Marketing

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Global game market

Games generate $159 Bn in 2020 [Global Games Market Report]

2020 Global Games Market
Per Region

- **Europe**: $29.6Bn, +7.8% YoY, 19%
- **Latin America**: $6.0Bn, +10.3% YoY, 4%
- **North America**: $40.0Bn, +8.5% YoY, 25%
- **Middle East & Africa**: $5.4Bn, +14.5% YoY, 3%
- **Asia-Pacific**: $78.4Bn, +9.9% YoY, 49%

2020 Total: $159.3Bn, +9.3% YoY
Global game market
PC games ~ 1/4

2016-2020 GLOBAL GAMES MARKET
FORECAST PER SEGMENT TOWARD 2020

TOTAL MARKET
+8.2%
CAGR 2016-2020

TOTAL:
$104.8Bn
$116.0Bn
$125.4Bn
$134.5Bn
$143.5Bn

2016
2017
2018
2019
2020

Source: ©Newzoo | Q4 2017 Update | Global Games Market Report
newzoo.com/globalgamesreport
Indiepocalypse

Number of Steam game releases worldwide!

Don’t compare with big hits years ago

Amnesia: The Dark Descent (2013)

- Game costs 360 000$ to make
- 710 000 units sold
- 1 360 000 units with bundles
- ~10 000 people a month purchasing for full price
- Revenue exceeds 10x the budget
Steam Direct

Previously: Steam Greenlight

- Pay 100$ for Greenlight publishing fee
- Get your game approved by community
- Get the right to publish any game on Steam

Now: Steam Direct (Starting from June 2017)

- Pay 100$ to release a game
- Recoup the publishing fee once the game has made at least 1000$

In August 2017: 25 games released every day
In February 2018: 40 games released every day

Extra 300 games every month
Steam Greenlight

Pros:
● Incentive to do early marketing
● Worst games got filtered out

Cons:
● Shady practices
The Old Normal (before 2017 summer)

Average game on Steam:

- Sold 500 copies (500 median, 3700 mean)
- Made 2000$ in revenue (2000$ median, $18000 mean)

In the first month of sale

At an average price of 7$ (7$ median,$8.30 mean)

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WycVOCbeKqQ (No More Robots GDC talk)
The New Normal (after 2017 summer)

Average game on Steam:

- Sold 50 copies (50 median, 2000 mean)
- Made 250$ in revenue (250$ median, $25740 mean)

In the first month of sale

At an average price of 5$ (5$ median, $7 mean)

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WycVOCbeKqQ (No More Robots GDC talk)
The New Normal (after removing the crap)

Average game on Steam:

- Sold 2000 copies (2000 median, 10 000 mean)
- Made 12,500$ in revenue (12 500$ median, $110 000 mean)

In the first month of sale

At an average price of 12$ (12$ median, $13 mean)

Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WycVOCbeKqQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WycVOCbeKqQ) (No More Robots GDC talk)
Early Access

Average game on Steam:

- Sold 3000 copies (+1000 compared to the overall)
- Made 24 500$ in revenue (~2x compared to the overall)

In the first month of sale

At an average price of 15$ (+3$ compared to the overall)

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WycVOCbeKqQ (No More Robots GDC talk)
Does having a publisher helps

Average game on Steam:

- Sold 6000 copies (+1000 compared to the overall)
- Made 52 350$ in revenue (~5x compared to the overall)

In the first month of sale

At an average price of 15$ (+3$ compared to the overall)

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WycVOCbeKqQ (No More Robots GDC talk)
Reality

93% of PC developers don’t make enough money to survive

- You should have a plan

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WycVOCbeKqQ (No More Robots GDC talk)
Marketing

Selling = delivering messages personally

Marketing = multiplying the message

Marketing is a saleswork that has been multiplied

The mere-exposure effect is a psychological phenomenon by which people tend to develop a preference for things merely because they are familiar with them.
Marketing

Emotions sell!

Buyer needs a logical reason and explanation to justify his emotional decision.

Why Add Emotion to Your Marketing

31%  
EMOTIONAL

26%  
COMBINED

16%  
RATIONAL

Case study following 1400 advertising campaigns measuring the economic success of campaigns sorted by emotional content.
Appeal

Most important emotion: **Happiness**

“Happiness is the main driver for social media sharing”
Marketing Mix for Indie Games

http://www.pixelprospector.com/the-marketing-guide-for-game-developers/
The Game

- Core
- Uniqueness
- Name
- Updates

Don’t try to balance out things you are bad at instead do what you are good at!
How indie games get discovered, evaluated

1. DISCOVERING
   - store (steam,...)
   - website (review,...)
   - youtube (let's play,...)
   - social media (twitter,...)
   - event (gamescom,...)
   - mail (newsletter,...)
   - other...

2. EVALUATING
   - trailer
   - screenshots
   - gameplay videos
   - reviews
   - demo if available

3. BUYING
   - interesting enough
   - reasonable price
   - no barriers
   - (not available on preferred store? required to install additional software? payment method of choice not offered...?)

4. PLAYING
   - liked / not liked

5. TALKING
   - and recommend game
   - or not recommend game
   - possibly via these channels
     - twitter, facebook, tumblr
     - forums, Reddit
     - website, youtube
     - steam, gog
     - comment section of websites
     - other...

6. FOLLOWING
   - twitter, facebook, blog, newsletter...
   - and considers to buy next game from developer

"How indie games get discovered, evaluated and bought" (v. 0.9)
pixelprospector.com/the-marketing-guide-for-game-developers/
The Funnel

Marketing Plan

Marketing is not about persuading people who don’t like your game.

It’s about identifying, finding and connecting with the fans that have the highest predisposition to like it!

- Marketing planning should **start early**
- Who is the target audience?
- Keywords
- How is your game unique?
- Elevator pitch
- Go-to-market
- List of YouTubers, streamers and press contacts
Brand

A brand is a promise to consumer -> what will the consumer get when he purchases your product!

Your core message?

Your brand must look the same
Webpages, Calling Cards, Staff, Office, Values, Packaging, Invoice ...
Make your game marketable

● 2 for 1 → Every player brings a friend.
  ○ Spends more money
  ○ Takes part of real world events
● Build the core demographic
● Something to think/talk about when not playing
  ○ In game economy
  ○ Seasons / content updates
Publishing

- **Self-Publishing** – 1/100 000 succeeds, you control the IP
- **Find publisher** – Publisher takes a portion of revenue
- **Get request proposal from publisher** – publisher asks his game to be made
Publishers

Publisher revenue share range 30% - 90%
- Chinese publishers → 90%
- Small publishers → 30-40%
- Bigger publishers → 50%

Publishers nowadays do not want to invest in development.
What to keep in mind when dealing with publisher

- Choose a publisher that publishes similar games
- Do not give away your IP
- Let the publisher list the things they will do
- Specify the consequences (also for the publishers)

- If you can not find a publisher it might be because of the game
Indie game marketing

First few weeks = most sales

- 2.5x 1st week ~ 1st month
- 5x 1st month ~ 1st year

Begin your marketing campaign the moment you have something that illustrates mechanics and look of your game.

But do not post ugly screenshots!
Set up your Store page early

Start collecting wishlists early to improve the odds.

Approximately 10% wishlists convert to sales. Which will bring your 5 times more organic sales. Which means that each wishlist is worth approximately 0.5 sales.

Wishlist conversions:
https://www.gamasutra.com/blogs/JakeBirkett/20180425/316924/How_many_wishlists_should_you_have_when_launching_on_Steam.php
Set up your Store page early

Setting up the Steam page takes time and effort.
Popular ways of marketing

- Online Marketing
  - fewer gamers are watching television.
  - Traditional banners don’t work.
  - Active present in gaming shows, live streams etc.

- Indie Marketing
  - Uses bit of humor
  - Extreme game concepts
  - Active interacting with fan through social media eg.
Indie game marketing

Marketing starts with:

- **A trailer** - About 1 minute, and meat as fast as possible (single most important thing to get people excited)
- **Simple landing page** - Call to action & include presskit
- **Social Media** - Facebook page, Twitter profile
  - Use peak hours 11am and 11pm EST
- **A development blog** - gamers love to read about personal struggles. Good way to prove that the game is coming along.

https://gamedevelopment.tutsplus.com/articles/marketing-your-indie-game-the-single-most-important-thing-to-learn--gamedev-7157
Trailer

Explosions!
Trailer

This trailer cost just 500$

And got over 1 000 000 views

The publisher (Paradox Interactive)
Pricing

Indies charge ~$9 on average per title on Steam. Most titles don’t get beyond 21,000 sales (including sales and bundles).

“Under-pricing up front hurts your ability to earn over the long-term”

http://www.gamesindustry.biz/articles/2017-08-23-indie-game-pricing-more-art-than-science
Success story - Cook, Serve, Delicious! (Released 2013)

Made with Game Maker
Spent $5,500 on art and music + $2,500 dev tools + $1k advertising
Original price $15
Released October 2012
Rough start ($900 first week)
GiantBomb Quick look video -> $7,400 sales
Grand total (including mobile sales) = $28,000 ($17,000 profit)

Directed pricing
Presskit

It won’t give you media attention but you’ll have to have it!

http://dopresskit.com/
Reddit marketing

Redditors Hate You (Reddit Marketers)

- You can’t be a marketer, you have to be a redditor
- Only share with the community if you think it’s awesome
- No Double Dipping
- Don’t let your first posts be a promotion
- Don’t Over-Promote

Collect data about your players

30 minutes of idle gameplay: [https://optimatica.eu/scavenger](https://optimatica.eu/scavenger)

Questions:
1. Should I make an extended version?
2. Would you purchase an extended version for mobile or Steam?
3. Leave your feedback about your game
4. Leave your e-mail (if you want to get updates)

4500 answers over 5 months (posted once)
Use cases → Minecraft

- **Notch published a lot of blog posts** during the development of the game, sometimes two a day or more.
- **Most blog posts were short**, just a few lines.
- **He was asking for feedback.** "Please remember to give me some feedback!" And when he got feedback, he showed that he appreciated it.
- **He spent a lot of the time playing the game.** "It's very important to me that the game is actually fun and the only way to make sure they are is to play with it."

First screenshot posted to Tigsource:

[Link](https://blog.habrador.com/2017/06/lessons-learned-from-development-of.html)
Use cases → Kingdoms and Castles

Market test early and continuously

- **1mo** (and onward) post gifs on twitter
- **3mos** - Steam Greenlight Concept

**Step 1** - Post on twitter, test the waters

**Success Criteria**: getting retweeted 25+ times

Youtube talk: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpkLUolgcXQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpkLUolgcXQ)
Use cases → Kingdoms and Castles

**Step 2** - Get into the top 100 ideas and generate 50+ comments

Youtube talk: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpkLUolgcXQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpkLUolgcXQ)
Use cases → Kingdoms and Castles

Made it into the top 100 ideas and results went beyond expectations:

Youtube talk: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpkLUolgcXQ
Use cases → Kingdoms and Castles

**Step 3** - Commit 6 months of dev time to prepare:

- Crowdfunding campaign
- Real Steam Greenlight run

**Scope Criteria:** Being Greenlit and level of success of crowdfunding

Crowdfunding -> 108 767$ of 15 000$ goal

Youtube talk: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpkLUoIgcXQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpkLUoIgcXQ)
How NOT to market your indie game

- Don’t post too detailed stuff
- Don’t play the “Top secret project” game
- Don’t insult your players, *Accept feedback* with gratitude
- Don’t have your *Social media pages outdated*
- Don’t *wait with spamming the press* until your game is released

www.gamasutra.com/blogs/DushanChaciej/20131107/204257/How_NOT_to_market_your_indie_game.php
Be consistent
Some other creative ways to do marketing

- Alternative Reality Game
- Hidden messages / puzzles
- Live twitch events

Halo 2 | I love bees game
Overwatch | hidden message in trailer
Punch Club | - Twitch plays through
Lecture task

Choose a method or channel for marketing a game, read about it and write 3 tips for being more successful in there.

Example: Marketing a game through Discord server:
- Spread the news that you’re running a closed “beta” through Discord
- Run silly meta-games in Discord server
- Make your developer accounts / bots to the characters in your game.

Source: https://youtu.be/Zg7tRh0k_a8

Some other channels: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Reddit, Youtube, Twitch, Keymailer, TickTock…

NB! It would be extra awesome if you can find some unique ways for promoting the game.