

GAME START-UPS 101

GETTING THE RIGHT PARTNER
FOR YOUR GAME

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DISCLAIMER

This lecture was held in November 2019 at the IGDA Game Start-Ups 101 in Oulu/Finland. The presentation may not include all original materials shown during this talk (pictures, videos etc.) – but has been enhanced with additional explanatory text which was given during the presentation in form of voice over by the speakers.

AGENDA

- Strategy (Company & Game)
- Pitching – Best Practices
 - Pre-Pitch Process
 - Location & Timing
 - Materials & Preparation
 - Presentation
- Publishers & Investors: What are they really interested in?

STRATEGY (COMPANY & GAME)

What's your studio strategy?

- Overall goals for your studio?
- Size, structure, workflows?
- What kind of games?
- Own IP's? Work-for-hire studio?
- Indie vs. AAA?
- Exit-Strategy?

STRATEGY (COMPANY & GAME)

What partner do you need?

- No project – looking for Work-for-Hire
- Publishing of a completed project
- Presenting RFP (Request for proposal
= publisher reached out to you before)
- Original IP Concept
- Investment in company

PITCHING – PRE-PITCH PROCESS

Questions before the pitch

- Target partner's business focus?
- Genre and target platform?
- Do you have something worth pitching?
- Can you show something running?
- Have you made a game before?

PITCHING – LOCATION & TIMING

How to approach potential partners

- Determine the publishers & investors
- Look to build relationships
-> Grow your network!
- Look for opportunities to meet
- Prepare your materials
- Practice & Polish!

PITCHING – LOCATION & TIMING

Best Practice: Where to pitch

- Conferences = Great for contacts, but don't try to sell your game there
- You only have short amount of time
- Not all stakeholder present
- Try to make curious...
- ...and get an appointment at HQ

PITCHING – MATERIALS & PREPARATION

Essential Team Information

- Studio Background
- Size
- Track Record
(Genre, Platform, USP's)
- Tech
- Man Month Rate

PITCHING – MATERIALS & PREPARATION

Best Practice: Studio Background

- Important for publisher
 - Team experience (over individual XP)
 - Have you worked together before?
 - Maybe as a student team?
 - Maybe start with Work-For-Hire to get credibility/XP

PITCHING – MATERIALS & PREPARATION

Essential Game Materials

- Game Treatment (~2-4 pages)
 - Design Vision & Visual Concept
 - Demo, or Animated Storyboard, or Rip-o-matic/Video, Storyboard, or concept art
 - End date - given start date

PITCHING – MATERIALS & PREPARATION

Best Practice: Design Vision

- What is your game (all about)?
- Start with the X
- Core features/game loop
- Short Summary (Elevator Pitch)
- What makes it different/special/unique?

PITCHING – MATERIALS & PREPARATION

Best Practice: Visuals

- If you can't make it – fake it!
- Important for publisher: “visual” goals
- Compare with similar titles
- Video: Pre-Render gameplay
- Rip-o-matic: Made out of cuts from other games

PITCHING – PRESENTATION

American vs. European

- Europeans tend to:
 - Pitch half-hearted
 - „I‘ve no chance anyway“
 - Under-sell
 - Appear grumpy & sluggish

PITCHING – PRESENTATION

15 Minutes of Fame

- You have 15 minutes to convince
- Publisher made up his mind after the first 5 minutes
- After 15 minutes no more chance
- CEO present? Even less time...

PITCHING – PRESENTATION

Don't save the best for last

- Start with playable Prototype
- No prototype? Start with video!
- Team-Presentation can wait
- Avoid PowerPoint

PITCHING – PRESENTATION

Elevator Pitch

- Your game idea in 45 seconds:
 - What's so great about it?
 - Why is it unique?
 - What's the core loop of the game?
 - Why would I stop playing XYZ for this game?

PITCHING – PRESENTATION

Never „pitch“ too many risks at once

- Publishers are risk-averse
- Don't try at the same time...
 - to conquer a new genre
 - try a new tech (engine, 3D vs 2D etc.)
 - try a new platform (new console etc.)
 - with a new team...

PITCHING – PRESENTATION

You always pitch your studio

- Even if not actively pitching a game
- You're always pitching yourself
- At shows, conferences etc. – wherever you are present
- Great chance: Publisher might get interested in you as a studio

PUBLISHERS & INVESTORS

What publisher are really looking for

- Reliability
- Available resources
- Cost efficiency
- Working pipeline
- Honest & transparent communication
- XP with genre, style & tools = Quality!

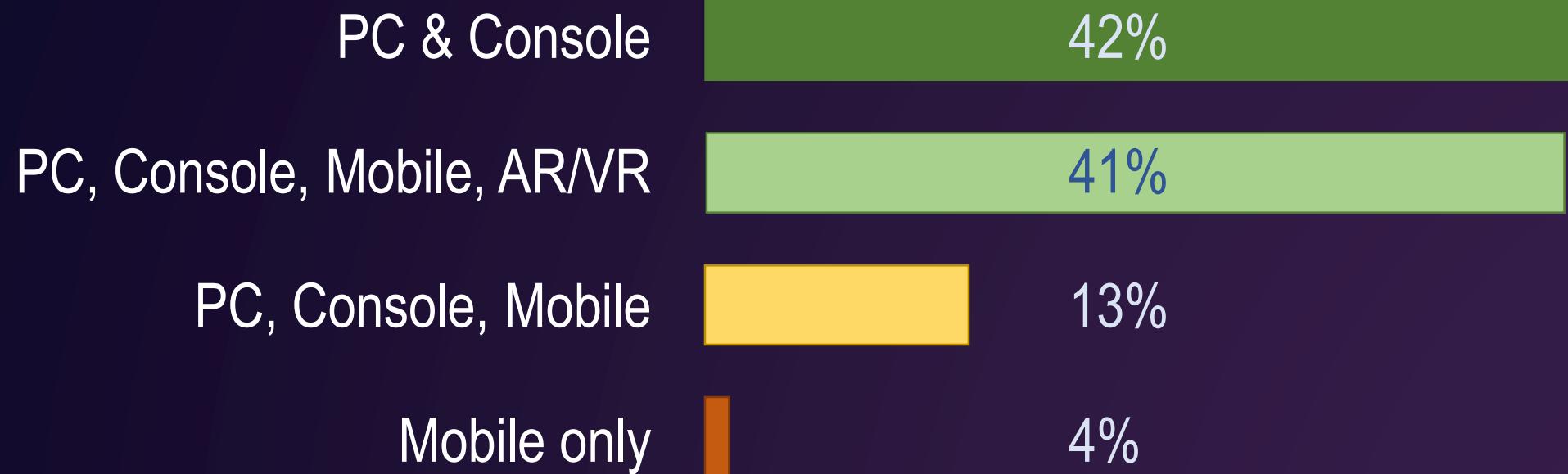
PUBLISHERS & INVESTORS

Best Practice: General

- Be unique! No clone games!
- Minimize repetitive communication
- Keep portfolio on website up to date
- Regularly provide updates to contacts
- Use and meetings at events to share major updates

PUBLISHERS & INVESTORS

Publishers interested in*:



*Source: Xsolla Funding Club

<https://www.gamesindustry.biz/articles/2019-11-06-which-platforms-are-publishers-and-investors-really-interested-in?fbclid=IwAR2JdcVkJVG3FdxyOMPZayyMFd9CHdjWgPkAxp5fl9SG9G1gLD5q7InpGbk>

QUESTIONS?



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