



2024 Wrap Up Report  
January 16, 2025



This report breaks down all components for the following People of Play (POP) week initiatives:

- Dave & Busters;
- Innovation Conference and Inventor Pitch;
- Thought Leader Summit;
- TAGIEs;
- Chicago Toy & Game Fair;
- The Young Inventor Challenge.

**Public Relations** - In the months leading up to the Chicago Toy & Game Fair, Carve Communications (*formerly Freeman Public Relations*) undertook an aggressive media campaign which totalled 1,503,318,495 **impressions**. This included: 137 online/print clips and 15 broadcast segments, including WGN-TV (Chicago); 5 Segments, KABC-TV (Los Angeles), WBBM-TV (Chicago); 2 segments, WCIA-TV (Champaign), WFLD-TV (Chicago), WXIN-TV (Indianapolis), WEHT-TV (Evansville), KSL-TV (Salt Lake City), KDVR-TV (Denver) for a total of 152 placements.

The trade press in the North America, South America, Australia and Europe also featured regular news of all People of Play events throughout the year. Carve Comms. distributed a total of 9 press releases in 2024 highlighting numerous POP events including Young Inventor Challenge, Innovation Conference and Inventor Pitch, TAGIEs and more, totaling **2,852,161 impressions**.

**Social Voice and Reach** - Throughout the campaign, the social team was able to spread the word about all of the initiatives on the consumer and B2B sides, for an additional **3 million impressions**.

**Direct Marketing and Co-Branded Partnerships** - Throughout the year, numerous direct marketing and co-branded promotions helped to drive consumers to the show, for an additional **14 million impressions**.

**TOTAL IMPRESSIONS: 1.52 Billion**



## Event eBlasts

- Trade & POP (3) x **90,000 = 270,000**
- Pro Inventor (3,700) and Product Acquisition Exec (1,050) = (10) x 4,750 = **47,500**
- Play in Education (3) x 145,000 = **435,000**
- Consumer (5) x 20,000 = **100,000**
- Young Inventor Challenge (5) = 1340 = **6,700**
- **Co-Branded Partnerships (next slide) - 4,394,000**
- Hotel Partnership - NEW - 25,000

## Past Adult Ticket(s) Purchaser eBlasts

- Young Inventor Challenge (1,340), Girl/Boy Scout (4,300+), First Responders/Vets (500), Grandparents (750), Special Needs (400), Educators (2,600), Trade (973) and (Eventbrite/Email) (6) x 10,870 = **65,200**

## Eventbrite and Groupon Marketing

- Eventbrite 2,987 followers x 18 sends = **53,766**
- Groupon 3,000,000 x 2 = 6,000,000

## Sponsor Logo Placement (your logo is featured for 1 year)

- The Bloom Report 52 issues x 28,000 = **1,456,000 impressions**
- **peopleofplay.com** 150,000 unique users (over 80% consumer), **837,000 event count** (logo on the sidebar of every page) from 182 countries
- **chitag.com** 64,000 unique people visiting 162,953 **page views**
- YouTube **11,500 views**

## POP/CHITAG Attendee Locations:

- **26 states - AZ, CA, DE, FL, GA, IA, ID, IL, GA, IN, KS, LA, MA, MD, MI, MN, MO, NE, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OH, PA, TX, UT, VA, WI**
- **19 countries - US, UK, Spain, Costa Rica, Canada, Australia, Finland, Austria, France, Netherlands, Germany, Hong Kong, China, Mexico, South Korea, Switzerland, Israel, UAE, Hong Kong, Venezuela -**  
Several of these countries had representatives checking out Fair for future participation

# CO-BRANDED PARTNERSHIPS



There were partners that helped spread the word to consumers about the show in advance of the fair. This included newsletter blasts, social media postings, digital/print ads and promos/contests. Here are some of the partners!



501st Star Wars  
Anderson  
ASTRA  
Baby Paper  
Barry and Jason  
Crazy Aaron's  
Dani Standring (infl)  
Duncan Toys  
Exhibitor Promo Codes  
Fair Game Store  
Girl Scouts  
Goliath (Inventor)  
Grant's Game Recs (infl)  
Grey Matter Games



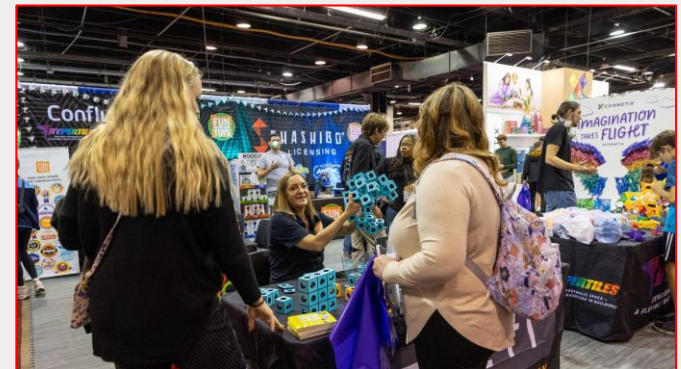
Hasbro (Inventor)  
Hidden Roles Podcast  
Hobbydb  
Innovation DuPage  
Mattel (Inventor)  
Moms Branch Network  
Neighborhood Parent Network  
PlayMakers, The  
Rosemont PR and Marketing  
Rotary  
Scouting America  
Tickets for Kids  
Touch of North Events  
ToyFest  
WGN Radio



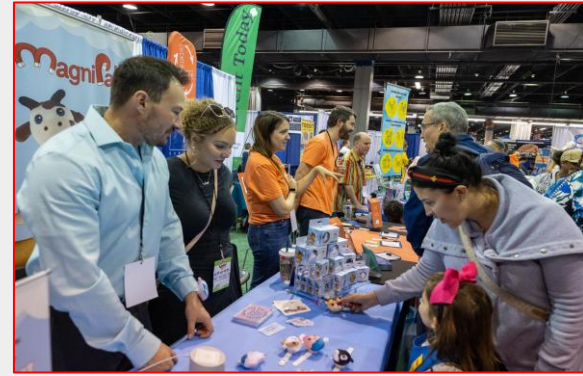


This year's Fair was elevated by having the Mayor of Rosemont cut the ribbon to the Fair's opening along with the help of the Girl Scouts, making the kick-off even more exciting and memorable.

This fun-filled, two day event allowed both kids and adults the chance to get a hands-on experience with some of the top toys for the holiday season. Plus, exhibitors were able to sell products at the show giving consumers a chance to start their holiday shopping early! A win-win for both parents and toymakers.







# The Young Inventor Challenge



The **Young Inventor Challenge (YIC)** provides kids ages 6 to 18 the opportunity to develop and pitch their inventions to major toy companies and industry professionals at the Chicago Toy & Game Fair. The challenge is a **STEM-accredited educational experience**, encouraging young minds to be creative and employ critical thinking along with **STEAM** (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) skills while inventing.

In the months leading up to the Fair, Carve Comms. continued to build awareness for YIC by securing media opportunities for the 2023 winners. This coverage aimed to inspire and encourage kids to participate in the 2024 YIC.

Carve Comms. worked with 2023 winners to showcase their winning games on **WPWR-TV (Chicago)**, **WMAQ-TV (Chicago)**, **WFLD-TV (Chicago)**, **WEHT-TV (Henderson)**, **WISH-TV (Indianapolis)**, and **KDVR-TV (Denver)**.

Additionally, Carve Comms. submitted information on behalf of the 2023 winners to their local area Patch.com pages. The posts included details of the winner's invention and encouraged other young inventors to join!



**Analise Potsander**  
**WISH-TV (Indianapolis)**



**Shea Curran, Marley McCall, Carol Pack**  
**WFLD-TV (Chicago)**



**Wolf Danzer**  
**KDVR-TV (Denver)**



# The Young Inventor Challenge



This year, 168 young inventors submitted a total of 120 toy and game creations to the competition, representing 18 U.S. states, as well as countries such as Canada, Spain, Mexico, and Guyana. Each participant brought global perspectives to their creative concepts. The YIC continues to expand its international reach, offering a platform for young inventors worldwide to share their ideas.

The esteemed judges collectively dedicated over 200 hours to reviewing, scoring, and providing thoughtful feedback for each participant online. This rigorous review process helped identify winners across six categories, representing the best in innovation, creativity, and market potential.

Carve Comms. is currently gearing up for press opportunities highlighting the 2024 winners!





# PR Highlights



DIRETTO DA ANGELO FRIGERIO



Chicago With Kids

Part of the BRIDGE TOWER MEDIA network





TV segments were a plenty this year both in advance and during the show. Nearly all affiliates covered the show either in advance with in-studio segment interviews with Mary Couzin or live remotes at the show on Friday and Saturday (ABC and CBS affiliates). CBS even came back Sunday to film more content for the evening news!

In addition, Ribbon-Cutting Footage from our partner influencer was sent over to the FOX affiliate who unfortunately could not send a crew. As a result, the footage aired multiple times on the evening news!

Additionally, the People of Play team worked with Donna Drake and Matt Nuccio to film "TOYS OF OUR LIVES," which aired in markets such as New York, Dallas, Atlanta, among others.



# Print & Online Media



On the consumer front, the team was able to generate significant press for the show, as well as the Young Inventor Challenge with placements in Chicago Tribune, Daily Herald, Indy with Kids, and many more!

From a B2B perspective, the toy and game trade media came through consistently for People of Play, publishing press releases and mentions about the Young Inventor Challenge, the TAGIEs and ChiTAG.

Additionally, Carve Comms. utilized Business Wire to spread the word about both the Fair and the TAGIE winners. The ChiTAG media alert was distributed across the local Chicago wire to entice both media and consumers to come to the event. Additionally, a press release featuring the 2024 TAGIE winners was distributed nationally.

**Have the Most Playful Day at ChiTAG in 2024**  
This will be my seventh time attending the Chicago Toy and Game Fair, and I cannot wait! I love it, and my husband and my kids love it. CHITAG is the largest toy and game fair in North America, and there's a reason—it's the most incredible place to go, play, and have one of the most playful days you'll ever have with your kids. There's a packed schedule of special appearances, tournaments, and two days of toys and games.

## Chicago Tribune

**Chicago Toy and Game Fair:** Get ready to play at the Chicago Toy and Game Fair. Try your hand at a variety of games or enter the Young Inventor Challenge or the Illinois State Yo-Yo Competition. Characters from "Star Wars," Benny the Bull and the Oscar Mayer Wienermobile will also be on hand. *10 a.m.-6 p.m. Nov. 9 and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Nov. 10 at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, 5555 N. River Road, Rosemont; tickets \$6-\$15 at [chitag.com](http://chitag.com)*

## Daily Herald

**Chicago Toy & Game Fair:** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 9, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 10, at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, 5555 N. River Road, Rosemont. North America's largest toy and game fair open to the public with experiential and immersive events, interactive exhibits and activities for all ages. \$12 for adults, \$6 for kids in advance; \$15/\$7 at the door. [chitag.com/2024-fair](http://chitag.com/2024-fair).



# Social Partners



This year, the team collaborated with key industry influencers from the family, toy, and game space to help spread the word about ChiTAG! In addition to Katy Mann, a longtime supporter who has been attending the Fair for 10 years, new partners included Toy Testing Sisters, Grant Lyon and Danielle Standing.



**Katy Mann**  
**Indy with Kids**  
[@indywithkids](https://www.instagram.com/indywithkids)

As a 10-year supporter of the Fair, Katy promoted it on WXIN-TV (Indianapolis), showcasing sponsored toys and inviting viewers to attend. She also shared the pre-Fair promotional graphic with a discount code for her readers!

Additionally, she shared videos from the event, capturing all the fun!



**Mandy Merrell**  
**Toy Testing Sisters**  
[@toytestingsisters](https://www.instagram.com/toytestingsisters)

Mandy from TTS showcased the show on her Instagram, sharing her and her kids' favorite toys and a pre-Fair promotional graphic with a discount code for her followers.

After the event, she highlighted their top toy and game picks on KSL-TV in Salt Lake City and featured them on her Amazon storefront!



**Grant Lyon**  
[@grantsgamerecs](https://www.instagram.com/grantsgamerecs)

Both Grant and Danielle not only promoted the Fair by encouraging their followers to attend and they also created unique opportunities for guests to engage with them one-on-one.



**Danielle Standing**  
[@dani\\_standing](https://www.instagram.com/dani_standing)

By playing games and hosting tournaments at various booths, they added an extra layer of connection and excitement to the Fair!

# Social Analytics



100+

POSTS FROM  
INFLUENCERS,  
BRANDS, OUTLETS  
AND MORE

3.0M+

AUDIENCE REACH  
ACROSS TIKTOK,  
INSTAGRAM,  
FACEBOOK, ETC.



7.1%

5.6%

ENGAGEMENT RATE  
AVG ACROSS ALL  
PLATFORMS



6.1%

- This year, **3.0M+** fans were exposed to content from ChiTAG, People of Play, the Young Inventor Challenge, and the Tagies, thanks in large part to influencer partnerships and **100+ UGC posts**.

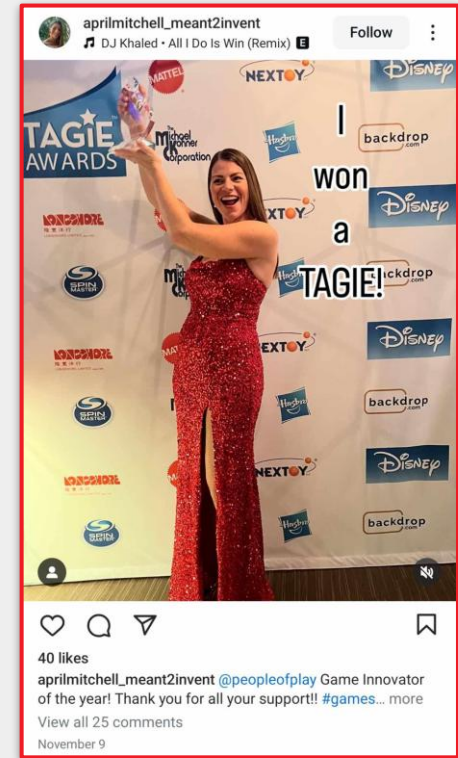




- Engagement rate on UGC increased +2 percentage points year over year (3.6% in 2023 vs. 5.6% in 2024), keeping in mind that an industry-wide “good” engagement rate is between 1%-5%.
- This means fans were much more likely to engage with content about ChiTAG compared to previous years.
- Looking at specific platforms, engagement rate was even higher on TikTok (6.1%) and Instagram (7.6%)



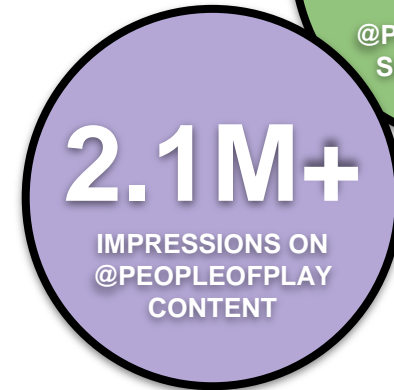
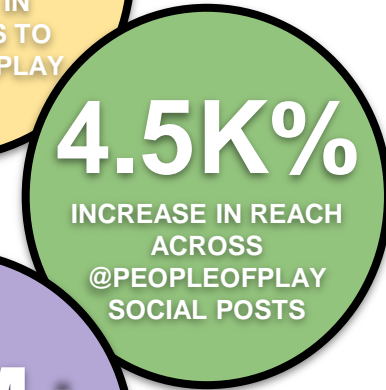
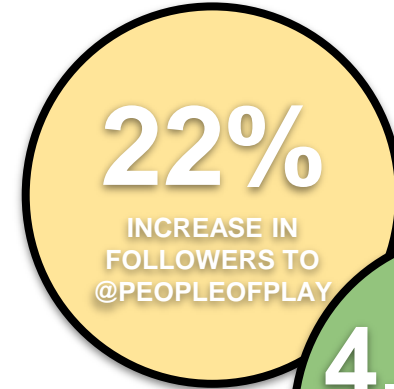
- Popular topics for UGC were the Young Inventor Challenge and the TAGIEs, with participants (and winners) across both competitions excited to share their accomplishments with their audiences.



# Owned Social Media



- 2024's more robust social coverage of ChiTAG led to a **22% increase in followers** to @peopleofplay, and a **4,500% increase in owned reach**.
- 150+ owned social posts drove more than **2.1M impressions** on @peopleofplay, largely driven by the impressive **partnership with @toystestingsisters**, whose reels significantly overperformed and contributed **500K+ views** and **20K+ engagements** to the campaign.

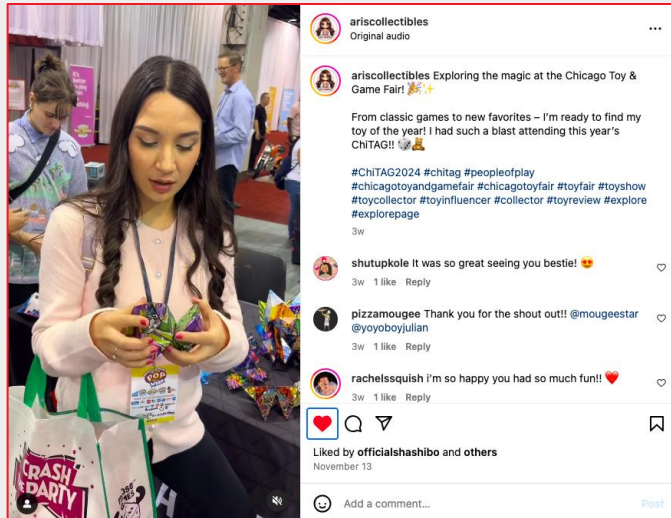


# Social Influencers and Bloggers



Carve Comms. collaborated with over 30 influencers and bloggers in 2024 for an engaging two-month social media program, showcasing the excitement of the Fair before, during, and after the event. Their posts highlighted the fun booths and activities, inspiring their followers and readers to take part and to “Save The Date!”

This was the largest group of influencers yet, and the team was thrilled to have them attend the show and help spread the word!



The Chicago Toy and Game Fair (CHITAG) is North America's largest toy & game fair that's open to the public!

Taking place this year on November 9th and 10th at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont in Chicago, the fair is filled with immersive events, interactive booths and activities for all ages from toy & game companies — and you can start your holiday shopping early as the toy makers are selling at their booths too! Events also include the 18th annual Young Inventor Challenge as well as the toy-inspired fashion runway show, PlayCHIC! See all the fun from last year [here](#). More exciting events to be announced!



2024 HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE



Pop Up Bluey



Sling It



Tapped Four Original ...



Keeper Chaos



Amoebunnies



Sensory Plush & Crin ...



The Game of Wolf



ALL IN WIN, WIN



Pickle Everything - ...



CONNETIX 48 Piece Ro ...



Circuit Blox BYO Bur ...



Kidscleancar



Wild Flowers