

The Revamping of an iconic brand

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The Doll Evolves, Big and Tall: Mattel Revamps Barbie Brand



Barbie, born Barbara Millicent Roberts in 1959, stands 11 and a half inches tall—but not any more.

<https://twitter.com/Barbie/status/692706242720976896>

Mattel is making the cover of [TIME magazine](#) with the news that **Barbie** will now come in tall, petite and curvy body types, in addition to a variety of skin tones and hair colors, as part of the **brand**'s Fashionistas line. That's right: **Barbie** now comes in 4 body types, 7 skin tones, 22 eye colors and 24 hairstyles (including blue and purple).



"We were hearing that many thought that **Barbie** was out of touch," commented Evelyn Mazzocco, Mattel SVP and global **brand** general manager, to [CBS](#) about the transformation, called "Project Dawn" within Mattel HQ.

"I actually think this is one of the most exciting times for the **brand**, broadening girls' choices," added **Mattel President** and **COO Richard Dickson**. "What **Barbie** looks like—her body type, her ethnicity, her career—this is all part of the evolution of the **brand** and what we believe is the right conversation around the world to have with kids today."



The newly diverse dolls are a calculated bet from the global toy powerhouse, with a billion-dollar **brand** to protect in **Barbie**, but Dickson said, “It would be more of a risk if we don’t continue to evolve **Barbie**—if we stayed stagnant, if she looked the same, if she did the same thing. She’s got to evolve with the times.”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPETP7-Uful>

The ideals of American beauty have transformed with the likes of **Beyonce, Jennifer Lopez and the Kardashians**. “This is what our future looks like, because this is what the world looks like,” said **Robert Best**, senior direction of production **design** in a video about the evolution of the doll (hence the hashtag, [#TheDollEvolves](#)). “We’re saying there isn’t this narrow standard of what a beautiful body looks like.”

“We said to our teams, ‘If you could start the **brand** over today and you didn’t have any rules, you could do whatever you wanted, what would you do?’” said Kim Culmone, the head of **design** at **Barbie**, to **TIME**. The answer was greater diversity—in terms of skin tone, hair color and texture and finally body size.

<https://twitter.com/nypost/status/692772922566533121>

The first batch of new dolls, each costing \$9.99, will make their debut at the New York Toy Fair, Feb. 13-16. They are now available to [order](#) online in the US and will be available in spring 2016 at major toy retailers worldwide.



“We believe we have a responsibility to girls and parents to reflect a broader view of beauty,” [stated](#) Mazzocco. “We are excited to literally be changing the face of the **brand**. These new dolls represent a line that is more reflective of the world girls see around them – the variety in body type, skin tones and style allows girls to find a doll that speaks to them.”

<https://twitter.com/Barbie/status/692771080260292609>

Mattel also has an imperative to modernize **Barbie**. Although it’s estimated that a new **Barbie** doll is sold somewhere every three seconds and nine out of ten people worldwide know the **brand**, as **TIME** points out,

*staying the course was not an option. **Barbie** sales plummeted 20% from 2012 to 2014 and continued to fall last year. A line of toys **designed** to teach girls to build, **Lego** Friends, helped boost **Lego** above Mattel as the biggest toy company in the world in*

2014. Then Hasbro won the **Disney** Princess business away from Mattel, just as Elsa from the film *Frozen* dethroned **Barbie** as the most popular girl's toy. The estimated revenue loss to Mattel from Elsa and the other **Disney** Princesses is \$500 million.



Last year Mattel launched a girl-empowering campaign also speaking to moms, called “Imagine the Possibilities.”

At that time BBDO San Francisco executive creative director **Matt Miller**, who worked on the campaign, [observed](#) that, “This generation of moms has been bombarded with images with **Barbie**, but don’t know why **Barbie** was created in the first place... We had this creative ‘aha’ moment when we found a quote by Ruth Handler, **Barbie**’s creator, saying that she created **Barbie** to show girls that they had choices.”

Now **Barbie**’s creators are giving girls more choices—and voices—in the hope that the born-again **Barbie** will resonate with them, and the adults buying them dolls that better reflect the diversity of shapes, sizes (and hair color). The bold **brand** revamp could restore #**BarbiePride** to bedrooms—and Mattel’s boardroom.

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