, and Avatar continue to expand their universes with strong cross-platform strategies that draw consumer attention (Warner Bros Discovery, 2025). The Motion Picture Association also reports that theatrical attendance remains below pre-pandemic levels, showing that consumer habits have shifted toward streaming-first consumption (Motion Picture Association, 2020). Finally, reputational risk remains high. Negative discourse from fans, amplified by influencers and online communities, can quickly erode confidence if new content fails to deliver (Morris, 2025).

Section 7: Competitor Analysis

Star Wars faces competition from both external studios and within Disney itself. Warner Bros Discovery's 2024 Annual Report shows that franchises like DC and Dune are central to its strategy, with investments spanning theatrical releases and Max Originals, directly challenging Star Wars for sci-fi and fantasy audiences (Warner Bros Discovery, 2025). Marvel is another primary rival. Although Popverse reports that Marvel has begun adjusting its pricing and distribution to counter signs of fatigue, its interconnected universe and constant character tie-ins still command loyalty from a wide fanbase (Arrant, 2024).

Competition also arises internally. The Disney Movie Insiders program integrates Star Wars, Marvel, and Pixar under one loyalty framework, strengthening Disney overall but requiring Star Wars to differentiate itself to avoid brand dilution (Beans, 2022). Beyond Disney, streaming-first players like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and HBO Max are rapidly scaling new sci-fi and fantasy properties. Market.us data highlights particularly strong growth in North America, Western Europe, and Asia-Pacific, regions where Star Wars has historically performed best (Pangarkar, 2025). This fragmented market means Star Wars must compete on both legacy recognition and innovative storytelling to retain its edge.

Section 8: Market Strategy

Marketing Objectives

The main objective for the Millennia era is to rebuild loyalty among Star Wars fans while attracting new audiences. Stat Significant shows that fans value inclusivity, creativity, and participatory outlets such as fan art and discussions, so marketing must highlight involvement (Parris, 2024). GWI adds that influential fan groups shape online discourse, making dialogue and authentic interaction more effective than one-way promotion (Morris, 2025). These goals align with Disney's Annual Report, which stresses maximizing franchise value through both theatrical and streaming platforms (The Walt Disney Company, 2025).

Financial Objectives

The Millennia era aims to boost global box office revenue while driving Disney+ subscriber growth. Disney's Annual Report identifies revenue diversification as a priority, with streaming helping to balance theatrical volatility (The Walt Disney Company, 2025). Evoca adds that Disney+ reached over 180 million subscribers in 2025, generating recurring revenue through its ad-free tier (Gaines, 2025). Aligning Star Wars content with both box office and streaming ensures short-term impact and long-term retention.

Positioning Strategy

The Millennia era will position Star Wars as a premium, fan-focused reboot that introduces new narratives while still honoring the familiar themes of Jedi, Sith, and the Force. Research published in SHS Web of Conferences shows that modern film marketing increasingly relies on digital-first storytelling to create immersive, interactive experiences that engage audiences before release (Xue, 2024). Territory Influence highlights how influencers strengthen this model by lending authenticity and translating studio messaging into formats fan communities trust (Vigener, 2024). Aligning with research from Stat Significant, our positioning will present the Millennia timeline as a new chapter that welcomes participation and inclusivity, treating audiences as central stakeholders from the outset (Parris, 2024). By aligning narrative innovation with participatory engagement, the franchise can reestablish loyalty while appealing to new generations of viewers.

Section 9: Marketing Tactics

Product

The Millennia era will launch a new Star Wars trilogy set thousands of years beyond the Skywalker timeline, supported by Disney+ exclusives for spin-offs and specials. According to Boxoffice Pro, a theatrical-first approach with a 45-day exclusivity window remains the industry standard for major films, maximizing box office returns before shifting to streaming (Loria, 2025). Disney’s 2024 Annual Report also shows that exclusive streaming releases strengthen

Disney+ as a hub for long-term franchise engagement (The Walt Disney Company, 2025). This product strategy is designed to drive box office revenue with large-scale theatrical spectacles while sustaining long-term fan engagement through accessible digital content on Disney+.

Price

Pricing will balance premium positioning with accessibility. According to MoviePass, blockbuster ticket prices in major U.S. cities average $17, which is consistent with industry expectations for theatrical tentpoles (MoviePass, n.d.). Streaming releases will be included in the Disney+ ad-free plan, priced at $13.99 per month or $139.99 annually, which ensures affordability for subscribers (Power et al., 2025). Merchandise pricing will reflect established Star Wars tiers, ranging from $20–$40 for standard collectibles to $80–$120 for premium sets, as outlined in Disney's existing consumer product strategies (Beans, 2022). Ancillary products like books, comics, and video games will follow typical industry ranges, with novels priced between $14.99–$29.99 (Nicole C. W., 2018), comics between $4.99–$19.99 (Arrant, 2024), and AAA games at $59.99–$69.99 (Williams, 2025). This tiered approach allows the brand to serve both casual fans and dedicated collectors.

Distribution

The Millennia trilogy will follow a theatrical-first model with a 45-day window, which the Los Angeles Times identifies as today's industry baseline (Masunaga, 2025). Smaller spin-offs can go directly to Disney+ to boost subscriptions. Disney's *Black Widow* release shows that streaming-first can work in select cases, but theatrical remains the strongest driver for major franchise entries (Peters, 2021).

Communication

The communication strategy will lead with digital-first storytelling supported by social campaigns, influencers, and selective TV use. According to the SHS Web of Conferences, short-form formats like YouTube, Instagram Reels, and TikTok are now central to building anticipation with measurable engagement (Xue, 2024). Territory Influence shows that creators add authenticity by reshaping official messaging into content fan communities trust (Vigener, 2024). Comcast Advertising adds that TV remains useful for tentpole moments when paired with digital activations for broader reach (Singletary, 2023). This mix builds momentum online while TV amplifies awareness during cultural peaks.

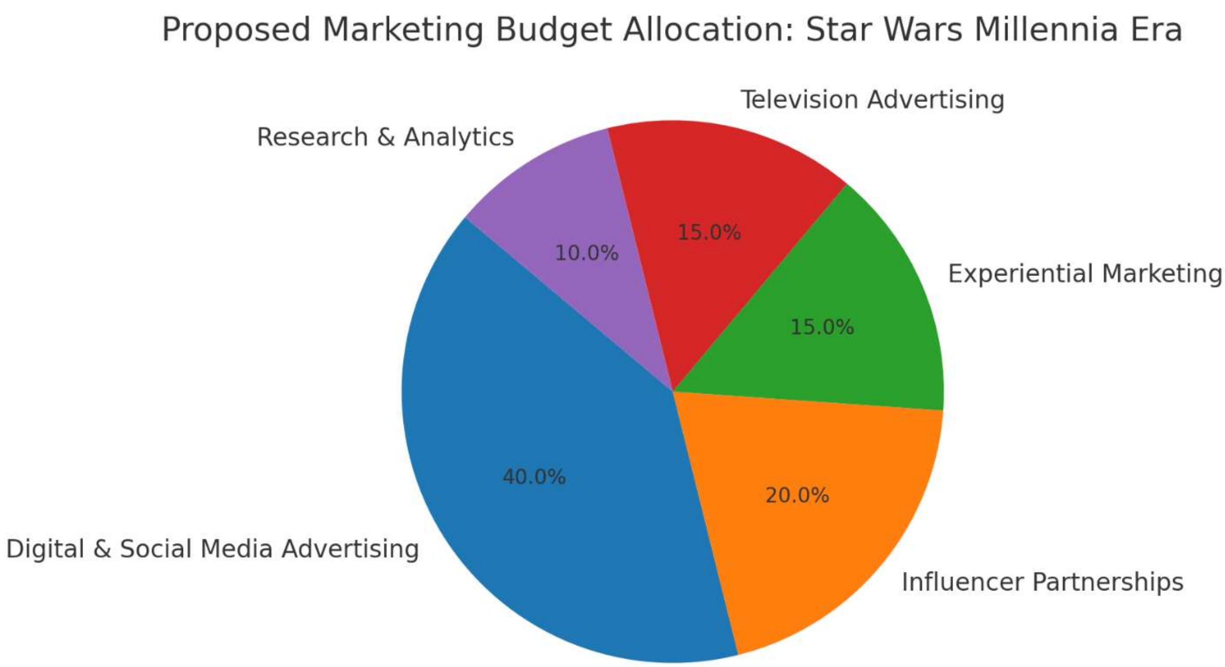
Research

Research will guide both creative and marketing choices. According to SuperAGI, sentiment analysis tools such as Brandwatch and Talkwalker track real-time reactions and emotional tone across platforms, giving Disney a way to monitor both enthusiasm and criticism (SuperAGI, 2025). Focus groups with fans, casual viewers, and critics can test narrative strengths and weaknesses before release, while surveys distributed through forums and social media measure interest in new storylines. This ensures that strategies adjust continually to fan expectations and help reduce backlash risk.

Section 10: Financials

Marketing Budget Breakdown

The Millennia budget will prioritize digital, with support for influencers, fan events, TV, and research. The Interactive Advertising Bureau reports that advertisers are shifting resources to digital video for its measurable ROI and reach (Bruderle et al., 2024). Comcast Advertising adds that pairing digital with selective TV buys remains effective for mass impact during major events (Singletary, 2023). Based on these findings, the budget focuses on digital-first engagement while reserving funds for fan experiences and limited TV placement



Budget Rationale

This budget allocation is strategically designed to balance proven industry data with the specific need for franchise reputation recovery. Digital and influencer channels take the largest share because they deliver the strongest ROI and audience trust. Experiential activations remain essential for rebuilding fan connections, while TV is limited to key release windows. Research also receives a share to ensure continuous measurement and adaptation to audience expectations.

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