

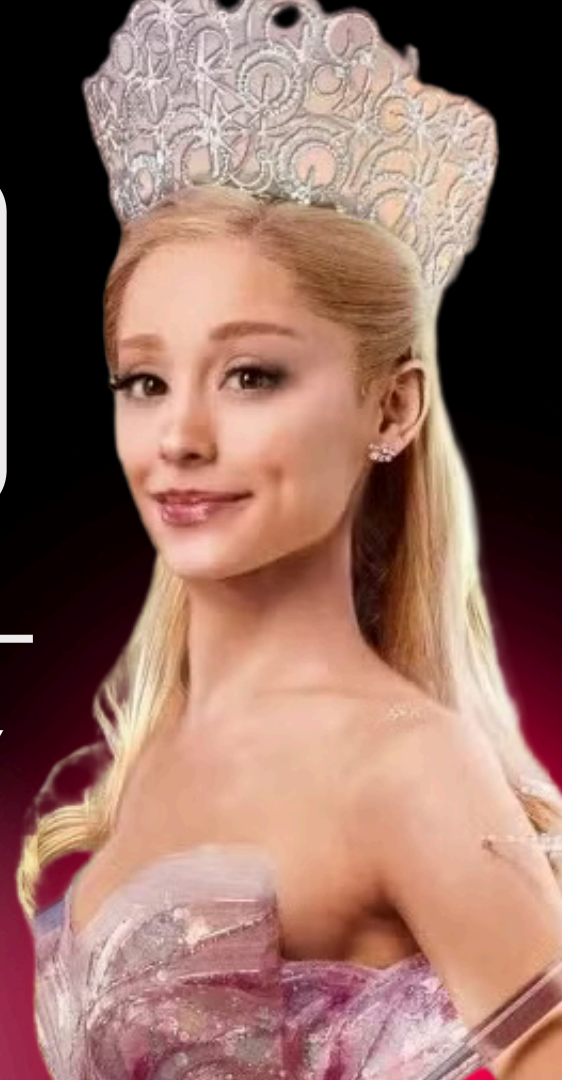


WICKED

PART I

ENTERTAINMENT PR CASE STUDY

NATALIE GILLUM & LAUREN KLUTTZ





CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

- Entertainment PR
- Premiere of *Wicked: Part I*
 - Universal Studios' two-part musical-to-movie adaptation based on the Broadway musical, *Wicked*
 - Released November 22, 2024

TARGET AUDIENCES

- Fans of the 2003 Broadway musical
- Preexisting fans of the lead actors Ariana Grande & Cynthia Erivo
- Fans of the source media:
 - *The Wizard of Oz* books/1939 film
 - *Wicked* novels by Gregory Maguire
- New fans unfamiliar with the franchise
- People who live in cities and use public transportation
- Underrepresented audiences seeking representation
 - Black, jewish, asian, and disabled women
 - LGBTQ+



SPOKESPERSONS USED



ARIANA GRANDE

- Lead actor, Galinda Upland
- Key figure in press tour
- Noteworthy Appearances:
 - The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
 - 2024 Met Gala attendance & performance
 - The TODAY Show
 - SNL Host, October 2024
 - Paris 2024 Olympics
 - Super Bowl LVIII



CYNTHIA ERIVO

- Lead actor, Elphaba Thropp
- Key Figure in press tour
- Noteworthy Appearances:
 - The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
 - Late Night With Seth Meyers
 - Hosted 2024 CFDA Awards
 - Target's 2024 Wicked retail ads
 - 2024 Met Gala attendance & performance
 - The TODAY Show
 - Paris 2024 Olympics
 - Super Bowl LVIII



JON M CHU

- Director
- Key visionary behind the film's creative/artistic elements
- Key 2024 Appearances in:
 - Variety
 - The Hollywood Reporter
 - Deadline
 - Forbes

SPOKESPERSONS CONT.



JEFF GOLDBLUM

- Supporting Actor, *The Wizard*
- Key figure in generating cross-generational media attention
- Featured on *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*



MICHELLE YEOH

- Supporting Actor, *Madam Morrible*
- Key figure in adding prestige and credibility to the project due to her Academy Award win for *Everything Everywhere All at Once*



JONATHAN BAILEY

- Supporting Actor, *Fiyero*
- Key figure in attracting younger and streaming-era audiences due to his popularity from *Bridgerton*



MARISSA BODE

- Supporting actor, *Nessarose*
- Key figure in representation-focused media
 - First wheelchair user to the portray the role



ETHAN SLATER

- Supporting Actor, *Boq*
- Key figure in connecting the film to Broadway audiences/ Gen Z
 - Tony Nominee for *Spongebob* portrayal
 - Viral *Jennifer Hudson Show* moment



STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

- Composer and Lyricist behind the original musical
- Legacy Broadway public figure
- Key in explaining the film's new songs and expanded story

KEY MESSAGES

- “The movie will premiere on November 22nd 2024.”
- “Everyone Deserves the Chance to Fly”
 - The message encapsulates the themes of Glinda and Elphaba’s story:
 - **Inclusivity, authenticity, empowerment, and acceptance.**
- *Wicked: Part I* will be an omnipresent global phenomenon



PR TACTICS: GLOBAL PRESS TOUR

- Universal executed a global press tour aimed at generating hype around the 2024 film
 - Visited large cities across the world, from Sydney, Australia, to Los Angeles, California.
- The tour highlighted the unique friendship between Grande and Erivo.
 - Joint interviews with the film's leads emphasized the authenticity of their connection and emotional bond.
 - Many iconic viral moments ensued.
 - Established film as a global event



PR TACTICS: METHOD DRESSING

- Grande and Erivo dressed exclusively in their characters' colors for all public appearances and movie-related press.
 - At times mirroring specific costumes from the Broadway musical production
- Method dressing allowed the public to associate the lead actors with their fictional counterparts



PR TACTICS: VANITY FAIR EXCLUSIVE

- Cover story and profile of Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo launched September 30, 2024
 - Offered exclusive interviews and behind-the-scenes insight into their auditions, preparation, friendship, and transformation into their characters



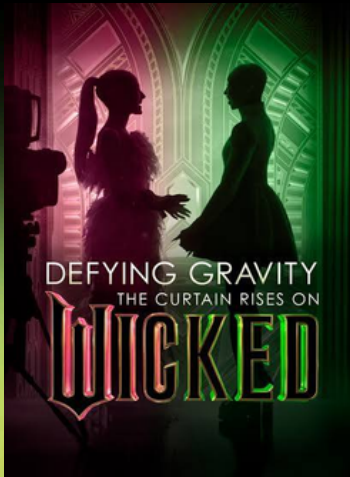
PR TACTICS: RED CARPET PREMIERE

- Private, invite-only premiere on the yellow brick carpet in Los Angeles with press, all key spokespersons, cast, crew, and former Broadway actors.
- Secondary premieres were held in Sydney, London, and New York.



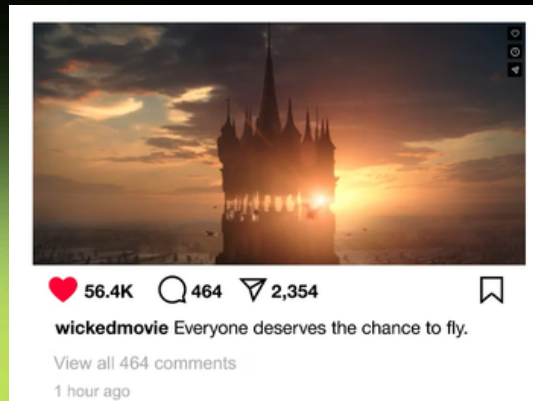
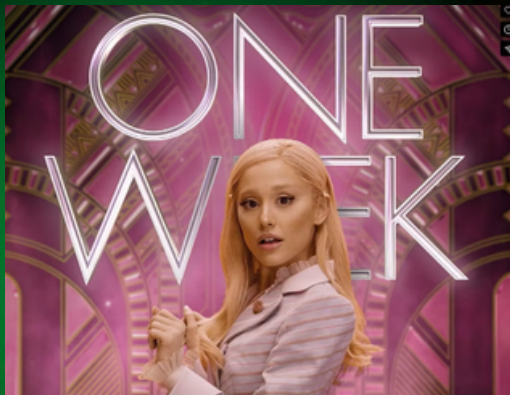
PR TACTICS: BEHIND-THE-SCENES DOCUMENTARY

- NBC aired *Defying Gravity: The Curtain Rises on Wicked* on November 19, 2024, ahead of release, and was available to stream on Peacock the following day.
- Featured cast interviews, personal video diaries, and behind-the-scenes footage from filming.



PR TACTICS: SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

- Over the six month campaign NBCUniversal used TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter to release trailers, cast content, memes, and behind-the-scenes videos, to leverage anticipation and fan engagement on their official account @wickedmovie.
 - Follower Growth: Over 1 million new followers across platforms.
 - Engagements: 42.3 million total interactions.
 - Public Impressions: 30.9 million impressions on Twitter alone.
 - Public Video Views: 227 million total video views.





PR TACTICS: STUNTS



- Jeff Goldblum performed a surprise live piano rendition of a *Wicked* song and two Christmas tunes at St Pancras International station in London where the movie was filmed.
- The Arc de Triomphe was illuminated pink and green on November 16, 2024.

MARKETING TACTICS: PARTNERSHIPS

Marketing budget of \$350M with 450+ brand partnerships including:

Mattel × Wicked: Released official dolls of key characters and teasers of “Popular” and “Defying Gravity”.



Starbucks × Wicked: Released two limited-time drinks including “Glinda’s Pink Potion” and “Elphaba’s Cold Brew”.



LEGO × Wicked: Released sets of “Shiz University”, “Glinda and Elphaba’s dormitory”, “Emerald City”, and “Glinda’s bubble,” plus six mini-figures of the main characters.



MARKETING TACTICS: PARTNERSHIPS (CONT.)

R.E.M. Beauty × Wicked: Ariana Grande's brand released a collection of Oz-inspired products including "Bubble of Brilliance" eyeshadow, "I Come and Go by Bubble" highlighter, and the "Ozdust palette."



Target × Wicked: Launched a 150-item collection with a national (and viral) commercial starring Cynthia Erivo. Featured apparel, accessories, toys, and beauty products.



Xfinity × Wicked: Ran the "Connect to Your Dreams" campaign for Black Friday with exclusive film content, a Jeff Goldblum Wizard ad, and the first 4DX promotional spot.



MARKETING TACTICS: PARTNERSHIPS (CONT.)

Lexus × Wicked: Launched the “Drive the Magic” campaign with Glinda and Elphaba themed TX models. Featured pink and green wraps.



Crocs × Wicked: Released clogs and Jibbitz inspired by Glinda and Elphaba in pink and green.



Hilton × Wicked: Offered a themed suite at the New York Hilton Midtown with Emerald City-inspired décor, a Wizard’s Throne Room living area.



MARKETING TACTICS: BILLBOARDS

- Traditional, 3D, and AR billboards displaying Glinda, Elphaba, and the slogan “Everyone deserves the chance to fly” were featured in high traffic cities including:
 - New York City
 - Los Angeles
 - Chicago
 - London



MARKETING TACTICS: EXPERIENTIAL STUNTS

- Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo attended major worldwide events to promote the film
 - 2024 Met Gala, Super Bowl LVIII, and the Opening Ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympics.
- Strategic incorporation into major broadcasts raised awareness and earned media exposure.
 - The first trailer premiered during Super Bowl LVIII
 - Wicked's pink and green visuals became recognizable, increasing public awareness prior to the film's debut.



RELEVANT VIDEOS / ADS: OFFICIAL TEASER



RELEVANT VIDEOS / ADS: OFFICIAL TRAILER



MEDIA HITS SUMMARY

Coverage for *Wicked (Part One)* began as early as 2012 when Universal Pictures first announced the film adaptation, immediately generating publicity among theatre fans. Development delays due to licensing rights, the COVID-19 pandemic, and SAG-AFTRA strikes dragged things out. Following, press generated around the following themes:

- Erivo and Grande's casting announcements November 4, 2021
- Cultural themes of identity, inclusion and belonging
- Good v.s. evil and nature v.s. nurture
- The personal lives of Erivo, Grande, and Slater

TRADITIONAL MEDIA GRID

| Outlet | Date | Headline |
|----------------------|------------------|--|
| Good Morning America | November 5, 2021 | <u>Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande to star in 'Wicked' movie musical</u> |
| Deadline | April 26, 2022 | <u>Universal Releasing 'Wicked' Musical in Two Parts</u> |
| Hollywood Reporter | December 8, 2022 | <u>Michelle Yeoh Joins 'Wicked' Film as Madame Morrible</u> |
| Hollywood Reporter | March 14, 2023 | <u>'Wicked' Movie Moves Up Release Date From Christmas to Thanksgiving 2024</u> |
| Variety | April 16, 2023 | <u>'Wicked' Movie First Look: Ariana Grande's Glinda and Cynthia Erivo's Elphaba Make Their Debuts</u> |

TRADITIONAL MEDIA GRID

| Outlet | Date | Headline |
|--------------------|-------------------|--|
| Variety | February 11, 2024 | <u>'Wicked' Trailer: Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo Defy Gravity in First Look at Movie Musical</u> |
| Rolling Stone | February 11, 2024 | <u>'Wicked' Trailer Starring Ariana Grande Debuts During Super Bowl</u> |
| Hollywood Reporter | May 6, 2024 | <u>Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo's Met Gala 2024 Looks Feature Nods to 'Wicked'</u> |
| Vogue | May 7, 2024 | <u>Ariana Grande Closed Out the 2024 Met Gala With an Epic Performance—And a Special Guest Appearance From Cynthia Erivo</u> |
| ABC News | May 7, 2024 | <u>Ariana Grande, Cynthia Erivo perform epic duet at Met Gala</u> |

TRADITIONAL MEDIA GRID

| Outlet | Date | Headline |
|----------------------|--------------------|---|
| Rolling Stone | May 15, 2024 | <u>'Wicked' Trailer: Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande Trade Insults, Invent Evil</u> |
| Hollywood Reporter | May 15, 2024 | <u>Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo Soar in Full 'Wicked' Trailer</u> |
| Teen Vogue | July 26, 2024 | <u>Ariana Grande Goes Full Glinda at the Olympics Opening Ceremony.</u> |
| Vanity Fair | September 30, 2024 | <u>Wicked Stars Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande on Love, Defying Rumors, and Flying High</u> |
| Entertainment Weekly | October 30, 2024 | <u>Wicked first reactions call film a 'musical masterpiece,' praise Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande</u> |

TRADITIONAL MEDIA GRID

| Outlet | Date | Headline |
|----------|-------------------|---|
| Variety | November 5, 2024 | <u>‘Wicked’ World Tour: All of Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo’s Pink and Green Looks From Their ‘Journey Through Oz’</u> |
| TMZ | November 14, 2024 | <u>Ariana Grande & Cynthia Erivo Defend Crying During Wicked Press Tour Interviews</u> |
| NBC | November 15, 2024 | <u>Wicked Star Ariana Grande Recreates Viral Wizard of Oz Meme with Jimmy Fallon</u> |
| Deadline | November 17, 2024 | <u>Wicked Press Tour Looks Ariana Grande & Cynthia Erivo</u> |
| Deadline | November 17, 2024 | <u>Wicked Director Jon M Chu Explains How His Oz Adaptations Reflect An America in Transition</u> |

TRADITIONAL MEDIA GRID

| Outlet | Date | Headline |
|--------------------|-------------------|--|
| Hollywood Reporter | November 19, 2024 | <u>‘Wicked’ Review: Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande Make a Strong Case for Hiring Legit Musical Theater Talents in Captivating Screen Adaptation</u> |
| YouTube (NBC) | November 22, 2024 | <u>Ariana Grande, Cynthia Erivo, Jeff Goldblum, Bowen Yang & Michelle Yeoh Talk the Magic of Wicked</u> |
| People | November 22, 2024 | <u>Where Does Wicked: Part I End and What’s Next in Part Two</u> |
| Hollywood Reporter | November 24, 2024 | <u>Box Office: ‘Wicked’ Lands Top Opening Ever for a Broadway Musical Adaptation Amid Other Records</u> |
| VOX | November 25, 2024 | <u>Fans are “holding space” for Wicked’s press tour</u> |

SOCIAL MEDIA GRID

| Platform & Engagement | Description of post | Link |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Instagram 16.2M | First trailer reveal post | Instagram Link |
| Instagram 3.5M | First movie poster reveal post | Instagram Link |
| Instagram 870K | Second movie poster reveal post | Instagram Link |
| Instagram 2.2M | Six months to movie release countdown post | Instagram Link |
| Instagram 829K | Five months to movie release countdown post | Instagram Link |

SOCIAL MEDIA GRID

| Platform & Engagement | Description of post | Link |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Instagram 786K | Release date moved up announcement post | Instagram Link |
| Instagram 1.3M | Four months to movie release countdown post | Instagram Link |
| Instagram 760K | Post about Wicked train pop up at 2024 Paris Olympics | Instagram Link |
| Instagram 421K | Three months to movie release countdown post | Instagram Link |
| Instagram 7M | Wicked: Part 2 first trailer reveal post | Instagram Link |

SOCIAL MEDIA GRID

| Platform & Engagement | Description of post | Link |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Instagram 23M | Ariana Grande post about Wicked Olympics feature | Instagram Link |
| Instagram 8.8M | Ariana Grande 90 days till Wicked countdown post | Instagram Link |
| Instagram 6.8M | Ariana Grande REM Beauty X Wicked Collab announcement post | Instagram Link |
| Instagram 6.7M | Ariana Grande SNL Host Announcement Post | Instagram Link |
| Instagram 6.9M | Vanity Fair Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande November cover reveal post | Instagram Link |

SOCIAL MEDIA GRID

| Platform & Engagement | Description of post | Link |
|-----------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Instagram 940K | Two months to movie release countdown post | <u>Instagram Link</u> |
| Instagram 1.6M | Tickets on sale for Wicked: Part 1 announcement post | <u>Instagram Link</u> |
| Instagram 1.9M | Wicked Journey Through Oz press tour announcement post | <u>Instagram Link</u> |
| Instagram 443K | Sydney movie premiere post | <u>Instagram Link</u> |
| Instagram 1.9M | Two weeks to movie release countdown post | <u>Instagram Link</u> |

SOCIAL MEDIA GRID

| Platform & Engagement | Description of post | Link |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Instagram 2.2M | LA movie premiere post | Instagram Link |
| Instagram 1.9M | Mexico City movie premiere post | Instagram Link |
| Instagram 1.2M | One week to movie release countdown post | Instagram Link |
| Instagram 1.7M | NYC movie premiere post | Instagram Link |
| Instagram 1.9M | London movie premiere post | Instagram Link |

CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS

Wicked: Part I generated \$758.8 million worldwide at the box office becoming the highest-grossing “Oz film” of all time.

Strengths:

- Strong existing global fanbase from the Broadway musical: grossed over \$1.8 billion (2nd highest of all time).
- Groundbreaking representation, themes of inclusivity, intersectionality, female empowerment, and resistance.
- High budget
- Multigenerational appeal
- Renowned A-list cast recognized as top talent in their respective fields.

Challenges:

- Oversaturation of marketing and brand partnerships may have caused audience fatigue despite increasing visibility.
- Musicals have a narrower target audience and can limit broader appeal to the mass audiences.
- Adaptations are subject to higher expectations and scrutiny (especially with added length and plot changes).

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear the execution *Wicked: Part I* was highly successful, as enforced by the box office and engagement statistics. However, considering the challenges, the following is recommended:

- Implemented image repair strategies well and had a lot of spokespersons but could have leveraged others more.
 - Reduce over reliance on Grande and Erivo: both received backlash for due to their personal lives and for seeming out of touch.
 - EX: Capitalize on appearances from Jonathan Bailey, Jeff Goldblum and Jon M. Chu.
- Leverage the “Glicked” phenomenon similar to “Barbenheimer”.
 - Emerged online to describe the double feature releases of *Wicked: Part I* and *Gladiator II*.
 - EX: Increase earned media opportunities through social media campaigns and combined press events/screenings.

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