

Marketing Plan for Independent Project

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We Are

- A platform to connect game design programs and job opportunities for students.
- A community to offer advice for choosing programs and related jobs.

What We Do

- Collect and encourage people to share unbiased comments about Canada's game design programs in our community.
- Post current trends in the industry for students who want to be game designers.
- Search for job opportunities.
- Arrange regular seminars and invite game designers to make presentations for users.

1. Environmental Analysis

1.1 Competition

General Online Recruiters

A couple of online recruiters like Monster.com and Indeed.com have a seasoned team to run the website with a better understanding of the recruiting market.

Famous Video Gaming Companies

Companies like Ubisoft have their own HR department. People who would like to get a job in Ubisoft tend to visit the company website directly.

Famous Game Design Programs

They offer detailed information for applicants who want to be a game designer. People will visit the program's page and forum to get information.

1.2 Regulations

- Government policies support the industry at both the federal and provincial levels. They offer generally competitive corporate tax rates, and many provinces have introduced refundable tax credits for the production of interactive digital media to encourage growth of the sector.
- Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED) tax credits also play a critical role in fostering technology-based innovation and advancements in the video game industry. Federal and provincial funding programs for digital media offer support for projects that might not otherwise obtain funding, like Canada Media Fund (CMF).

- The Montreal government has been fostering the gaming industry for ten years by issuing refundable tax credits, building gaming funding association, and holding Montreal International Game Summit (MIGS).
- The Toronto government's special grants are available to those who qualify, paying up to 50% of the salary for video game studios.

1.3 Economics

- The video game industry contributes \$2.3 billion to Canada's GDP, and \$1.6 billion in direct labour expenditure. It employs 16,500 full-time employees (FTEs) directly, but the industry supports up to 27,000 FTEs in Canada.
- Employment has grown 5% since 2011. 40% of companies surveyed predict over 25% growth in the next two years.

1.4 Social factors

- Game design talents are gathering in different communities like school forums, and LinkedIn groups.
- Freelancers tend to find job opportunities in specialized communities and word-of-mouth in the real world.
- According to Entertainment Software Association of Canada (ESAC), Canada has the 3rd largest video game development industry in the world, and the largest per capita. Approximately 329 companies are currently operating in Canada (Nov. 2013).
- The industry is centered on three key hubs: Quebec, Ontario and BC. Emerging hubs include Nova Scotia and Manitoba.

- 88% of firms are small (5-99) or micro (0-4) in this industry, while 68% of employment is found in large firms.
- Console games contribute 66.5% revenue to the market. However, 84% of studios are developing games for mobile platforms with 10.8% contribution to the market.
- The average age of workers in Canada's video game industry is 31 years old.
- Within 2 years, most of the companies and studios changed their direction to develop mobile games. The changes are too fast for the education system to prepare more senior talents for the industry.
- A number of universities and colleges have game design programs for students. The information of different programs with various features is overloaded for students to make a wise choice.

1.5 Technology

- Game design technology has been simplified significantly as the development of third party software. Unity 3D offers an easy way to control the game engine. A bunch of motion capture and audio studios offer affordable services for gaming studios. Some incubators invite seasoned developers to help juniors solve the problems in development. Communities support each other to address technology issues in this industry.
- People tend to seek job opportunities through LinkedIn, Facebook, blogs, forums and other online communities.

2. SWOT Analysis

2.1 Strengths

- User-friendly web design.
- Focusing on offering services for local micro and small companies in the video gaming industry.
- A better understanding of the needs and wants of both education and employment sectors with 5 years worth of operating experience.
- Better community connecting different platforms like College/ University forums, LinkedIn groups, Facebook and other online communities.
- Hold seminars and events frequently for the community.
- Good relationship with the targeted companies and get feedback directly from them.
- Community is built by word-of-mouth, which is one of the best ways to get targeted loyal users.
- We keep our team small so we are able to respond very quickly.

2.2 Weaknesses

- Community-based operation strategy needs more time to accumulate reputation.
- May be challenging to ask employers to post a decent job opportunity on the site.
- May be challenging to attract qualified job seekers with limited job opportunities.

- It needs more time to optimize the system for people to get valuable information they want faster, and let the useless content disappear automatically.

2.3 Opportunities

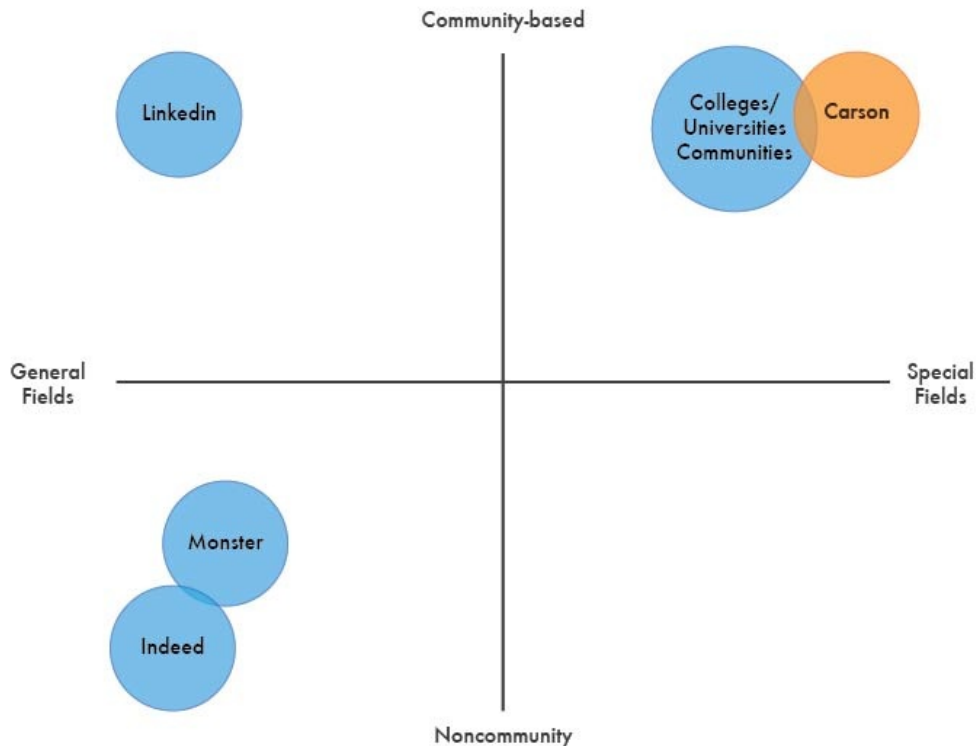
- 88% of the game developers are micro or small companies/studios in Canada, so we have plenty of potential exclusive partners.
- The government needs to bridge the gap between education and employment for the long term. We may hand in a report about the problems we find and ask for support.
- We could be the only agency who collects information of education and jobs specialized for game designers.
- Micro and small companies/studios looking to hire lack ways to get premium exposure on general recruiting websites like LinkedIn. They can be easily found by potential employees on our site, so they benefit from being partners and posting job opportunities on the site.
- A number of colleges and universities have created game design programs. Students want to know what the differences are among these programs. We offer unbiased reviews for the programs which is essential for students.
- Users can participate in local activities, network with experts and gain advice directly from them.
- We could hold presentations and events on campus for students to better understand the industry. Our partners will be invited to the event, so their brand could be promoted as well.

2.4 Threats

- Other general online recruiters have a better reputation in the market.
- Some employers have a better reputation like Ubisoft.
- The colleges and universities may not be happy about getting negative third-party comments on their programs.
- We may be seen as competitors to colleges and employers, limiting our access to job postings and general information.
- LinkedIn group is a powerful platform to build a decent community that specializes in gaming industry.

3. Segmentation

3.1 Perceptual Map



The business is positioned into the 'Special Fields' to 'Community-based' quadrant, because the success of the site relies on the community and third-part comments for college/university programs. Our competitor, LinkedIn, is on the other end of the X axis. Most online recruiters offer general job opportunities based on search lists like Monster and Indeed, rather than interactive community discussion.

The business will be a major stepping-stone for students who want to start their game design career after graduation.

3.2 Segmenting the Market

Demographics

It targets both genders; teens ages 11-19; adults ages 20-24.

Geographic

The provinces that the government supports in the video game market, including Quebec, Toronto and Vancouver BC.

Behavioristic

Teen: Still in high school and live with parents; play a wide range of video games; actively discuss games from a designer view in online community and social media (Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter); tech-savvy; no car; may have a part-time job; is planning to choose a game design program.

Adult: is studying in game design programs and is looking for a related job opportunity; has desire to know what kind of employees studios want.

Socio-economic

The business is targeting middle to high-income groups, interested in taking a risk to join micro and small game design studios.

Benefit

Critical and unbiased comments for game design programs – the third-party comments are beneficial to teens on choosing appropriate programs to invest in.

Plenty job opportunities with clear requirements – it helps upcoming graduates know what to learn during the rest of their school time in order to settle a job.

Majority job opportunities in micro and small companies – the big company only offer limited positions for graduates every year. By focusing on micro and small companies, the employers are able to contact the potential employees directly, and the students are able to seek great opportunities that they barely realize in the market.

3.3 Target Profiles

Mathew is a 17-year-old boy who is fond of making his own game, so he is planning to apply to a college or university game design program. He lives in Toronto, plays video games every day and actively participates in game design activities in the city. Since there are so many different programs out there, he wants to know what kind of program he should choose and what kind of job he can get after graduation. He values third-party comments to help him make a wise decision. He is willing to spend a bit more money on the program, as long as it can help him to be a great game designer. He also needs valuable advice from the community for his choice of career. He enjoys posting his ideas and video game projects online and in his social networks.

Cindy is a twenty-two year-old girl in her last year of a game design program. She is seeking job opportunities in Vancouver, BC. She is not ambitious to apply to big video game companies like Ubisoft. She aspires

to join indie game studios, because in micro or small companies she can experience different positions and take on a major role in the project. Though it's risky, she values challenging work in a small creative team. She loves sharing her unbiased comments of the program she took with others in the community. She also builds a good relationship with some game designers from the seminars and makes friends online. She often writes blogs about game design and shares her opinions to the community. Her family still supports her financially. Her parents think it's risky to work in a micro company and give her 3 months to settle on a job, or she will have to find another job.

3.4 Positioning Statement

For the students who are planning to choose a game design program, or looking for a game design job, the website is an interactive community that provides unbiased information about programs and job opportunities, including plenty of chances to network with industry experts. The website is the only community focused on connecting game design programs and career to students.

4. Action Plan

4.1 Product

Our community will offer unbiased third-party comments of the game design programs and provide job opportunities for students, both teens and adults. They are able to interact with experts and peers in the industry and in the online community. To offer better networking opportunities, we will arrange seminars and other activities regularly online and offline.

From our community, students benefit from the valuable comments to make wise choices regarding programs. They keep up-to-date on trends in the industry. Most importantly, they will get advice that will prepare them for their careers ahead.

To make our services appealing to our users, we will optimize the valuable information on our website with an interactive atmosphere in the community. We are going to strengthen our branding apparent on all of our website pages and peripherals like goodie bags and T-shirts. We will keep the same name we have been using for 5 years with a brand-new modern logo design, as well as a new visual design for the website. Students who want to be game designers are adventurous and creative. Only a cool website can appeal to them.

4.2 Price

Our community is free to access for both students and studios. We will sell online advertisements for studios and game design programs. In order to

keep our high quality information, we won't accept any compromise related to unbiased third-party comments like deleting specific posts.

The programs that offer clear and honest information in the community will be regarded as our honored partners and get 10% off for advertisements. The studios that are able to offer decent positions exclusively will get 20% off for any promoting options as well.

The site will use the CPM (Cost per 1000 Impressions) method. We will build a system to calculate how much it costs to provide the advertisements for different clients. To keep our information high in quality, we will filter the ads by selling them slightly higher than our competitors, but give our honored partners decent discounts.

4.3 Place

Online:

To market our community online, we will promote the site in colleges and university online forums. As for social media, we will target game design online groups in LinkedIn and Facebook. Some online communities for game designers will be considered as an option as well. Through e-newsletters, we will send out recent events notifications to our registered users.

Offline:

To market our community offline, we will arrange seminars for students to have a better understanding about game design by inviting experts to make presentations. On-campus activities will be held regularly in colleges and

universities, targeting students who are in their last year of the program. We will also partner with local studios to hold some inspiring presentation in high school, introducing the dynamic industry to these potential game designers. Brochures and posters will be distributed during these activities.

4.4 Promotion

Online community:

We will promote the services in specific communities in colleges, universities and social media groups.

SEO:

Our web designers will focus on search engine optimization. We will pay for the keyword searching on Google to make sure our brand name will be the top one when it is searched.

Online Advertising:

We will pay for Google Ads for searching promotion and pay to place the ads on LinkedIn and Facebook. These ads can target specific users well.

Event and Print Promotion:

We will join video game offline activities. During the period, posters, business cards and brochures will be distributed to students who are interested in game design. All these printed promotional materials will be distributed during the activities we hold in campus.

Word of Mouth:

We will encourage our users to share their positive experiences in the community by writing blogs and sharing in social media. Successful cases will be promoted as a story to show the power of the community.

Social Media:

We will be active in social media, but only in specific groups. We encourage people to discuss with us. By connecting all fragmented groups online, the brand will be promoted through different channels.

Email Campaign:

We will email latest events and job opportunities bi-weekly to people who subscribe to the newsletter services.