

Things to which game developers should pay attention in order to increase their income

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Abstract

The video game industry occupies an important place in terms of its effects on human life. Ongoing changes in the industry have made video games increasingly influential in entertainment, education, and social life. Video games that meet the requirements of our age and manage to gain the appreciation of the player base achieve greater commercial success than others. This brand-level goodwill, which can exist independently of product quality, shapes the competitive hierarchy in the gaming industry and motivates closer investigation of factors that are often overlooked. This research paper aims to identify the factors that might permit a brand to grow and become more eminent as well as bolster the growth trend of the gaming industry to continue and amplify. The industry, whose objective is to maintain production, requires vigorous game companies to accomplish this. This power promises the brand adequate income that would enable it to introduce novel products. Therefore, to support the industry's long-term growth, game companies must understand players' expectations, choose revenue models that strengthen their financial position, and cultivate a loyal and trusting community.

Background

The gaming industry has gone through many distinct phases until it reached its current position. It still maintains a rapid trend of development and change. The sector, which emerged in the 1970s with the invention of arcade and home consoles, hosted the first 3D games in the 1990s. With the inception of online systems and mobile games in the 2000s, it began to occupy a different place in people's lives. With the influence of digitalization in the 2010s, players had the opportunity to acquire games through different platforms. It was also during this period that e-sports emerged and became widespread (Alsén et al, 2016). Today, the sector has entered a new stage with the rise of AI, which makes development faster and helps reduce bugs, easing the workload of game creators. The gaming industry is a promising sector with its high growth potential and ability to attune to technological developments in every period. It also renders multiple revenue models possible to its companies. Because of its wide range of production possibilities, the industry can respond to diverse player preferences and appeal to many different tastes. These reasons foster the sector to grow and to constantly alter itself with different innovations. Factors that increase the revenues of video games have previously been researched in specific areas. Some studies (Handrick et al., 2022) explained with the aid of surveys how the innovations brought to the game world from disparate angles were received by the player base and, as a result, the changes in the earnings of the game to the company. Others explained what kind of relationship game companies should maintain with their customer base (Dziwinski, 2023). However, all of these studies were conducted within a narrow framework, and therefore they are not suitable for making inferences that will have a global scope. Furthermore, these studies focused on a limited number of factors affecting the video game industry. The aim of this study is to ensure that these effects are suitable for examination on a global scale and to focus on all factors influencing game revenues.

Effect of disparate platforms on game revenues

The audience to which different game platforms appeal is distinct. In this respect, mobile games are remarkable in terms of their inclusiveness. As a consequence of distinct platforms having disparate consumer bases, there are also some sales strategies that may vary depending on platform preference.

a. The place of mobile games in the video game industry

One of the momentous reasons behind this rapid change in the video game industry is mobile games. The accessibility, ease of use, and portability of mobile gaming platforms made mobile games an ubiquitous form of entertainment across demographics unlike traditional gaming platforms. In 2023, mobile games had more than 700 000 content in the App Store and Play Store. This accounted for 49% of all video games (NewZoo, 2023). Mobile games comprise 54% of annual video game revenue, which gives it the largest earning potential in the industry. The mobile gaming market is predicted to reach a CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of 14% in the 2020-2025 period (Wood, 2020). A number of strategies involving mobile games have been the propulsive force of this popularity. The most important of these are free to play models.

Free-to-play models often rely on microtransactions for revenue. Microtransactions can be defined as players paying with real money to procure virtual or in-game amenities. Microtransactions are utilized by approximately 5% to 20% of gaming communities (NewZoo, 2023). Executives of these companies are trying to monetize the player base that does not participate in the microtransaction community to achieve further growth. For these reasons, game companies can be encouraged to make phone-based games widespread. Although free-to-play mobile games may not generate revenue in direct proportion to their large player bases, they still represent crucial income sources through microtransactions and should remain a strategic priority for companies. According to the research by Gabe Duverge of Touro University (2020), microtransactions can be divided into four main types: In-Game Currencies, Random Lucky Buys, In-game items, and Expiration date.

In-Game Currencies is a model which permits players to purchase the in-game currency that allows players to acquire myriad products in the game, such as different in-game cosmetics. This currency is always sold in bundles, obscuring its true value; additionally, there is always a discount or bonus for larger amounts, which makes players find it more attractive. Random Lucky Buys include loot boxes and other “surprise item bags” that are often worth more than the cost of entry. Players pay real money to open these boxes. What makes such microtransactions more appealing is the element of surprise. In-game items that involve the purchase of in-game resources, such as cosmetic items or items that facilitate the gameplay process for players. Often such resources can be procured for real money. Expiration date is a type that gives customers a limited amount of time to play and charges them for the extra time if they want to play more. Nowadays this category of microtransactions is quite pervasive amongst mobile games and augments mobile games’ revenues. Although microtransactions were heavily criticized when they became widespread around 2010, they soon evolved into a standard

revenue model that game companies had to adapt to. According to an open survey conducted by Qutee in 2018, 69% of respondents respond positively to microtransactions since they are confined to in-game cosmetics and do not interfere with gameplay by creating “pay-to-win” scenarios. This is a solid example of a shift in perspective in the gaming industry. Moreover, it is important for game companies to closely follow the development of the process and the steps taken by their competitors and adapt them to their products in line with their own interests, to communicate with the player base on social media, and get their opinions about these transformations.

Furthermore, digital marketing of games not only paves the way for developers to generate more sales, but also allows them to earn money after purchasing the original game through various microtransactions such as downloadable content (DLC), in-game items, season passes and subscriptions. Additional content such as DLCs allowed game developers to monetize players by distributing them through online stores after the game's initial release (Perrotta, 2020).

b. Position of PC based games in the industry and the impact of innovations on these games in terms of revenues

On the other hand, The PC game market is likely to grow in terms of the opportunities it provides to game developers and players, such as upgradeable hardware, replaceable game content and an increasingly digital distribution model. Games developed for PCs may attempt to go beyond what is currently possible in the gaming world by taking advantage of the latest innovations in graphics and processing power. The development of gaming platforms is one of the most important steps towards meeting players' expectations such as stunning visuals, complex in-game logic, superior performance and fascinating game design. The game's innovations in terms of hardware and software deeply affect the creation, distribution and consumption of content.

The hardware expounds physical devices used to play games; the storyline refers to a game's story, challenges or campaigns, the presentation explains the visual and auditory features of the game, and the principle is the relationship between the game and the player.

i. Innovations of the hardware

Hardware innovations such as faster processors, advanced GPUs, and XR devices reduce the technical barriers to realism and enable deeper, more immersive gaming experiences. Each new console brings advanced graphics, processing power and storage capabilities that enable more complex and immersive gaming experiences. This competition also instigated differentiation in game development; each platform has powered a unique gaming ecosystem designed to leverage hardware capabilities.

The main innovative gaming trends of the past decade are Mixed Reality (MR). This trend is an abstract concept that creates the connection between human, computer and the physical

environment surrounding the player (Bray B. & Coulter D., 2020). The form of AR controllers introduced in the 2010s has recently been improved upon with inventive VR helmets making further gaming development possible. To produce images of acceptable quality, MRI devices, especially VR glasses, require large amounts of computing power. This factor makes PC and next-gen consoles the best hosts for such devices (Oguguo, 2024). Therefore, if it is postulated that one of the biggest demands of players right now is to have a realistic gaming experience, it can be averred that the popularity of mobile games, which are preferred by the customer base over other platforms due to their accessibility and ability to be played anywhere, will begin to shrink after a while. Therefore, game companies need to always follow trends and shape themselves according to changes.

ii. Innovations of the storyline

In order to evaluate the impact of innovations of the storyline on game revenues, the consumer audience to be addressed must be well determined. A research (Handrick, Heidenreich, Kraemer, 2022) has demonstrated that innovations in the storyline have a negative impact on game sales in the short term (which is considered as the first 18 months after the game's release) when considered in the European context. It has been enunciated that it has no effect in the long term (19th to 36th months after the game's release). Although the marketing of the game and the reputation of the game company had an impact on this result, the findings fostered game companies to convey a subject to which the consumer base is accustomed in a different way rather than innovating in the storyline. Accordingly, consumers appear to prefer stories similar to established video game portfolios, attempting to preserve their established status quo (Zaltman and Wallendorf, 1983). This explains why many successful video games are part of established game series based on the same type of story (Marchand and Hennig-Thurau, 2013), e.g. Grand Theft Auto (Rockstar Games).

Because certain storylines are consistently more popular, game companies should prioritize them, especially given evidence that radical narrative innovation can reduce sales. The first of these is the storyline, which can be called the hero's journey. This kind of storyline requires a situation where the hero is fortified by going through some emotional processes and overcomes a big foil. An important reason why this storyline is met with interest by the player base is that it provides them with emotional satisfaction. The second of these is the storyline style, which allows players to explore an unknown world. A discovery-driven storyline set in an uncharted world provides players with satisfaction and takes them away from the world they live in. Such games trigger the player's sense of curiosity (Alsén, A., Ekström, L., & Ohlsson, M., 2016). Games about the post-apocalyptic survival adventure and the difficult survival struggle of the characters are also highly popular. While such games endow players with a strong sense of curiosity arising from uncertainty, they also allow players to think about scenarios that are thought to be impossible. In addition, storylines that evolve surprisingly depending on player choices are also interesting to the player base. Moreover, the potential of such games to make players feel like they are an important subject with a great impact on the game is one of the important effects of this popularity. The player determines an end for themselves with their own choices, and this aspect makes them feel valuable (Perrotta, 2020). Science fiction games, on the other hand, that reverberate the possible future effects of technology that deeply influences

today to the player and introduce a world that has not yet been realized is a type of storyline that game companies can adopt in order to attract the attention of players with its unique context that contains a possible future that will have become quite distinct from its current state with the aid of technology. Finally, epic stories set in mythological, magical or alternative universes and games containing psychological stories that establish a deep bond between the player and the game with their deep psychological depictions are also an efficient step towards increasing the popularity of the game. (Wood, 2020).

iii. Innovations of the presentation

The findings of the research (Handrick, Heidenreich, Kraemer, 2022) demonstrated that the innovations made in the presentation had a positive effect on game revenues in the short term; however, in the long run, these innovations had no effect. It is asserted that the reason for this is the regular increase in the technical performance of computers in a short period of time such as 1 or 2 years. This causes new games to emerge in a way that is adapted to these technical developments, so the time period in which the presentation can be considered innovative is very short. Since the lifespan of games with good graphics and sound is very short, these games do not bring any benefit to the company in the long term (Moore, 1965).

iv. Innovations of the principles

Similarly, for the innovations in principles, it seems that such innovations have a positive effect in the short term, but in the long term, the effect on game revenues almost completely disappears. The reason for this might be that these games, which are innovative in terms of principles, have become nondescript as a result of being emulated and copied by other content producers.

The impact of artificial intelligence on the future of the industry

It is pronounced that developments in artificial intelligence will profoundly affect the future of the gaming industry. Artificial intelligence will enable automation and efficiency in the game development process. In this way, characters, dialogues, missions and maps can be created automatically, which will facilitate the job of game developers. This can benefit players by shortening development cycles and reducing the time between releases. This assists increased game revenues by delivering more products with faster production potential, saving the player base from waiting. It may also inhibit them from connecting to other brands due to the inactivity of a brand they love. Moreover, game developers will not have to make a decision between several different ideas and will be able to implement each of them in a short time. Artificial intelligence can also make more distinct and innovative games by abandoning the ready products available on the market, which are preferred by game developers due to lack of resources or time constraints, and can manage to attract the attention of the player base. Besides, being able to optimize game codes or detect errors (for instance, tools such as GitHub and Copilot) will allow game developers to combat technical factors. These efficiencies can reduce development costs and augment game revenues. Artificial intelligence will also turn the

NPCs in the game into smarter enemies or allies and permit them to give more dynamic and human-like reactions. The fact that artificial intelligence never stops learning will enable it to develop strategies according to player style and habits (Mollick, 2023), and this will deepen players' gaming experience and perhaps devalue games played collectively, which is currently popular. Therefore, game companies need to follow the developing trends well and evaluate their perspectives carefully.

The evolution of the video game industry's interaction with its player base

The gaming industry has experienced rapid changes over the past decade. One of these is that game companies change their perspective and start to procure more ideas from the player base during the development process of their games. Game companies have begun to see players' opinions as an important criterion to be taken into account in the game development phase. The business to consumer method has gained importance in the industry. This method can be defined as the marketing of goods and services directly to the customer base by the company without an intermediary and the sale of the produced products directly to the customers by the company (Thomas Brock, 2020). Besides, new business models such as F2P, P2P and microtransactions that have emerged in the customer orientation over the past two decades have led to various alterations in relations with the consumer base. Therefore, it is possible to aver that the perspective towards customer orientation, which is momentous for consumer satisfaction, has changed. Although in the early stages of the development of the industry, the objective of game developers was to develop games that would satisfy players like themselves, with the influence of the new customer orientation model, the aim of game companies has shifted to create games that will satisfy the society in general, in lieu of providing products that will only include the ideas of several players. This new customer base is one of the reasons for the expansion of the video game market. With the new perspective and novel purposes that emerge, game companies that aim to appeal to all segments of society will be able to increase their income. The smartest move gaming companies can make is to prioritize the customer's wishes without putting stakeholder's opinions in the background (Pashkov, 2021).

Creating a new game involves many risks. The most important of these is that the future popularity of the game cannot be surmised (De Vaan et al., 2013). This uncertainty has aggravated over time as prices have increased. Types of roles are also inclined to grow in the face of this uncertainty. This growth has augmented the cost and difficulty of managing teams. In this complex environment, the role of broadcasters has evolved. It can be considered that the most important of these changes is the emergence of new business models which should be taken into account when conducting market analysis. Many publishers have taken on vertically integrated development roles that started in the 2000s and are strategic moves contrary to the economic realities of the sector to more easily and effectively control production, distribution, and marketing. The objective of the integration was to facilitate operations and provide advantages. This provoked the emergence of synergy between development and distribution. During this time, major publishers commenced procuring small and feeble development studios; this is a strategic move to create efficiencies and manage rising costs (Pashkov, 2021).

Game companies began to follow a different path to maintain the success they had already achieved and increase their revenues. This evolution is important in terms of rejecting the traditional sales model and incorporating many innovative strategies that will have the capacity to adapt to changing and developing technology and meet the anticipations of the player base.

It is momentous for game companies to correctly choose the audience they will appeal to and maintain a correct marketing policy towards them. However, games should be inclusive so that every segment of society can benefit from them. Although working to make the majority happy may seem like an important ideal to augment revenues, gaming companies must ensure that everyone in their player base can find a game that appeals to them. Inclusivity and excitement must be found amongst the social characteristics of gaming trends. Therefore, the industry is prone to create its games from this perspective with the purpose of strengthening the social aspect. This permits both developers and publishers to include minority representation in video games across various genres. Previously, the orientation was towards "hardcore" gamers, but now companies are striving to create projects accessible to all types of players, including professional, semi-professional and casual gamers (Pashkov, 2021). Especially small-scale brands should turn their endeavor to attract the attention of these hardcore gamers into giving more importance to middle-class players who can be a higher source of income for themselves and whose knowledge of the industry is not as profound as hardcore gamers. Recent technological advances in mobile phones, gaming consoles and personal computers have made it possible to adapt and implement B2C strategy and, as a result, video games, which have become a hobby accessible and preferred by all types of players, have begun to monetize the entire player base.

Game companies that want their products to be considered high-quality and successful should foster developers and marketers to receive the opinions and feedback of the player base about the developed game (Pashkov, 2021). A survey aimed to discover where people generally place themselves in the gaming community and whether they are more active or passive. Participants were asked the following question: To what extent are you involved in the gaming community? The researchers remarked that there was a significant number of people who did not take an active role in the community. Conversely, there was also a smaller group who expressed opinions and contributed to the content produced. This group, which includes fewer players, is the group with the greatest influence in the industry because they express their thoughts and are the most visible. They are the spokespersons of the community. The whole community changes and adopts a point of view according to their decisions. Therefore, video game developers need to work to maintain the closest relationship with this group and satisfy them as much as possible (Dziwinski, 2023). On the other hand, the silent majority of society should also be taken into consideration since they are the group which can generate high revenue. Hence, inclusivity is momentous for player satisfaction.

Interaction in video games

Customer experiences are shaped not solely by interactions between the company and player, but also by their interactions with other players, which can be called "travel companions" (Hamilton et al, 2021). Another factor that can enable players to have a deep and impressive

gaming experience is creating a suitable environment for them to interact with each other. The results of the study (Smith et al, 2025) show that enabling and promoting collective participation and related social use are important components of a brand's marketing strategy.

Social exchanges are a more effective strategy than more calculative, cost-benefit approaches, which are methods whose purpose is to create locking mechanisms in order to keep players hooked on the game. In lieu of preventing players from leaving by keeping switching and termination costs high, game companies should create an environment where players can establish strong social bonds and allow collective social events to persuade them to stay in the game. Interaction with players will reduce the brand's effort to attract players, and players' loyalty to the brand will be fortified as a result of a gaming experience enhanced by social interactions.

The impact of the breadth of collective brand loyalty on collective consumption is an immediate benefit. However, research shows that the density, which is the increase in posts per user of collective loyalty, has a negative effect during the first 15 minutes. That is, density results in reduced collective consumption in the first 15 minutes. However, the long-term consumption benefits are twice as large as the collective brand breadth, which can be considered as users. Both breadth and density have a positive impact on collective consumption in the long run. Therefore, a short-term focus can lead to detrimental actions. Game companies should instigate density and breadth to support collective consumption. Video game search and consumption peak on weekends, while collective brand interactions such as chat are highest on weekdays. These findings indicate that consumers interact with brands differently at different times (Kranzbühler et al., 2018) and that an activity can focus attention on itself and away from other content in the short term. The transaction basis should not be a propulsive force in the design and emergence of participation strategies. Instead, efforts should be made to develop long-term relationships not only with the brand, but also with the customer base community that work collectively to buttress that brand and stakeholder.

Factors affecting engagement and consumption

According to Smith et al. (2025), traditional marketing actions in the gaming industry, such as releasing new content and price reductions, can impact engagement and consumption differently. If long-term interaction and brand building are aimed, producing new content can be an effective method. On the other hand, if short-term consumption is targeted, some changes can be made at the purchasing stage and it may be preferable to apply price discounts that can instantly foster consumption more effectively. It is worth noting that this method will not be very effective for companies that want long-term profits. Game developers who want this kind of profit must turn their focus to new content and efforts to increase engagement. It is possible to observe the differentiation phase of games in the market with evolving business models. Even though many gaming companies value transactional opportunities such as selling games, the results suggest that the platform itself can play an important role in creating a collective among its users. These business models can provide added value to brands participating in the platform by creating opportunities and designated brand space for collective participation activities.

There are three general ways that platforms can facilitate engagement: First, they can make greater use of traditional social media at a very basic level. Platforms whose purpose is to strengthen their media presence and promotions through social regular sales and joint promotions with companies rarely promote themselves. Examples of these opportunities include activities such as holiday discounts on Steam and the free games Epic provides to players every week. The second is to create social interactions that are essential to make the gaming experience of the player base more effective. The platforms make it easy for customers to review, comment and otherwise interact. The purpose of this is to instigate players to participate in joint activities. Steam can be given as an example of a platform that invests heavily in these systems, and as a result of this importance, it has managed to create collective participation in both breadth and intensity. Third, brand-like platforms can facilitate social usage features. Some platforms, such as Steam and Epic, create software tools and services (e.g. Steamworks) that companies can integrate into their software products. These features can assist brand managers to facilitate social connections on the platform while also minimizing the need for video game brands to create this functionality (Smith et al, 2025). Due to these features, choosing the platform through which the games will be purchased is important in terms of the amenities the platform will provide to itself and its players. Various activities give players the right to express themselves, interact with other players and take advantage of opportunities related to the price. Platform choice is also a factor that cannot be ignored in terms of brand recognition. Therefore, platform choice affects brand image and, accordingly, sales.

Games that have been huge commercial successes

Adopting the correct behavior of different brands and learning from the mistakes of other companies are important for continued growth. Therefore, game companies should be involved in the part of the industry that is outside of them. I find it appropriate to demonstrate, through a few examples, how the factors influencing game sales are analyzed meticulously and utilized correctly by some brands, and how they are used incorrectly or misperceived by some other brands.

There are some games that have achieved high commercial success and are therefore known by everyone. Minecraft is an example to those games. Created by independent developer Markus "Notch" Persson in 2009, this game has over 140 million monthly active players as of 2020 and is the best-selling game of all time. Among the factors that enabled it to achieve this success, its simple but deep gameplay is an important one. The game allows unlimited freedom of space and appeals to the imagination of the players by making everything possible. It has also managed to acquire a wide age group coverage. Additionally, it is used in some schools as an educational tool (Minecraft: Education Edition) (Warren, 2014). This has endowed the game with a very different dimension and enabled it to expand its purpose. The fact that it is one of the most watched games on platforms such as Twitch and YouTube has also supported the game in terms of marketing. Moreover, the game enables cross-platform interaction: it can be played on many platforms such as PC, console, mobile and VR, and the flexibility of this transition between platforms with Bedrock and Java versions played a major role in endearing the game to the player base.

Another game that has managed to achieve great success is Call of Duty. This series, published by Activision, is amongst the best-selling games. One of the reasons for this success is the high production quality bolstered by features such as realistic graphics and cinematic narration. Furthermore, developing the game with real military consultants increased brand awareness. Especially the "Modern Warfare" series has technically come of age. Another factor is that the game constantly renews itself. It has managed to appeal to disparate types of players with distinct modes (Zombies, Warzone). Having a competitive multiplayer structure, clan system, and various mechanics as well as ranked matches have significantly paved the way for this commercial success. With Warzone, it adopted the F2P model and engaged a lot more players. Releasing new games every year has enabled the brand to maintain its freshness. Additionally, it gained strong marketing opportunities by collaborating with YouTube, Twitch, tournaments and influencers (Gish, 2010).

When this game is evaluated, it can be considered that the most striking feature that has a positive effect on sales is that the brand releases a different version of the game at regular intervals. Games that are sequels or adaptations of a game series seem to be more reliable to attract a larger player base than those that embody a novel idea. Due to these disparate versions of the same game, the principle of inclusivity in the sector is accomplished. Owing to this, people with different perspectives and anticipations can be satisfied by a single brand. These data should be utilized by other game companies in the development and alteration phase of their new games. The expenditure of changing the same game is less, and changes are more satisfactory for the player base. Therefore, game companies may prefer to work in this direction. Second, another important factor that increases the sales of the game is the meticulousness shown in the production phase of the game, but this might challenge some small-scale game companies. Since it is substantiated in the "innovations" section that the effect of realistic graphics and a pleasing presentation will perish after a while, game developers may choose to procure information and ideas from experts and transfer these gains to their games, and this may be positively received by the player base.

An example of a game that did not achieve commercial success is Beyond Good & Evil, developed by Ubisoft in 2003. The game was described as a disappointment since it did not accomplish the expected commercial success and failed to capture the targeted player base. However, the game received good scores from critics (GamesBeat, 2011). Therefore, it would not be correct to concede that the game failed due to technical problems or a gameplay style and a storyline that could be described as tedious. The reason for this failure may be inadequate marketing methods, errors in determining the target audience and inefficient utilization of tools in order to reach this audience. Ubisoft officials admitted that not enough budget was allocated to the marketing of the game. Additionally, the marketing message was not conveyed clearly, and the player base lost interest. Another factor that negatively affected its revenues was the timing of the game's release and the profusion of competing activities during this period. The brand's awareness was not very high, and it could not compete with eminent brands.

The failure story of this game should show the momentous nature of marketing to other game companies. However, it is impossible to compare the conditions of the game, which was

released in a time when social media was not as widespread and effective as it is today, to today's games. The producers of the game had to spend a huge budget to market the game successfully; therefore, this small-scale game company was not successful in marketing. Today, marketing processes can be carried out in different scopes through social media channels. This gives even the company with the smallest budget a chance to gain some recognition. Companies should take advantage of this opportunity. Moreover, this game stresses the importance of determining the correct release date of the game. It is comprehended that the player base is reluctant to squander money for different games close to the release date of a game about which they are curious and excited. Thus, timing is critical for game companies.

Relationship of game companies with player base

a. The impact of social media on relationship with the player base, marketing and brand image

The profound impact of social media on the gaming industry is indisputable. Many gaming companies see social media as a conducive environment for good marketing and a way to amplify their image. In addition, it is a medium that paves the way for interaction with the player base and for the company to compensate for its mistakes (Meech, 2006). Social media is one of the easiest and most effective ways to interact with players and learn about their expectations, yet this task remains challenging because of cultural differences and online norms (Sörhammar, 2022). Engaging in dialogue with users on social media is one of the marketing strategies that continues to become popular. Owing to this tool, consumers can also be contacted; an interested and loyal consumer base can be created. Moreover, the new product can be made more attractive. However, the person who is responsible for social media in a company and manages the company's activities on social media must be well informed in order not to vex anyone or be humiliated in public (Burger-Helmchen, 2014). Researchers concluded that the consumer-generated form of marketing has become a significant marketing force and is leading to major changes in the gaming industry, as in many industries.

A company's public image is often determined by its activities on the Internet. According to the survey (Dziwinski, 2023), 54% of participants follow the official social media account of video game developers to see the activities of companies on social media. Therefore, companies should plan the showcase of their new games on social media in the most effective way, regularly inform the player base about the developments and be very sensitive about the shares on the accounts. Additionally, 32.9% of survey participants aver that they pay attention to the personal social media accounts of people working in the company. This means that video game developers' main social media accounts, as well as employees' individual accounts, are momentous for the company's public image. Inappropriate behavior by a single employee can damage perceptions of the entire company, which may be criticized for tolerating or enabling that conduct.

Social media allows people to give the company another chance and permits companies that want to make excuses in a crisis to interact with its player base to offset their mistakes. The ability to provide information and commentary to a larger group of people is crucial for

companies, and social media is capable of meeting this requirement. The development of digital media has made the job of public relations experts significantly easier (Wesley, Barczak, 2010). Companies can make agreements with bloggers, YouTubers and influencers and bring their websites to a strong position in the search engine with positive and neutral mentions about them on the platforms where they provide products. Accordingly, they expand the company's target audience and endow it with the opportunity to inform younger generations about its products (Goltz, Franks, 2015).

b. The causes and solutions of controversial situations

Controversies can seriously affect a game company's reputation, and bias against it in the player community can affect the revenue of the game company's past and future products. According to Dziwinski (2023), regular positive experiences create a sense of confidence. However, as people will have different expectations about the products and the services, it can be arduous for a video game developer to please everyone and build a holistic sense of trust. According to the survey (Dziwinski, 2023), 52% of respondents said they had been disappointed by a video game developer before. The common belief is that many companies are lying or avoiding the truth about their games still in development. Creating a highly idealized image of the product through promises and descriptions can be deceptive; it creates a sense of "hype" and fosters more people to purchase a game that is demonstrated distinctly. Most video games can be pre-ordered and can be paid for before they are released. Although the pre-order action can be considered as an indication of trust in a company and is done to buttress that company, the disappointment in such situations may be greater than usual if the video game does not meet expectations, especially if the developer promised some features that are not included in the game. Other consumer complaints include misunderstanding of players' expectations, favoritism of certain groups of players, numerous bugs, unnecessary and intrusive microtransactions, exploitation of employees, lack of transparent and regular communication with the community, slow-acting or rude technical support, launch delays, ignoring customers' requests and suggestions regarding the game, release of unfinished games, unpleasant treatment of fans, aggressive public comments, declining quality of games, poor game optimization, and lack of regular updates. Such actions greatly influence thoughts of players about a video game developer and can irreversibly damage the developer's reputation. Numerous negative experiences with video game companies can lead to a lack of trust in all developers in general and eventually be pernicious for the entire industry.

A gaming company faced with a public relations problem must act quickly and decisively to impede the damage to its public image and the resulting economic problems; however, in some cases, immediate intervention may not be adequate, and the developer might need to take long-term steps to repair relationships with the player base. The most important factors in analyzing the problem and making a response plan in a short time are the conditions that provoked the incident and the reason for the emergence of this crisis. Mistakes by a company or events that are not directly linked to a company's decisions and actions can lead to disputes. In such cases, people tend to condemn the company; this tendency increases the pressure. Companies can approach these types of PR issues in myriad ways, usually through social media or video game journalists. Being able to interact directly with the player base is crucial in such situations since it creates a clear and unaltered means of communication. According to the

survey (Dziwinski, 2023), the majority of respondents are somewhat interested in the controversy surrounding video game developers. Findings were demonstrating that respondents were divided on whether a controversial situation with a gaming company would impact their purchase decision. 55% of respondents said their purchasing decisions were independent of controversies whereas 45% of respondents averred that they would take these controversial situations into consideration when purchasing. Past controversies involving game developers have included: unfair or harmful treatment of employees (56% of respondents), aggression on social media (48%), lying to fans (89%), as well as the implementation of microtransactions, unfair business tactics, publishing unfinished products, buying reviews, open propaganda of the developer's ideology and political views, human rights violations, introducing pay-to-win elements in games, and inappropriate treatment of fans.

Boycott is one of the primary methods that consumers will use to ameliorate the situation with which they are not content. Granted, this method requires the participation of a large number of people to be effective. Therefore, consumers need to be able to communicate with each other and reach a common decision. This communication is achieved with the aid of social media. This also results in a much larger number of potential participants due to the rapid dissemination of information. A similar number of the survey participants said they thought boycotts were effective and necessary and that boycotts did not work. This duality in the player base can turn into a factor that will alleviate the company's potential economic damage in a crisis if game companies can take advantage of this situation.

The effect of the immediate apology offered by gaming companies in times of crisis to calm the player base and maintain the brand's image may vary depending on the type of offense and how the apologies are expressed. Some may even question the sincerity of the message. Survey participants answered the question of the companies that formally apologized after the discussion and how they responded to their behavior as follows: 46% respondents chose the "This is just a marketing strategy and a way to avoid consequences" option and 3 respondents said "This is a bad decision because most fans won't accept it anyway." On the other hand, 43% marked the "A good decision that shows respect for the fans" option. Other participants said it depends on the company's public image, previous behavior, and the way it apologized. Multiple responses argued that an apology should solely be made if the company truly improves and corrects its behavior. Consumers will often be skeptical of apologies if the company had issues with its public image even before the controversy arose. Therefore, companies should make decisions while being aware that the player base anticipates real changes as well as an apology.

Psychological factors that affect game sales

The psychological factors affecting revenues of video games can be elaborated with disparate features; it would be more appropriate to commence with self-determination theory. Players expect a video game to make them feel autonomous and competent. This causes games that make players experience these feelings more intensely to be preferred more, and these games succeed in attracting players (Ryan et al, 2020). Multiplayer games also create a bandwagon effect in the player base owing to their popularity on social media and instigate players to

consume the game content. Since marketing is momentous, game companies should use social media effectively to promote and market their games or at least make them visible (Hamari and Keronen, 2017). Another factor affecting game sales is that the game is capable of creating a sense of addiction in players through the reward mechanisms it provides. Reward types such as score, level up and luck-based rewards stimulate the player's dopamine system and make the players constantly search for rewards, subsequently making them play the game and purchase disparate services provided (King and Delfabbro, 2019).

Games that give players the opportunity to create their own characters, change their skins and create avatars respond to the players' urge to show themselves in the game. Sales of in-game cosmetic products, which have an important place among microtransactions, may increase owing to this psychological effect. Furthermore, such opportunities may encourage players to make other in-game expenses to feel special (Khan, 2017). Designing systems that make players feel special is effective, and many companies also leverage fear of missing out (FOMO)—the anxiety of falling behind—to drive engagement and spending. Limited-time events and discounts, as well as seasonal content, aim to augment the revenue of the game based on this psychological fact (Przybylski, 2013).

Suggestions

In order to increase the income from their products, game companies should give importance to different platforms, and especially to those that are surmised to be at the beginning of their popularization period, considering the anticipations of the today's player base, which enable the game to be closer to reality, and try to ensure that the platform preference enables players to have a more profound gaming experience owing to its modern functionalities. Mobile games, which can be considered a prominent traditional platform, create a significant part of annual video game revenue. This platform can be effective in increasing the number of players of the game in terms of its accessibility and ease of play in accordance with the inclusivity principle in the industry. The four transaction models—In-Game Currencies, Random Lucky Buys, in-game items, and time-limited access—should be designed carefully, drawing on psychological insights without undermining players' trust.

Game companies that want to advance in PC-based games should not be cautious about the innovations that will be brought to a specific game genre. The research shows that it is not wise to go beyond the traditional patterns that have already been adopted by the player base. However, this is closely related to the brand's recognition and image. The player base finds the storylines to which they are accustomed more attractive and feels close to them, so small-scale game companies should move towards recounting a known story, which they might adapt from a well-known book, movie or another game into their own games, in different ways in lieu of pursuing innovation in this regard. Since the positive effect of the innovations in presentation will not be long-lasting and it is difficult for game companies to find a presentation model that will not be possible to be beaten by a novel and a better version over the years, they should solely focus on this if they aim to produce games that will provide a high income in the short term, but if the game company manages to introduce such a big novelty that is unattainable by other companies and technology, it can achieve serious success in the long term. When it comes to

innovations in principles, the situation is almost the same. While it has a positive effect in the short term, its effect shrinks in the long term. Still, it may be a good option for game companies aiming for short-term success. However, it should not be forgotten that this research was conducted in an European context. Although the factors that cause the effects of innovations to decrease over time and I consider that they would not change worldwide, the cultural and social context can turn some positive short-term effects into negative and vice versa.

Creating a multiplayer environment in games where players can interact with each other can have a positive impact on gaming revenues. This game model, which requires less expense than single-player and story-based games and takes the responsibility of entertainment off the developer, based on an easier gameplay style, may be ideal for small-scale game companies.

Additionally, game companies must carefully monitor their activities on social media and avoid statements that may create controversial situations. However, companies should also take the personal social media accounts of its employees into consideration, as well as the official social media accounts of the company. This situation requires measures on a larger scale.

After a controversial situation arises, players expect a sincere apology and an improvement in the company's behavior. Both of these actions are momentous for the company's image. Companies should immediately compensate for their mistakes since the survey showed that 45% of gamers also take into account the company's past controversial situations in their purchasing activities. Game companies should also advertise on disparate social media platforms and attract the attention of the player base. Moreover, if the game company decides to include an individual from minority groups (LGBTQ+ etc.) in the game in order to gain attention and sympathy by touching sensitive issues, this character is expected by the majority of the player base to contribute to the content of the game. Game developers should take advantage of human psychology in their games and make proper use of psychological features such as self-determination theory.

Finally, game companies need to closely follow the developments in the industry and the player base, shape themselves according to the requirements of the new era, and pay attention to the activities of other brands. The gaming industry still maintains its trend of rapid development and alteration. Ultimately, the ability to adapt to changing market conditions and player expectations is essential for sustained commercial success.

CONCLUSION

The factors that influence video game revenues and shape players' perceptions of brands have a significant impact on the current and future role of the gaming industry. The capacity to utilize these factors can lead to drastic changes in the revenues of products introduced to the player base. While current exigencies may put a brand that masters them ahead of others, it may cause game companies that do not adopt them to make mistakes, damaging their images and dealing a heavy blow to their own assets.

The perspective, organization and psychology of the player base, platform preference, innovations, interaction within the game are several factors that affect a company's image, and therefore it is arduous to compensate for the damage that may arise from them. These requirements, some of which are far from plausible and difficult to surmise, demonstrate that success comes with a wealth of knowledge beyond acknowledgements. Game developers need to be aware of the demands and expectations of the player base, the growing and fading trends of the period, and the activities of rival companies. Improving and adapting to changes by understanding the system well is one of the foundations of growth.

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