

Julius Fondem

Marketing Plan for a Mobile Game's Launch, Case: Oddwings Escape



Bachelor of Business
Administration

Spring 2015



KAJAANIN
AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tekijä(t): Fondem Julius

Työn nimi: Marketing Plan for a Mobile Game's Launch, Case: Oddwings Escape

Tutkintonimike: Tradenomi (AMK), tietojenkäsittely

Asiasanat: markkinointi, markkinointisuunnitelma, mobiilipeli, julkaisu, lanseeraus

Tämän opinnäytetyön toimeksiantaja on Small Giant Games Oy, joka on helsinkiläinen mobiilipelien kehittäjä. Yritys on julkaisemassa ensimmäisen pelinsä nimeltään Oddwings Escape kevään 2015 aikana. Oddwings Escape on mobiilipeli, jossa lennetään erilaisilla otuksilla läpi haastavien tasojen. Opinnäytetyön aihe valikoitui, kun tekijä sai tilaisuuden työskennellä pelin julkaisun markkinoinnin parissa.

Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli tehdä markkinointisuunnitelma pelin julkaisua varten ja toteuttaa kyseinen suunnitelma. Työssä kuvataan, mitä asioita pitää ottaa huomioon ja muistaa markkinointisuunnitelman sekä pelien julkaisujen suhteen. Tämän lisäksi työssä käsitellään erilaisia markkinointistrategioita pelialla ja maksuttomia markkinointikäytäntöjä. Nämä koostavat työn teoriaosuuden.

Case-osiossa esitellään toimeksiantajayritys, heidän pelinsä ja mikä lähtöasetelma oli, kun tekijä liittyi yritykseen. Case-osiossa kuvataan yrityksen markkinointisuunnitelma pelin julkaisuun mobiilialustalle ja sen toteutus. Lopuksi työssä arvioidaan itse prosessi.

Työ oli aikaa vievää, eniten työtä meni teorian tutkimiseen ja yritykselle sopivan markkinointisuunnitelman luomiseen. Kun suunnitelma on kirjoitettu, on toteutus huomattavasti suoraviivaisempaa kuin markkinointisuunnitelman kirjoittaminen.

ABSTRACT

Author(s): Fondem Julius

Title of the Publication: Marketing Plan for a Mobile Game's Launch, Case: Oddwings Escape

Degree Title: Bachelor of Business Administration, Business Information Technology

Keywords: marketing, marketing plan, mobile game, launch, release

This thesis was commissioned by Small Giant Games Ltd, which is a Helsinki based mobile game development company. Small Giant Games is releasing their first game, Oddwings Escape, during spring 2015. Oddwings Escape is a mobile game where players fly with various creatures through challenging levels. The subject of the thesis was decided when the author got the opportunity to work on the marketing for the launch of the game.

The goal of this thesis was to create a marketing plan for the game's release and to execute this plan. The thesis describes the matters that should be taken into consideration and remembered for creating a marketing plan and releasing a game. In addition to this, the thesis goes through different marketing strategies and non-paid marketing practices. All of these aspects comprise the thesis theory part.

The Case section of the thesis introduces Small Giant Games, their game and what the initial setting for the project was when the author joined the company. The section describes the company's marketing plan for the release of their game on a mobile game platform and the execution of the plan. At the end of the section, the author reviews the process of making the marketing plan and executing it.

The thesis was time consuming and most of the work went into research and creating a fitting marketing plan for the company. Once the plan was written, the execution was notably more straightforward to perform.

FOREWORD

To my family, girlfriend, class mates, Small Giant Games and everyone who supported me during my 4 years of studies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Purpose of marketing	1
1.2 Marketing plan	2
1.3 Messaging	4
2 LAUNCHING A GAME	6
2.1 Press release	6
2.2 Announcement	7
2.3 Maintaining momentum until launch	8
2.3.1 Videos	8
2.3.2 Going to events	10
2.3.3 Previews	11
3 MARKETING STRATEGIES	12
3.1 Starting early	13
3.2 Press	14
3.3 Creating news	16
3.4 Guerilla marketing	17
3.5 Trailers	18
3.6 YouTubers	21
3.7 Press kit	24
4 NON-PAID MARKETING	28
4.1 Website	28
4.1.1 Google Analytics	30
4.2 Community management	31
4.2.1 Facebook	32
4.2.2 Twitter	33
4.3 Twitch	35
4.4 Reddit	35
4.5 Blog	37
5 CASE: ODDWINGS ESCAPE	39

5.1 Initial setting for the project	39
5.2 Marketing plan.....	41
5.2.1 Messaging.....	42
5.2.2 Building a community	42
5.2.3 Facebook	44
5.2.4 Twitter	45
5.2.5 YouTuber campaign	46
5.2.6 Website	47
5.2.7 Press.....	47
5.2.8 Events and competitions	48
5.3 Execution of the marketing plan	49
6 CONCLUSION	53
7 REFERENCES.....	55

LIST OF TERMS

App Store	The App Store is a digital distribution platform for mobile apps on iOS, developed and maintained by Apple Inc.
Blogger	A person who writes for a website containing a writer's or a group of writers' own experiences, observations, opinions, etc., and often having images and links to other websites.
Build	A version of a software. During the development of a game, multiple builds are created and tested.
Churn rate	Churn rate (sometimes called attrition rate), in its broadest sense, is a measure of the number of individuals or items moving out of a collective group over a specific period of time.
Concept art	Concept art is a form of illustration used to convey an idea for use in video games.
Conversion rate	The rate at which players who find out about a game convert to paying customers.
E3	The Electronic Entertainment Expo which is a video game trade show held annually in Los Angeles, USA.
Gamer	Someone who plays games as a hobby.
Gamescom	Europe's largest consumer video game trade show held annually in Cologne, Germany.
Indie studio	An independent game company that is in majority owned by its employees and founders. These companies usually have limited resources and small teams.

iOS	iOS (originally iPhone OS) is a mobile operating system developed by Apple Inc.
Javascript	JavaScript is a programming language commonly used in web development. It was originally developed by Netscape as a means to add dynamic and interactive elements to websites. JavaScript is a client-side scripting language, which means the source code is processed by the client's web browser rather than on the web server. This means JavaScript functions can run after a webpage has loaded without communicating with the server.
Kickstarter	A website that offers game developers a chance to crowd fund their games.
Minecraft	A video game developed originally by Markus "Notch" Persson and later on by Mojang AB. The game has gained wide popularity with over 50 million sold copies on various platforms.
PC	Personal computer.
Post-mortem	A project post-mortem is a process, usually performed at the conclusion of a project, to determine and analyze elements of the project that were successful or unsuccessful. Project post-mortems are intended to inform process improvements which mitigate future risks and to promote iterative best practices.
PR	Public relations (PR) is the practice of managing the spread of information between an individual or an organization (such as a business, government agency,

or a nonprofit organization) and the public. Public relations may include an organization or individual gaining exposure to their audiences using topics of public interest and news items that do not require direct payment.

Presskit()	A tool developed by Rami Ismail which allows game developers to easily create a press kit website.
RPG	Roleplaying game.
Reddit	Reddit is an entertainment, social networking, and news website where registered community members can submit content, such as text posts or direct links. Registered users can then vote submissions "up" or "down" to organize the posts and determine their position on the site's pages. Content entries are organized by areas of interest called "subreddits."
Screenshot	An image that shows the contents of a video game.
Steam	Valve's digital distribution platform for PC, Mac and Linux games.
Steam Early Access	Steam Early Access is a platform run by Valve Corporation. The game's released on this platform are still under development and the revenue from the sales go into the development of the games on this platform.
Steam Greenlight	A program offered by Valve Corporation in which game developers can submit their games to be chosen to be a part of Valve's Steam platform by gathering votes from Steam's users.

Teaser announcement	A teaser announcement is an advertising announcement which typically consists of a series of small, cryptic, challenging advertisements that anticipate a larger, full-blown announcement.
Trailer	A selected group of scenes that advertise a video game.
Tweet	A message sent on the social media channel Twitter which has a 140 character limit per tweet.
Twitch	Twitch.tv is a live streaming video platform owned by Amazon.com.
Voxels	A voxel is a unit of graphic information that defines a point in three-dimensional space. Since a pixel (picture element) defines a point in two dimensional space with its x and y coordinates , a third z coordinate is needed. In 3-D space, each of the coordinates is defined in terms of its position, color, and density.
YouTuber	A user of the video sharing website YouTube who provides video content for the website.

1 INTRODUCTION

Marketing is considered to be a company's actions and procedures related to the buying and selling of a product or service. This includes selling, advertising and delivering products to customers by getting the attention of target audiences by using general media exposure, packaging design, slogans and celebrity endorsement. There are the so-called four Ps of marketing which are product, place, price and promotion. (Investopedia, n.d.)

Product refers to the nature of the product a company is making. What does the customer want from this product and what needs does it satisfy for the customer. Place refers to where the customer can obtain the product and how a company can be on that store/platform and how the company can differentiate their product from the rest. Price refers to the value of the product to the customer and how much will he/she have to pay to get the product. Lastly, promotion refers to how, when and where can a company get its marketing messages across to its target audience. All of the four Ps have to be considered in relation to each other. (MindTools, 2015)

1.1 Purpose of marketing

A lot of people think that marketing is only sales or advertising. This is, however, not the case. Marketing is not only limited to these two things but encompasses everything the company does to gain customers and maintain a relationship with them. Even small actions like sending thank you letters, spending the afternoon with a prospective client, returning calls swiftly and rekindling a business relationship with a past client can be considered as marketing. The end goal of marketing is to connect the company's products and/or services to the people who want and need them. Through this the company ensures profitability. (Investopedia, n.d.)

Marketing is effectively one third of a company's chance at success and the game itself only determines one third of the sales. The last third of this combination is luck. A company can make the best game the world has seen and it still does not sell. Luck is something a company cannot control but it can most certainly control its marketing. Many beginners in game development have a tendency to forget about marketing, and they only focus on making a great game. (van Dongen, 2012.)

The biggest enemy a game company can have is obscurity. Simply making a good game is not enough to ensure that it sells well. The fact is that if no one knows about the company's game then no one will buy it, no matter how amazing it is. If the game is of extremely high quality, it can spread fast (e.g. Minecraft) but typically a normal game requires a great amount of marketing to reach an audience. The biggest challenge is not that people will get the wrong idea of a game. The biggest challenge is that they will not have any idea of the game since they do not know it exists. (van Dongen, 2012.)

1.2 Marketing plan

The most common reason for a game company needing a marketing plan is that without one, the company's game will only reach a fraction (if the company is lucky) of the target audience. Currently the various game marketplaces are heavily saturated so just publishing a game on one of them or preparing for physical sales is not enough to guarantee success. Indie studios need a plan that will detail how to get the game in front of those people that would be interested in playing it and then convince them to buy it. (Johnson, 2015.)

Numerous great games have failed to succeed simply because the company had not put enough time, thought and effort into its marketing. Video games are in the same situation as any other product: there are thousands of competitors and customers are becoming continuously less susceptible to marketing and further indifferent to any kind of company messaging. (Johnson, 2015.)

The simple truth is that gamers will not purchase a game solely based on the fact that it exists, no matter how good it is. There is a plethora of amazing games available to gamers and there are volumes of adequate games that are developed by companies with large marketing budgets. The average gamer will already have a huge range of choices when it comes to games so they will not shift their attention to a game simply because it is new. (Johnson, 2015.)

Many game developers might think that a marketing plan is something very hard to make, but in all its simplicity, the marketing plan is a game company's map on how to get the game to the company's target audience. A marketing plan can be divided into several sections. The company's strategic plan or business plan describes the company's strategic goals. The marketing plan focuses on these goals and how, in practice, the company can reach them. (Hietalahti, 2006.)

These strategic goals define where the company is heading with its games and as a company. In the marketing plan, the company can start by choosing the goal for the income it desires. After this has been determined, the company can add goals for sales, downloads, conversion rate, and the price for the game. The goal for a company's game could be, for example, to earn \$50 000. From here the company can start determining the price of the game. There are several variables that affect the price, such as the game itself, the company's profile and the target market. The company can look at what other companies are using as prices for their games on the same market and could decide to price their game at \$19.95, for example. The company could price it cheaper to aim for a bargain price or higher to have a more premium atmosphere surrounding the game. The price of course can be adjusted later if the company sees that it is a good choice. (Hietalahti, 2006.)

The strategic goals need to have an exact date as well. The goals can be split into smaller divisions, for example months, quarters or years. The next phase in the marketing plan is to determine how to bring the game into the attention of the target audience. They have to be aware of the game and they need to be guided to a website for more information or a place from where they can be directed to download the game. The market segment that the company targets at affects how to

make the offer to the target audience. Players in different market segments have different playing habits and different preferences when it comes to games. (Hietalahti, 2006.)

The four common market segment variables are geographic (world region, country or city), demographic (age, gender, education, religion, occupation, income, family size), psychographic (social class, lifestyle, personality) and behavioral (casual to hardcore player, attitude towards the service, loyalty towards the company, stage of awareness, attitude towards the game, genre and favorite games). Technical aspects (such as internet connection speed and age of device) can also be included in the market segmentation. (Hietalahti, 2006.)

Once the market segmentation has been defined, it is time to position the marketing message. This means arranging what the game is offering in a way that differentiates it from the competition. Positioning the game as the lowest priced game for young strategy gamers is very different than a high quality non-violent game for religious players, for example. (Hietalahti, 2006.)

Game companies will have to, in addition to all of this, reach the target audiences in different ways, which may range from major download sites, advertising and press releases to reviews news sites and contests. The most important thing is to be inventive and creative in thinking of ways to reach the audience. (Hietalahti, 2006.)

Depending on where the game will be distributed, promotional activities could be handled by third parties (such as Apple or Google) or by a publisher if the game company in question has signed a publishing deal. (Hietalahti, 2006.)

1.3 Messaging

In its essence, messaging means how a company talks about who they are and why they are operating as a company. The messaging always ties back to the

brand and communicates the core points, which a company will consistently make when being in contact with their audience. Indie studios can develop different messages for different intents, e.g. speeches, Kickstarter campaigns or talks at events, and these messages should be developed with the different audiences in mind. Indie studios should create a set of short phrases or paragraphs that they use frequently to talk about the company, their games and services. (Nonprofit Answer Guide, 2015.)

When Indie studios need to get in touch with specific audiences, launch new campaigns or communicate about their games, they will have standard language ready to use and it only needs to be tailored for the situation. Well-crafted messages will underline a game company's differentiating benefits, target their audience, support their company mission and most likely include a call to action for the audience. (Nonprofit Answer Guide, 2015.)

2 LAUNCHING A GAME

Through a company's prerelease efforts, the company should have a community built around its upcoming game. During the release of the game it is paramount to drum up more noise about the game than ever before. This means sending more press releases to the press list, publishing more videos of the game and getting in touch with everyone the company knows and telling them about the game. (Taylor, 2009.)

It is smart to have a post release marketing campaign planned and put into motion after launch. For indie studios this usually means targeted web advertising, updates to the game (paid and free), interviews, and anything else that can bring more attention to the game. The company can get more opportunities to talk at conferences after the game is launched and enter the game into competitions and festivals. It is very important to continue on after release and this is where PR activities become more important than before. (Taylor, 2009.)

Distribution platforms measure a game based on a very brief period during the initial launch so platforms such as Steam or Kongregate will base the amount of advertising a game gets on how well it performs at launch. So it is very important that a game performs well right during launch and not 2 weeks or 6 months later even if there is a significant update. (Attard, 2014.)

2.1 Press release

One of the most basic forms of marketing a game is a press release. To get attention for a game, the press needs to be aware of the game and write about it. Simply put, the press release is a message (usually via email) with news about a particular game including links to screenshots and possibly a trailer. The press will write about the game if the news is interesting. It is good to send press releases to hundreds of gaming websites and magazines so that enough publications will pick

up on the news and word of the game will spread wide enough. (van Dongen, 2012.)

To ensure that the press release can be sent to numerous gaming news publications, the game company should create a press list where it can collect the email addresses of different websites and magazines that write about games. The list should be as wide encompassing as possible. Most websites will have their email address for news displayed somewhere on the site or even the email addresses of the journalists who write about various types of games. (van Dongen, 2012.)

For each contact, the list should contain a name, email address, the publication the person works for, what media they work with and what genres they usually write about. Another thing that could be added is a section for when the company has contacted the person in question. (Toresson, 2013b.)

Game companies should aim to put together as large a press list as possible. The contacts can be separated based on if they are English speaking or not, to make sure that the company can either contact them in their native tongue or start the message with a hello in their native tongue. Members of the press are people after all and they will appreciate gestures like this. (Toresson, 2013b.)

2.2 Announcement

In the announcement message indie studios should condense into a clear message what is different and original about their game, anything that the developers and/or the studio has done in the past that might be worth mentioning, and anything interesting that is in any way associated with the company and/or the developers. (Taylor, 2009.)

Teaser announcements, which big companies tend to do, usually do not work for smaller game companies unless the company or the game has an established fan

base, or the teaser is especially strong in its own right that people will be interested. (Taylor, 2009.)

Typically a game is announced when there is some content to show. This should be done as early as possible, even with the first attractive pieces of concept art. The downside to announcing with concept art is that most news sources will not pick up on the news unless the concept art is stunning and the concept is great, and many sites will not cover a game until it has a video. (Taylor, 2009.)

2.3 Maintaining momentum until launch

Through their game's announcement, indie studios can create a situation where people are following its updates and this can be capitalized on. Indie Studios should release quality updates about their game including videos, pictures, audio, text, funny development stories and advice. (Taylor, 2009.)

It can technically be anything as long as it is interesting and engaging for the community and the updates should be frequent. It is also important to talk to the people in the community and respond to what they say. They can also be asked to invite new people into the community. Once the game company has accumulated enough exciting content, it can collect it together for another press release. (Taylor, 2009.)

2.3.1 Videos

Usually game companies release quality trailers to showcase their games to the public and media. It is important for indie studios to find what is appealing and interesting in their game and focus on these aspects in the trailer. It could be interesting characters or graphical effects, impressive environments or previously unseen features. The main focus should be to get people to share the video with the people that they know. (Taylor, 2009.)

If a certain video is popular with the community, the company should consider making a press release out of the video to gain more visibility for it. Since indie studios usually do not have the budget to do high quality rendered or live action videos, their trailers and videos will most likely consist of footage straight from the game. This means that the videos and their visual quality will evolve as the game is developed further. (Taylor, 2009.)

It is wise to wait until the game looks decent before publishing any videos to the press but release teaser videos can still be done for the community but only with good looking footage. (Taylor, 2009.)



Figure 1. Scribblenauts release trailer. (The Nintendo Basement, 2009.)

All of this should build up to the release of major trailers. For example, the Scribblenauts release trailer (see Figure 1 above) is a very good of example of a successful trailer. It conveys the concept of the game in a straight forward and clear way, it is well paced and fun. This kind of trailer helps people to talk about the game well before it is even released. (Taylor, 2009.)

Once the major trailer is ready, it should be sent to the PR list. Major trailers are the things that will really help indie studios be successful with their games. (Taylor, 2009.)

2.3.2 Going to events

There are essentially three different ways for a game company to meet with members of the press: visit them, fly them to visit you or go to a trade show. Trade shows are frequented by big gaming websites, numerous blogs and even hobby journalists, and it is notably cheaper to talk to many of them at Gamescom than it is to fly each and every one of them to the company's office. (van Dongen, 2012.)

Journalists will typically have their schedule filled to the brim and it might be hard to find them in the large crowd so it is wise for indie studios to make appointments ahead of time. (van Dongen, 2012.)

Indie Studios should allocate some of their budget for travel and booth expenses for bigger events like PAX Prime if they want to showcase their game there at a booth. It may cost quite a lot but is usually worth it. For studios on a tighter budget, there is the possibility of submitting to Indie Mega Booth which provides qualified game developers a chance to showcase their games at events for as little as \$500, which is very cheap. (DellaFave, 2014.)

Indie Studios should go to events, even if they cannot afford a booth or are rejected, to hand out flyers, physical CDs of their demo, a piece of paper that informs people where to get their game or anything else that will make the studio stick into gamers' minds. (DellaFave, 2014.)

In this manner, trade shows allow game developers to connect with the people who will be playing their game (which is arguably more important than connecting with other developers). Going to events also allows for game developers to meet with their target audience face to face, show them their game and receive valuable

feedback. This way, developers can further humanize themselves and their promotion efforts. (DellaFave, 2014.)

2.3.3 Previews

Previews are a powerful platform for indie studios to showcase their games which are still in development. That is why so many companies heavily invest in showing previews at key moments. Many bigger companies have big press events to which they invite members of the press to try out preview versions of their games. (Taylor, 2009.)

It is favorable to preview the game in person so that there can be time for interview questions. The most important thing, however, is that the preview build is stable and impressive, and that it is sent to as many places as possible. (Taylor, 2009.)

3 MARKETING STRATEGIES

Indie game studios typically believe in the myth that successful marketing requires a very large marketing budget. This is caused by the fact that many indie studios compare their own marketing efforts with large studios like Bungie who spend tens (sometimes even hundreds) of millions of dollars on their own marketing activities. (Spillmakerlauget, 2013.)

This is, however, only a myth. For example, a game called Monkey Labour had very low sales (1000 copies in three months) as a result of no marketing efforts, but once the developers started investing in marketing, they sold 6000 copies in ten days as a result. Another example is Hitbox Team who got over 100 published articles during launch of Dustforce, and 7 days after launch, the game was profitable. (Spillmakerlauget, 2013.)

Indie studios will not be draping buildings with sky scraper sized posters at E3 since they are nowhere near the size of large companies like EA or Blizzard, but their small size works to their advantage. Small companies should use the fact that they do not have a large marketing team that might be heavily limiting what they are allowed to say about their game. Since indie studios are not large corporations, they should not try to act like one. It is important for them to learn their own strengths and create their own marketing strategy based on that. It is imperative that this is done while the game is in development and not after development. (Toresson, 2013a.)

Big companies have tendency of rarely leaking new information about their games and they carefully guard their updates. This guarantees that their messaging is very controlled and polished, and can make sense for them since their updates leaking will result in front page coverage by every video game news website. However, for smaller game companies carefully constructed press releases will likely fall into obscurity. (Graham, J. 2009.)

Creativity and experimentation is therefore required from indie studios and they need to frequently post updates. It is very hard to predict which particular update will blow up in popularity and traffic, therefore, the more information and content an indie studio shares with their audience, the better the chances of them getting the gamers' attention. (Graham, J. 2009.)

3.1 Starting early

Indie studios need to start talking about their game and getting in touch with people as soon as possible. They have to start building awareness early on so that their game is known by the time it comes out and has gathered interest and they must understand what makes their game stand out, which will convert to sales. This is also a way of building anticipation, which in turn makes people excited. Also, the earlier they start talking about their game, the bigger the chance that someone in a powerful position (e.g. press) will write about the game. (Steamworks Development, 2014.)

The more frequently a potential customer has heard about the company's game, the more likely he/she is to have a look at it (and potentially buy/download it) when it is released. The more content this potential customer has come in touch with, be it blog posts about the concept of the game, discussions about games the developers have enjoyed/disliked/despised etc. the more likely he/she is of finding something that he/she is interested in. (Toresson, 2013a.)

Awareness for the game is slowly built up during the development of the game and needs to be maintained and nurtured. Wolfire Games and Vlambeer are excellent examples of building up awareness for their games and their company. They are extremely active on social media channels and participate in nearly all conversations relevant to them, their games and the industry. (Toresson, 2013a.)

3.2 Press

Unless the game an indie studio makes is the most anticipated game up until that point in time, members of the press are not going to buy the game themselves. The studio needs to deliver their game to members of the press before launch so that they have enough time to prepare a review for the launch day. The press list is a good tool for finding members of the press to give the game to. It is common practice to send members of the press a download code for the game and they are not going to hurt sales. (van Dongen, 2012.)

When it comes to members of the press, bloggers or YouTubers, it is important to find ones who are interested in the type of game the company is making, and send them a personalized message, rather than a generic one since this will capture their attention. (RunJumpDev, 2011.)

Finding big game news websites such as IGN, Gamespot, Kotaku and Eurogamer should be easy for indie studios. In addition to this, it is important to reach out to non-English speaking websites which can get the game a significant amount of attention. (van Dongen, 2012.)

If the company is working on a PC exclusive title, this will eliminate all Mac and console exclusive websites which cuts down the amount of people the company has to get in touch with. Similarly, working on an RPG means that the company has no need to focus on sites that focus on other genres. (Drake, 2013.)

The company will also need to determine its identity as a company which gives it a voice and style in its messaging. The tone of the messages should also change depending on whom the company is targeting with them. Big companies will typically sound very formal and stiff due to their material going through numerous people for approval. (Drake, 2013.)

Getting coverage by the press is important even before the game is released. The advantage in coverage before the game is released is that members of press who

have written about the game are more likely to write about it again at launch, and on top of that, it raises awareness for the game. (Santos, 2015.)

The following are typical milestones when indie studios should try to get press coverage for their games:

- **Announcement:** If the game has had no previous press coverage, the company can try to catch the attention of members of the press by officially announcing the game. For this announcement, it is good to have a trailer (with gameplay) and screenshots.
- **Kickstarter:** If the game is going to be put on Kickstarter, this is a great opportunity to seek press coverage.
- **Steam Greenlight:** Reaching members of the press when the game has been submitted to Steam's Greenlight program is important. This is a good chance to get in touch with people who have written about the game previously.
- **Beta Testing:** If the game company chooses to open up its game for playtesting by the consumers, they can reach out to members of the press with information on how players can participate in the playtesting. Please note that sometimes members of the press do not want to write about a beta test for their website but will happily tweet about it. It is acceptable to ask members of the press kindly to tweet about your game if they are not willing to write about the game on their website.
- **Launch:** This is the last big chance for a game company to get press coverage for its game, excluding future updates to the game. (Santos, 2015.)

Indie studios need to determine where their audience is located when it comes to gaming related websites and which publications would be interested in their game

(and even dig deeper to find out which writer/editor in particular would be interested in the game), and target these websites and people first. (Spillmakerlauget, 2013.)

It is a good idea to have a review embargo in place when sending review copies to members of the press. This means that they will not publish their article until the date you have given them. It makes sure that once someone reads the article, the game is available for them to buy instead it coming out later by which time the reader will have forgotten the game. (RunJumpDev, 2011.)

3.3 Creating news

Creating news is an important part of a game company's marketing efforts. Some things are very obviously news, such as the announcement of the game, the announcement of the release date, the release itself or any of the other things mentioned above. Other than that, it is up to the developers to be creative in their marketing efforts and realize what parts of their game are interesting. Many game developers do not realize that they can create news themselves if they are smart about it. The simplest method of doing this is by keeping most details of the game secret and gradually releasing more information as time goes by. (van Dongen, 2012.)

Every piece of content or information a game company reveals can be a newsworthy item. This of course is most effective for games that everyone is looking forward to, e.g. for Grand Theft Auto V even the revealing of the release date was big news, for which Rockstar prepared a trailer. Smaller game companies need more creativity and persistence to create news worthy content. How things are formulated and worded are also important because with one small change something might be newsworthy or not, so indie studios need to put a lot of attention to detail. (van Dongen, 2012.)

In order to create newsworthy content and from keeping themselves from revealing everything at once, indie studios need to have a marketing plan in place ahead of time. The company needs to be creative and come up with various ways to garner attention from members of the press, and after that is done, put it all into a plan. This also helps the company see what it needs for its marketing efforts. For example, trailers take time to make and to reveal something, it needs to be polished enough to show. In conclusion, game companies should make a marketing plan with a lot of key moments to reach out to the world. (van Dongen, 2012.)

3.4 Guerilla marketing

Guerilla Marketing is an advertising strategy that focuses on low cost unconventional marketing activities that yield high results. Jay Conrad Levinson coined the term in 1984 in his book “Guerilla Advertising”. The term itself was inspired by guerilla warfare which is a form unconventional warfare and includes strategies used by armed civilians. Ambushes, sabotage, raids and elements of surprise are a part of these tactics. (Creative Guerilla Marketing, n.d.)

This marketing style leans heavily on unconventional marketing strategies, high energy and imagination. The core concept of Guerilla Marketing is taking the consumer by surprise, creating a stirring impression and generating copious amounts of word of mouth. It is said that Guerilla Marketing makes much more valuable impression with consumers in comparison to traditional forms of marketing and advertising. This is caused by the fact that guerilla marketing campaigns hit consumers at a more personal and memorable level. (Creative Guerilla Marketing, n.d.)

Many of the activities mentioned in this thesis are basic but they do require genuine creativity to really work out. For a game company to come up with newsworthy content, requires thinking outside the box. Real brainstorming is in order to reach results, and therefore, creativity is not just for game development, but also for the game’s marketing. (van Dongen, 2012.)



Figure 2. “Your Mom Hates Dead Space” campaign. (Dead Space, 2011.)

EA Games’ campaign “Your Mom Hates Dead Space” (see Figure 2 above) is an excellent example of how to showcase a game in an unconventional context. Here EA broke up the basics, including showing gameplay of Dead Space 2, by showing mothers and their reaction to the game’s gory and violent gameplay. This is still relatively basic marketing, as games will often be showed to focus groups for feedback, but the unusual part of the campaign is the mothers. The execution was of high enough quality to make the trailers go viral and achieving over 100 000 viewings and the Behind the Scenes series has achieved almost a million views. This is a prime example of low cost activities yielding high impact results. (Toresson, 2013b.)

3.5 Trailers

Developers should not underestimate the power of a trailer since it will introduce consumers to their game and it can be embedded into blogs and shared all over the internet. Many gamers will watch trailers before reading a single word about the game on an article or the game’s website. (Santos, 2015b.)

Making trailers is an art unto itself and should definitely be invested in but one or two trailers alone will not be enough, the more trailers a company produces the more opportunities it will have for the press to show its game to their audience again and again. (van Dongen, 2012.)

Indie studios should not settle for good or great when it comes to quality, their video needs to be built in a way that it could go viral. If indie studios do not have the necessary talent in their own company, they should consider asking for help from someone who is more experienced since there are many talented people out there who are able to make an amazing video of their game. Naturally, it will not be free but the cost will be offset by the quality which can lead to more coverage and awareness for the game. (Santos, 2015b.)

If the indie studio decides to produce the trailer themselves they should look at other successful indie game trailers and what they are doing right. What they will find is great music that fits really well, good length (usually a maximum of 90 seconds), actual footage from the game itself and no menus. (Santos, 2015b.)

As stated above, the length should not be more than 90 seconds to get people interested in the game and if the studio thinks it should be longer, they actually might be losing the viewer's interest instead. It is important to show the viewers the game in action and how the gameplay mechanics work but the studio should not reveal everything at once. That 90 seconds is a very limited amount of time and it should leave the viewer curious and wanting more. (Santos, 2015b.)

During the 90 seconds there is not much time to tell a story but the trailer should build up in action, have a climax and some sort of conclusion. In other words, it needs pacing. At the very end of the video, the company should include the game's name, supported platforms, availability and website. (Santos, 2015b.)

Bad to mediocre music in the trailer might not be a deal breaker but it will most likely not encourage the viewer to rewatch the trailer, which great music can do. Indie studios also need to make sure that the footage for the trailers have as little video compression as possible and that they capture moments that demonstrate

the game mechanics that the studios want to highlight perfectly. At least one whole day should be spent capturing footage for the trailer. (Santos, 2015b.)

The studio should make sure that the trailer can be uploaded to YouTube and embedded on other sites. Additionally, the video should be offered for download in the press kit. Bloggers will usually want to upload videos to their own streaming service or video service. (Santos, 2015b.)



Figure 3. Super Time Force trailer. (IGN, 2014.)

Kert Gartner, who has made trailers for popular indie games such as Aquaria, Luftrausers and Spelunky, says that the trailer for Super Time Force (see Figure 3 above) is the pinnacle of a teaser trailer. The trailer has a story structure with a build in action, it highlights gameplay mechanics by slowing down the footage slightly, it shows viewers what they should focus on by zooming into specific areas and it teases an interesting plot with the ending of the trailer. It leaves more questions than answers, and due to its short teasing nature, it grabs the viewer's attention and interest. (Santos, 2015b.)

After the indie studio has finished the trailer and is happy with it does not mean that the trailer is ready to be released. The studio should show the trailer to someone who has never played their game or heard of it before. If that person cannot describe what the game is about and its mechanics, then the trailer needs to educate its viewer better. If the person is part of the games target audience and he/she is not interested in the game after seeing the trailer, then the trailer (or possibly the game) may need to be made more entertaining. (Santos, 2015b.)

3.6 YouTubers

YouTube is an extremely powerful medium for indie studios to promote their game, increase awareness for it and acquire new players. Usually when indie studios think about YouTube, they envision PewDiePie, TotalBiscuit, Markiplier and many of the most popular channels, which according to a misinformed public opinion, can make or break a game. Every indie studio would like these channels to play their game in order to become an explosive success similar to Surgeon Simulator or Goat Simulator. (Palka, 2015.)

USER STATISTICS TABLE FOR PEWDIEPIE (MAR 20TH, 2015 - APR 18TH, 2015)						
DATE	SUBSCRIBERS		VIDEO VIEWS		ESTIMATED EARNINGS	
	CHANGE	TOTAL	CHANGE	TOTAL		
2015-03-20	Fri	+19,553	35,419,563	--	8,134,590,101	€0 - €0
2015-03-21	Sat	+28,546	35,448,109	+36,778,336	8,171,368,437	€7.1K - €114.3K
2015-03-22	Sun	+36,499	35,484,608	--	8,171,368,437	€0 - €0
2015-03-23	Mon	+25,880	35,510,488	--	8,171,368,437	€0 - €0
2015-03-24	Tue	+19,771	35,530,259	+41,030,164	8,212,398,601	€8K - €127.6K
2015-03-25	Wed	+20,842	35,551,101	+3,114,548	8,215,513,149	€605 - €9.7K
2015-03-26	Thu	+20,969	35,572,070	+11,206,912	8,226,720,061	€2.2K - €34.8K
2015-03-27	Fri	+21,831	35,593,901	+11,098,084	8,237,818,145	€2.2K - €34.5K
2015-03-28	Sat	+26,951	35,620,852	+23,929,314	8,261,747,459	€4.6K - €74.4K
2015-03-29	Sun	+24,413	35,645,265	--	8,261,747,459	€0 - €0
2015-03-30	Mon	+22,560	35,667,825	+17,493,018	8,279,240,477	€3.4K - €54.4K
2015-03-31	Tue	+26,479	35,694,304	+25,134,908	8,304,375,385	€4.9K - €78.1K
2015-04-01	Wed	+24,959	35,719,263	--	8,304,375,385	€0 - €0
2015-04-02	Thu	+23,903	35,743,166	+22,638,039	8,327,013,424	€4.4K - €70.4K
2015-04-03	Fri	+24,739	35,767,905	+11,162,401	8,338,175,825	€2.2K - €34.7K
2015-04-04	Sat	+25,602	35,793,507	--	8,338,175,825	€0 - €0
2015-04-05	Sun	+22,684	35,816,191	+16,964,923	8,355,140,748	€3.3K - €52.7K
2015-04-06	Mon	+23,280	35,839,471	+26,231,042	8,381,371,790	€5.1K - €81.5K
2015-04-07	Tue	+24,946	35,864,417	+12,133,710	8,393,505,500	€2.4K - €37.7K
2015-04-08	Wed	+24,614	35,889,031	+10,211,269	8,403,716,769	€2K - €31.7K
2015-04-09	Thu	+20,546	35,909,577	--	8,403,716,769	€0 - €0
2015-04-10	Fri	+20,080	35,929,657	+11,346,579	8,415,063,348	€2.2K - €35.3K
2015-04-11	Sat	+23,042	35,952,699	+22,951,080	8,438,014,428	€4.5K - €71.3K
2015-04-12	Sun	+23,424	35,976,123	--	8,438,014,428	€0 - €0
2015-04-13	Mon	+18,075	35,994,198	--	8,438,014,428	€0 - €0
2015-04-14	Tue	+22,387	36,016,585	+27,777,543	8,465,791,971	€5.4K - €86.4K
2015-04-15	Wed	+17,649	36,034,234	+18,447,221	8,484,239,192	€3.6K - €57.3K
2015-04-16	Thu	+16,094	36,050,328	+10,447,300	8,494,686,492	€2K - €32.5K
2015-04-17	Fri	+19,081	36,069,409	--	8,494,686,492	€0 - €0
2015-04-18	Sat	+16,541	36,085,950	+10,032,220	8,504,718,712	€1.9K - €31.2K
DAILY AVERAGES		+22,314		+12,003,200		€2.3K - €37.3K

Figure 4. Statistics of PewDiePie's YouTube channel. (Social Blade, 2015.)

This is a common misconception although it is possible for the biggest channels (see Figure 4 above) to propel a game into huge popularity, it is very hard to gain those channels' attention especially if the indie studio is not paying them anything. Indie studios need to be very lucky to get a video from these very big YouTube channels, be one of the best game developers in the world or make a unique game, which somehow appeals to both the YouTuber and his/her viewers. (Palka, 2015.)

However, YouTube includes millions of channels that range from a few to hundreds of thousands of subscribers. If indie studios are trying to get the attention of a YouTuber with tens of millions of subscribers but it is not working out, they should try to approach tens of YouTubers with millions of subscribers instead. If that does not work, they should try to reach out to hundreds of YouTubers with hundreds of thousands of subscribers. The amount of channels with great content is almost limitless and indie studios should use this to their advantage. (Palka, 2015.)

Indie Studios will usually view smaller channels as useless for raising awareness for their game, which is also a misconception. Smaller channels usually have a more active and engaged user base following each video they release. Smaller channels also have the added pressure of competing with big channels, which makes them usually produce high quality content. In addition to this, smaller channels are usually connected with the bigger ones and can help indie studios get in touch with them. (Palka, 2015.)

To increase their chance of getting noticed when indie studios approach YouTubers, they should properly consider which ones to approach and only get in touch with the ones that play similar games to the one that they are offering. (Palka, 2015.)

YouTubers receive several hundred emails every day which is why indie studios should be persistent in their attempts to contact them. If a YouTuber does not answer then the indie studio should contact him again and again, week after week. After a few emails, they will eventually reply. If a YouTuber does not have an email account then he/she can also be reached through social media channels (YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest or any other place where the YouTuber is active). (Palka, 2015.)

3.7 Press kit

A press kit is an all-in-one zip file with all the information (about the game, the studio, etc.) and media (screenshots, trailers, etc.) which makes it simple and convenient for members of the press to write about the game by referring to the press kit when in need of screenshots, trailers or information about the game, instead of having to search for it themselves. Additionally, this helps a game studio to gather all of its marketing assets in one place instead of having to send them separately to each member of the press. They are more likely to write about a game if they can easily find all they need for the article. (Santos, 2015b.)

Another way of having a press kit is by dedicating a full page on the indie studio's website with the same information and content as the press kit (see Figure 5 below). This way the company can make it even easier for journalists to gather information, especially if they do not have a lot of time, and search engines can pick up the site which can result in organic traffic. Once again, the goal is to make it very easy for people to find information about the game and write about the game and the company. If the company decides to go for the website solution, they should still offer a zip file on the page for convenience sake. (Santos, 2015b.)

Young Horses, Inc.

octodadgame.com

[Factsheet](#)

[Description](#)

[History](#)

[Projects](#)

[Videos](#)

[Images](#)

[Logo & Icon](#)

[Awards & Recognition](#)

[Selected Articles](#)

[Team](#)

[Contact](#)



Factsheet

Developer:

[Young Horses, Inc.](#)

Based in Chicago, Illinois

Founding date:

October 6th, 2011

Website:

octodadgame.com

Press / Business contact:

philtb@octodadgame.com

Social:

[Octodad Twitter](#)

[Octodad Facebook](#)

[Octodad YouTube](#)

[Young Horses Twitter](#)

[Young Horses Facebook](#)

Releases:

[Octodad](#)

[Octodad Dadliest Catch](#)

Phone:

N/A

Description

As Young Horses we strive to push the boundaries of game design in order to create experiences that players have not seen before. This is not only because we think that we should be bringing something new to our medium and our industry, but because we think that innovation is necessary to reach new, broader audiences. Our goal is to create innovative, intelligent, and charming entertainment that can be enjoyed by both children and adults.

History

Beginnings

The Young Horses were unofficially formed in March 2011 at the Game Developers Conference. We had gotten nominated as a Student Showcase Winner for Octodad, and we realized that the little game we'd created during our time at DePaul University had gained a sizable following. All 18 of the original Octodad creators gathered in a dank hostel basement theatre to decide what we all wanted to do with the rest of our game dev careers. No pressure. In the end, 8 of us decided to form a company to make a bigger and better Octodad.

And then...

After some initial actions to seek some sort of funding for the next Octodad we found that the only viable way we would be able to create what would become Dadliest Catch was to both crowd and self fund it. After doing a load of research we found ourselves planning our very own Kickstarter campaign, which we set loose unto the world on July 10th, 2011. After successfully raising \$24,320, we set out to create Octodad: Dadliest Catch.

Projects

- [Octodad](#)
- [Octodad Dadliest Catch](#)

Figure 5. Young Horses' online presskit using Presskit(). (Young Horses, n.d.)

This press kit is not only meant for members of the press, bloggers who find the game at a later time after launch will also need to have easy access to all the information and media. (Santos, 2015b.)

The contents of a press kit should be irresistible, meaning pieces of marketing content that are so alluring they compel sharing and discussion. It is important to leave a great first impression through these materials and encourage sharing. For example, one of Castle Story's developers created a technical demo video, which explained how the game functions and uploaded it to YouTube. After an hour of release, the studio was getting hundreds of emails, and as a result they grew their follower count (which had been very small until this point) to over 40 000. (Spillmakerlauget, 2013.)

The press kit should include a press release which is where the indie studio gives members of the press a summary of the news, and it should tell them what the game is about, when it is going to be released, what platforms will the game be out on, how much will it cost, and where consumers will be able to buy it. (Santos, 2015b.)

Screenshots should also be incorporated into the press kit and they are also very important since these will also be used in decision making by members of press and players, and they will be also used by members of the press in articles about the game. This is why it is very important to regard each screenshot as a work of art as each of them represent the game.” (Spillmakerlauget, 2013.)



Figure 6. Screenshot of Guacamelee. (Drinkbox Studios, 2014.)

Screenshots are the most likely way for a game to make a first impression on players so it is very important that each of the screenshots showcases how exciting the game is (see Figure 6 above). This is why the screenshots should not focus on uninteresting things such as menus or anything else that is not interesting. Screenshots should not be watermarked and should be large so that members of the press can properly utilize the screenshots in their article and having large

screenshots can encourage them to create a gallery for the screenshots. (Santos, 2015b.)

Lastly, the press kit should include previous coverage from the press. Indie studios can increase the credibility of themselves and their games by having links to previous press coverage from respected gaming websites in the press kit. (Santos, 2015b.)

4 NON-PAID MARKETING

Often in the video game industry marketing is thought of something that large companies with large marketing budgets do by buying advertisement space on television, magazines and websites. This is not the case however, as in today's game industry a small indie studio with a small or no marketing budget can still get a lot of attention for its games. Indie studios can in fact outperform larger companies in marketing downloadable games. (van Dongen, 2012.)

4.1 Website

A game's website is one of the most important pieces of a game company's marketing strategy because it is where they can best showcase the game without the limitations of marketplaces and distribution channels like Steam. (Santos, 2015b.)

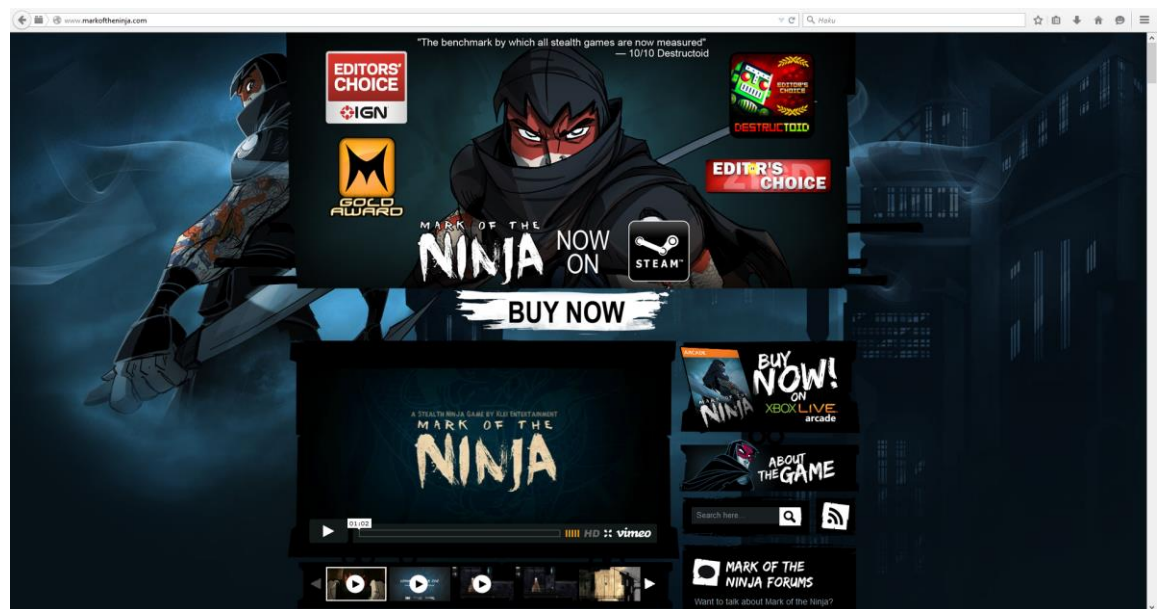


Figure 7. Mark Of The Ninja website. (Klei Entertainment, 2012.)

A website can be thought of as a direct way to contact consumers and indie studios can present their game on the website in exactly the way that they want (see Figure 7 above). The website is also a really good tool for building interest and following for the game before and after the launch of the game. The company can also sell their game on the website which allows them to keep the most revenue from each sale and it gives fans the best way to support the company's current and future work. (Santos, 2015b.)

The game's website can be used during the game's development to show progress, build a community, take preorders, promote crowdfunding campaigns and establish the company's and game's brand, and therefore the website is a key part of a successful launch. The website is going to be a focal point for the company's other marketing efforts since it will be linked in press coverage, the platforms the game is on, and many other places on the internet. This is why it is key that the website has all the information about the game available. (Santos, 2015b.)

Additionally, it is hard to stand out from the huge volume of other games when a game company tries to promote their game's page on big marketplaces such as Steam and the App Store. The game company can, however, build a hub for the game on the game's website and generate traffic from search engines and articles. (Santos, 2015b.)

The website should have a clear description of the game, but before going into detailed information about the game, the website should explain what the game is in a few sentences. This short description should be at the very top of the website and the detailed description should be in another section. (Santos, 2015b.)

The website should also tell visitors what platform the game is for, and what the system requirements for it are. Having a development blog which gives the community a look at how the game is made is also good to have on the website. (Santos, 2015b.)

It is important to have a news section on the website which is dedicated to news and updates regarding the game. This should be separate from the development

blog because important news might get lost if it is together with the blog, and that news might not get the attention it deserves. The website should include screenshots and videos to give visitors a good first impression of the game since these will be the primary factor for purchase for consumers. (Santos, 2015b.)

The above mentioned press kit, which includes information about the game and media, should be linked on the game's website. The website should also include an email address and a contact form so that anyone, from members of the press, potential publishers to fans, can easily get in touch with the company. (Santos, 2015b.)

The website should also include links to the game's and/or company's Twitter, Facebook and other social media channels so that fans can follow the company and the game on the social media channel of their choice. Lastly, the website should tell visitors where the game is available and how much it costs so that visitors can easily find the game on the storefront of their choice and buy it. Thought should be put into the design of the website, since it can give the game company a valuable edge, but it is not the highest priority. (Santos, 2015b.)

4.1.1 Google Analytics

Google Analytics lets game companies get the full picture of how their customers behave across ads, videos, websites, social tools, tablets and smart phones. It helps them analyze visitor traffic and put together a better picture of the customers' needs and whether they are on the path to purchasing their game. Google Analytics help game companies track the routes people take to reach them and the devices they use to get there. With all this information, game companies can improve the visitors experience and interactions. (Google, n.d.)

On the Google Analytics dashboard, game companies can see their traffic sources, which is very important data. This lets them see where exactly the traffic

to their website is coming from (referring sites, search engines, etc.) and adjust the content on their website accordingly. (Positech Games, n.d.)

It is important to have goals for analytics because without them it is merely interesting but not very useful. Game companies need to identify whether they are getting many visitors or many quality visitors on their website. What game companies can do is track the number of views they get on their registration page (this means that the sales are not confirmed yet), and have set goals for their top selling games. Everything else will come from this. (Positech Games, n.d.)

Indie studios should monitor their bounce rate, which is the number of people who visit their site briefly and then leave. This kind of behavior is not good because for indie studios it is important that visitors stay on the site and buy/download their game. Some pages, however, will have a high bounce rate such as a demo download page and the buy page because these are natural dead ends. The home page, on the other hand, needs to pull people in and guide people to the download or buy page. If 95% of the visitors to the company's homepage leave then the homepage's content is of low quality and the company is not getting the visitors it desires. (Positech Games, n.d.)

Game companies can track outgoing links by adding some javascript around outgoing links. It is important to do this for buy/download buttons or any link that takes the visitor out of the website. Through this the company can track navigation into and out of pages on the website. The company can also see the routes visitors took to make their way to the buy page. (Positech Games, n.d.)

4.2 Community management

Of course, the game's website is not the only place to raise awareness of the game, there are other channels for effective marketing such as Facebook, Twitter, a blog, forums, etc. All of these channels give indie studios a way to be in touch with their fans. It helps to have a devoted core community, who talk about the

game on a daily basis, for word of mouth to be effective. Giving them something to talk about and engaging with them is a good way to keep up interest for the game. (van Dongen, 2012.)

On Facebook and Twitter, a reply is worth a lot more than someone simply seeing the message, and if they do reply, the message will reach more people than just the company's normal followers since it will be shown to the replier's friends as well. It is important to keep this fact in mind while writing posts to Facebook and Twitter, and indie studios should try to entice people to reply to their posts. This requires some creativity and is harder than it sounds but good examples of this include polls and asking questions through which people can show their creativity by answering. (van Dongen, 2012.)

4.2.1 Facebook

Facebook is not simply a platform for announcing news and updates but should be used to engage and socialize with the community. It should be used for announcements as well but the people who frequent the company's/game's page are usually aware of the company/the game and are interested in what they are doing. That is why it is preferable to encourage interaction by engaging with the community, answering people directly and not communicating like a big corporation, the developers should sound like themselves and find their own voice. (Toresson, 2013a.)

The company should also be active on other Facebook pages and use their own Facebook page like a normal account, meaning that they should debate and discuss topics and news in games, politics and other subject on appropriate Facebook pages that they themselves enjoy. For example, if one of the developers wants to discuss the Xbox One, he/she should utilize the company Facebook page instead his/her own account because the visibility will be more interesting for the company Facebook page than the personal account. (Toresson, 2013a.)

Indie studios should see themselves as a small store in a large town, meaning that they should recommend the stores that they prefer to shop at and maintain good relationships with the other store owners which in turn can result in them doing the same for the indie studio. This way both studios gain customers and better possibilities to do what they want, and on top of this, the studios are helping to develop the independent game community. All in all, Indie studios should strive to be assets for their community. (Toresson, 2013c.)

Many companies tend to post something on their Facebook page and then just leave it there. Instead, they should share and like their company's posts with their personal accounts because the company can increase the reach of their posts to friends who have not yet liked the company's Facebook page, and the developers can ask a few of their friends to share, comment or like the update to create an encouragement for others to take part in the conversation or share the update. It is good to remember people will find personal recommendations more credibly than any high quality advertisement. (Toresson, 2013c.)

Indie studios should strive to post fun, honest and personal content and not try to be official, and they should also try to encourage discussion and ask questions from the community since posts with more comments and likes are showed to more people on Facebook. (TeeGee, 2013.)

Nowadays almost half of the company's Facebook page's administration panel consists of various paid advertising options, and to further incentivize their use, Facebook has limited the spread of normal posts and they are getting showed to less people. Indie studios can have more reach when they have notably less followers. (TeeGee, 2013.)

4.2.2 Twitter

Twitter, much like Facebook, is not simply for the occasional announcement. Once again, it is very important to socialize and to engage with people that developers

find interesting and they have a differing or similar opinion which could contribute to the discussion. If game developers behave more loosely and comfortably, and not like a big corporation or robot, they will have an easier time when they are actually promoting their game. By taking part in conversations by contributing interesting content, such as thoughts or assets, the developers are an actual part of the community discussing issues, and this can make the difference between a big gaming news outlet like RockPaperShotgun retweeting their tweet and a tweet that no one pays attention to. (Toresson, 2013a.)

Hashtags are extremely important on Twitter and are a very useful tool for reaching a large audience (e.g. #indiedev and #indiegame). One popular trend is developers sharing screenshots of their game every Saturday and indie studios can use this to tweet a variety of things such as concept art, screenshots, pictures from a brainstorm session, etc. The point of these tweets is to create a narrative that people can follow and see how the game grows to become the final product. (Toresson, 2013c.)

Twitter is an incredibly useful PR tool because it provides real time insight into what people are discussing, what is trending and even which members of the press are looking for new games to play. Game developers should not expect members of the press to send out mass emails to their industry contacts asking for something new to play, rather they will ask on Twitter what they should be playing. (Drake, 2013.)

The strength of Twitter is that it makes developers seem more human and interesting, and less of a spammer or someone who only gets in touch when they want something. Twitter allows developers to talk about what is interesting for them even if it is outside of the industry. This is considerably more human and people prefer to talk to people that share their interests and seem human. (Drake, 2013.)

4.3 Twitch

Streaming game development sessions is an activity that game developers are using increasingly. Actually, so many developers are doing this that Twitch has dedicated an entire category to game development. Even renowned indie game developer Jonathan Blow is documenting on YouTube his progress of creating a new programming language meant for making games. Streaming game development gives the audience a look into how games are made and it also gets them excited about gameplay and visuals. (Santos, 2015a.)

The Dutch indie game studio, Vlambeer, developers of Super Crate Box and Luftrausers, regularly stream their programming, art creation and playtesting sessions of their game Nuclear Throne which is currently in Steam's Early Access. Every broadcast is quite simple, it involves the streamer showing what they are working on their computer screen and at the same time a camera shows them work and the footage is located in the corner of the stream. Interaction with the live chat room is also a key part of the stream. (Santos, 2015a.)

Tim Schafer's Double Fine Productions which is known for Psychonauts and Brütal Legend among several other games, has a different approach to game development streaming. They hold team streams in which several members of the development team recap what they have been working on with demos and discussions about how they came to certain design decisions. (Santos, 2015a.)

4.4 Reddit

According to independent developer Moa Cube, Reddit has been their most successful source of traffic. Reddit draws in 87% new traffic ratio for their website. The average time spent on their website is significantly shorter than compared to Facebook or Twitter, on the other hand but for how little effort it takes for them to post a link on Reddit, it is definitely worth it. (TeeGee, 2013.)

One thing to note is that Reddit has a strict anti-spam policy and established etiquette which means that it should not be treated as a newsfeed and as such should only be used for really important news and informative blog posts. Indie game studios should post things that they themselves would like to read and it is also wise to be an active part of the community, rate and post other links, participate in conversations, etc. Spamming is highly disliked on Reddit. (TeeGee, 2013.)

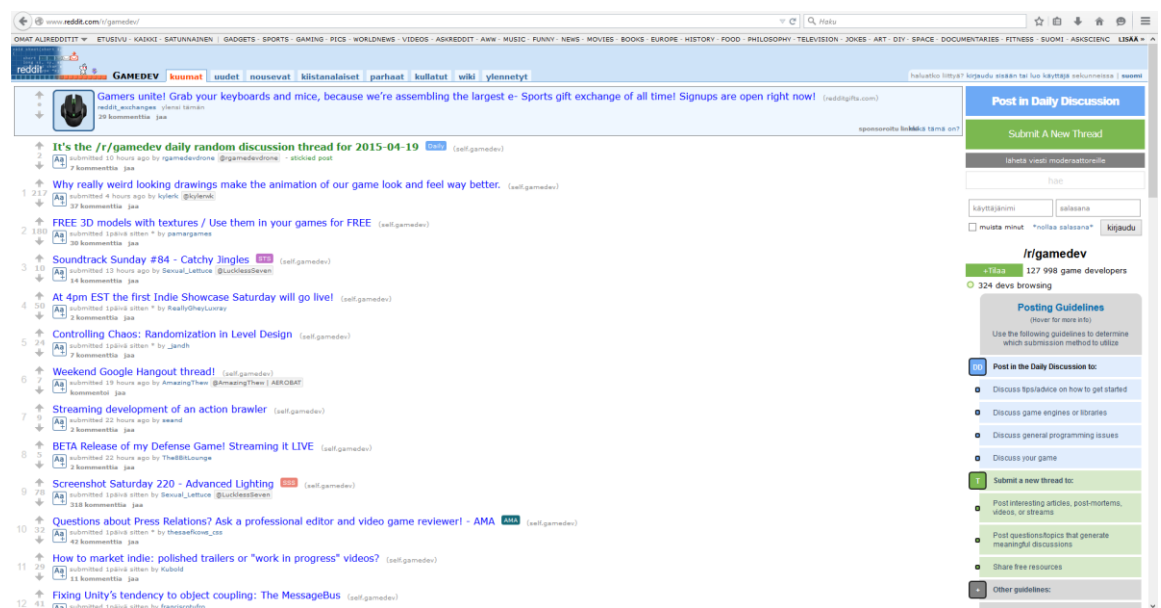


Figure 8. The r/gamedev subreddit. (Reddit, 2015.)

Good subreddits (see Figure 8 above) for posting game development related topics and game updates are r/indiegaming (good for telling when the game is released and indie game related blog posts, and getting feedback), r/gamedev (good for game development related posts, especially post-mortems) and r/games (good for news and updates that could be interesting for the wider gaming audience). (TeeGee, 2013.)

r/roguelikes or r/visualnovels, which are genre specific subreddits, are also very useful. Although they are smaller, the users there will be more interested in games of that specific niche, and the churn rate on their main page is slower. (TeeGee, 2013.)

When indie studios work on a good headline for their Reddit post, it should be tailored to the audience. For the more business oriented r/gamedev, Moa Cube used the headline “Cinders postmortem: production, marketing and sales numbers” and for the more consumer oriented r/games, they used “If you have been wondering how small indie development looks from the backstage and how much it earns, Cinders postmortem is out”. It makes quite a large difference when you know your audience. Also, if an indie studio is linking their content, they should be courteous and introduce themselves in the comments. They should explain what they are linking and be willing to answer questions and receive feedback. This makes people more welcoming. (TeeGee, 2013.)

4.5 Blog

A blog is essentially an online diary for game companies to tell what they have completed, what they are working on, what their future looks like and other topics. This is a good way of gaining the attention of consumers who are interested in the game development process regardless of if they themselves are game developers or not. For example, a blog post could detail interesting results for solving design challenges while working on a game. This gives readers a look at the development process and the challenges that the developers are facing, and it may even help a fellow developer facing the same problems while at the same time telling them about your game. (Santos, 2015a.)

One particularly good example of this is the programmer of Fez, Renaud Bédard, and his blog, the Instruction Limit (see Figure 9 below). One particular blog post that is a great example is his explanation of “Trixels”, the rendering technology inside Fez, and how it differs from voxels, which Minecraft made popular. The article is indeed technical in nature but it is written in a manner that makes it still easy to understand for people who are not developers. (Santos, 2015a.)

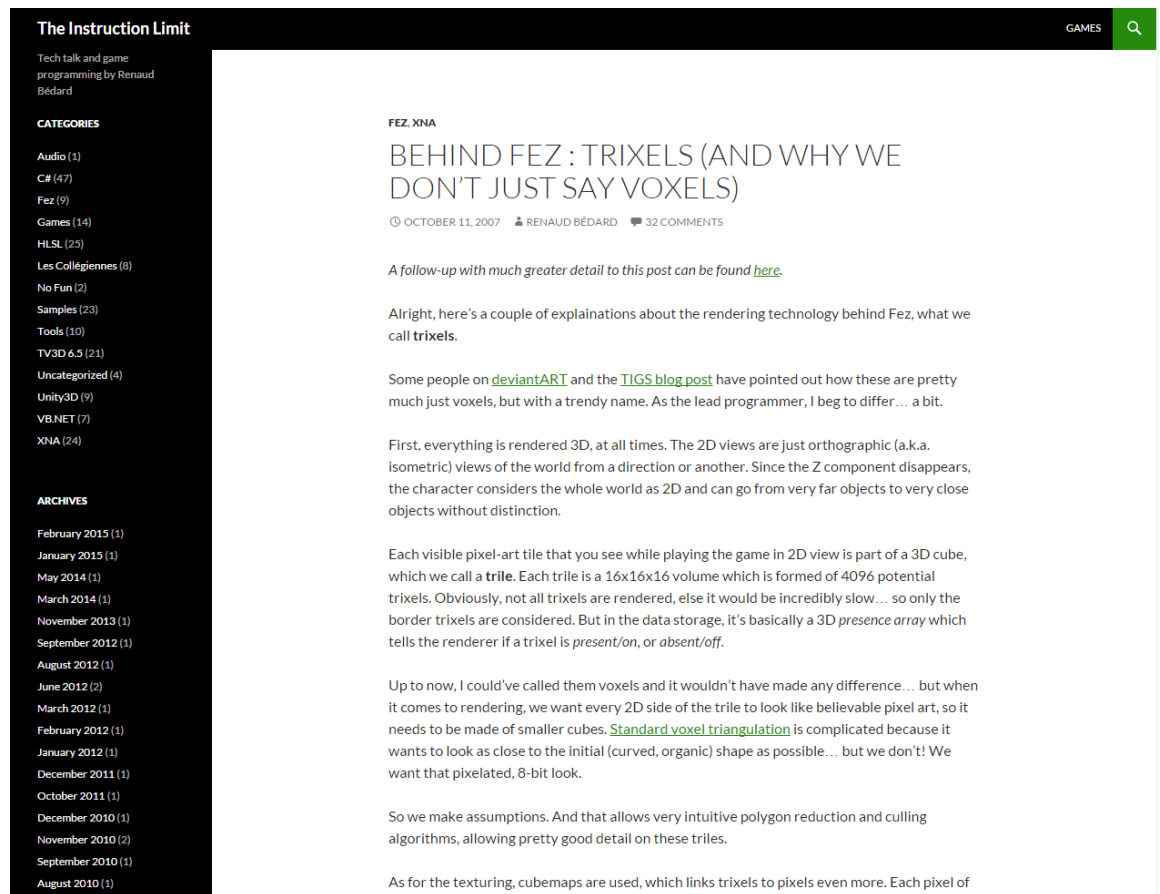


Figure 9. The “Triixels” blog post gathering a fair amount of attention with 32 comments. (Bédard, 2007.)

Blogging also works as a way for game developers to share their opinions on game development, the game industry or other topics. Rami Ismail of Dutch indie studio Vlambeer is a good example because he wrote a blog post about the state of the game industry and how it is becoming increasingly challenging for indie studios to make a living. It is a very timely topic that touches on both developers and gamers and the blog post gained a fair amount of attention. (Santos, 2015a.)

Another advantage to blogging is that the blog helps people find the game on the internet which is crowded with games. Readers can link to and share blog posts which helps indie studios to create a brand for their studio, the developers or their game. Lastly, blog posts will improve the website’s search engine optimization and it will be more likely to appear higher up on search results. (Santos, 2015a.)

5 CASE: ODDWINGS ESCAPE

The goal and purpose of this thesis is to gather information about marketing a video game before and during its release, and how to make a marketing plan for the launch of Oddwings Escape. Through the research and observed best practices of other studios, a good marketing plan can be written for Oddwings Escape. In particular, it is important to come up with strategies and activities that work well for this particular game and mobile games in general.

After the marketing plan has been planned and thought out, it will be written down so that none of the information is forgotten or lost, and that anyone can see what the plan is and it is laid out clearly. The marketing plan will be executed leading up to and during the launch of Oddwings Escape, but unfortunately, the launch will happen after the writing of this Thesis. Therefore, the results of the marketing plan will not be enclosed and reviewed in this thesis, but the process itself will be.

5.1 Initial setting for the project

Oddwings Escape has been in development by Small Giant Games since the autumn of 2013 and is going to be launched at the end of April or beginning of May 2015. The game's development cycle is roughly 20 months and it is important that it has a successful launch so that the company can grow and develop new products in the future. Thanks to large completed financing rounds, the company's future is not dependent on the success of Oddwings Escape.

Small Giant Games

Small Giant Games is mobile games company located in Helsinki, Finland, working on its first game Oddwings Escape. The company was founded by ex-Sulake employees who in the past have worked together on Habbo Hotel. The company

has 11 employees and strongly believes in keeping the team size small because they feel that small teams can do great things. (Landon, 2014.)

The company believes that it is not possible to succeed in the fiercely competitive mobile game market by simply copying existing games. They want to focus on creating new and fresh game mechanics and features, which will help shape existing genres and give birth to completely new ones. Small Giant Games also wants to raise the quality of character animations to whole new heights. (Anderson, 2014.)

Oddwings Escape

The game is an all new flying game for iOS in which players fly through endless levels, flying puzzles and races to rescue the wacky Oddwings from the evil Dr. Rooster. The game has heavy emphasis on fresh physics based controls, a never before seen blend of endless and challenge based levels, gorgeous painterly visuals, and being able to play against your friends even when offline.

Small Giant Games has put a lot effort into the game's physics engine that makes each of the characters feel different to control, and dynamically generate animations. The development team has also put a lot of time into the game's graphics and art style which are very colorful and stunning, and extremely impressive for a mobile game (see Figure 10 below).



Figure 10. Screenshot from Oddwings Escape. (Small Giant Games, 2015.)

Also, the company has built a sophisticated server system for the game which allows for players to play against friends, as seen in Figure 10, and beat their scores even if the player is offline or does not have a steady internet connection. The system is built so that it does not require a constant internet connection from the player in order to give the player the data necessary for multiplayer functionality.

5.2 Marketing plan

The goal of the marketing plan is to outline Small Giant Games' marketing strategy and activities leading up to and during the launch of their first game, Oddwings Escape. The plan will also describe campaigns, practices and guidelines for the company to follow and execute online on various social media channels such as

Facebook and Twitter. The marketing plan took shape through having several meetings between myself, the CEO Timo Soininen, the COO Otto Nieminen and SagaSocial, which is the PR company we worked with, and researching best practices online.

5.2.1 Messaging

Messaging means what wordings and messages are used when communicating about the game to any external parties such as players, members of the press or members of the game industry. How the game's core messaging is formulated and communicated to the audience is extremely important as it is a part of the first impressions of the game. Oddwings Escape needs a strong and simple tagline that will communicate the core essence of the game swiftly and efficiently. This tagline will be used in the game's messaging on the App Store, official trailers and some screenshots.

In addition, the game will need a short few sentence description that can be used to highlight the game's strongest features and unique selling points, and grab the interest of potential players.

An important thing in the messaging of the game is to differentiate the messaging into an industry message and a player message. This means that the message meant for members of the game development and technology industries is more technical and game development centric, whereas the player message focuses on the features of the game that excite players and the aspects of the game that will make players want to play it.

5.2.2 Building a community

The goal of Small Giant Games' social media presence and activity is to build and nurture a community around the company and Oddwings Escape, and gain more

followers. Part of this goal is to garner interest for the game from members of the press and the game industry, and have them spread the word. Lastly, the company will engage existing audiences through questions and competitions to garner a response from them and thus solidify the community and spread the visibility of Oddwings Escape.

These goals will be reached by increasing communication on social media channels, asking questions, holding competitions and highlighting user made content such as screenshots and videos to bring members of the community to the forefront. The tone and style of the messages on social media channels will be very important to invite people to take part in conversations and share content. The tone should not be corporate since Small Giant Games is a small talented studio and they do not want to behave and communicate like a huge company. The messaging should have a personal differentiated touch to it meaning that the messaging makes it transparent that the company is comprised of people first and foremost.

To give off this personal feeling in the company's messaging, Small Giant Games will mention team members in content that is related to them, to emphasize that it has been made by people. On top of that Small Giant Games will use their small size as a way of representing the company as a small team of talented individuals rather than a faceless corporation.

Small Giant Games also wants to incorporate odd and crazy elements, which are a core part of the studio and its games, into the messaging to stand out from the crowd. However, it is important that this be in good taste and that it feels natural so that people will not think that the oddity and craziness are forced and disingenuous. Lastly, visual elements are a core part of the company and will naturally be a part of the messaging by having visually alluring and appealing images and videos as a part of it.

5.2.3 Facebook

Small Giant Games has a company Facebook page (see Figure 11 below) with some followers but when I joined the company, the page had very little and infrequent activity as it was not the priority during the game's development phase. The Facebook page of the company is a place for the company to communicate with its fans and reach new followers. It is an apt place to share updates of the game, screenshots, concept art, trailers and other content. The most important part is to have the page be alive with frequent posts and engage with the community that is present.

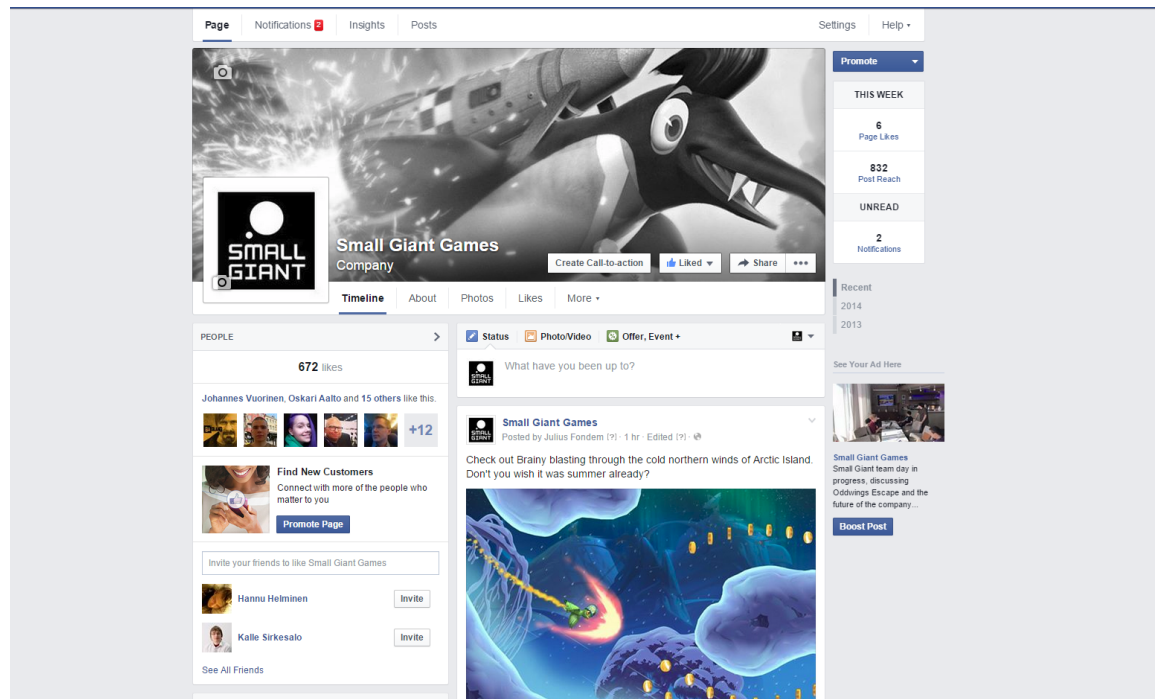


Figure 11. Small Giant Games' Facebook page.

Since the page does not have a huge amount of followers it is important to start growing the community through frequent content updates and engaging posts that will get likes, shares and replies from followers which means that the post will reach their friends as well. This can be achieved by having attractive, screenshots or trailers coupled with a short piece of text preferably ending in a question so that it encourages interaction.

The plan is to have 3 – 5 posts per week before the launch of Oddwings Escape and during the week leading up to the launch, to have at least 1 post per day. Also, a Facebook page has to be established for Oddwings Escape as well so that when players search for the game on Facebook they can find an official page with updates and news about the game.

5.2.4 Twitter

Similar to the company's Facebook page, Small Giant Games had a company twitter profile (see Figure 12 below) when I joined but it also had very little activity in it. Also, the game did not have its own Twitter profile activated yet.

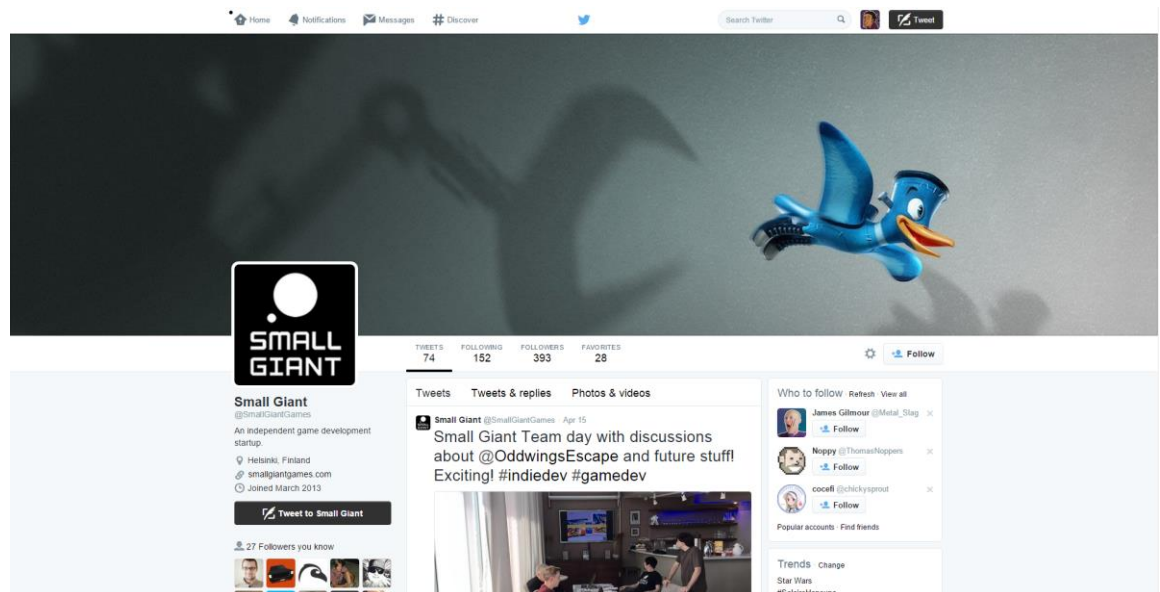


Figure 12. Small Giant Games' Twitter Profile

On Twitter it is very important to not just make announcements but be part of the ecosystem and take part in conversations. The company should thus follow various companies, individual developers, members of the press and publications so that the company can see what they are talking about and join in discussions. This will bring attention to the company and new followers who are interested in the

company so when it does tweet an announcement, the followers will be interested and likely to share it.

Small Giant Games will tweet all updates regarding Oddwings Escape to its followers on the company's Twitter profile and the game's profile as well. On Twitter it is important to use hashtags such as #indiedev and #gamedev to further spread the messages.

5.2.5 YouTuber campaign

YouTube has become a powerful promotion tool for games (see Figure 13 below) in the recent years but has not been utilized by mobile game developers that much. This could be a great opportunity for Small Giant Games to reach a vast variety of mobile gamers and bring Oddwings Escape to their attention.



Figure 13. PewDiePie playing mobile game Dumb Ways To Die 2. (PewDiePie, 2015.)

To achieve this, the company will arrange a new type of flying themed competition between prominent YouTubers on who can get the best score in handpicked multiplayer levels in the game. Other parts of the campaign are still being worked on after the writing of this thesis.

5.2.6 Website

Small Giant Games already has a website for the company but it does not contain very much information about the company, and most importantly, of Oddwings Escape. The company's website will be updated to include information about the game, a link to the press kit and a blog where the company can announce the release date of the game and the release of the game and any future updates.

In addition to this Oddwings Escape will have its own website which includes a description of the game, screenshots, videos, a link to the game's social media channels, a link to the press kit, a link to the game's App Store page, an introduction of all the game's characters and contact information. The website should be launched when the game's release date is announced.

5.2.7 Press

For contacting members of the press, Small Giant Games will need an extensive list of contacts so that the company's PR communication can reach as many people as possible. SagaSocial will be handling all of Small Giant Games' PR communication leading up to the launch and during the launch of Oddwings Escape. As such, SagaSocial has an extensive list of contacts who they will send all of the company's PR messages to.

For the launch of Oddwings Escape, it is important to have an official press release which is sent to numerous game review, game industry and technology related websites to inform that the game is now available. This will be written by Small

Giant Games in collaboration with SagaSocial. Before this press release, Small Giant Games will send out a press release announcing the release date of Oddwings Escape, details about the game itself, and calling for review code requests so that reviewers have time to write a review for the launch of the game. This press release will also be written in collaboration with SagaSocial who will send this press release and the release announcement press release to members of the press.

In addition to this SagaSocial will coordinate interviews with select news publications to raise awareness for Oddwings Escape during its release. Though SagaSocial will be helping with Small Giant Games' PR efforts, the company will also contact publications it already has a good relationship from the past themselves.

Small Giant Games should also put together a press kit on the company's own website and the game's website. The press kit will allow members of the press to find information about Small Giant Games and Oddwings Escape, screenshots and videos of the game, references to previous articles, mentions of awards the game has won and press releases. There are several solutions such as Presskit() for making a separate page for the press kit which should be looked into.

5.2.8 Events and competitions

Small Giant Games should look at any big events and game industry competitions and submit Oddwings Escape to be part of the competitions and be present at big events. Events will allow the company to get the game in front of gamers, members of the press and members of the game industry, and thus raise awareness for the game. At game industry events, such as GDC Europe, Small Giant Games should focus on getting attention from fellow game developers and potential partners, and at trade shows, such as PAX Prime and Gamescom, the company should focus on showing the game to gamers and members of the press.



Figure 14. The Indie Megabooth at PAX East 2013. (Indie Megabooth, 2013.)

It is important, however, when the company is at trade shows (see Figure 14 above) that Oddwings Escape is already available to download so that players who like the game can immediately download the game from the App Store. Otherwise, they will most likely see many other games at the event and forget about Oddwings Escape.

Competitions give the company an opportunity to gain press coverage for the game if they win a prize. In addition to this, prizes can be used in marketing messaging to give credibility to the game and make it more appealing.

5.3 Execution of the marketing plan

We started collaboration with SagaSocial by having a face to face meeting with them and laying out what we want to achieve and how we want to position the

game in our messaging. After the meeting they started working on the first draft of the release date announcement press release.

Once they were ready with the first draft, they sent it to us for review and we made our own suggestions to the draft and they adjusted the draft accordingly. We are currently still working on the press release together with them. The press release will be sent out two weeks before the release of Oddwings Escape. The same process will be done for the game's release announcement press release, which will be sent out when the game is released.

The tagline "Fly like never before" was designed to capture the essence of Oddwings Escape into one short and powerful phrase that can be easily understood by the audience. This tagline will be used in one of the game's screenshots on the App Store, on the game's App Store description and various other marketing materials such as the website.

Speaking of the Oddwings Escape website, it was developed by an external partner who implemented the website according to a layout design which I did and our artists refined. We tested the website and gave feedback to the web developer and he made adjustments to the site. The web developer will also update the company's website with the above mentioned blog which will be published together with the game's website, so at the same time as the release date announcement press release is sent to the press.

This partner also implemented the press kits for Oddwings Escape and Small Giant Games. We gave him all the materials he needed (game & company descriptions, screenshots, videos, previous press coverage of Small Giant Games, facts about the company, links to social media channels, logos, additional links and contact information) and he put together the press kit using Presskit().

Small Giant Games' company Facebook page and Twitter profile had been relatively inactive for quite some time so my task was to activate those social media channels with frequent updates and engaging with followers and people on Twitter and Facebook. The main goal of that was to increase the amount of followers on

both channels and raise awareness for the game. I started by making a content plan for both of the channels in which I detailed what would be posted to which social media channel at any particular date.

A Facebook page and Twitter profile were created for Oddwings Escape as well, which was also part of the content plan. After the plan was ready I proceeded to publishing updates and content to the social media channels according to the plan. In addition to this I started following various Twitter profiles with the company's and the game's Twitter profiles so that the Twitter feed would be populated by tweets from all the followed profiles which makes it easier for me to see what kind of conversations are going on.

I took part in some conversations on Twitter so that we would start getting a better footing in that ecosystem and gathering more attention to our Twitter profiles, and showing that we are not just a corporate profile but actual people. On Facebook our posts first had too long texts and pictures with big logos that made the posts look like advertisements which in turn made them less attractive to people. Through feedback we decided to shorten the texts and remove the logo from the images to improve our messaging.

We also wanted to stand out from the huge crowd of mobile games by getting Oddwings Escape in the hands of big YouTubers and organizing a campaign. We started by outlining the campaign: how it would play out and who we want to contact. We decided to have a campaign where YouTubers would first race each other in the game and do certain other activities related to the game which are still being worked on. We contacted a few YouTubers ourselves and are now working to contact more of them through SagaSocial's contacts.

I also had the pleasure of meeting a YouTuber at Unity's housewarming party in Helsinki. I showed him Oddwings Escape and he really liked the game and wanted to make a video of the game and publish it on his channel which has over 500 000 subscribers and focuses on mobile games. After the event I sent him a download

code for the game and he is currently working on the video and we plan to have it out on the release day of Oddwings Escape.

Lastly, we submitted Oddwings Escape to several events and competitions (these are usually part of the same package), such as Brazil Independent Games Festival and Nordic Game Indie Night, so that we could get visibility and attention for the game. These events are shortly after the game's release, which make their timing good for us. We will also look at events and competitions, which are later on in the year and take part in some of them to market the game even more and hopefully win some awards.

6 CONCLUSION

Working on the marketing plan for Oddwing Escape's launch was very interesting and also challenging. Since this is the first game the company is releasing, there is no established community for the company to rely on, and especially since it is a mobile game, there will not be a big audience of gamers eagerly anticipating it like for example with Call of Duty or Destiny. This was very apparent when I started with the company's social media channels being very quiet and not having a huge following (about 600 hundred).

Starting to build a community for a mobile game, which has had very little visibility in the past, has proven to be quite challenging since the release date is so close and building awareness for a game is usually a slow process requiring time. The other big problem has been the fact that mobile gamers do not typically frequent forums, game news sites, etc. to find the latest news and content in mobile gaming and thus there are not many big places where you can talk about your upcoming mobile game. I did post a thread on Toucharcade which is one of the biggest mobile gaming forums, but even there the attention was not huge due to the game and company not being familiar, and because the company was had not been an active part of that community.

These have been constant challenges but the fact that main mobile platform companies seem to be very keen on the game and will likely feature it during launch, will help it t gain a lot of visibility and players. Also, if the YouTuber campaign works out, it will boost visibility once again. The game has tremendous potential to be successful but only time will tell how the launch will go. Today's mobile game market is highly saturated and competition is fierce.

That being said, I have greatly enjoyed working with Small Giant Games on the project. Working with them has been seamless and getting feedback for the work I do has worked well and has been very easy and swift. My tasks have varied a lot to keep me interested in working and coming up with creative solutions. The fact

that I have gotten to work on marketing texts, website layouts, a YouTuber campaign and a lot of many thing has been highly enjoyable. The only downside to that has been that I have not been able to focus on the community management side, and since I do not have a lot of experience in social media marketing, I would have needed more time to get better results.

Due to the tight schedule, I have not been able to release all of the planned social media content, as I have not had the art assets ready by the time I need them because the art team has been very busy with finishing up the game, understandably. All in all, I think the game will be successful and will get a lot of attention from both players and members of the press.

7 REFERENCES

Anderson, G. (2014, 23rd October). Finnish studio Small Giant Games raises \$3.1 million. Read 10.4.2015, on the site Arctic Startup internet address: <http://arcticstartup.com/2014/10/23/finnish-studio-small-giant-games-raises-3-1-million>

Attard, J. (2014, 6th October). 8 tips for a smooth launch to your indie game. Read 20.3.2015, on the site Gamasutra internet address: http://www.gamasutra.com/blogs/JesseAttard/20141006/227070/8_tips_for_a_smooth_launch_to_your_indie_game.php

Bédard, R. (2007, 11th October). Behind Fez: Tixel (And Why We Do not Just Say Voxels). Read 18.4.2015, on the site The Instruction Limit internet address: <http://theinstructionlimit.com/behind-fez-tixel-and-why-we-dont-just-say-voxels>

Creative Guerilla Marketing. n.d. What Is Guerilla Marketing. Read 19.3.2015, on the site Creative Guerilla Marketing internet address: <http://www.creativeguerrillamarketing.com/what-is-guerrilla-marketing/>

Dead Space. (15.1.2011). Your Mom Hates Dead Space 'Participant #0113' Reaction. Found <https://youtu.be/Pcm5M-KWQnM>

DellaFave, R. (2014, 2nd July). Marketing Your Indie Game: The Single Most Important Thing That No One Knows How To Do. Read 18.4.2015, on the site tuts+ internet address: <http://gamedevelopment.tutsplus.com/articles/marketing-your-indie-game-the-single-most-important-thing-that-no-one-knows-how-to-do--gamedev-7157>

Drake, S. (2013, 10th May). PR Pro Tips: Targeting and Pitching Your Game to Media. Read 20.3.2015, on the site Evolve internet address: <http://www.evolve-pr.com/2013/05/10/pr-pro-tips-targeting-and-pitching-your-game-to-media/>

Drinkbox Studios. (2014, 6th March). Read 18.4.2015, on the site Guacamelee internet address: http://guacamelee.com/?attachment_id=533

Google. n.d. Read 19.3.2015, on the site Google Analytics internet address: <http://www.google.com/analytics/why/>

Graham, J. (2009, 21st September). GDC Austin: Wolfire's PR Tips. Read 26.3.2015, on the site Wolfire Blog internet address: <http://blog.wolfire.com/2009/09/gdc-austin-wolfires-pr-tips/>

Hietalahti, J. (2006, 19th May). The Basic Marketing Plan For Indie Games. Read 26.3.2015, on the site Gamasutra internet address: http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/131104/the_basic_marketing_plan_for_indie_.php

IGN. (14.5.2014). Super Time Force Launch Trailer. Found https://youtu.be/C_dXhsbo2sU

Indie Megabooth. 2013. <http://indiemegabooth.com/wp-cargo/uploads/2013/09/indie-megabooth-east-2013.jpg> (Read 16.4.2015).

Investopedia. n.d. Marketing. Read 19.3.2015, on the site Investopedia internet address: <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/m/marketing.asp>

Johnson, J. (2015, 26th March). Why Your Game Company Needs a Marketing Plan. Read 27.3.2015, on the site Gamasutra internet address: http://www.gamasutra.com/blogs/JovanJohnson/20150326/239776/Why_Your_Game_Company_Needs_a_Marketing_Plan.php

Klei Entertainment. 2012. <http://www.markoftheninja.com> (Read 19.4.2015).

Landon, V. (2014, 27th October). Small Giant Games thinks big. Read 10.4.2015, on the site Helsinki Business Hub internet address: <http://www.helsinkibusinesshub.fi/article/small-giant-games-thinks-big/>

MindTools. 2015. http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newSTR_94.htm (Read 2.4.2015).

Nonprofit Answer Guide. (2015). (Nonprofit Answer Guide, 2015.) (Read 23.4.2015).

Palka, A. (2015, 6th April). Understanding Youtube #1 - Debunking myths. Read 18.4.2015, on the site Gamasutra internet address: http://gamasutra.com/blogs/AlbertPalka/20150406/240508/Understanding_YouTube_1__Debunking_myths.php

PewDiePie. (13.01.2015). DUMB WAYS TO DIE 2 // 3 Free games. Found <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8-Ze2KqbaU>

Positech Games. n.d. Google Analytics for software sellers: Tips for maximizing the performance of your website. Read 19.3.2015, on the site Positech Games internet address: <http://www.positech.co.uk/content/analytics/analytics.html>

Reddit. 2015. <http://www.reddit.com/r/gamedev/> (Read 19.4.2015).

RunJumpDev. (4.12.2011). RunJumpDev – Ben Kuchera – November 2011. Found <https://youtu.be/uiqyFfsSUDA>

Santos, A. (2015a, 6th February). A Guide to Launching Indie Games, Part One: Pre-Launch. Read 20.3.2015, on the site binpress internet address: <http://www.binpress.com/blog/2015/02/06/indie-game-launch-guide-pre-launch/>

Santos, A. (2015b, 6th March). A Guide to Launching Indie Games, Part Two: Websites and Media. Read 20.3.2015, on the site binpress internet address: <http://www.binpress.com/blog/2015/03/06/guide-launching-indie-games-part-two-websites-media/>

Small Giant Games. (2015, 2nd April). Read 10.4.2015, on the site Facebook internet address: <https://www.facebook.com/SmallGiantGames/photos/a.149002711943632.1073741829.139400512903852/443061755871058/?type=1&theater>

Social Blade. 2015. Read 18.4.2015, on the site Social Blade internet address: <http://socialblade.com/youtube/user/pewdiepie/monthly>

Spillmakerlauget. (10.10.2013). Konsoll 2013: Marketing Indie Games on a \$0 Budget. Found <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SkEQtMP2CuA#t=636>

Steamworks Development. (11.2.2015). Marketing Your Game. Found <https://youtu.be/477rvRSjE5U?list=PLckFgM6dUP2hc4iy-IdKFtqR9TeZWMPjm>

Taylor, P. (2009, 26th August). Building Buzz for Indie Games. Read 26.3.2015, on the site Gamasutra internet address: http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/4117/building_buzz_for_indie_games.php

TeeGee. (30.5.2013). How we handle our social networks. Found in the address <http://moacube.com/blog/how-we-handle-our-social-networks/>

The Nintendo Basement. (9.5.2009). Scribblenauts Trailer. Found <https://youtu.be/iTlz55VIE-I>

Toresson, J. (2013a, 13th October). Indie Game Marketing: A love story - Part 1 [Getting a solid base]. Read 19.3.2015, on the site Gamasutra internet address: http://www.gamasutra.com/blogs/JohanToresson/20131021/202762/Indie_Game_Marketing_A_love_story__Part_1_Getting_a_solid_base.php

Toresson, J. (2013b, 11th November). Indie Game Marketing: A love story - Part 2 and 3 [Getting in touch with Journalists, Fans and some Guerilla Marketing]. Read 19.3.2015, on the site Gamasutra internet address: http://gamasutra.com/blogs/JohanToresson/20131111/204534/Indie_Game_Marketing_A_love_story__Part_2_and_3_Getting_in_touch_with_Journalists_Fans_and_some_Guerilla_Marketing.php

Toresson, J. (2013c, 25th November). Indie Game Marketing: A love story - Part 4 [Practical Stuff – Facebook, #screenshotstaurday and your list of contacts]. Read 19.3.2015, on the site Gamasutra internet address: http://gamasutra.com/blogs/JohanToresson/20131125/205581/Indie_Game_Marketing_A_love_story__Part_4_Practical_Stuff__Facebook_screenshotsaturday_and_your_list_of_contacts.php

van Dongen, J. (2012, 29th November). The indie marketing plan. Read 19.3.2015, on the site Joost's Dev Blog internet address: <http://joostdevblog.blogspot.co.uk/2012/11/the-indie-marketing-plan.html>

Young Horses. n.d. Read 18.4.2015, on the site octodadgame internet address: <http://www.octodadgame.com/press/>