

## Transmedia Campaign Proposal



BATMAN v SUPERMAN  
DAWN OF JUSTICE

### **Aaron Morden**

Batman and Superman are, without the doubt, the most iconic superheroes ever created. Their stories and legacies echo throughout American culture, and continue to define what it means to be a hero today. They, along with Wonder Woman, form DC Comic's "Trinity" of leading superheroes, and have been at the forefront of the comic book industry for over 75 years. Both characters have long, storied histories of cinematic depictions; beginning with the grandfather of all superhero movies: Richard Donner's 1978 classic, *Superman*.

With Hollywood's demand for sequels, the Superman franchise expanded to a number of follow-up films of varying quality, including *Superman II*, *Superman III*, and *Superman IV: The Quest for Peace*. As each film became more ridiculous and poorly received with each passing addition, the *Superman* brand became tainted, and superhero movie were considered stupid. This changed in 1989, when Tim Burton burst onto the scene with *Batman*.

For over three decades, the Caped Crusader had long been associated the campy Adam West incarnation, and wasn't taken as a serious character. That is until Frank Miller changed the game with his 1985 comic series, "The Dark Knight Returns." Miller's story focused on an aged Batman who returns to crime fighting after decades of retirement. The material was dark, gritty,

and above all else, an incredible story. “The Dark Knight Returns” revolutionized the way comic books told stories, and more importantly, it brought Batman back to his roots in gothic, noir-ish crime stories.

Burton, seeing the potential of a dark and powerful superhero movie, created *Batman*; bringing the Dark Knight to the big screen for the first time. Burton’s incorporation of many elements found in the “The Dark Knight Returns,” as well as his dark reimagining of Gotham City as a noir, urban landscape, catapulted Batman to the top of the box office. However, as with *Superman* before it, *Batman* spawned sequels. Tim Burton returned to the decently respectable *Batman Returns*, but when the franchise was handed over to Joel Schumacher in 1995, things took a turn for the worst. Schumacher tried to incorporate the campy feel of the 1960’s *Batman* TV series into Burton’s established world, and ended up creating an absolute mess.

1995’s *Batman Forever* wanted to bring the character of Robin into the series by showing Batman’s reluctance to accept a partner. However, with the over the top silliness, poor dialogue, and scatter brained plot, the film was panned by critics and fans alike. As bad as *Forever* was, the movie earned enough to warrant a sequel: the universally hated dumpster fire of a film, *Batman & Robin*. The movie was so reviled for its horrible choice of cast, stupid ice puns, and absolutely awful plot. For many fans, two words describe *Batman & Robin* greater than any review ever could: Bat nipples. Needless to say, by 1997, both the *Batman* and *Superman* franchises were, for all intents and purposes, dead.

Their deaths were not in vain however, as they inspired other studios to pick up the torch and create more superhero films. Sam Raimi’s cinematic depiction of Marvel Comic’s iconic Wall Crawler *Spider-Man*, as well as his masterful follow-up *Spider-Man 2*, helped launch a new

era of modern superhero films. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fox followed suit, and found great success with their *X-Men* franchise. By 2005, the world was ready for new takes on its most famous heroes.

Christopher Nolan's *Batman Begins* was a success for many reasons: it brought back the excitement and darkness of Batman's early roots, it grounded Batman in a world very similar to our own, and it made Batman a fallible person who learns from his mistakes; it didn't hurt that Nolan incorporated elements of Frank Miller's **other** Batman masterpiece, *Batman: Year One*. *Batman Begins* was a new story for a new generation; one that had grown up in a post 9/11 world, and was looking for a hero who could face their real-world threats. Above all else, though, *Batman Begins* treated its main character seriously, and this allowed audiences to take Batman seriously.

In 2006, after the success of *Batman Begins*, Warner Bros. released *Superman Returns*, a soft reboot/continuation of the Richard Donner *Superman* franchise with a new lead actor. Brian Singer, the director of the early *X-Men* films, was brought on to do to Superman what Christopher Nolan had done for Batman. However, since the plot was stuck following the original continuity, and the fact Singer wanted to keep the original campy vibe, *Superman Returns* failed to impress. Unfortunately, this only strengthened Superman's reputation as a cinematic plague.

It wasn't all bad for superheroes though; Nolan's subsequent *Dark Knight Trilogy* won critical acclaim not only from fans, but also critics. Heath Ledger's career defining turn as Batman's chaotic archrival, The Joker, won him worldwide praise, and even an Academy Award. Both *The Dark Knight* and *The Dark Knight Rises* broke box office records, and made it perfectly clear that superheroes could be taken seriously.

It was in this new cultural landscape that Marvel Comics launched Marvel Studios, where the company themselves could create superhero films based on their own properties. With the release of *Iron Man* in 2008, Marvel laid the foundation for the Marvel Cinematic Universe: a series of connected films and TV shows that shared a single continuity and built upon each other. Since then, the MCU has been one of the most domineering forces in the entire entertainment industry; earning billions of dollars worldwide and helping to shape modern pop culture.

DC and Warner Bros. had had plans for a relaunch of the *Superman* brand ever since *Superman Returns*. However, seeing the success of the MCU, as well as the *Dark Knight Trilogy*, decided to start production of their own Cinematic Universe, beginning with a brand new take on Superman.

In 2013, DC released *Man of Steel*, which offered the world a modern and realistic interpretation of the last son of Krypton. Christopher Nolan was brought on to serve as an executive producer, along with *Dark Knight* co-screenwriter David S. Goyer to pen the script. In addition, Zack Snyder, the visionary director behind *Watchmen* and *300*, was brought on to direct. The film was a huge success, earning over \$650 million and laying the foundation for the DC Extended Universe.

This brings us to the property I would like to discuss today: the next stage in DC's plan, *Batman V Superman: Dawn of Justice*. When the film was first announced at the 2013 San Diego Comic Con after the release of *Man of Steel*, fans went wild with the possibility of seeing these two titans together at last on the big screen. A majority of the production team from *Man of Steel* was brought back for *Batman V Superman*, including Snyder and Goyer as director and screenwriter respectfully. One of most talked about elements of this film was the decision to cast Hollywood A-Lister Ben Affleck as Batman/Bruce Wayne; many fans were wary of Affleck

since his turn as Daredevil is the eponymous 2003 film, which was universally panned. The team has stuck behind Affleck, and the vast majority of fans have come to accept, and even be very excited for, his portrayal of the Dark Knight.

The film was originally scheduled to be released in 2015, but was ultimately pushed back to March 25, 2016. *Batman V Superman*'s importance to the DCEU cannot be understated. It's subtitle, *Dawn of Justice*, says everything it needs to. It has been confirmed that the movie will serve as the foundation for future *Justice League* and other DC stand-alone films; in many ways, *Batman V Superman* is the key to DC's entire cinematic future. It was confirmed early on that actress Gal Gadot had been cast as the Amazonian princess herself, Wonder Woman; making her long overdue first appearance in a live action film.

With the addition of Wonder Woman to the roster, DC went on to confirm that many future Justice Leaguers, including The Flash, Cyborg, and Aquaman, would all make very brief cameos to establish their characters within the continuity. Many fans saw this as DC taking a different approach to world build than their counterparts at Marvel; Marvel built their universe slowly, character by character, but DC's approach is to introduce their characters first, and then allow them to grow in their own subsequent films. With *Batman V Superman*'s importance to the future of the DCEU well established, let me lay out my plan for not only the promotion of this film, but also the beginning of the DCEU.

The majority of this transmedia campaign will focus on the "Prelaunch" aspects, since spreading the word and establishing the world of *Batman V Superman* is the most important part of drawing in a large audience for this and future DCEU films. The campaign will begin by asking a simple question across all of social media: "Who would win? Batman or Superman?"

This question is the core premise of this entire film, and it is a question that has been debated since the very inception of both heroes.

Drawing inspiration from the *Man of Steel* / Gillette “How does the Man of Steel shave?” campaign, the “Who Would Win?” campaign would focus on fans sharing their personal opinions and well researched arguments with the world.

On Facebook, an official page will be available for people to post and share their arguments, as well as vote for opinions they agree with. Facebook allows for people to write out their agreements, and doesn’t restrict their character count. Facebook would also offer fans the opportunity to add a “temporary profile filter” in support of either Batman or Superman. Twitter, on the other hand, will be used to enhance the conversation with hashtags like #WhoWouldWin, #BvS, #TeamBatman, and #TeamSuperman.

One of the largest social media sites this campaign would focus on would be YouTube, because it is long-form video set up is perfect for people to craft well reasoned, and considerably longer arguments. Much like the “Who Does He Shave?” campaign, we would incorporate video testimonials by many famous celebrities, comic book creators, and media figures. It’s a simple question, when it comes down to it, and would be easily sharable across multiple social media platforms that “this person favors Batman” or “this famous celebrity thinks Superman would win.” It’s all about creating a conversation and driving people towards the theater to see the actual fight between Batman and Superman.

In keeping with the social media/sharable elements, this transmedia campaign would also focus on making people feel like they can experience the world of *Batman V Superman* through their technology. One of the most recent media platforms is 360° videos such as the *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* speeder video across the planet Jakku. This campaign would release 2

videos that can be viewed on social platforms via a mobile device, or in VR headsets; the first video would be an opportunity to explore the new Batcave, filled with many different Easter eggs and references to classic Batman mythology. Essentially, this video would allow fans to explore the new home base of this new Batman within the world of *Batman V Superman*.

The second video as well would do very similar things, except it will be framed as a new employee getting the tour of supervillain Lex Luthor's company LexCorp. The video would feature "the employee" (the stand in for the viewer" being taken around and shown this company that exists within the world of the movie. Both of these videos would give viewers an opportunity to dive deeper into the world of this film, and see how lovingly the creators crafted this world.

Something that this film deals with is the aftereffect of Superman revealing himself to the world, and how people react to it; the central premise of the movie is that Batman attacks Superman because he believes that Superman cannot be trusted with such power. The trailers that have been released show how different people respond to Superman's existence, including worshipping him as a god, or calling him a dangerous warrior sent to destroy Earth. This is a central theme in *Batman V Superman*, and shows that the production team are keeping with their "realistic" approach to these characters.

Continuing the idea of world building, many different aspects of this campaign focus on bringing elements of the *Batman V Superman* universe into the real world, so as to let fans experience the world this movie is creating. This portion of the campaign can be broken down into 3 different categories of "in-universe" promotion: content from the film being brought to life, live events that seemingly "take place" in-universe, and finally elements that make it seem that the universe of the film is "real."

Starting with the in-universe content, part of this campaign would be to create and distribute full editions of *The Daily Planet*, complete with in-universe ads, news reports, and op-eds by journalists such as Lois Lane, Clark Kent, and Perry White; accompanied of course by photographs by Jimmy Olsen.

**Daily Planet**  
METROPOLIS' GREATEST NEWSPAPER  
OCTOBER 15, 2017

# SUPERMAN SAVES THE DAY!

Reported by Hopsy Huh

Yesterday Superman pulled the unexpected victory of one billion dollars in gold, and here is how it was done.

The gold was being shipped to the U.S. Mint via an express train when a team of thieves struck. Metropolitan Police reports that at 6:30 PM several masked men armed with automatic weapons entered the train car just as the train left Union Station. They subdued the guards positioned at the rear and opened the guard's uniform. The thieves then made their way to the middle of the train where the gold had been stored. Upon arriving at the car that contained the gold, the thieves unlocked the rear car from inside. The majority of the guards were captured in the rear behind the gold. A quick-thinking engineer ordered help when he saw the guards can't make back onto the train and drove the train. The engineer burst into the locomotive, shot the radio dead and took the engineer's badge. This left the train of helplessly nearby destinations. I can't exactly determine as being as the "Man of Steel" in action.

"It was the dumbest thing I ever saw in a movie or on TV. The train engineer, later stated he was on his way to the train when he heard the wheels grinding, screaming to a halt. Like someone put the brakes on the whole train." The sound like heard was Superman pushing against the engine. Forcing more power than the locomotive. Metropolitan's forensic quickly had the train stopped dead in its tracks. With thinking speed, Superman then dis-

The state of Metropolis are major than ever with a continuing trend of crime on the decline.

## METROPOLIS IS ALIVE WITH SIGNS OF URBAN GROWTH

Reported by Clark Kent

As Metropolis, the "City of Tomorrow," continues to rebound in a major way, many signs of recovery, various signs of economic stimulation can be seen throughout the city. From the area of Northbridge to the recently district in Midtown, you can see the city's landscape changing and developing.

The most noticeable of these changes is the new Regan Field ballpark, home to the Metropolis Monarchs, is built at a great cost. "I get a lot of calls," the Superman really saved the day?"

was a controversial move four years ago, but the ballpark's impact was proved to be an economic boon to the surrounding area. Regan Field has now become major thoroughfare, and a number of new businesses and sports have been built in the area since then.

Once in Chatterbox Park, the Midtown district has seen underutilized land turned into college apartments and condominiums. Metropolis University has increased its size, building new research centers and a series of University Hospital offices on the west end. In addition, the former Plaza Shopping Center has received an extensive renovation, adding an elaborate 24-screen movie theater and converting itself into an open-air facility known as The Plaza at Plaza Park.

Recent developments in Midtown have been discovered as an area with decent living spaces at lower costs, it was quickly overrun with business professionals. A number of new businesses and high-end apartments have been significantly renovated with trendy design and affordable new decorating formerly undeveloped land and lower costs. The artists, musicians, have relocated to the Midtown district, taking over the older homes and small apartment buildings and transforming the area into a major center of art galleries, live music, watering holes and fashion boutiques.

On the city's southeast edge, Chatterbox is primarily known for its diverse community of immigrants, but they have filled with thousands of new lower-income homes. Many of them are lined up on main street, side by side, located over what once a few years ago were prime hillside. Property values in the area are low for the moment, but Chatterbox's close proximity to the Central Business District makes it a potentially viable source for additional development.

Heading south across the Regan Bridge to the Midtown's, (continued on next page)

Within this copy of the paper would also be "think pieces" by intelligent individuals in-universe who express their opinions on the actions of both Superman and Batman. For example, Lex Luthor would write a piece explaining how Superman is a menace, and Clark Kent would write a response.

Beyond the physical copy of the *Daily Planet*, this campaign would also like to create a number of different videos that would exist in-universe as well. One example would be a "news report" video about the destruction of Metropolis in *Man of Steel*, and how the city has recovered in the following years. Another idea for a video would be the history of Wayne Enterprises, or a training video for new employees of LexCorp. Both of these videos would be easily sharable and help flesh out the world of *Batman V Superman*. Continuing in this vein of



in-universe videos, this campaign would take inspiration from *Prometheus*'s fake TED talk and have Ben Affleck and Jesse Eisenberg give their own TED talks as Bruce Wayne and Lex Luthor, respectively.

The second category of in-universe promotion would be a large live "fundraiser" put on by Wayne Enterprises as a "Relief for Metropolis." Tickets would actually be sold, and people could actually donate money if they so choose (all proceeds would go towards an actual charity). The event would be promoted across social and traditional media for months leading up to the release of the film, and when the time came for the actual event, it would begin as if it was a real fundraiser, but would slowly become a mini convention devoted to the release of the film. Affleck's Bruce Wayne would give a video recorded message before the start of the event, and from there the actual festivities would begin. Fans would have a chance to debate who would win, meet and ask questions with the film's production team, as well as buy exclusive merchandise.

The final in-universe part of this campaign would be place / convert real world elements into part of the *Batman V Superman* universe. An example of this would be to turn taxis, buses, public works and other public things into either Gotham City or Metropolis services. This would make the world of *Batman V Superman* feel like part of our world. Another part of this would be to place large, functioning Batsignals atop of buildings in major cities next to life size replicas of Batman and Superman. This would make it seem to regular people that Batman and Superman are "real." The Batsignals would be fictional, and they would shine the Batsymbol into the night sky, drawing immediate attention from fans and regular people alike.

Beyond the in-universe promotions, another part of this campaign would be to capitalize on the medium where these characters began: comic books. During *Man of Steel*'s marketing

campaign, DC released a prequel comic that filled in some of the story before the movie takes place.



This campaign would do the same thing for this film, by releasing a prequel comics series that connects the story from the end of *Man of Steel* right up to the events of *Batman V Superman*. This approach is very similar to how the shows *Arrow*, *The Flash*, and *Gotham* release special “Season X.5” comic book series that fill in the story between seasons. With the focus on this movie being Batman, Superman, and Wonder Woman, this offers an opportunity to publish 3 separate storylines leading up to the events of the film. With each of the Trinity getting their own comics, this will drive up collectability in order to read all the different stories; this will also help promote the film more than only one comic would.

Finally, the last part of the “Prelaunch” phase of this campaign will put a spin on the traditional press tour. Along with doing all the regular stops to promote the film on news outlets, TV shows, etc., a section of this part of the press tour would include visiting and chatting with popular “nerd” media figures and news sources. For example, one of the most popular sites for

nerd culture is Nerdist.com. The company, which began as a website but now consists of a veritable multimedia empire, would be a fantastic place to give exclusive interviews with the cast and crew. Also, since the company is focuses around “nerdy” things like superheroes, it will allow for the interviews to be unique in a way that traditional news outlets could not provide.

While mentioning Nerdist.com, the company has one of the largest podcast networks in the world, which would be an extremely unique and important resource to tap. If the some of the cast and crew of *Batman V Superman* were to be guests on the Nerdist Podcast, it would provide an incredible break from the traditional press tour, while showing fans that they love the source material just as much as they do.

On the subject of podcasts; podcasts have become one of the fastest growing and most enjoyed forms of new media available. More and more people are listening to podcasts that focus on specific subjects, and by having some of the cast and crew be interviewed on popular entertainment it would help reach an even larger audience than before.

In essence, the majority of the campaign would focus on the “Prelaunch” phase so as to prepare audiences to be fully immersed in the world of *Batman V Superman*. Throughout this entire campaign, and especially in this “Prelaunch” phase but continuing into the later phases, the the different elements will be measured by the number of unique interactions viewers have with the content on social media, as well as how often they mention Batman V Superman across their social media platforms. Additionally, these elements will me measured by the amount of coverage they are given on traditional news outlets and their respective websites. Ultimately though, this campaign will be measured by the amount of revenue gained from sales of tickets, merchandise, and related content.

The next phase of this campaign will revolve around the actual “Launch” of the film, and will begin on March 25, 2016. Once the film is released world wide, there will be a number of different platforms promoting it so as to draw in audiences. Obviously, part of this phase will incorporate a more traditional advertising campaign that goes along with a film’s release: trailers, TV spots, radio ads, posters, online ads.

Along with these promotional materials, Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment will release a Batman V Superman expansion pack for their current mobile and console fighting game *Injustice: Gods Among Us*. *Injustice* is one of the most popular mobile fighting games, and has continued to release expansion packs with new character models, missions, and upgrades. The new *Batman V Superman* pack will include new versions of Batman, Superman, and Wonder Woman, as well as new story missions that incorporate elements of the movie’s plot (without revealing any spoilers).

Of course, with any release there comes the most lucrative promotional tactic of them all: merchandise. Along with the traditional slate of clothing, this campaign will make exclusive deals with toy manufactures to create scale models of all the characters within the film. The toy collection industry is one that is huge within the comic book community, and is largely untapped. In addition to the higher priced, near identical models that collectors prize, the campaign will also release regular toys to children; boys and girls alike, since everyone loves comic books, and Wonder Woman will be a huge part of the general marketing campaign.

Other merchandise will be sold as well, including supportive “team” buttons with phrases like: “Son of Batman”, “Support Superman,” and “Amazonian Warrior.” These, and a multitude of different goods too many to name, will be sold all across the world to anyone who loves these iconic characters. All in all, the “Launch” phase of this campaign is less dynamic than the

“Prelaunch” because this film has been eagerly awaited for over 3 years; it’s very existence will speak for itself when the time comes for it’s release.

Finally, this brings me to the final phase of this entire campaign: the “Post-launch.” After a few months’ time following the release of *Batman V Superman*, a number of different platforms will launch to continue its story and draw people into the DCEU. One of the first products released during the “Post-Launch” phase will be the official novelization of the film. This will be released in paperback and e-book format, and will be targeted towards middle and high school students.

Along with the novelization, the official script by Zack Snyder and David S. Goyer will be released concurrently for any fans who want to explore the written world of the story. Additionally, after the film has been out for roughly a year, DC will release the official graphic novel adaption of the events of the film, released in 3 different volumes from 3 different perspectives: Batman, Superman, and Wonder Woman. These collections will be a continuation of the prequel comics series, and will be released in collected package that will include the original prequel stories. These works will definitely appeal to fans of the source material, and will give fans of the film a new perspective to view the story.

The next part of the “Post-Launch” phase will be to commission a theme park ride based on the film in every Six Flags Park across America, since Warner Bros. has an exclusive partnership with Six Flags Parks. This will be a very similar strategy as to what was done with the *Dark Knight* ride after the success of that film. This will add a new layer to the existing film, and will give fans a chance to really feel like they are within that world.

As was mentioned earlier, during the initial “Launch” phase an expansion pack would be released for *Injustice: Gods Among Us*. This will happen again a few months later to showcase the Batman V Superman versions of Aquaman, The Flash, Cyborg that all debuted in the original film. This pack will offer new character models, as well as a short story mission featuring these characters.

Once Fall comes around a few months after the release of the film, official costumes of the character will be released with both child and adult versions. These costumes will be released at roughly the same time as the Home Entertainment versions of the film are released on Blu-Ray, DVD, and digital download.

Finally, the last part of this entire campaign will be to lay the groundwork for the next entry in the DCEU: *Suicide Squad*. This will be done by continuing the comic book series that were established for the prequels and will serve as a sequel series that will fill the story between *Batman V Superman* and *Suicide Squad*. From there, the next “Prelaunch” phase begins; and so does the ever growing world of the DC Extended Universe.

Throughout this entire campaign, the intention is to attract as many unique viewers as possible from the general population. Since these characters are so iconic, and known by almost everyone on Earth, this campaign will have no trouble bringing in this crowd. However, despite the goal of drawing in the general masses, the specific target audiences will be broken into 3 primary groups: young child to young adult males, young child to young adult females, and lifelong comic book fans of any gender.

The most obviously demographic to target with this would be the young male population, since they make up the majority of comic book movie viewers, and since both leads are males. However, this campaign will not ignore the widely underserved female demographic. This film

makes the first live-action cinematic debut of Wonder Woman, and this will not be undersold; this film is making history, and this campaign will be sure to highlight Wonder Woman's essential role in the story.

Finally, the last demographic this campaign will target is life-long fans of comic books of any age or gender. This campaign will recognize that this property comes with a well established fan-base, and it be sure to honor and respect the legacy these characters represent, while simultaneously bringing their stories into the future.