

Marketing Mix Guidelines for Finnish Mobile Game Companies

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<p>This thesis is a qualitative study for the Finnish mobile gaming industry. The research aims to create Marketing Mix guidelines designed as a handbook for Finnish mobile game companies. It will help the case companies and other companies to have a clear image of effective marketing strategies in the Finnish mobile gaming industry. Additionally, an overview of marketing strategies used by three case companies is provided in the research.</p> <p>The investigative areas are (1) potential mobile game players, (2) suitable online channels, (3) pricing models, (4) promotion strategies and (5) player psychology. The last chapter includes a summary of the discussions which happened throughout the research. The chapter also covers research evaluations, recommendations and reflections on learning in order to apply the research effectively.</p> <p>The research was carried out from May 2018 to November 2018. Primary data was built on research data, interviews, the Pocket Gamers Connect conference, International Game Developers Association meetings, and the author's own observations. The mobile game companies involved in this research are Supercell, Full XP and Quick Save.</p> <p>This research focuses primarily on the area of marketing for Finnish mobile game companies. If the case companies decide to apply the Marketing Mix guidelines of this research to their business, this area is not covered in this research.</p> <p>The findings of this research are Marketing Mix guidelines designed as a handbook. The handbook covers mobile game genres, launching platforms, pricing models, promotion strategies and player psychology in Finnish mobile game companies. After examining the materials available, it was determined by this author that there may be a need for this marketing guide in mobile gaming industry.</p>	
Keywords Finnish mobile games, mobile games, Marketing Mix, digital marketing, social media	

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1 Introduction

This chapter is an introduction for the thesis. It contains the original idea and background information for the topic combining with the implementation plan and research questions. The author also explains demarcation, international aspects and risks as well as the expected benefits for all involved companies in the research. At the end of this chapter, the list of companies and their background information are provided to bring readers a better understanding while reading this research. Also, the reasons for choosing the companies that participated in this research are described.

1.1 Background

This research was inspired from the book *The Playing Finn: Stories on Successful Game Development and Music Export* by Toni-Matti Karjalainen, Miikka J. Lehtonen and Jani Niipola (2014), and the documentary movie *Indie Game: The Movie* by James Swirsky and Lisanne Pajot (2012). The book and movie told about successful and unsuccessful stories of game developers from designing the games from papers to the mobile phones or laptops. Through the emotional and sometimes tough journeys of these game developers, as well as my own interest in playing mobile games, this author intends to deliver useful and practical Marketing Mix guidelines to support mobile game companies of different sizes. Consequently, she hopes to reduce stress in this creative industry, and encourage new entrepreneurs to enter the game sector and make games they love.

In 2017, Statista 2018 reported that over 780,000 and 640,000 new gaming applications appeared on Apple App Store and Google Play Store respectively (Statista 2018a, b). Furthermore, it is predicted that mobile games will continue to contribute a significant percentage (72%) toward global app revenue in 2020 (Warman 2016). There are 260 active video game developer studios in Finland. These numbers show the non-stop and fierce competition between mobile game companies. To be a winner of this contest, wise marketing strategies and campaigns behind the games are needed, as stated by Dongen (2012), "Marketing is one third of your chance of success".

Also, the Finnish government aims for the whole industry in Finland to succeed, not just individual companies. Sharing and collaborating in making games within the Finnish game community is called as Team Finland (Karjalainen, Lehtonen & Niipola 2014, 17). The spirit of Team Finland was established to make the gaming industry success. Desiring to spread this spirit, the author approached mobile game companies in Finland through interviews to get in-depth information about their Marketing Mix model.

1.2 Research Question

This thesis aims to benefit Finnish mobile game companies by offering Marketing Mix guidelines regarding mobile game genres, pricing models, launching platforms, promotion strategies and player psychology. The research approached three mobile game companies in different sizes, specially Supercell, Full XP and Quick Save. The research also explains the overview of marketing strategies in the case companies. The final results reveal the current marketing channels between them to help other companies have a clear image of effective Marketing Mix strategies in Finnish mobile gaming industry.

The research question can be worded as “What are the effective Marketing Mix channels of Finnish mobile game companies?” By dividing this research question into five investigative questions (IQ), the research provided a systematic process to readers. The five investigative questions are explained as follows:

IQ 1. Who are the potential gamers for Finnish mobile game companies to target?

IQ 2. What are suitable online channels for marketing Finnish mobile games?

IQ 3. What are the pricing models for mobile games of Finnish companies?

IQ 4. What promotional strategies do Finnish mobile game companies implement?

IQ 5. How important is player psychology as a marketing consideration when designing mobile games?

Table 1 below presents the theoretical framework, research methods and results chapters for each investigative question.

Table 1. Overlay matrix

Investigative Question	Theoretical Framework	Research Methods	Results
IQ 1. Who are the potential gamers for Finnish mobile game companies to target?	Theories about product, demographic, target market in mobile gaming industry. Research report Article about mobile games.	Desktop studies Pocket Gamers Connect Conference Qualitative interviews.	4.2.1 Potential target gamers for Finnish mobile games companies to target
IQ 2. What are suitable online channels for marketing Finnish mobile games?	Theories about launching place for mobile games.	Desktop studies Qualitative interviews.	4.2.2 Suitable online channels for marketing Finnish mobile games
IQ 3. What are the pricing models of mobile games for Finnish companies?	Theories about business model for mobile gaming apps.	Desktop studies Qualitative interviews.	4.2.3 Pricing models for Finnish mobile games companies
IQ 4. What promotional strategies do Finnish mobile game companies implement?	Theories about promotion strategies for mobile games.	Desktop studies International Game Developers Association (IGDA) gatherings Pocket Gamers Connect Conference Qualitative interviews.	4.2.4 Promotion strategies for Finnish mobile games companies
IQ 5. How important is player psychology as a marketing consideration when designing mobile games?	Theories about player psychology in mobile games.	Desktop studies Pocket Gamers Connect Conference Qualitative interviews.	4.2.5 The important of player psychology as a marketing consideration when designing mobile games

1.3 Demarcation

This research focuses primarily on the marketing area for Finnish mobile game companies. PC game companies are not research's target. Later on, if there is any implementation based on the Marketing Mix guidelines from this research, the author does not cover the implementation results. The results are not covered in this research, if the case companies decide to apply this Marketing Mix guidelines into their business.

1.4 International Aspect

The two biggest mobile game launching platforms are the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store. Most mobile game companies would launch their games with these main channels before they are targeting any others. These stores are used globally. The games that are introduced on the Apple App Store and Google Play Store reach users around the world.

1.5 Benefits

With the Team Finland spirit and the importance of marketing, this research aims to be a place for big and small mobile game companies to share their marketing knowledge and learn from good practices together. This research may also be a useful Marketing Mix training guideline for new employees. For start-ups or small mobile game companies, the research's findings can be applied to find potential solutions for their current problems. On the other hand, top mobile game companies like Supercell have a chance review their marketing campaign or be inspired by fresh ideas. For the Author, enhancing marketing knowledge in mobile game industry would be an advantage for her future career.

1.6 Key Concepts

Mobile game: Mobile games – more precisely, mobile network games – are narrowly defined as games conducted in handheld devices with network functionality. The key terms are portability and networkability (Jeong & Kim 2009, 290.)

Marketing Mix: The Marketing Mix is a well-established conceptual framework that helps marketers to structure their approach to each market (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 54).

Digital marketing: Digital marketing is marketing online whether via web sites, online ads, opt-in email, mobile apps or emerging platforms (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 13).

Social media: Social media is the term commonly given to Internet and mobile-based channels and tools that allow users to interact with each other and share opinions and content. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks and encouraging participation and engagement (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 225.)

1.7 Risks

Due to the study involved in interviewing with many different mobile game companies. The research may not get the expected number of interviewees. Addition to, the summer holiday which have three months totally in the middle of study could cause a delay in collecting data for the research. These risks may affect the process of carrying this research. Also, it was a challenge to find marketing documents as the research topic is quite new and the mobile gaming industry landscape is different from established ones.

1.8 Case Companies

There are totally three mobile game companies who participated in this research. They are one big company – Supercell; and two smaller companies – Full XP and Quick Save. Choosing companies of different sizes intends to make the comparison related to their marketing strategies more useful. The companies with smaller sizes could compare with the larger, more successful one about what strategies, features or campaigns they may not have applied in their marketing management. The companies are described below:

Supercell

Supercell is a mobile game company established in Helsinki 2010. When the company started, it had 15 people working for it. A bit later on, the company expanded to 250 employees in five different international offices. Supercell has brought four hit games which are played by millions of players daily all over the world. They are Hay Day, Clash of Clans, Boom Beach and Clash Royale (Supercell 2018a, b). In 2015, Supercell spent nearly 500 million dollars marketing their games (Orlanski 2015).

As Supercell is a company with a lot of success in the mobile gaming market and has invested heavily in marketing in the past, having the company in this study would be a valuable source and a good practice for others to learn and improve their current marketing strategies. It also helps others to realise the importance of marketing in mobile gaming industry.

Full XP

Full XP specialises in service for mobile game publishing. The company provides services from production to marketing to other mobile game companies such as consultation, game marketing, press release, customer support, etc. Full XP was established in 2016 with twenty employees at this moment. (Facebook Full XP & Full XP 2018).

The reason for choosing Full XP is because the company are working on different marketing projects for many mobile game companies. The companies are managing marketing for many mobile games such as Visual Realms Studio and Critical Force. Therefore, the company's thoughts and experiences may be valuable information for other mobile game companies.

Quick Save

Quick Save was established in 2015 by six Finnish game developers. The company specialises in Facebook Instant Game platform for mobile game. The game is developing is Best and Bester which was launched on the Facebook Instant Game platform. (Facebook Quick Save & Quick Save 2018).

The reason for choosing Quick Save is that the company has a similar company size with Full XP. They focus mainly on the Facebook Instant Game Platform which is a new method of publishing mobile games. Having them on this research brings a source for marketing mobile games on a new and developing platform.

2 The Marketing Mix Model in Mobile Games

The Marketing Mix referred to the 4 Ps of Product, Price, Place and Promotion originally created by E.J.McCarthy (1960). The 4 Ps model has been extended to the 7 Ps which are added three elements: People, Process and Physical evidence (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2012, 258). As products of mobile game companies are intangible, the element of Process and Physical evidence would not be mentioned in the Marketing Mix model. On the other hand, Product, Price, Place, Promotion and People preferred as Player from 7 Ps model are being applied with the purpose of providing the clear picture of marketing in mobile gaming industry.

Product	Price	Place	Promotion	Player
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mobile games• Game genres	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free• Freemium• Paid• Paidmium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Landing page• Blog• Trade channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social media channels• Press release	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Target players• Psychology of players

Figure 1. The elements of the Marketing Mix model in mobile gaming industry (Adapted from Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2012, 258).

2.1 Mobile Game as a Product

This chapter provides readers the basic knowledge in mobile gaming industry such as definition of a mobile game, ten different types of mobile games and the main target market for different mobile game genres.

2.1.1 Defining a Mobile Game

A mobile game is defined differently depends on each country and each game research institution. It is important to understand meaning of mobile games for mobile game companies before carrying other business activity. Mobile games – more precisely, mobile network games – are narrowly defined as games conducted in handheld devices with network functionality. The key terms are portability and networkability (Jeong & Kim 2009, 290.) Or defined by Wikipedia (2018a), “A mobile game is a video game played on a feature phone, smartphone/tablet, smartwatch, PDA, portable media player or graphing calculator.”

On the other hand, Jeong and Kim (2009) also cited the boarder definition of mobile games with the key element is portability. All games in portable devices can be defined as mobile games without wireless functions as they are “embedded, downloaded, or networked games conducted in handheld devices such as mobile phones, portable consoles, and PDAs”.

2.1.2 Mobile Game Genres

“A game genre is a category of games characterized by a particular set of challenges, regardless of setting or game-world content” (Rolling & Adams 2003). According to the Apple App Store, the games can be classified in eighteen different game categories. There is no clear boundary between game genres as some game apps could fit in multiple categories. For example, Crossy Road game can belong to family and arcade category in the App Store. Different types of game players would choose different game categories to play based on their own interests, hobbies or styles. Choosing a suitable game category is very important. Because it shows where the game apps get listed in the app stores, which makes it easier for users to choose the right types of game they want to play with. The eighteen mobile game genres are explained as below based on the alphabetical order (App Store 2018a).

1. Action

This type of games is about physical challenges, reflexes, reaction time and hand-eye coordination. Action games focus mainly on main characters safe and alive, while they are placed in a shooting or other challenging environment. Sonic Runners Adventure, Temple Run are good examples of action game genre. (R-Style Lab 2017.)

2. Adventure

Adventure games has a wide variety of experiences and not involve war or fast action. Instead of reflexing testing and puzzle solving, adventure games take gamers to exciting, interesting places and situations as the main focus is on entertainment and engagement than combat and competition. Example of this game genre is Bad Land, Old Man’s Journey or To the Moon. (R-Style Lab 2017.)

3. AR Games

AR Games, stands for augmented reality games, is the integration of game visual and audio content with the user’s environment in real time. Pokémon Go which is ranked in the top games worldwide in 2018 is a good illustrates for AR games. (Rouse 2016.)

4. Arcade

This game category focuses more on the gameplay instead of story or content. The players start with the easier levels, then they will become more challenging and difficult to complete the whole game progress. Arcade games have short play times, instant challenges and a simple gameplay. For example, Angry Birds Friends, Pac-Man are belonged to the arcade game genre. (R-Style Lab 2017.)

5. Board

The board game uses the traditional gaming elements, such as dice, boards and cards inside the game. Also, the board games usually have themes or scenarios to appeal players. (Eddy 2017.)

- 6. Card**
Card genre is one of the most popular games. This include poker, rummy, euchre, or others. Fairway Solitaire of Big Fish Games company is a good illustrate of card game. (R-Style Lab 2017.)
- 7. Casino**
Mobile casino games facilities games which are played on casino to mobile phones, such as blackjack, slot, poker, etc. (Casinopedia 2018).
- 8. Family**
The family category is multiplayer games. It is designed to play and have fun with a group of friends or family's members. Heads Up is a good example of family games. (Grannell 2016.)
- 9. Kids**
The main target for this game genre is kids from three to twelve years old. The kid games are not too mature, fun and easy for kids to play. Talking Tom game is a perfect illustrate for kid games. (Hindy 2018a.)
- 10. Music**
Music games are more about song, dance and music. They are not only fun, but also helps users to gain knowledge about specific instruments they want to study. (Valerie 2018.)
- 11. Puzzle**
Puzzle games, for example Candy Crush Saga game, focus on problem-solving skills and word competition. Players are normally given an unlimited amount of time and attempts to complete a puzzle. (R-Style Lab 2017.)
- 12. Racing**
The racing game genre is the games which players take part in a racing competition. Racing games may also belong to sport game genre. (Wikipedia 2018b).
- 13. Role Playing**
Role Playing game involves journey, heavy storylines and diverse characters. Players often have a full responsibility for their actions and spend many hours of playing. (R-Style Lab 2017.)
- 14. Simulation**
This game genre is a simulation of real-world activities. The players are freely to control a chosen game character and there are no strictly goals. Hay Day game of Supercell is a good example of stimulation game which ranked second on the App Store. (R-Style Lab 2017.)
- 15. Sports**
Sport genre is about real-life activities such as basketball, football, or baseball. The players can play individuals or in team. (R-Style Lab 2017.)
- 16. Strategy**
Strategy games usually focuses on a battlefield or other competitive areas. This game type covers anything involving army placement and one-on-one combat. For example, Boom Beach from Supercell have gained success for a while in this game genre. (R-Style Lab 2017.)
- 17. Trivia**
Trivia game genre is designed for players to ask questions about different topics. It can be known as quiz games. Logo Quiz and Who Wants to be a Millionaire are typical games of trivia genre. (Hindy 2018b.)
- 18. Word**
Word game category is word and vocabulary games. Word games could also fit in quiz game genre. (Writtenhouse 2017.)

The bar chart below (Figure 2) compares the most popular game genres among the Android gaming applications worldwide in September 2017. It is clear that the casual, puzzle and arcade games are the most popular game genres on the Android mobile

devices globally. By contrast, only a very small percentage (under 1%) of the Android game apps belonged to sport and family games. According to BIC research in 2017, it is expected that the global revenue of action and adventure games increases by 46% in 2023. (WePC 2018.)

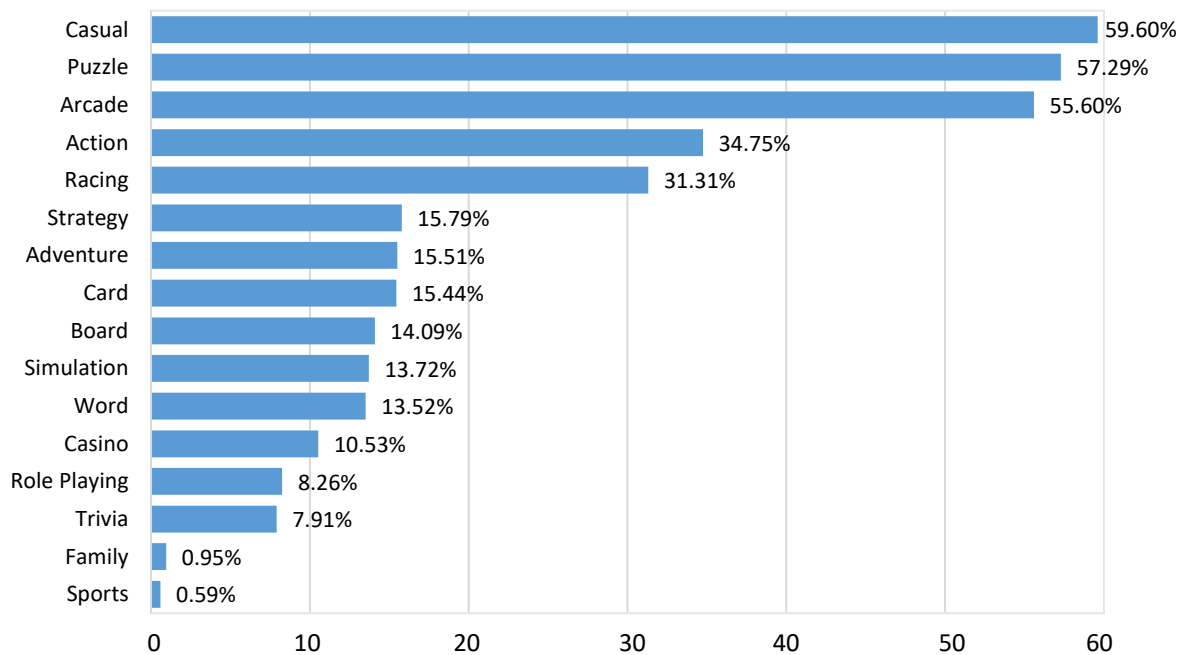


Figure 2. The most popular game genres on the Android game apps worldwide in September 2017 (Adapted from WePC 2018)

2.2 Pricing Models for Mobile Game Apps

Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2012, 278) points out that pricing models of the Marketing Mix is to set the form of payment for products or services. It is important for the mobile game companies to choose the suitable pricing models. The right pricing models will balance the goal with target market's expectations for mobile game organisations (App Store 2018). Based on the App Store's guidelines for applications in 2018, the pricing models can be classified as free, freemium, paid and paymium model.

Among the four types of mobile game's pricing model mentioned above, the free model is the most popular type on the App Store, specifically there is approximately 90% of free game apps and 8% of paid apps in the Apple App Store 2016 (Gimon 2016).

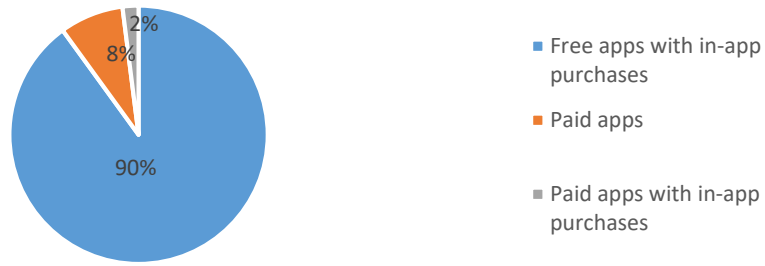


Figure X. Percentage of pricing model in mobile game apps (Adapted from Gimon 2016)

2.2.1 Free Model

A free model is that the players do not pay to download the app, it is totally free. By removing the barrier of price, the companies could increase the number of downloads. The free model is better suited for start-ups who want to get as many players as possible to play the games, to gather information about players and increase brand awareness. So later when the company starts to publish a new game, the fans and supporting community is already built from the previous games. If the new game is as good as the previous games, there is a hope from the fans who would willing to purchase something from the company's products (App Store 2018b.)

Even though the free model is totally free for users, the mobile game companies could get revenue by selling ad space within the game apps. However, this method is effective only when the in-app advertisings are appropriate and relevant to players. The AdMob platform by Google is a tool that allows companies to filter relevant advertisements to appropriate target market displayed inside their own apps. (Wilson 2018.) Image 1 shows an example of the free game Flip Master with in-app advertisements. With Flip Master, the players will get more coins after watching advertised videos.



Image 1. Screenshots of the free model with in-app advertisements (Apple App Store 2018)

2.2.2 Freemium Model

In this model, the users pay do not need to pay to download any game apps. However, they are offered optional in-app purchase for premium features, or digital goods that are locked in the game. In other words, the users can get the games at no cost and have the option to pay if they want to engage with the game more deeply (App Store 2018b). As Wilson (2018) points out that in gaming apps, the users download the app for free but they must pay to move up to next levels, get extra lives, access to premium features or use currency inside the app. Similar to the free pricing model, the main goal of the freemium model is to attract users to certain game levels and provide them a rich preview of the games, then they may choose to spend for special features inside the game as a source of income for companies (Wilson 2018.)

With the freemium model, the players usually want to have more features later from the app if they are expected to upgrade. Therefore, it is required a lot of work from game developers as they have to continually add new features, upgrades and improvements to keep the games interesting to players and make them feel good when paying for the games (Wilson 2018.) The best example of this pricing model is Boom Beach game. It is free to download the game, but the players could pay to get more coins and features (Image 2).

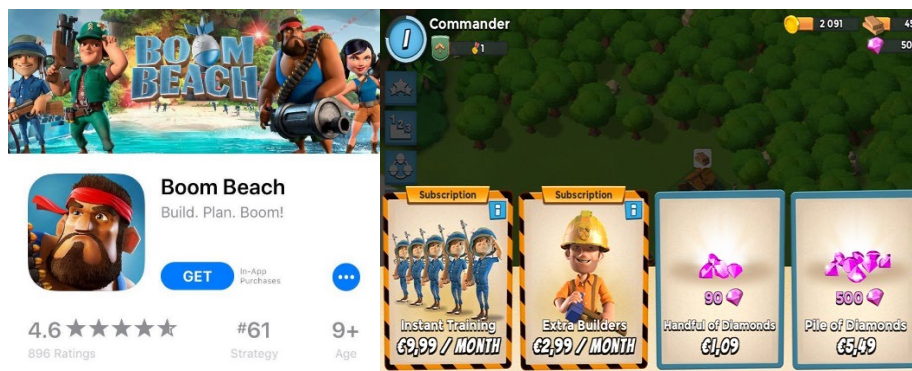


Image 2. Screenshots of the freemium model (Apple App Store 2018)

2.2.3 Paid Model

Paid model is the model that the users pay once to download the games and they can fully experience the games. There are no additional charges after downloading the games. The paid apps usually range from 0.99 to 9.99 dollars. The game companies can calculate their revenue upfront based on the number of every new download (App Store 2018b.) The paid model is a common pricing model for mobile game apps, however, it

could be the least effective one. As the players are being asked to give their money before experiencing the games, the players could hesitate to agree on paying in advance. They usually respect the perfection in the game as they have to spend money for playing the game. In this pricing model, it is very important that the marketing efforts should be very strong to have players. The companies need to consider their game's features and financial budget before choosing this paid model (Wilson 2018.)

One effective approach for mobile game companies could apply to get more downloads from potential long-term players is to offer a 7-day or 14-day free trial, at the end the players must pay to continue playing the game. This approach is a great way to encourage players in trying out the new games with no pressure to make any advance purchases (Wilson 2018.)

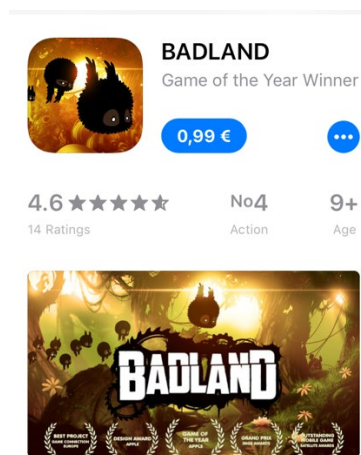


Image 3. Screenshots of the paid model (Apple App Store 2018)

2.2.4 Paymium Model

This paymium model is the new method but the least common between pricing models. The model is the combination of the paid and freemium models, users pay upfront to download the game and also have the option to purchase additional features inside the app (App Store 2018). Wilson (2018) points out that the paymium model is the most effective when the value of the app come from its contents. Like the freemium model, this model also requires continual developments from the team to make the game stay relevant, up-to-date and entertained in order to make additional purchases inside the games. Also, a great marketing and strong reputation are important in this model to achieve more downloads and purchases (Wilson 2018.) For example, the game Heads Up has gained success with this model. It costs 1.09 euros to download the app, then the payers could purchase more card categories during playing the game (Image 4).

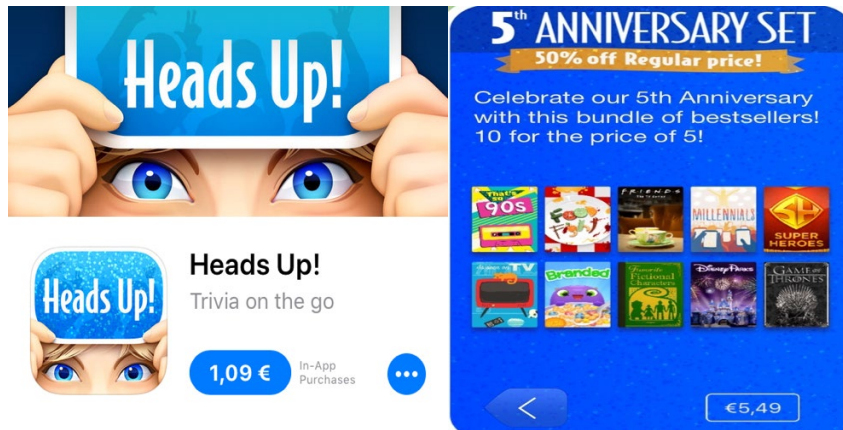


Image 4. Screenshots of the paymium model (Apple App Store 2018)

2.2.5 How to Choose the Best Pricing Model for Mobile Game Apps

Choosing the right pricing model for the game apps could be quite hard and time-consuming. However, picking the pricing model is an important and crucial step to keep the business going on and gain revenue. Using the wrong price could break the deal before players download the app. Potential customers would decide not to buy the games immediately when they see the high price (Wilson 2018.) Wilson (2018) listed seven questions in his article in order to choose a perfect pricing model for the game apps. The companies need to consider these factors before going any further in deciding the pricing model.

1. The target players which the companies want to aim at
2. The competitors' prices and activities for their mobile game apps
3. The location of game apps when they are published, whether it will be in the iOS or Android Store
4. The total cost of building and maintaining for the game apps
5. The purposes of the game apps, whether it is for education or entertainment, etc.
6. The market demand situation for mobile games
7. The business goals of the companies

After choosing the suitable pricing model, the companies could go further with setting how much their game app cost. It is hard and complicated to set up the price, but it is important to make any purchasing happens. There are other three important rules to price the game apps effectively for long term (Game Dev Underground 19 August 2017.):

- Rule 1: It is always better to start at a higher price than a lower price as players usually associate low prices with bad games. Also, players would be a lot happier if the company decide to drop the price lower later.
- Rule 2: Control the comparison. Let the customers compare pricing options between different versions of your own game app instead of comparing to other competitors' games. For example, creating two pricing options: game vice versus game and soundtrack. And the price of the game and soundtrack is rather higher than without soundtracks, so customers could compare these options.

- Rule 3: Always test before officially publishing the price. The test could be created by offering different pricing options in different advertisements, then track the engagement to these prices. The pricing option which has many purchases would be the suitable one for the game apps.

2.3 The Launching Platforms for Mobile Game Applications

Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2012, 288) define place of the Marketing Mix refers to how the product is distributed to customers. In mobile games, online channels are the main selling platforms. The places could be a landing page or development blog.

A landing page is a web site and its purpose in life is to convert visitors to customers (Jonassen 2013.) It is also viewed as a customer support for gamers where gamers can have freedom to ask questions about your games (Zhao 2016.) Nowadays with the development of technology, more than half of the total population use mobile devices for their internet (Statista 2018c). Therefore, the focus on designing a good landing page for a desktop and mobile phone is very important.

On the other hand, a development blog is a place to start the conversations directly with people to get them interested about your games. The blog provides many articles to keep fans informed with the latest news about games, as well as they can leave feedback to game developers (Jonassen 25 September 2012.)

2.3.1 Landing Page or Website

A landing page or a website is a destination page when a user clicks on an ad or other form of link from a referring site (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2012, 446). A good landing page or specially created microsite could bring more effectively as it converts visitors to the download or purchase action. To make the page easy to find compared to other websites on Google, for instance, a URL strategy is recommended. "A URL strategy is a defined approach to how content is labelled through placing it in different directories or folders with distinct web addresses" (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2012, 446). With a good structure URL, your websites are often the first thing come up in Google. This creates a higher chance that customers would see and click to the websites. But getting a good structure URL involves in some techniques to create a memorable URL.

In the article for Search Engine Journal, Boyd (2017) mentioned some approaches to optimize URLs:

- Use your keywords
Apply some suitable keywords and include relevant terms into your URLs. In order to search for the right keywords, which have high volume for particular topics, the Moz Keyword Explorer is perfect for this. The Moz Keyword Explorer analyses the

monthly volume of keywords and suggests other keywords with high volume. For example, keyword “games” has a high monthly volume, around 300 thousand searches, compared to other keywords (Image 5).

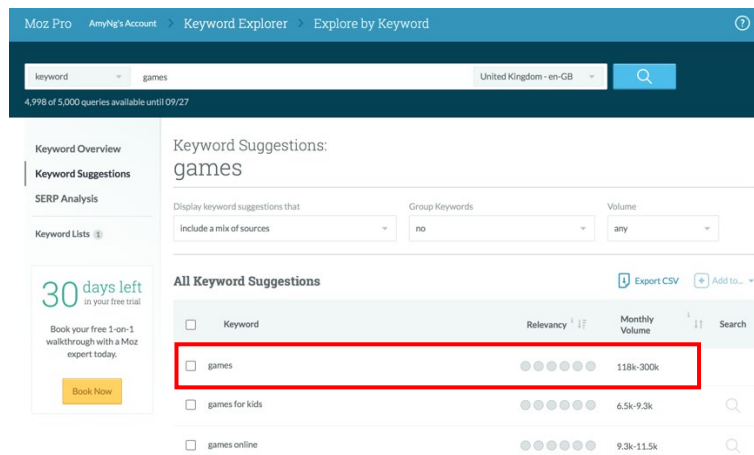


Image 5. The Moz Keyword Explorer example (The Moz Keyword Explorer, 2018)

- Avoid preposition, conjunction or keyword repetition
Make sure that users could understand your page is about when looking at the URLs. This means that you do not need to include preposition or conjunction. Also, repeat unnecessary words will make the URL structure become clumsy.

The next step after creating memorable and structural URLs for companies’ websites is to design the page layout. As stated by Jonassen (15 April 2014), “Website’s landing page are sales team”. The page aims to get visitors to click on the call-to-action (CTA) button with may lead to actions of purchasing or downloading games. This is the reason why designing a proper landing page is very crucial for mobile game companies. Besides that, mobile games do not usually come with a lot of contents, all the visitors need is a good landing page that appeals them to the games. Chaffey and Smith recommended typical aims and corresponding questions to create a landing page with high conversion rate (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2012, 397):

- Aim 1 – Generate response
 - Does the page have a prominent call-to-action or subscription buttons above the fold and repeated in text and image?
 - Patel (n.d) wrote on his blog that it is recommended to keep the call-to-action big and obvious that stands out to visitors’ eyes. A subscription button is the easy way to let fans follow your game’s progress.
- Aim 2 – Engage different audience types
 - Does the page have a prominent headline and subheads showing the visitor is in the right place? Does the page have images or videos to appeal customers?
 - Website visitors would expect to have a quick look or even experience the games, so high resolution images, trailers or videos related to the games provide a high engagement on visitors (Padia 11 August 2016).
- Aim 3 – Communicate key brand messages

- Does the page clearly explain who you are, what you do, where you operate and what makes you different? Is your other online channel compelling? Are you trustable? Do the page have social media icons?
- Jonassen (15 April 2014) said that testimonials help visitors build trust instantly. The companies should encourage users to contribute honestly even with their photos of themselves playing the games if possible.
- Aim 4 – Answer the visitor’s questions
Do you answer customers’ questions? Do your page have frequent ask questions for the new visitors?
- Aim 5 – Showcase range of offers
Do you have recommendations on related or the most popular games? Do you show the full-range of your games through navigation?
- Aim 6 – Attract visitors through search engine optimization (SEO)
How well do you rank in the relevant search terms compared to competitors? Is it easy to find your page on Google, for example?

In April 2018, the statistic shows that 51,2% of internet users who browse webs by mobile devices (Statista 2018c). It is also predicted to increase more in upcoming years. A lot of people tend to search websites from their phones or tablets (Patel n.d.). For these reasons, the companies should design the landing pages which is suitable on mobile devices in order to grow traffic for their websites. It does not mean that the landing page in desktop version cannot apply in mobile landing page. However, the mobile phone’s screen is much smaller and longer loading time than a laptop. People often have a little bit different expectation about user interface on their phone than on their laptop (Patel n.d). Therefore, the mobile game companies should keep in mind below key areas to create an appealed mobile landing page (Patel n.d.):

- Keep it simple
Smith (n.d) wrote on his article that the longer someone spends on the page, the more likely they are about to leave the page. People want to get what they are looking for fast. If they have to wait for so long (more than 20 seconds) until the page fully load, they will quit. So, simplicity on website will make the load time increases.
- Get rid of unnecessary elements on the mobile landing page
Supercell website is a good example for the landing page on both desktop and mobile phone (Image 6, 7).

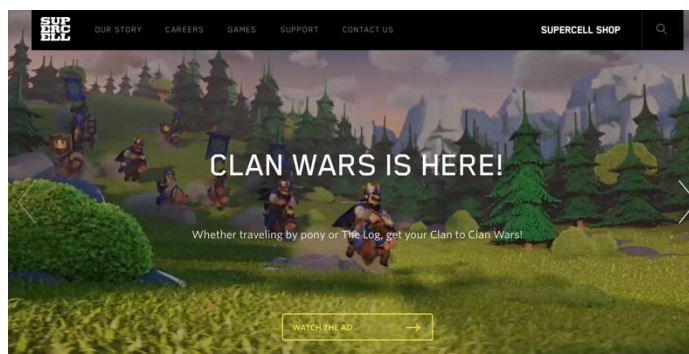


Image 6. The landing page on desktop (Supercell 2018)

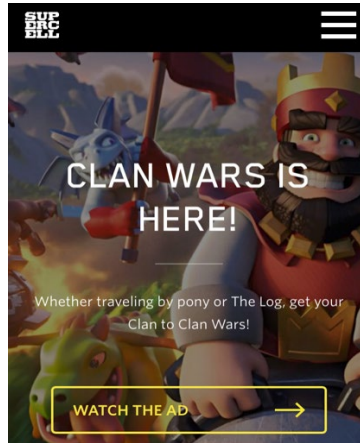


Image 7. The landing page on mobile phone (Supercell 2018)

- Make sure the loading time is fast
As mentioned earlier, the users usually do not have patience to wait for the page to load on their phone. In order to test the speed of landing page, Google's Mobile-Friendly Test is highly recommended. Image 8 illustrates Mobile-Friendly Test of Supercell's landing page.

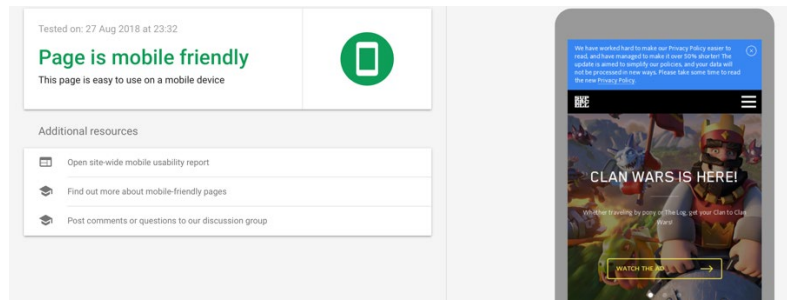


Image 8. Google's Mobile-Friendly Test (Google's Mobile Friendly Test 2018)

2.3.2 Blog

A blog is the channel about company's online diary, journal or news source. Postings are usually in different categories and readers could leave comments or feedback to each blog posting. Blogs provide an easy way of regularly publishing web pages as online journals, diaries, news or upcoming events. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2012, 29, 510.) Jonassen (2013) also stated that a blog is a great place to increase 55% traffic for the companies. The more content companies write in their pages or blogs, etc. which include company's name, game's name, type of game, the more Google will rank higher searches for these companies' channels. That's why a blog is very essential for mobile game companies. Based on the presentation of Jonassen (2013), the best practices for a blog are:

- Post minimum one times per week - Posting constantly to your blog helps to reminds about your games and companies.
- Using images - It's always better to use visual creatures in the blog. If the blog is full of text, no one is going to pay attention to it.
- Put link to home page in each post - This helps the visitors to find your games by clicking to the provided link of your blog.

- Email subscription - After subscribing to your blog, visitors will get a message whenever a new article posts on the blog. This helps to keep them coming back to your blog.
- Social subscription - Similar to email subscription, the blog will automatically send a notification to fans, players if there is any new post.
- Social sharing buttons - This makes it easy for your fans if they want to share your game, they can share it with social icons.
- Promotion at the end of each post - It is always useful to put a little promotion for your games and let people know how they can get them.
- Use simplicity for the blog on mobile phone device – The simple blog would appeal to readers more than a complicated one on their phones.

2.3.3 Distribution Channels for Mobile Games

Determining where the mobile game applications are going to launch are essential for mobile game companies. There are quite a few sites where mobile game companies can launch their games and make them available for any purchases. They are the Google Play, iOS App Store, Facebook or Messenger. However, the two biggest mobile game distribution channels are still the Google Play and iOS App Store with millions of downloads worldwide. The Google Play and iOS App Store have their own guidelines and submission process for publishing an app. Stronk (13 February 2018) highlighted in his presentation that the iOS App Store is known for strict requirements and requires the apps need to be perfect on their store. If the companies do not want their game apps being rejected from the stores, they need to carry research carefully about the time submission, guidelines, features on these both channels. As stated by Walz (2016), “Nothing’s worse than notifying your entire press and sign-up lists that your app is about to launch and then being held up by an app store rejection”.

Based on the article of Marszalek (2016), the best practises to increase the chances of getting features in each Google Play and iOS App Store for mobile game applications are listed below:

For the Google Play

- **Make game apps Android-friendly**
Android Developers (14 December 2015) suggested to follow the Google Play guidelines for each platform like mobile phone, tablet or laptop. For the Android, developers should use Java or Kotlin operating system.
- **Use new technologies**
The Google Play supports more on apps which integrate with the Google Play's new products. It is useful to implement new features developed by the Google inside the game apps.
- **Technical requirements**
The game developers need to make sure that their mobile game apps are meeting all their technical requirements from the Google Play.
- **Make the apps stand out on the Google Play**
Using icons, screenshots, graphics and videos to impress your apps on the Google Play listing (Android Developers 14 December 2015.)
- **Localize your apps**
Translating all of the elements inside apps in different languages in order reaching larger players worldwide (Android Developers 14 December 2015.)

For the iOS App Store

- **High quality**
The companies should submit the app only when the crashes and bugs are fixed. Also, all links inside the app must be functional. (App Store 2018c.)
- **Go native**
Apple wants applications created exclusively for them, not cross-platform. Therefore, focusing on the iOS platform and building a tailor-made native app are useful for being features in the App Store. For the iOS, developers should use Swift mobile operating system.
- **Be Apple friendly**
As the Apple places a high value on clean, refined and user-friendly interfaces (App Store 2018c). So, the game apps should be available for all the Apple products such as iPhone, iPad, Apple watch, etc.
- **Use foreign markets**
Only localizing mobile game app is not a good idea. It is beneficial to make the app available in a bigger number of countries to reach huge amount of audiences.
- **Keep it up to date**
It is considered as an advantage to keep the app update with new features all the time.
- **Detailed description**
Inaccurate description is one of the reasons for app rejections. The app description and screenshots should be clear and accurate to the app's functionality. (App Store 2018c.)
- **Make a pitch**
The Apple gets a thousand of emails which try to advertise mobile apps and get them featured. It is good to prepare a pitch message to make them impress.
- **Buzz**
Promoting mobile app before and after launching would help to increase the chance of getting featured in the App Store. As the Apple prefers the app with more downloads and good rates from fans.

In 2016, the Facebook first launched Facebook Instant Games which works on both Facebook and the Messenger platform. The Instant Games platform is a new way for people to play games across the Facebook platforms. It allows people to find and play games directly in the News Feed or the Messenger conversation that works on both desktop and mobile devices. (Facebook for Developers 2018a.) There were about 1.5 billion games that have been played on the Facebook Messenger in 2017 (Smith 2018). Also, more than 800 million people play at least one Facebook-connected game every month (Facebook IQ 2018.) Therefore, launching games on the Facebook Instant Games brings a huge opportunity for mobile game companies. The benefits on launching games on the Facebook Instant Games are displayed as below (Facebook for Developers 2018a).

1. Instant
Instant Games are quick to load as it powered by HTML5 technology. Also, it could reach many users on iOS or Android devices.
2. Discoverable
People can find the games easily, even though they are in conversations or scrolling through the news feed. For instant, image 9 shows position of Games in the Messenger platform.

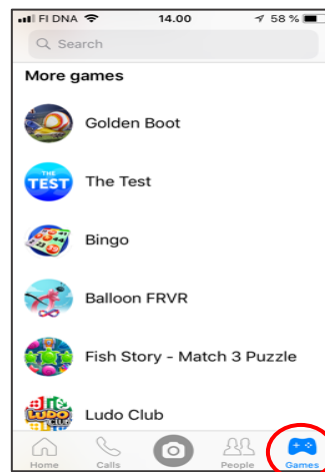


Image 9. The position of Games in the Messenger platform (the Messenger App 2018)

3. Engaging
There is a platform inside the games that players could chats, sharing flows or invites friends easily.

2.4 The Promotion Strategies for Mobile Game Companies

The promotion strategies of the Marketing Mix model refer to how marketing communications are used to inform customers about company's services or products (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2012, 295). Based on Wilmshurst (1993), the boarder view of promotion is defined with a range of meanings. It includes the personal methods of

communications, such as face to face or telephone selling, as well as the impersonal ways such as advertising (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2012, 295).

In this section, the promotion strategies for mobile gaming industry are analysed, specifically social media channels, press release materials, reviews and ratings and community support. Also, search engine optimization and measuring return on investment for each marketing projects are mentioned as important factors to measure marketing success of companies. Finally, social media trends for 2018 and onwards are point out which helps the mobile game companies predicts the trends of users in the future.

2.4.1 Social Media Channels for Mobile Games

This section focuses on the three biggest mobile game social channels: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Reddit. The reasons why having these channels in mobile game marketing are also mentioned.

Facebook

Facebook is the largest social networking site in the world with more than 2,200 million active users in 2018 (Statista 2018d). With such a large number of users, Facebook is an important social network for individuals and businesses. On Facebook page, people can share images, videos with their friends. Users also can follow news and announcements from different companies or groups which are interested to them. It is a must for mobile game companies to have a Facebook page to interact with their fans. For mobile gaming business, the companies could publish game trailers, announcements, job recruitments, or activities happening inside the companies (Egan 2017).

Particularly, the Facebook group - Play Finland which has 5,600 members is a public group included all discussions about Finnish gaming industry. The content could be news, new game accountment, recruitment or game events happening in Helsinki, Finland. Also, the group also welcome any questions related to the mobile gaming field.

Facebook provides the Facebook Analytics tool. This tool allows users to measure, understand and optimize interactions between people with the company's business. This tool provides unique insights, powerful reports like conversion funnels, retention curves and automated insights for users. From this analytic, the companies can build a better experience for their audiences (Facebook for Developers 2018b). For Facebook channel, it is recommended to post one post per day and the good time is from 1.00 – 4.00pm. (Walker-Ford 2018)

Twitter

Twitter is a fast-paced, concise and easy way to connect with the audience worldwide. Nowadays, with over 310 million registered users, Twitter is a place of information as Twitter allows users to post messages, videos, photos or links. The contents could be read, follow or re-tweeted by other users. In Twitter channel, hashtags are a key tool. The tags allow the posts to reach a wider audience or at a specific target audience the companies want to deliver the message (Egan 2017).

Twitter is a useful tool for engaging conversation between companies and users. The main focus is more about customer service where the users could ask questions and get responses directly from companies (Egan 2017). It is recommended by Walker-Ford (2018) that the companies should post 15 tweets daily from 2.00am – 10.00pm.

YouTube

In 2018, YouTube was ranked second in the most social networks worldwide, specifically 1 900 active users (Statista 2018d). YouTube is a video sharing service where users could upload, view, rate, share, report, comment on videos and subscribe to other users. Users could access YouTube platform on mobile phones, tablets, laptops or PCs. In February of 2017, there was more than 400 hours of content which is uploaded on YouTube within a minute. (Wikipedia 2018c). With the positive influence of YouTubers who is famous on YouTube channel, the games could be advertise or play review to new players. From reasons mentioned above, YouTube provides the best opportunity for mobile gaming business to reach millions to people worldwide.

Reddit

“Reddit is a community-determined aggregator of content” (Boyd 2018). It is a social platform where users can post things or leave comments in the topics, they are interested in. The way Reddit works is that users submit links to Reddit about cool photos, articles or funny videos, then the other users can vote up and down for the posts. The posts which have a lot of votes will be shown on the top of main page, vice Versace the least vote links are at the end of the list.

In gaming industry, Reddit platform is very useful to connect with the other gamers. The mobile game companies can create different Reddit pages for each game or take part in

the Reddit gaming society. The Reddit page created for each game is mainly used for discussions about that specific games. The contents can be announcement, questions, comments or problem reports. For example, Clash Royale Reddit page with 675 votes for Clan War Updates from Supercell illustrates the good practise for using Reddit platform.

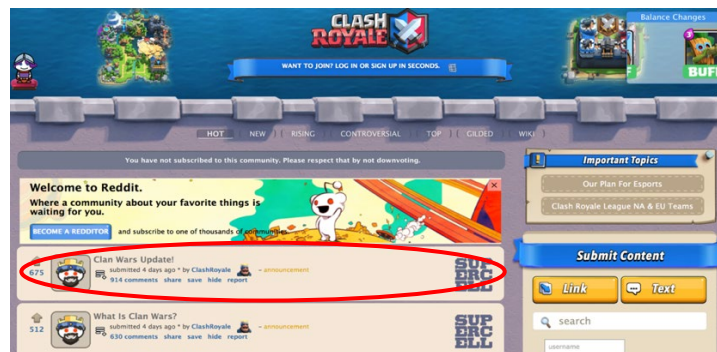


Image 10. Example of the most vote link in Clash Royale Reddit platform (Reddit 2018a)

In addition to own Reddit page, it is very beneficial for companies to follow the general Reddit gaming where all about discussions, news or hit games within gaming society. r/gaming Reddit platform is a good platform to follow and get update information about topics that users discuss the most (Reddit 2018b).

According to Klingman (2018), there are 52 different ideas for social media posts in order to keep the game community engaging. From these ideas, the author grouped them into 6 big groups below:

- Photo: posts about photos could be infographics, behind-the-scene, game photos, photos with fans, meme, or photos of employees.
- Video: it is recommended to post videos related to games, how-to videos, live videos, trailers, or game-play videos.
- Status: it can be celebrating holidays during the year, quotes, or fill-in-the blank.
- Ask: posts about ask for feedback, for advice, for questions from fans or questions to fans are also great ideas to post.
- Share: sharing posts are about statistics, data, useful links, news related to games or tips.
- Contest: polls, photo contents, events or giveaways are also very effective posts.
- Recommend: tools, useful products, advice or helpful sources are highly recommended to implement.
- Offer: post about offering can be free eBook, online tutorials, how-to guide.

2.4.2 Press Release Materials

As Jonassen stated in her Konsoll presentation 2013, "Trailer video is probably your most important promotional material." The potential players would look at trailer videos to have the brief ideas what the game is going to look like, then decide whether to download or buy the games or not. For the press, they are going to look at the trailer videos to

determine whether or not they want to write the article about the game (Jonassen 2013). Therefore, not only a trailer video is a must to have for each new game release, but also the trailer video should be attracting enough to keep the viewers download the games. According to Jonassen (2013), she mentioned some best practices to make the trailers good enough to game players:

- Keep it short from 1-2 minutes
If it is longer than 90 seconds, there is a risk of losing audiences before they get to the end of the video.
- Make the first three to five seconds interested
The audiences usually would be captured by first seconds at the beginning of the videos, so the attention at the beginning is very important to keep them watch to the end.
- Show only the coolest parts
The audiences easily get bored and quit the videos, showing them the coolest parts will make them finish the whole videos.
- Use music and sound effects
Game Dev Underground (2017) mentioned in his video that music helps to contribute to the engagement of the videos. The companies must wise enough to choose the cool music that matches the mood of the games.
- Show the next step at the end
It is good to end the trailer with the next step such as tell people where to buy and where to download the game.

The official trailer of Clash of Clans game from Supercell is a good practise. The trailer is 60 seconds long with catchy music and sound effects. The trailer highlights all of the main characters and game features in a minute long. At the end of the trailer, the last screen shows the audiences exactly where they can download the game.

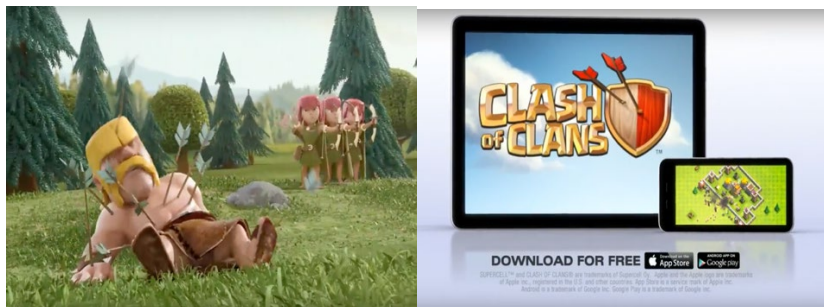


Image 11. Example of trailer video – Clash of Clans (YouTube Clash of Clans 2016)

Beside with trailer videos, another important material is screenshots where the viewers and the press would look at and decide to play the game or not. Screenshots could be used by the press to promote the game on their articles. Screenshots should be considered as “a piece of art” (Jonassen 2013). Jonassen (2013) recommended screenshots should be in high resolution, excellent composition and engaging scene to make them like a piece of art to attract the audiences.

Finally, press releases play an important role in promotion materials for the mobile game companies. The reason is that the press basically could consider the press release as the article where they are going to cut and paste from to make their own article (Jonassen 2013). Based on Jonassen (2013), the three best practises for a good press release are:

- The first paragraph of the press release is the most important information. It should grab the readers' attention and summarize the essential information of the promoted game.
- Using quotes in the press release is a good idea to make readers feel connected to the personal stories.
- At the end of the press, the company and contact information should be mentioned.
- Providing trailer videos with screenshots to writers and editors is a good practise. The press may use these provided materials in their articles.

2.4.3 Reviews and Ratings for a Mobile Game Apps

For mobile game apps, reviews and ratings are when customers provide feedback on their experience with an app and help others decide which apps they want to try. The ratings allow users to rate between 1 and 5 according to their experience. An app review is a text message about customers' feedback. Based on the report of Apptentive (2016), 59% of people usually or always check ratings before downloading an app (Sefferman 20 October 2016.) Reviews and ratings are important for marketing as they influence how the game apps rank in search results and can affect whether other users want to download the apps. From the game developers' perspective, customers' reviews and ratings could help them to improve the game or app better. (App Store 2018d.) Therefore, the mobile game companies need to develop the suitable strategy to gain positive reviews and high ratings for their game apps. Aprofita (2018) mentioned some ways to improve app reviews and ratings:

1. Always respond to users' reviews
 - Listening and interacting with players' feedback is a crucial part of make the games well-known, even though with positive or negative feedback. As pointed by Gutierrez in the video (App Store 2018e), "Since we started responding to the review, we've seen generally fewer negative reviews".
 - Also, it is not recommended to copy and paste the responds. This will make the players feel that the companies will not care about their feedback. (App Store 2018e).
2. Ask the reviews or ratings at the right time
It is more likely that a player would leave a positive feedback or a high rate after winning a round in the game. The companies should choose the right time to leave review notifications to players.
3. Ask feedback inside the game apps
Providing a notification inside the game apps could prevent the negative feedback go outside the app. In other words, the developers are able to improve the games before negative reviews appears in the App Store or Google Play where other users to could look at.

Additionally, corporation with app reviewer sites is also contributing to marketing the game apps to market. App review sites would help potential users determine whether the games would fit their purposes or not. For example, the top Android app review sites are Android Tapp, App Brain, AndroLib, AndroidApps, etc. The top iOS app review sites are AppVee, The Daily app show, Apptism, etc. (Viswanathan 2018.)

2.4.4 Community Support

Community support for mobile gaming communities is a method for companies to engage with their players. The players could share their experiences, thoughts, discuss and ask questions related to games to customer support team. Through community support, mobile game companies could find out problems inside the games such as graphics, sounds or bugs and fix these problems as soon as possible to make sure the games are not interrupted. Successful mobile game companies usually gather player feedback via communities to refine rules and gameplay mechanics, increase the creation of new levels and characters, and create the suitable marketing and advertising for their players. (Vivas 2017).

There are different community support tools for mobile game companies. The game companies usually choose the tools based on their budgets and human resource. According to the article of Vivas (2017), the popular community tools are Discord and KTplay.

- Discord is a text chat used in gaming communities. The tool is free, easy to use and can be used in desktop and mobile phone application.
- KTplay is a communication tool focuses on in-app where users can share tips, screenshots and videos about the game.

2.4.5 The Science of Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Search Engine Optimization, also known as SEO, is the process of improving the position and visibility of a website on search engines such as Google or Bing (Kabani 2013, 29). Or another definition by Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2012, 669) is that SEO is a structured approach used to increase the position of a company or its service in search engine natural or organic listings for selected keywords or phrases. The main benefits of SEO are significant traffic driver, highly targeted, potentially low-cost visitors, dynamic (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2012, 494.) SEO is not easy to manage, however, there is a whole scientific strategies of driving traffic to your blog or the landing page. According Jonassen (25 September 2012), three essential things when writing your blogs or websites as SEO only help if the posts are written for the intended audience and free of spelling and grammatical errors.

Beside with “Content is King”, choosing the right key words is as important as writing a great content. Jonassen (25 September 2012) recommended the Google AdWords Key Planner to look for keywords that have a high amount of monthly search and not too competitive. One primary keyword and two to three secondary related keywords should be chosen. Image 12 presents an example of keyword “mobile game” on the Google AdWords Key Planner.

Keyword (by relevance)	Avg. monthly searches	Competition	Ad impression share	Top of page bid (low range)	Top of page bid (high range)	Account Status
<input type="checkbox"/> mobile play	100 - 1K	Medium	--	€0.77	€1.98	
<input type="checkbox"/> mobilepay	10K - 100K	Low	--	€0.35	€0.89	
<input type="checkbox"/> mobile games	10 - 100	--	--	--	--	
<input type="checkbox"/> most downloaded m...	10 - 100	Low	--	--	--	

Image 12. Example of the Google AdWords Key Planner (Google AdWords Key Planner on 1st April 2018)

After choosing the right keywords, the placement of keywords is important in SEO.

Jonassen (25 September 2012) mentioned the most important places to put them in her blog:

- Blog title
The first three words in the blog’s title are the most important to Web crawlers. The titles should be less than 70 characters long.
- Title tag
A title tag is an HTML element that specifies the title of a web page. The title tag of a web page meant to be a concise description of the page’s content. The title tag is an essential factor for search engine page results (Moz 2018.) Image 13 shows an example of title tags.

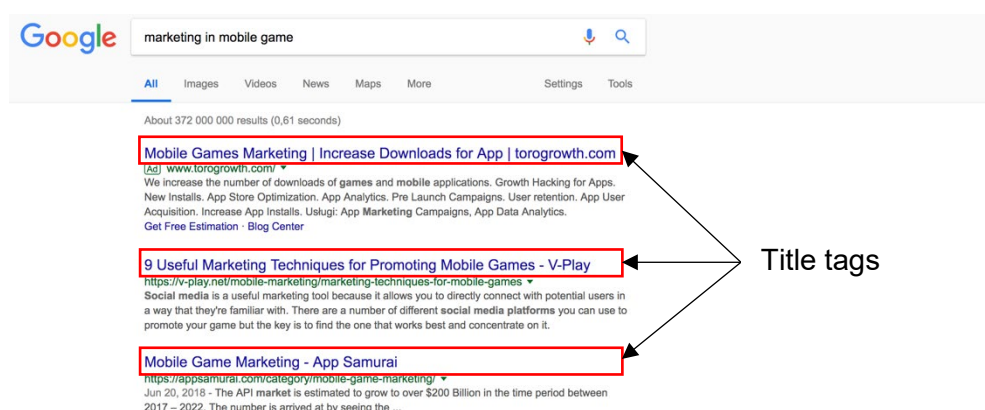


Image 13. Title tags example (Google search on 28th August 2018)

- URL
The title of posts should be included in the URL.
- Meta description
Meta description is a short summary of the post, 160 characters or less and contain the primary keyword.

- H tags (headlines and sub-headlines)
The primary keywords should be used at least once in H tags.
- First Paragraph
The primary keywords should be included in the first paragraph. The closer to beginning, the better.
- Post's body
The post should be at least 500 words. The primary keyword needs to be appeared at least three times and the secondary keywords should appear at least once.
- Images
The secondary keywords should use for image file names. Each image should have a descriptive alt tag.
- Links
The post should use anchor text as an opportunity to get keywords, e.g. "Watch more about [keyword]" instead of "watch video", "read more".

Jonassen (25 September 2012) also recommended to set up author Rank. author Rank is what Google uses to connect the content with the writer's Google+ profile. The tool helps Google determine the Web authority and how to place in Page Rank.

2.4.6 Measuring Return on Investment (ROI) for Marketing Campaigns

Return on Investment, shortly call ROI, provides the gain of a certain campaigns after the launching stage. It can be seen as the mirror where reflect the results of efforts on websites, blogs and social media. The Mobile ROI is very important as the company needs to know which projects or campaigns work, and which does not work. From the calculation an estimated ROI, they may improve their ideas for the next implementation (Sensoy 2017).

On the other hand, it would be a useful information for mobile game companies to know the number of visitors for each site and the visitors' location, as well as how often these visitors visit their sites. From this report, the sites with less visitors would need some improvements. Or the favourite sites should be continuing with the current effective campaigns. Based on the Google AdWords Help (2018), the ROI formula is:

$$\text{ROI} = (\text{Revenue} - \text{Cost of goods sold}) / \text{Cost of goods sold}.$$

Nowadays, there are plenty of free online tools for measuring ROI for websites, social media. One of the free and effective measure ROI for both the Android and iOS operations is the Google Analytics.

Source / Medium	Sessions	Cost	Revenue	ROI
	4,086 % of Total: 22.58% (17,791)	\$895.00 % of Total: 47.21% (\$1,896.40)	\$5,801.60 % of Total: 19.16% (\$30,287.10)	3,451.84% Site Avg: 6,811.07% (+47.79%)
1. google+plus / social	1,164 (28.49%)	\$150.00 (16.76%)	\$2,100.50 (36.21%)	1,400.30%
2. facebook / social	982 (24.03%)	\$255.00 (28.49%)	\$1,501.10 (25.87%)	5,886.67%
3. twitter / social	876 (21.44%)	\$250.00 (27.93%)	\$1,101.10 (18.98%)	4,404.40%
4. reddit / social	480 (11.75%)	\$140.00 (15.64%)	\$110.00 (1.89%)	-21.42%
5. linkedin / social	243 (5.95%)	\$100.00 (11.17%)	\$988.90 (17.05%)	9,889.00%

Image 14. Example of ROI from the Google Analytics (Morte 2018)

2.4.7 Social Media Trends for Mobile Games in 2018 onwards

Videos and Live Videos

According to Cisco report published in June 2017, 82% of the world's Internet traffic will be attributed by videos in 2021, up from 73% in 2016. The report also highlights that Live Internet video will grow 15 times from 2016 to 2021. Videos are in high demand as people want to watch video on social media channels more than other content types like images or GIFs. For that reason, producing videos and live videos on the YouTube, Facebook, Instagram or Twitch channel is very essential for all type of business, gaming industry would not be an exception.

To take Clash Royale: YouTube All-Star 5x5 Clan War on the YouTube live video in 2018 as an example, the live stream was filmed by Supercell company. The video was about the gaming competition between two best teams in Clash Royale game. There was approximately 44, 148 people watching the game with a lot of comments and cool emojis (Image 15).

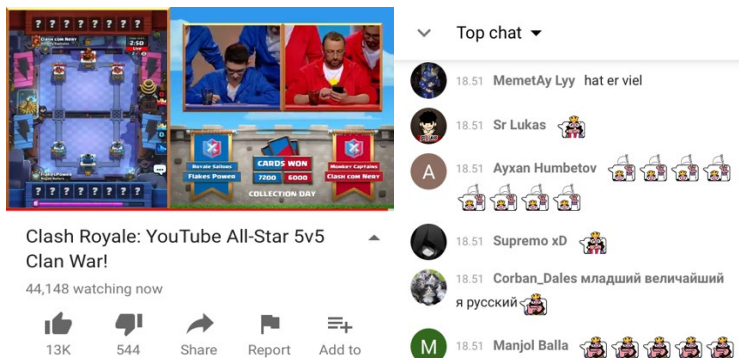


Image 15. Example of YouTube live video – Clash Royale: YouTube All-Star 5x5 Clan War (YouTube Clash Royale live 2018)

With the YouTube live videos, it is an effective strategy to promote the game itself. If the viewers who are already the game fan, they can connect with the other players around the

world. For the views who haven't played the game yet, it is the good opportunities to review how the game looks like and how to play it. This would increase the chance of download the game or play the game back after a long time from these viewers.

YouTube Influencers

A YouTube Influencer, also known as a YouTuber is video content creators by people with more than a thousand subscribers on their own YouTube channels. These Influencers have the power to affect purchase decisions of others because of his/her authority, knowledge, position or relationship with his/her audience (Marketing Hub 2018). In September 2018, YouTube launched a new channel for gaming videos and streams named YouTube Gaming with more than 200 million people come and watch gaming videos and live videos every single day. This new channel helps to make the gaming experience better for players on YouTube. (YouTube Creator Blog 2018.)

YouTube game influencers are important for gaming industry as there are 788,370 YouTube gaming channels in 2017 and they are expected to growth higher in the future. About 691,095 channels (88%) of all gaming channels on YouTube are active channels, only 12% are inactive channels. Active channels are defined as having a routine for publishing videos, for example weekly. The percentage shows that more and more active YouTube game influencers are on YouTube (Matchmade 2017).

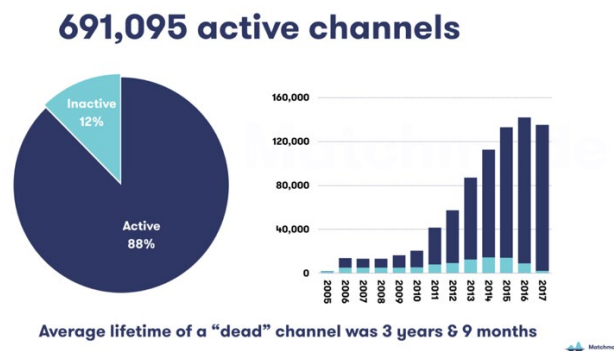


Image 16. YouTube active and inactive gaming channels in 2017 (Matchmade 2017)

Additionally, Florian – CEO of Bravo Company said that the number of downloads to their game Forces of Freedom increased significantly after one of the YouTubers posted the video which he is playing the game (Stronk 13 February 2018). This proves that marketing through YouTube influencers would be a wise strategy.

The Active YouTubers are always looking for new games to entertain their audiences. Their fans watch videos from these YouTubers as the interesting games which display in

a creative way. These fans could be the core target customers of game companies who they are trying to reach. If the companies approach the right YouTuber to advertise their games, they would get better return rates. However, finding the right YouTube influencer to market the games can be difficult and challenging. Game Development Marketer – Tavrox (2017) shared three important steps to proceed to the right YouTuber.

- Step 1: Game analysis. This step is about finding how to present your games to gaming YouTubers in one headline. Also, a list of games that have similar game genres to your games should be made in this step.
- Step 2: Influencers research. To avoid scammers, it is important for the companies to look at lots of YouTube videos, profiles and other social media channels of YouTubers. From the list of similar games in Step 1, search for them on YouTube. Then, write down all channel profiles URL with 10,000 to 600,000 subscribers. Based on this name list, the companies could use analytic tools to carry research about those influencers. One of the useful tools to track user statistics for YouTube channels is Social Blade where providing numbers of uploads, subscribers, subscriber rank, views for the last 30 days, etc. For example, TobyGames YouTube channel analytics (Picture X).
- Step 3: Mailing. After completing the analyse on YouTube influencers, it is time to contact these people. The companies could send email to each YouTuber. In the email, it is good to explain the reason why you want to corporate with them and the description of the games.

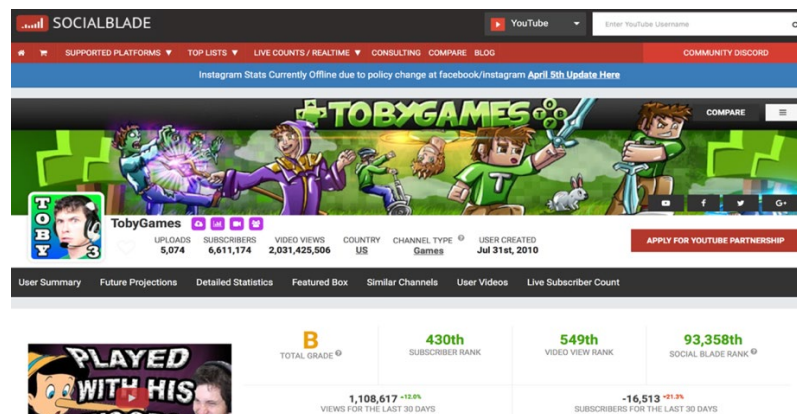


Image 17. Example of the YouTube analytic – Toby Games channel (Social Blade 2018)

2.5 The Players of Mobile Games

In mobile gaming industry, players place as an important factor. The game is design for the players and the players are the one who play the games. In this section, target audience are divided based on five different player segments, age group and gender. Beside with target players, the scientific reasons to explain what make people love playing games and the reason how they decide to download the game apps are being mentioned in this section.

2.5.1 Target Market of Mobile Games

Generally, mobile game players are considered as target customers for mobile game marketing campaign. In order to run the effective marketing campaigns, mobile game companies need to build deep and meaningful insights about their current and potential customers. Understanding who the players are, how they behave, the similarities and differences of players in terms of their attitudes, needs, and behaviours, as well as how players find out about games, they want to play are valuable information for mobile game companies.

According to Bevan articles about research study in 2017 from the Google Play, over 20,000 game players to gain deeper insight them, there are five distinct segments of players based on their social behaviours and passion for games.

Connected Enthusiasts: This group of players have high social and low passion.

Playful Explorers: Low social and high passion are the key insight of Playful Explorers.

Influenced Players: The level of social and passion is on the average.

Tentative Followers: Players with high social with low passion belongs to this group.

Passive Players: The gaming passion and social behaviour are both low.



Image 18. The 5 segments of players based on Social Behaviour and Gaming Passion (Bevans 2017)

The research cited a deeper understanding of demographic for each segment: percentage of population, age, gender, social drivers, passion drivers and average years of playing. The Connected Enthusiasts are younger players. In contrast, players with higher age are belongs group of Passive Players. There are the significant number (over 50%) of male players in Connected Enthusiasts, Playful Explores and Influenced Players group.

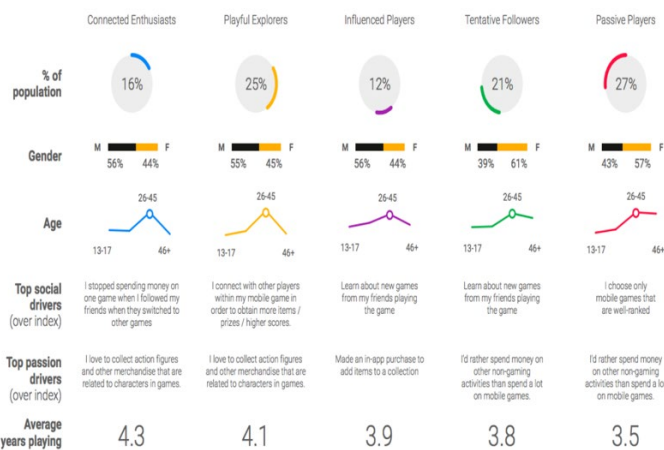


Image 19. Key demographic and drivers for each segment (Bevans 2017)

Also, a range of channels and influencers to discover new games from each segment are mentioned from the research's result. Connected Enthusiast segment uses the most channels to discover games to play. They find out about the games either from friends, seeing others or in-app advertising. However, Playful Explorers and Passive Players are less socially dependent. They depend more on in-app advertising and top charts in app stores. The Influenced Players and Tentative Followers are more dependent on social, either their friends are playing the game or seeing someone else play a game.

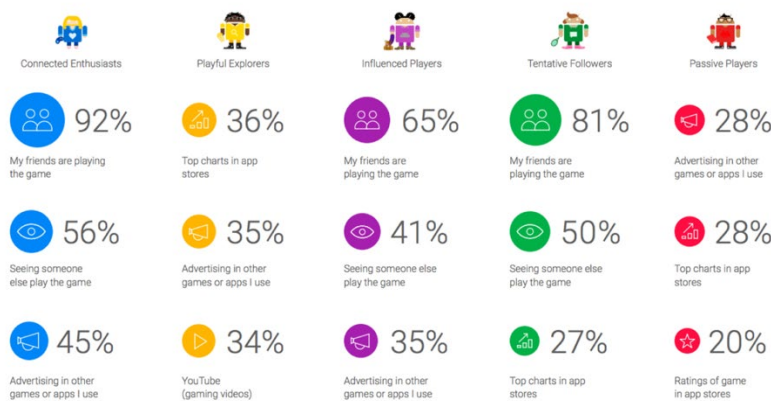


Image 20. Key game discovery influences for each segment (Bevans 2017)

According to Cetin (2017), the group which spends the most time (29%) and money (49%) for mobile games is from 25 to 34 years old. Following this group are the 18-24 and 32-45 age group which also have the high percentage of time and money spent on the mobile games.

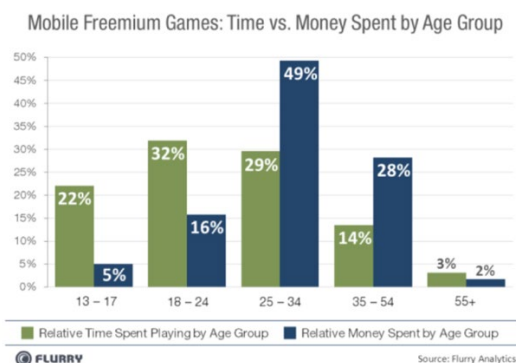


Image 21. Time and Money spent by age group on mobile game (Cetin 2017)

In addition, people who definitely love playing mobile games and always looking for the new games to experience and entertained are people who are making mobile games. This target group is also attractive, less cost and easy-to-find. As these people are already belong to the gaming industry, so reaching them would not be a challenge. Additionally, receiving feedback from these players would be valuable source for the game development team to improve the game better and better. Players who are making mobile games could be mobile game companies, start-up, independent developers or students who are studying mobile games. In Finland, there are approximately 260 game development companies (Neo Games Finland 2018). The useful channels to reach the mobile gaming community are game meetings, game seminars or game events which is hold in Finland or abroad.

According to the survey on US mobile gamers of Jun Group, there are a slightly higher percentage of female mobile game players (37%) than male players (35%) (eMarketer 2017). The content crafter Jacquene Zenn agreed that the biggest mobile game players are women in 2018 and beyond. About 60% of female players said that felt relaxing while playing mobile games as they are quick and easy to play, even on the go. (Zenn 2018.)

2.5.2 The Psychology as Marketing Consideration for Mobile Game Companies

In order to make players hook into the games, the games definitely need to be good and special. However, the good mobile game development process is not sufficient, there would be the whole scientific method behind the game to make the players get addicted to the games. There is a common challenge for mobile game companies is that the players usually do not come back to play the game after a specific period of time. And when they not continue playing the game, the chance of asking them to purchase items inside the game would be reduces significantly. Therefore, scientific methods are recommended to keep the players play the games in a longer time.

In this section, the Author will not go deeper into the design graphic and development process of the games. However, scientific factors related to marketing psychology which is placed inside the games would be mentioned clearly. Particularly:

Make Players Wait

“The longer players have to wait, the more craving builds” (Online Psychology Degrees n.d). If the games design that the players have to wait to continue playing before their life refills or they have to wait to open gifts, this strategy would make players more addicted to the games.

Also, as mentioned in who are the player section, the most popular players who are willing to pay and spend time belong to 25-34 years old. The characteristic of this target group are people who have stable jobs, income and busy. They would be happy to pay in order to make the waiting time reduces. Therefore, their game levels would go up faster than other competitors. To illustrate, Clash Royale game applied this concept by making their players have to wait when opening chests (Image 22).

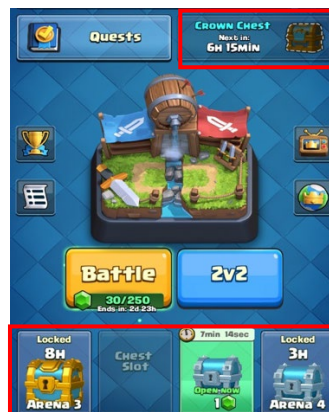


Image 22. Clash Royale waiting time to open chests (Clash Royale app, 2018)

Design for Convenience

It is recommended to design the games which let the players could play with one hand. While playing the games, players prefer to play simple games which allow them to give their attention or focus on other things (Cetin 2017). For example, they could carry a bag, purse or a drink while playing games. One of the good samples of this is Clash Royal game of Supercell. The players could definitely play with one hand while on the go.

Be Social

Social channel would be the best solution for marketing mobile games (Cetin 2017). As stated by StatCounter (2018), about 63 % of online users who use Facebook social channel. Integrating the games with social media platform such as Facebook would help the mobile game companies reach new players. On the other words, if the games allow the players to share their achieved levels or results or send requests to their friends when they run out of lives or gems, the higher chance to get more people are involved in the game. The successful game Candy Crush Sage with almost 3,3 thousand people rate 4.4 out of 5 is applying social sharing in to their game.

Also, letting players compete with the other players around the world instead of playing with a machine would make them more excited in the games. When entering new rounds or levels, if the games allow the players to confront to new competitors, then new challenges will appear which can make them more hooked into the game. As proof, Supercell had created a successful game - Clash Royale which allows players to connect with other players worldwide.

Frequently Update

As reported by studies, the state of happiness will reduce over time since downloading the new app. However, people would still feel happy after a long time using the app if there is an app update by developer (YouTube Bloxham 2014). By adding new levels, characters or challenges in a new update version of application, this can help to retain the users' happiness and make them feel entertaining by coming back to the games. Like the new update version of Clash Royale (Supercell) in last April 2018, the development team created the whole new game mode called Clan Wars which allows one team battle with other teams around the world.

Psychology of Colour

In the study called Impact of Colour in marketing, it is found that 90% of judgement about products are based on mainly colours (Fadilligulu 2016). Each colour has its own meaning to the users. In games, the colours should be carefully chosen in order to express the message which the game companies want to deliver to players. Also, this could make players more interested in the games as the nice and attractive colourful display. Mentioned by Widrich (2017), some emotions and colours' ratios correspond to people's emotions in different colour of call-to-action "buy" are explained as follows.

- Yellow presents for optimistic and youthful. The yellow colour is often used to grab attention of window shoppers.
- Red is a colour of energy and it increases heart rate. And usually uses in urgency situation.
- Blue creates the sensation of trust and security. The blue colour is usually seen with banks and service business.
- Green connects with wealth. Green is the easiest colour for the eyes to process, usually used in stories to make readers feel relax.
- Orange associates with aggressive. It often used to create a call to action such as Subscribe, buy or sell.
- Pink reminds people about romantics and feminine. The pick colour usually uses to market products to women or young girls.
- Black presents for power. It is usually connected with luxury products.
- Purple is used to soothe and calm. Purple is often seen in beauty or anti-aging products.

3 Research Methods

This is a practise-based thesis that can be considered as a marketing guideline for mobile game companies of different sizes. Data throughout the study was collected mainly from qualitative research methods. The reason for choosing this method was because qualitative research provides detailed information and can progress knowledge in a variety of areas. It can give insight into people's individual experiences; it can help evaluate service provision; and it can enable the exploration of little-known behaviours, attitudes and values (Grbich 2013, 3).

The qualitative research was collected by face-to-face interviews and by going to the Pocket Gamers Connect conference and International Game Developers Association meetings. The interview technique was semi-structured and unstructured interviews. The advantage of semi-structured technique is that it allows a certain degree of flexibility and allows for the pursuit of unexpected lines of enquiry during the interview. The findings from such an interview could be compared from different marketing strategies and interviewees' point of views. In addition, unstructured interviews provide interviewees with open questions which they are actively encouraged to talk from their own perspectives and experiences (Grix 2010, 128).

The interviews were carried out once for each company from August to October in Helsinki. The companies were asked different questions in order to highlight the effectiveness of different marketing strategies. The interviews lasted approximately half an hour which included six questions and a survey, presented as board game (see Appendix 1). During the interview, the data was recorded as audio. The interviews happened in the interviewees' offices. The participants are Supercell, Full XP and Quick Save.

Before collecting data from interviews, the author made the list of mobile game companies which showed their names, hit games and awards (if applicable). Then, the author approached companies mainly by sending them an email (appendix 2) found from their main websites. As the Author's limited knowledge in mobile game industry, she asked people from Facebook group – Women in Games Finland whom she should talk to next and asked them to connect her with the suggested people. Eventually, the author found out this snowball technique was very useful. It helped her to get in touch with some very knowledgeable people in mobile game marketing for the data collecting process.

The Pocket Gamers Connect conference happened in September, Helsinki. The reasons why people play mobile games and the important of YouTube influencer marketing were

gained through the conference. Also, the author participated in monthly International Game Developers Association (IGDA) gatherings in Helsinki to listen to people exchange their ideas and challenges from technical areas to business operation in the mobile gaming industry. The IGDA gatherings were held in Helsinki on the 13th of every month. The gatherings were a chance for her to meet people from gaming industry. The author discussed and shared her research with others to ask their opinions and ideas regarding marketing their games. This was a great resource to support this thesis. In the February gathering, the speaker was Florian Stronk from the Bravo mobile game company, based in London. It was interesting to listen to the lessons learnt, and Florian's thoughts during making their first game named Forces of Freedom which gained millions of active players. He highlighted the differences between distribution channels for mobile games, particularly the iOS App Store and Google Play. Florian also mentioned the importance of YouTube influencers in making their game Forces of Freedom well-known.

As the research has a high focus on digital marketing, most of the sources come from the internet with currently updated information. The resources include marketing blogs, websites, articles, books and recorded interviews.

Figure 3 below shows two phases of research and how the data was collected.

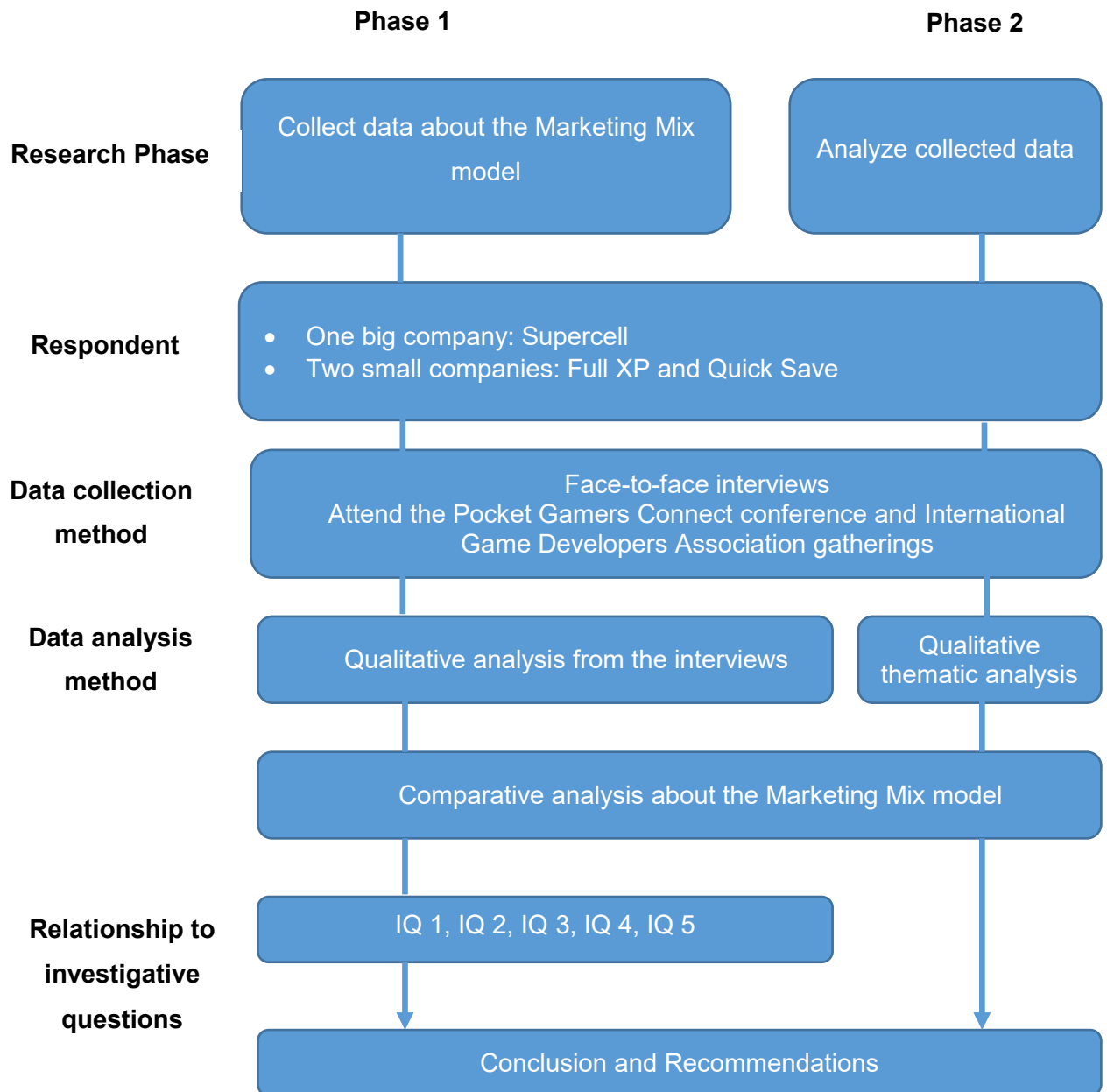


Figure 3. Research methods

4 A Study of the Case Mobile Game Companies through the Marketing Mix Model

From August to October 2018, the three interviews with Supercell, Full XP and Quick Save were carried out. The questions were divided into two separate parts. The first part was open questions related to marketing. The answers from these questions were used to understand overall marketing situations from the three interview companies, find out successful marketing methods as well as marketing challenges that the companies had experienced. The marketing plan which the companies plan or will apply in the near future was discussed also. The second part was the multiple questions survey designed as a board game. This part helped to collect detail data about the Marketing Mix model - product, place, promotion, price and player psychology for the company's games. For each Marketing Mix section, a list of different marketing solutions was shown, and the interviewees gave a tick for the solutions they are applying for their games. (Appendix 2.)

4.1 The Marketing Mix Strategies Overview of the Case Companies

After collecting data from the interview, the results present that three research companies are all aware the importance of marketing in mobile games. The companies are putting a lot of effort to plan proper marketing strategies and conduct research before launching their games to the market. These companies agreed that in the gaming industry, marketing strategy is considered as crucial as designing the games. As stated by Arponen (Arponen 27 August 2018), "As a lot of mobile game companies in Finland... they are very product focus to make a good product and start to think about marketing quite late. Marketing in games needs creativity and a lot of time to implement as well".

For the company with a bigger size like Supercell, the Marketing Mix model varies between online and offline marketing. The company is applying social media channels, press releases, television promotions and e-sport events to marketing their games. On the other hand, the companies with the smaller budgets are mainly using the online promotion strategies. At Full XP and Quick Save, social media and press release are the popular marketing methods to market their games.

The challenges which the case companies face are slightly different depending on the company sizes, aims and targets. For a big company like Supercell, it is a challenge to compete with other domestic and international companies. Keeping in step with external marketing agencies in order to deliver the same messages to players is also hard task. On the other hand, for smaller companies like Full XP and Quick Save, the main marketing challenge is budget. With these companies, not having enough budget to run different

marketing plans or using different tools makes it harder to achieve the company's marketing goals. Finding the potential players and having them like the games for a long time is the problem that Quick Save is facing. Arponen said "...in order to keep them interacting with the games for a specific period of time is quite a challenge." (Arponen 27 August 2018.)

4.2 Analysing the Marketing Mix Model of the Case Companies

This section will focus on analysing the Marketing Mix strategy including product, place, promotion and pricing models from the research companies: Supercell, Full XP and Quick Save. How important player psychology is as a marketing consideration in designing games is explained clearly as well. At the end, the future marketing plan and advice to other mobile game companies are mentioned in this chapter.

4.2.1 Potential Target Market of the Case Companies

The data collection showed that it depends on the characteristics of the mobile games to decide the target segments. At Full XP, for example, the target market of soccer games is mainly for male audiences and not female. In some cases, the target market could change based on the reaction of the players. For example, in "Best and Bester" from Quick Save, the main target players were young males and females. However, after publishing the game, Best and Bester had more female players than male. (Appendices 4 and 5).

According to Arponen (27 August 2018), the effective marketing method to find out the potential target segment is carrying out research and analysing data collected carefully from the company. From the analysed data, the suitable target segments are determined. Then, specific marketing campaigns are applied to those target segments. Marketing Manager of Full XP – Penttinen also agreed that research about players is a good way to determine the game's target players. She mentioned that at Full XP, they tried to carry out research as much as they can to understand what the players like and do not like. (Penttinen 20 September 2018.)

4.2.2 Suitable Online Channels for Marketing Mobile Games

Table 2 below represents data about online channels where the three case companies – Supercell, Full XP and Quick Save market their mobile games. The author used the X symbol to illustrate the channels that the case companies are using.

Table 2. The comparison of online channels used by the case companies for marketing mobile games.

	Supercell	Full XP	Quick Save
Blog	X	N/A	N/A
Website	X	X	X
Google App Store	X	N/A	N/A
iOS App Store	X	X	N/A
Others	Reddit channel	N/A	Messenger platform

From the table above, it is clear to see that website and iOS App Store are the suitable places to market mobile games. All of applicants chose their website as a place to market their games. iOS App Store and other channels are used by two companies. Other channels such as Reddit and the Messenger platform are determined depending on the characteristics and genre of the games. Particularly, promoting on the Messenger platform would be a more effective place for Best and Bester, which is published mainly on Facebook Messenger application. Regarding promoting games on a blog, some companies would prefer to market their game through other channels like Reddit. Reddit has become an important place for promoting mobile games. As stated by Dower (14 October 2018), "We stopped our blog a long time ago, we decided to kill the blog for Clash of Clans in order to focus more on Reddit. As many of our fans are on Reddit".

The games could be considered successful if they are "featured" Google or iOS App Store. Getting featured means the games are displayed and recommended as Game of the Day in the main page of App Store. This helps the game to reach more users. Dower and Arponen pointed out that it is very helpful for the games to be featured on Google App Store or iOS App Store. However, they both said that it is not as effective as it was. Arponen mentioned that "...iOS used to be featured the same game globally in the past, but they are now featuring different games for each country or region, so getting featured is not that effective any more". (Dower 14 October 2018 & Arponen 27 August 2018.)

4.2.3 The Pricing Models for Mobile Games of the Case Companies

In term of pricing strategies, freemium and free are the most popular models used by the case companies. Supercell and Full XP are operating freemium model for their games with in-app purchasing. For Quick Save, they are taking advantage of free model with in-

app advertising to run their games. Paid and paymium models should be used when the game is well-known or has reputation on the market. (Penttinen 20 September 2018.)

4.2.4 Promotion Strategies for the Case Mobile Game Companies

The comparison of social media channels and how often the company is active on these channels from Supercell, Full XP and Quick Save is presented in the table 3 below.

Table 3. Social media channels comparison between the case companies

	Supercell	Full XP	Quick Save
Facebook	Daily	Daily	Weekly
YouTube	Weekly	N/A	Monthly
Live videos	Monthly	Monthly	N/A
YouTube influencers	Weekly	Monthly	N/A
Twitter	Daily	Daily	Weekly
Reddit	Daily	N/A	N/A
Others	Discord channel 2-3 times/week	Instagram Daily	N/A

From the above table, it is clear to see that Supercell is the most active at social media marketing. Specifically, Facebook, Twitter and Reddit are posted daily, while YouTube, YouTube influencers and Discord are used weekly or 2-3 times a week. Out of three case companies, Supercell is the only company that is applying YouTube influencer marketing. “Influencers marketing is probably one of the most effective if you get the right influencers to market your games.” (Dower 14 October 2018).

Similar to Supercell, Full XP is also managing their social media effectively. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are posted daily to their fans. However, YouTube and Reddit are not used yet. In contrast, Quick Save is less active on social channels with only three social platforms – Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Arponen said that they would like to apply more social platforms and be more active on social media in the future (Arponen 27 August 2018). From this, Full XP and Quick Save can receive some key learnings from the more active Supercell company.

The data shown that it is a great idea to promote mobile games through social media channels. Having a Facebook, Twitter or YouTube channel is a must for every business these days. It is low cost but can take a lot of time to reach to the company's goals. It is highly recommended by Penttinen (20 September 2018.) that the social media plan needs to start as soon as possible. The ideal frequency for Facebook, Twitter and Reddit pages is to post daily, and weekly for YouTube channel.

In term of YouTube influencers, it is current trend and considered as one of the most effective marketing methods to spread mobile games to new players. Marketing and Community Manager – Rouvinen in her presentation at the Pocket Gamers Connect conference noted that however, not all games can be YouTube-able. In order to apply a YouTube marketing campaign effectively, the game should be multiplayer, fun and have many levels that people could play for years. Not many would be interested in watching a single person play a small repetitive game, for example, as it is not engaging enough to keep people watching. Also, YouTube influencers like and want to promote games that have a lot of fun to keep their fans engaged with their videos. It is important to keep in mind that Youtubers prefer to play games that have social impact. Therefore, the companies need to consider carefully the characteristics and features of their games before deciding whether to promote by YouTube influencers or not. (Rouvinen 12 September 2018.)

Regrading press releases, it may be a good marketing method to advertise the games. Press releases are very helpful to build the company's brand and it also helps to update the players and is a low-cost marketing method. At all companies, trailers, screenshots and press release are sent to the press when the games have a new update coming out. CEO of Quick Save - Arponen stated that press releases are a good marketing method to build the company branding, recruitment new people or looking for investments (Arponen 27 August 2018.)

In term of community support, Quick Save should consider establishing customer support for their games as soon as possible. Community support is one of the essential marketing methods to communicate with the players, receive feedback and report on technical problems. (Penttinen 20 September 2018.) Supercell and Full XP are successfully operating customer support for their players.

4.2.5 The Important of Player Psychology as a Marketing Consideration when Designing Mobile Games

All mobile game case companies agreed that it is very important to consider player psychology factors. *“If it could be from one to ten, I would give ten to this factor”* (Penttinen 20 September 2018). Player psychology for mobile games is about spending time to understand players’ perspectives and figure out the reasons why they should love the game. At Supercell, the games are played by their employees, then receiving feedback about good and not-good elements from the games. Also, it is highly recommended to apply social impact inside the games where players could team up with others. (Dower 14 October 2018.) For some Finnish mobile game companies, it is easily to forget the player psychology as they more focus on products than players. On the other hand, the game is not considered a success without any players. (Arponen 27 August 2018.)

At the Pocket Gamers Connect conference in Helsinki 2018, Rose Thomas from the King company mentioned in her presentation eleven different reasons why players play mobile games. On average, King references five separate motivations to analyse and understand their players. The motivations for players to play mobile games are mentioned in the chart below. (Thomas 12 September 2018.)



Figure 4. The reasons why players play games (Thomas 12 September 2018)

5 Conclusions

In this last chapter, a brief summary of key findings of the research are provided. The answers to the research questions and investigative questions which were mentioned in the section 1.2 are presented. The author also reveals the research evaluations and limitations during carrying out the research, together with recommendations to the case companies. Lastly, the author reflects on her learnings from this research.

5.1 Conclusion and Findings

Throughout the research, the first investigative question 1: Who are the potential gamers for Finnish mobile game companies to target? is being answered.

In Finnish mobile game companies, the decision on which potential players to target depends on the characteristics of the mobile games. For instant, soccer games would be suitable for male and not female players. It is essential to keep in mind that the target market could change after publishing based on the reaction of the players, because the market of mobile games is large and unpredictable. In this case, the marketing methods should be flexible to adapt with the new target segments. In order to find out the right players, carrying out research, analysing data in detail and careful monitoring should be implemented.

Regarding to the investigative question 2: What are the suitable online channels for marketing Finnish mobile game? the table 2 mentioned in section 4.2.2 above provided the key findings.

Publishing on either the iOS App Store or the Google Play App Store and the company's own website is an effective way to advertise the games. Especially, if the games get featured by these app stores, there is a higher chance to get more mobile game users play the games. The games can be also beneficial to promote on online channels such as Reddit or the Messenger platform instead of a blog. A blog is not that appropriate anymore to promote the games, because many mobile game players are starting to use Reddit channel rather than a blog. However, the final decision on choosing suitable places to launch the games also depends on the characteristics and genres of the games.

Regarding to the investigative question 3 - the pricing models, free and freemium are the popular pricing strategies for mobile games. With the freemium model, the companies should have in-app purchasing inside the games. Displaying advertising to players during

playing the games is implemented in free mobile games. For the games that have reputation, it is recommended to use either paid or paymium model.

To find out the effective promotion strategies, we view the investigative question 4: What promotion strategies do Finnish mobile game companies implement?

Regarding to social media, it is considered as one of most effective ways to promote mobile games. Social media channels like Facebook, Twitter or YouTube are great tools to communicate and receive feedback from the fans and players. It is even suitable for companies or start-ups with low budgets. However, marketing on social media channels can be time-consuming. The ideal posting time on social media is daily. The companies should start to market their games on social media soon enough to get the community involved.

Another effective marketing method is YouTube influencers. However, the mobile game companies should be careful if choosing this method, because the mobile games should have social impact with multiplayer, be fun and have many levels which could be played for years. The company may not receive good YouTube influencers results without these features.

Sending releases to the press is also a good method to build the company's brand, recruit new employees, look for investments or to inform fans and the market of new updates. It does not require a high budget. Trailers and screenshots should be included in the press release material.

Last but not least, having a community support team for the mobile games is a smart marketing strategy. Through community support, the game developers could receive feedback or reports from the players related to technical problems. It is also a great channel to keep up with the game community.

The answers for investigative question 5: How important is player psychology as marketing consideration when designing mobile games? are found in the interviews with case companies.

When designing the games for mobile, it is essential to apply the player psychology factors. Particularly, the game should be social and designed for multiple players, so many players can play at the same time. It is also about spending time to understand players' feelings and reasons why they like to play the games. The eleven popular

reasons why people like to play mobile games are for entertainment, excitement, competition, escapism, a challenge, a sense of achievement, a daily routine, a buzz, to pass the time or to relax. In conclusion, understanding player psychology while designing the mobile games can be the key to make the game a success.

The following recommendations were also suggested by Supercell, Full XP and Quick Save company during the interviews.

Firstly, it is recommended to make a cool and good game that people love and are proud to play. Keeping this in mind will definitely help the games success even without any marketing strategies needed. This is because when people are proud to play a game, they will naturally recommend it or show it to their friends and family. Secondly, a social aspect is an important factor in order to build up a lot of mobile players. Thirdly, Finnish mobile game companies should not wait for enough budget to implement marketing plan. As mobile gaming industry is hard to predict, and things could change very quick, starting marketing as soon as possible even with low budget is recommended. Another advisement is carrying out research about players. Understanding players and their own perspectives will be a key factor to make the game successful.

5.2 Research Evaluations and Restrictions

During carrying out the research, the author followed closely the research questions which are mentioned in section 1.2 above. The research started from May and finished in November.

While carrying out this research, one of the challenges comes from the new and unique characteristics of mobile gaming industry. There are not any series of books or guidelines which mentions specifically about marketing mobile games. Therefore, it was a challenge to choose and decide the trustable and relevant sources. Another challenge is that the literature book recommended to be used throughout the research was published five years ago. Some information provided might not be appropriate at this time. The biggest challenge in this research was making contact with many different mobile game companies to have an interview, a lot of companies did not respond to emails. The research did not get the expected number of interviewees planned at the beginning, ideally five companies. This was despite the author contacting ten companies, each company twice by emails, on social networks, and asking people at game conferences and events. In the end the number of interviews reached three.

5.3 Recommendations

Firstly, in the business context, especially for mobile games, it is a “must” to analyse every detail, monitor carefully, manage and evaluate the Marketing Mix model.

Secondly, it is worth it for mobile game companies to understand that it might take some time when operating the marketing methods. The actual results could be time-consuming to collect and analyse them. When coming to marketing context, the companies need to be patient waiting for the results. It is not compulsory to use any specific online or offline marketing tools and channels, but the companies should keep carrying out research and adapting to the new changing environment and high competition in the mobile gaming industry.

Finally, due to the nonstop changing nature of the mobile gaming industry, it is necessary to keep in mind that the knowledge used in this research might not be accurate in the future. Most of the literature cited in this research is recent. For research companies, other start-ups or mobile game companies, it is recommended to search for the most up-to-date information related to new marketing tools, as well as practical steps and tips.

5.4 Reflection on Learnings

Throughout carrying out this research, the author had a chance to gain more marketing knowledge, especially the Marketing Mix model as applied to mobile games. Obviously, she has learned many new definitions and information regarding to marketing in mobile games, or her previous knowledge has deepened. Due to the rapid changing in mobile gaming industry, it was required the author had good internet research skills. Literature books are not sometimes up to date which made them not suitable or accurate anymore. As the result, the Author’s ability to evaluate the trustable sources and information has improved over time.

Also, the author has gained an insight into the Marketing Mix model within big and small companies. During the face-to-face discussion with three different case companies, it was very valuable for her to understand and appreciate the interviewees’ thoughts and sharing related to mobile game marketing.

In order to make sure the research can be completed within the tight schedule. The other important learning was time management skills.

The author also learned to keep the learning attitude nonstop, especially in mobile game marketing. Because with this innovative technology related industry, new things and trends can be invented any time, so having an open learning attitude is definitely important.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview questions

Part 1: Open questions

1. I saw the very interesting How has the response been to this?
What other types of marketing methods do you use to promote your mobile games?
2. Which of these have you found to be the most effective, and why do you think that is?
3. What are some marketing challenges that you experienced when launching a new game?
4. Who is your target market?
5. Is there any new marketing method that your company hasn't tried that you may be interested in for the future?

Part 2: An informal survey designed as a board game



PLACE Tick (✓)

1. Blog	
2. Website	
3. Google App Store	
4. iOS App Store	
5. Others	

Two ✓ for the most important

SOCIAL MEDIA Tick (✓) How often?

	a. Daily (or more)
	b. 2-3 times/week
	c. Weekly
	d. Monthly

1. Facebook		
2. YouTube		
3. Live videos		
4. YT Influencers		
5. Twitter		
6. Reddit		
7. Others		

Two ✓ for the most effective channel

PR Tick (✓)

1. Trailer	
2. Screenshots	
3. Press release	
4. Others	

COMMUNITY Tick (✓)

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PRICE Tick (✓)

1. Free	
2. Freemium	
3. Paid	
4. Paymium	

How important is Player Psychology when designing your games?

6. Is there any information would you like to share about your mobile game marketing strategies that may helpful to other companies?

Appendix 2. Email to companies

Subject: Haaga Helia Student Mobile Game Research Interview

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is My Nguyen and I am a marketing student in my final year at Haaga Helia University of Applied Sciences. I'm conducting a research study on marketing strategies in mobile games. I would like to invite you or another relevant person, for a short interview (probably about 30 mins) about your companies' games marketing situation. Any visit or meeting would be at your convenience.

I chose the mobile gaming industry as a whole as I was inspired from the book *The Playing Finn: Stories On Successful Game Development and Music Export* by Toni-Matti Karjalainen, Miikka J. Lehtonen. Through emotional stories as well as my own interest in the gaming industry, I intend to deliver useful and practical marketing guidelines to support mobile game companies of different sizes. Consequently, I hope to reduce stress in this creative industry, and encourage new entrepreneurs to enter the game sector and make the games they love.

Also, I'd like to highlight the player's psychology which I haven't seen mentioned in any marketing books. In my opinion, player psychology is very important and be part of marketing in mobile gaming industry.

I understand some of your company's information may be sensitive and of course I wish to respect that. The draft version of my thesis would be sent to you before it's published for your feedback prior to any publication or submission. After completing the research, a final version would be sent to you as a reference source.

I hope that your participation into this research would in turn become valuable information for the Finnish game industry.

Thank you, I am looking forward to your response.

Kind regards,

My Nguyen

Appendix 3. Interview with Jonathan Dower – Artist and Game Lead of Supercell

Part 1: Open questions

1. I saw the very interesting You Tube trailers of Clash Royale game. How has the response been to this? What other types of marketing methods do you use to promote your mobile games?

The reactions of our You Tube trailers for Clash Royale are very good. Besides this, we also use social media channels, You Tube influencers, TV campaigns and E-sport events to market our games. We used to be featured on the app stores, however, in my opinion, getting featured in the app store is not that useful any more. We also used press releases when we have the new update coming out. In addition to, community support is applying for our games. For blog, we stopped our blog long time ago, we decided to kill the blog for Clash of Clan in order to focus more on Reddit. As many of our fans are on Reddit.

2. Which of these have you found to be the most effective, and why do you think that is?

Influencers marketing is probably one of the most effective methods if you get the right influencers to market your games. We also have TV campaign – the traditional marketing methods for Clash Royale game which are also very effective. The best marketing is social playground between players, for example your kids or friends need someone play games with. This marketing method would be more effective compared to other methods.

3. What are some marketing challenges that you experienced when launching a new game?

I would say the competitiveness with other companies in the same industry is pretty high. And also keeping in step with the external marketing agencies to make sure we all deliver the same messages to our players at the suitable time. It is not good if everyone shares different visions about the games.

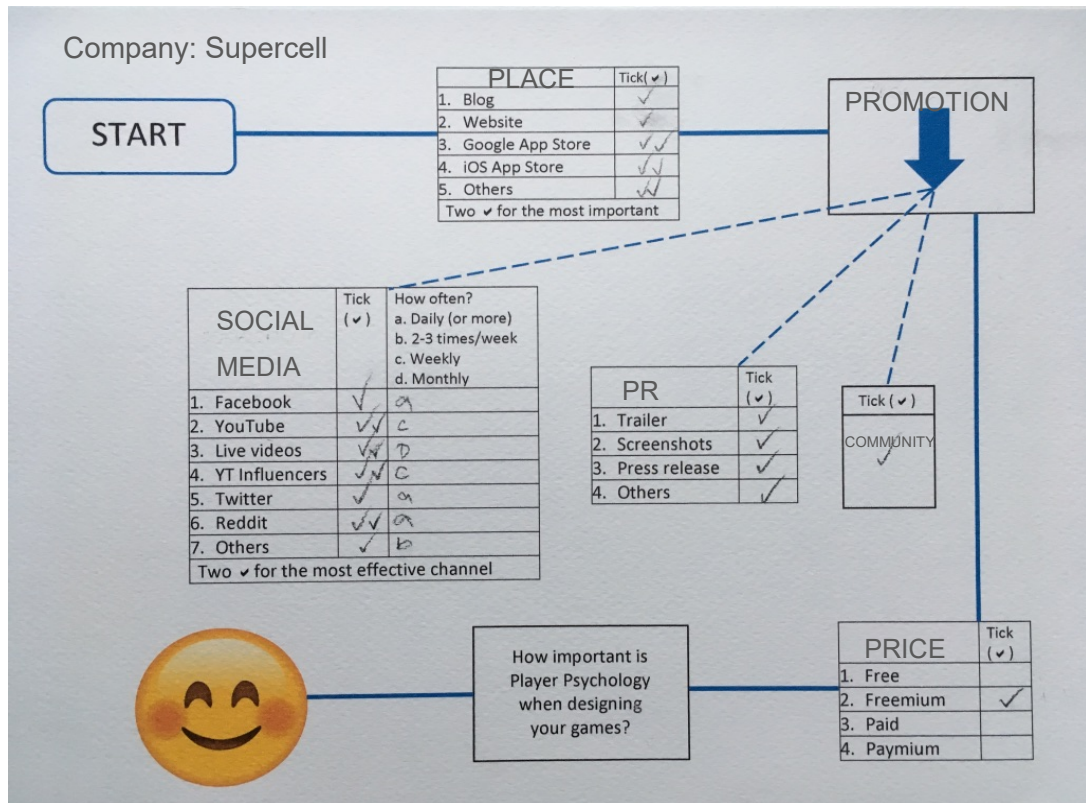
4. Who is your target market?

It depends on the games. We have different target markets for each game. For example, Hay Day's fans are mainly family, Clash of Clans are male players.

5. Is there any new marketing method that your company hasn't tried that you may be interested in for the future?

At Supercell, we are applying different methods from online to offline in the market. In order to keep a thousand of our fans, it is hard to create new marketing methods without using the methods which are already existing. I think our future plan is that making our exist marketing plans better and better every day

Part 2: An informal survey designed as a board game



How important is player psychology when designing games?

For us, psychology of players is not about analysing people. The most important thing about player psychology would be people who fall in love with your games. We are thinking a lot about the player's feelings and what they want in our games. We usually tested a lot with the people inside our company and found out what they like and don't like about the games. Then, we went very deep into the things people do not like. We also used the user testing which we sent the games to specific users and recorded their thoughts while playing the games. In the conclusion, player psychology is super important, and it is caring about players more than analysing them.

6. Is there any information would you like to share about your mobile game marketing strategies that may helpful to other companies?

I would recommend to other companies that the most important thing is to make the cool game that people are proud to play and love playing it. And also, it is important to create the game with social aspect where players can play with their friends or family.

Appendix 4. Interview with Paula Penttinen – Marketing Manager of Full XP

Part 1: Open questions

1. I saw the very interesting Facebook posts of Cat 'S' Trophy game. How has the response been to this? What other types of marketing methods do you use to promote your mobile games?

Beside with Facebook posts, we also use press releases. Social media channels are the effective marketing methods especially with low-budget company like us. We marketed our games through game developer community or had a game boost at the game conference.

2. Which of these have you found to be the most effective, and why do you think that is?

It depends on the games but for mobile games I would say social media is the most effective one. However, you need to take actions soon enough to get followers. It will not affect if you start to market your game quite late.

3. What are some marketing challenges that you experienced when launching a new game?

As our company has a low budget, so the challenge I would say is that I myself have to carry everything such as sending press releases or preparing materials for social media at the same time. These could be a challenge sometime.

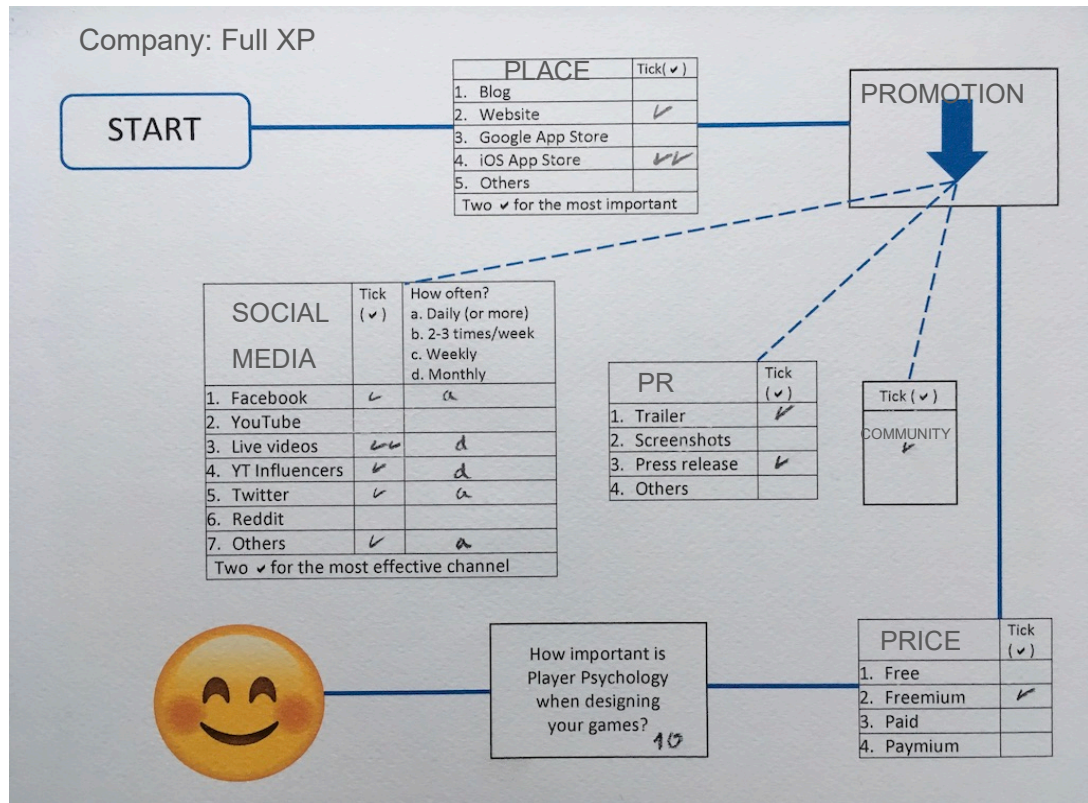
4. Who is your target market?

Our first game was about soccer, so the target market was mainly for young male audiences. And now we are developing 3 new games for female. So, we decided the target market based on the characteristic of the games.

5. Is there any new marketing method that your company hasn't tried that you may be interested in for the future?

We haven't applied any influencers method to our marketing methods, but this method is time consuming, and it requires a high budget. Also, we would like to apply a new tool to manage community called Discord that helps us to be more direct with our players.

Part 2: An informal survey designed as a board game



How important is player psychology when designing games?

I think it's super important. If it could be from one to ten, I would give ten to this factor. At our company, we are considering the social and choose carefully the colours to put inside the games.

6. Is there any information would you like to share about your mobile game marketing strategies that may helpful to other companies?

Don't wait for the marketing budget to be ready. Just start to market your games as soon as you can. As the market can change, the price can change in a very short time. There is always something unexpected, so just start early as you can. And also try to carry research about players as much as possible in order to understand your players. And the final is that doing a good game. Also, focusing on a good game definitely would make people like your games.

Appendix 5. Interview with Elina Arponen– CEO and Founder of Quick Save

Part 1: Open questions

1. I saw your game on the news of Artic Startup. How has the response been to this?
What other types of marketing methods do you use to promote your mobile games?

Yes, from that news our game is being found more than before. At our company, we are applying marketing methods such as press releases and our own social media channels. Press releases overall are very useful for company's branding building, recruitment new people or looking for investments. Press releases are not very effective in getting new players. In social media, people click on the links more often than in press releases. With social media, we have Facebook page for the company and Twitter for our own games. Social media is a social media tool to deliver messages to our community and get their feedback about the games. We don't promote our games on the iOS App Store and Google Play, getting featured on these channels is very useful marketing method. However, be aware that it's not that effective any more. The iOS used to be featured the same game globally in the past, but they are now featuring different games for each country or region, so getting featured is not that effective any more.

2. Which of these have you found to be the most effective, and why do you think that is?

We are doing games for the Facebook Messenger or instant games. It takes you directly to the game without downloading the app. The games will be loaded instantly from the Messenger platform. In our case, direct promoting to the Facebook would help to reach players. The Facebook advertising would be the most effective marketing methods for us. However, I could be time-consuming, so be aware of this.

3. What are some marketing challenges that you experienced when launching a new game?

In my opinion, one of the marketing challenges is to find users who actually like our games. As I mentioned before, with instant games, players don't need to download the games, so in order to keep them interactive with the games for a specific period of time is quite a challenging.

4. Who is your target market?

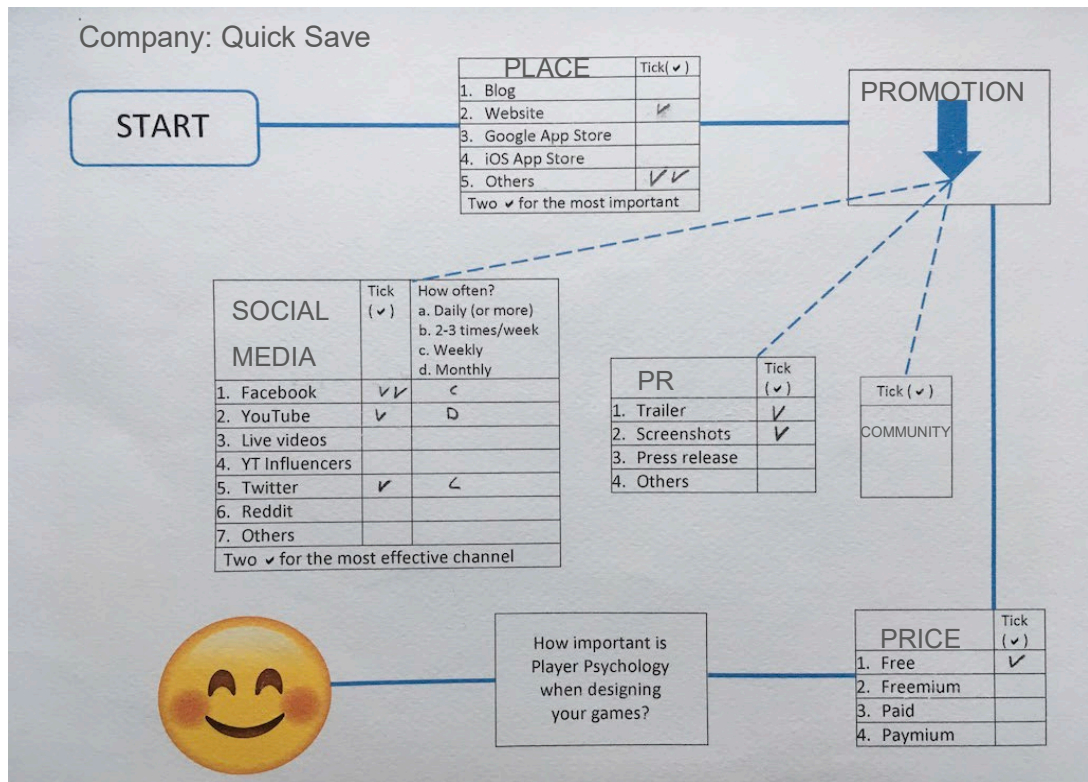
Our first game Best and Bester has more young female players than male. We aim to target both genders, but it is surprising that the fans are more female. We carried research

and analysed our data which segments are the suitable one to target and then had specific marketing campaigns to target those.

5. Is there any new marketing method that your company hasn't tried that you may be interested in for the future?

We plan to use playable ads where you can try to play directly on the advertisements. If you like the game, you can go to play it officially. With playable app, we provide the users the longer time to experience the game compared to image advertisements. Besides that, this way also gives us the right players. As the players who registered to the games after experiencing playable app are the one who really like the games, not just accidentally register to the game. Also, our company wants to be use more social platforms and be more active on these channels.

Part 2: An informal survey designed as a board game



How important is player psychology when designing games?

Yes, it is very important to consider player psychology when designing the game. We spent a lot of time to consider user acquisition to understand how players like the games and which reasons to make them coming back. We are trying to think from players' perspectives and understand their feelings. Our company carried the tests to observe and

record players' reaction when they play the games. The game cannot gain success without thinking about players.

6. Is there any information would you like to share about your mobile game marketing strategies that may helpful to other companies?

I have to say marketing is quite challenging for mobile game companies. As a lot of mobile game companies in Finland, they have a small team like programmers, graphic artists, designers. They are very product focus to make a good product and start to think about marketing quite late. Marketing in games needs creativity and a lot of time to implement as well. I would advise other companies or start-ups spend more time to carry research about marketplaces, players as well as the best marketing channels for the games. There is no luck that will bring people to download your games.

Appendix 6. Marketing Mix guidelines for Finnish mobile game companies

MARKETING MIX GUIDELINES FOR FINNISH MOBILE GAME COMPANIES

- My Nguyen -

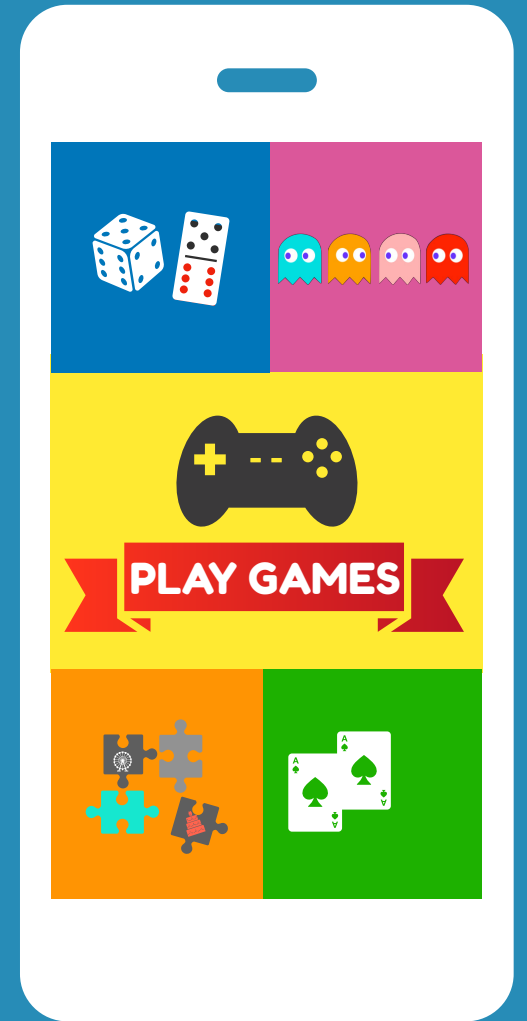
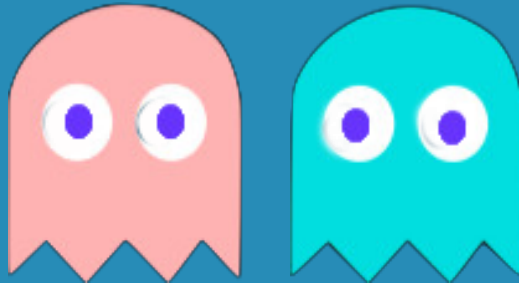


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Start

Player 1: 
Level 1



MOBILE GAME GENRES

MOBILE GAME GENRES

- A mobile game genre is a category of games characterised by a particular set of challenges, regardless of setting or game-world content.
- Mobile games can be classified into the following 18 game categories.



Action



Casino



Role-playing



Adventure



Family



Simulation



AR games



Kids



Sports



Arcade



Music



Strategy



Board



Puzzle



Trivia



Card

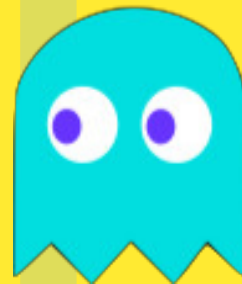


Racing



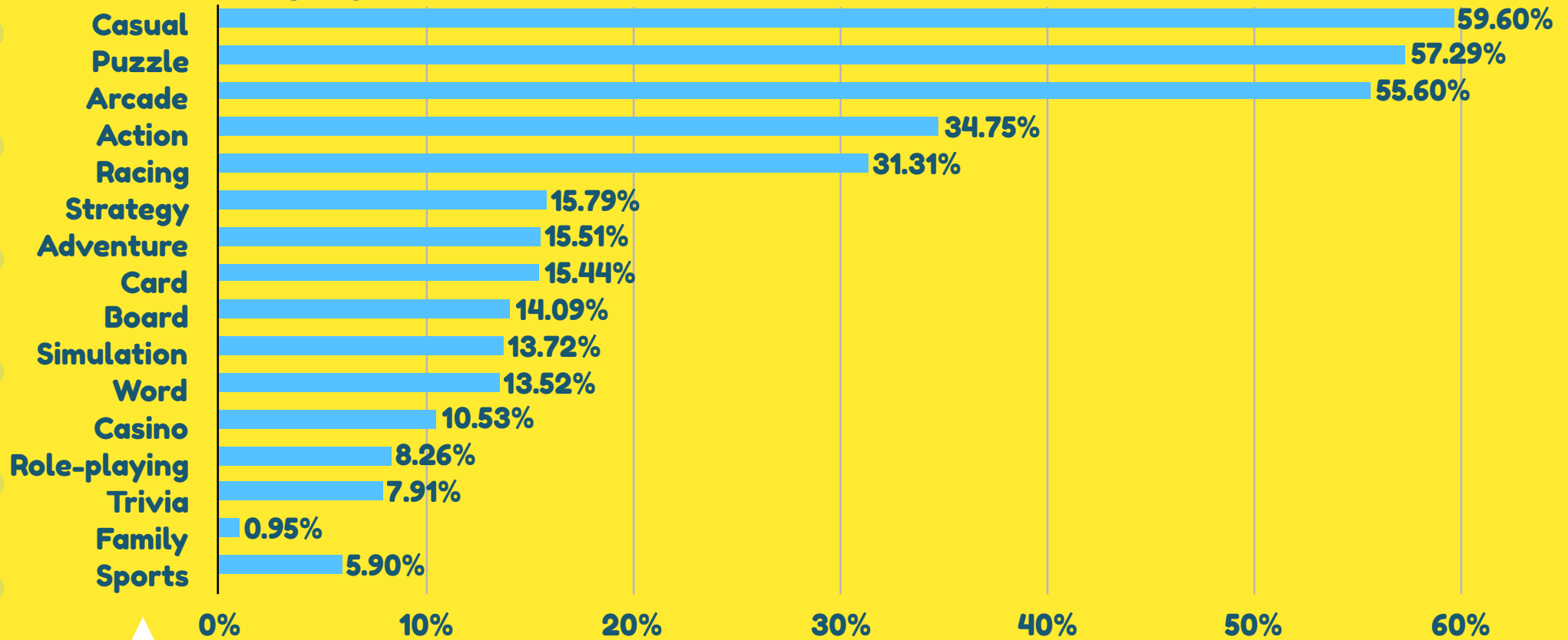
Word

* There is no clear boundary between game genres, some games could fit in multiple categories.





MOBILE GAME GENRES



- **Puzzle and arcade games are the most popular game genres.**
- **Sport and family games have a small percentage of game apps.**
- **It is expected that the global revenue of action and adventure games will increase by 46% in 2023.**



\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$

PRICING MODELS

\$
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PRICING MODELS



\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$

Free

- Free to download
- In-app advertisements

**Free-
mium**

- Free to download
- In-app purchases

Paid

- Pay to download
- No addition charges

**Pay-
mium**

- Pay to download
- In-app purchases

Free and freemium are the most popular pricing models.

PRICING MODELS

The decision on pricing models are based on the factors below:



PRICING MODELS



\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$

How to set the price ?

\$

\$

RULE 1.

It is always better to start at higher a price than a lower one, because players usually associate low prices with bad games. They also would be happier if/when the company later drops the price.

RULE 2.

Control the comparison. Let the customers compare different pricing options of your own game apps instead of comparing to other competitors' games.

RULE 3.

Always test before officially publishing the price. The test can be created by offering different pricing options in different advertisements, then track the engagement of these prices.

\$


\$

\$

\$

\$



Player 2: 
Level 1



LAUNCH PLATFORMS



LAUNCH PLATFORMS - WEBSITE



Three keys
to build a
good mobile
website

1

Keep it simple.

A simpler website will decrease load time. Users will quit the page if they have to wait longer than 20 secs.

2

Get rid of unnecessary elements.

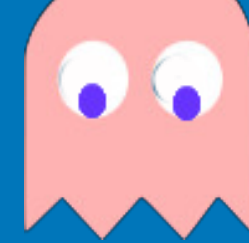
3

Make sure the loading time is fast.

In order to test the speed of the landing page, Google's Mobile-Friendly Test is highly recommended.

51.2% of internet users browse websites on mobile devices.

LAUNCH PLATFORMS - WEBSITE



How to build a good website?

SUBSCRIBE



Use call-to-action, such as a subscribe button



Use catchy headlines, subheaders, images and videos



Include social media icons



Include frequently asked questions (FAQ)



Display the full-range of your games



Use search engine optimisation

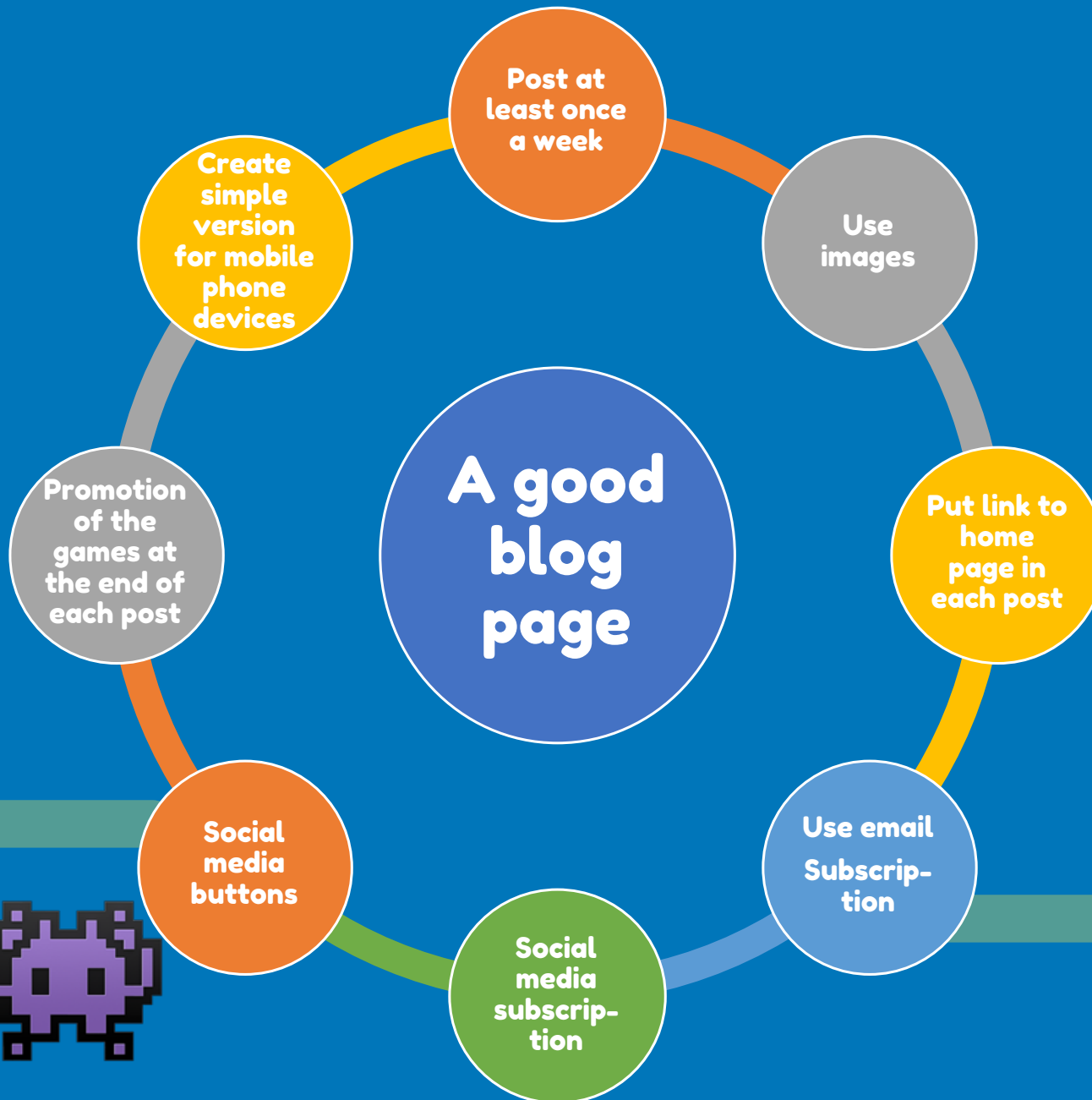


Use keywords



Avoid preposition, conjunction or keyword repetition in URLs

LAUNCH PLATFORMS - BLOG



LAUNCH PLATFORMS - GOOGLE PLAY & iOS

How to get featured on App Stores?

For Google Play

Make game apps
Android-friendly

Use new technology

Meet technical
requirements

Using icons, screenshots,
graphics and videos

Translate into different
languages

For iOS

Make game apps
Apple-friendly

Design game apps only
exclusively for iOS

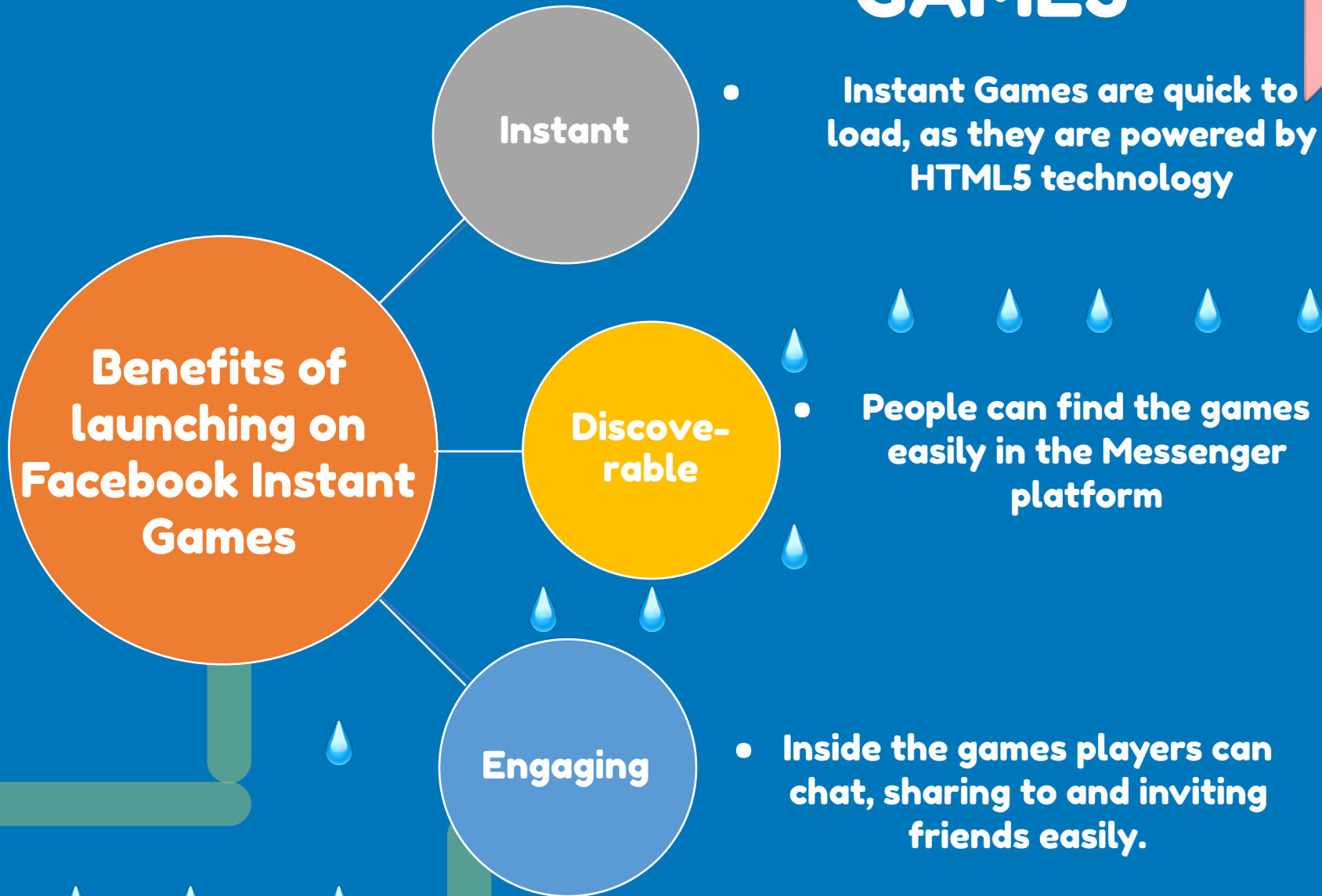
Design apps available
for foreign markets

Keep the app up to date

Create an appealing
description



LAUNCH PLATFORMS - FACEBOOK INSTANT GAMES



Level 2



PROMOTION STRATEGIES



PROMOTION STRATEGIES - SOCIAL MEDIA



What to post?

Photo

- Infographic
- Behind-the-scenes
- Game photos
- Fan photos
- Meme
- Employees photos

Video

- Game characters
- How-to videos
- Live videos
- Trailers or teasers
- Game-play videos

Status

- Celebrate holidays
- Quotes
- Fill-in-the blank
- Post series

Ask

- For feedback
- For advice
- For questions
- Questions to players

Share

- Statistics or data
- Useful links
- Players' posts
- Game-related news
- Tips

Contest

- Polls
- Photo contents
- Events
- Giveaways

Recommend

- Tools
- Useful products
- Advice
- Helpful sources

Offer

- Free ebook
- Free online tutorials
- How-to guide



PROMOTION STRATEGIES - SOCIAL MEDIA



When & How Often to Post?

Facebook	1 post per day	1:00 - 4.00pm
Twitter	15 tweets per day	2:00am - 10:00pm
Instagram	1-2 posts per day	Post 1: 8:00 - 9:00am Post 2: 2:00am
Discord	Weekly	Saturday & Sunday In the early morning
Live videos	Weekly	Monday & Wednesday 6:00 - 7:00am



PROMOTION STRATEGIES - PRESS RELEASE



What to send?

- Keep it short 1-2 mins
- Make first 3-5 secs interesting
- Show the coolest parts
- Include music and sound effects
- Call to action



- High resolution
- Excellent composition
- Use engaging images

- Impressive first paragraph
- Use quotes
- Mention contact information at the end

PROMOTION STRATEGIES - REVIEWS & RATINGS



Always
respond to
users'
reviews



Ask for the
reviews or
ratings at
the right
time



Ask for
feedback
inside the
game apps



Tips to
improve the
app reviews
& ratings

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Tools for community support

Discord

- Free
- Focus on text chat
- Use for both desktop and mobile phone

KTplay

- 30-days trial
- Focus on in-app communication
- Cheapest package is \$150 per month



PROMOTION STRATEGIES - SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS 2019





Videos & Live videos

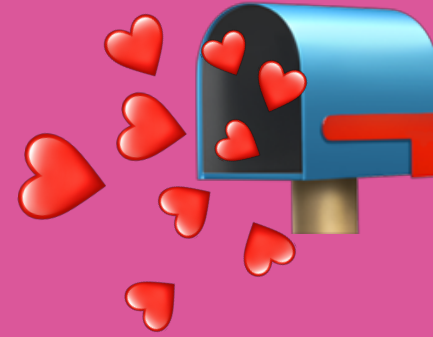
- **82% of the world's Internet traffic will be attributed to videos in 2021, up from 73% in 2016**
- **Live Internet videos will grow 15 times from 2016 to 2021.**

YouTube Influencers

- **There are 788,370 YouTube gaming channels in 2017**
- **YouTube launched YouTube Gaming with more than 200 million people watching gaming videos and live videos daily**



Player 1: 
Player 2: 



MOBILE GAME PLAYERS

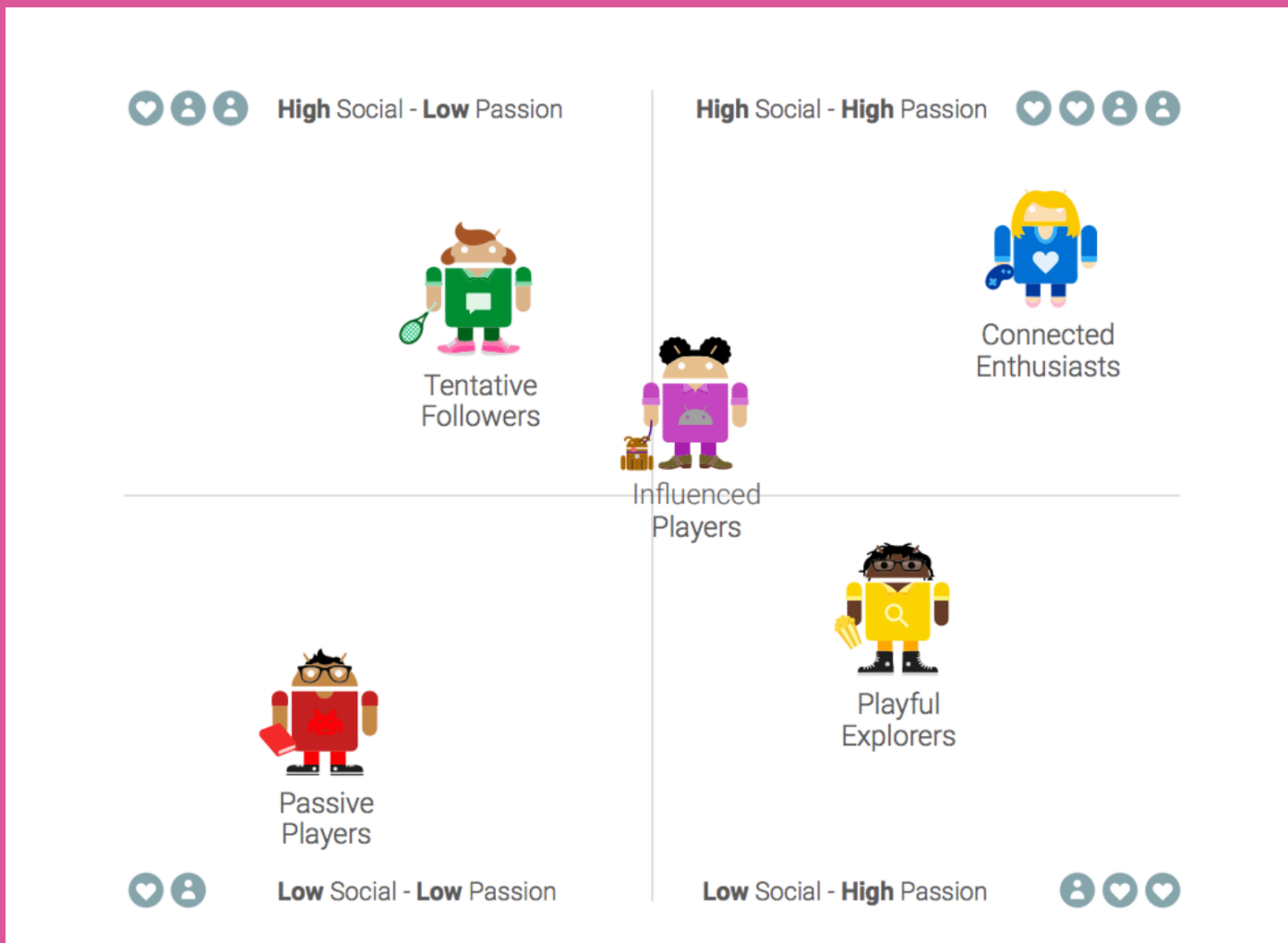




MOBILE GAME PLAYERS - TARGET MARKET

Who plays mobile games?

5 different groups of mobile game players



MOBILE GAME PLAYERS - TARGET MARKET

Who are they ?

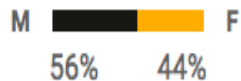


Connected Enthusiasts

% of population

16%

Gender

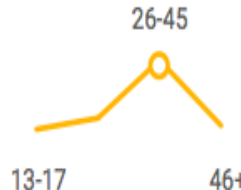
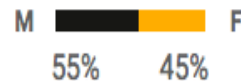


Age



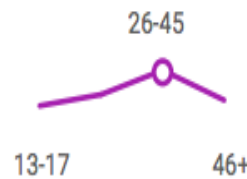
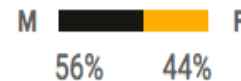
Playful Explorers

25%



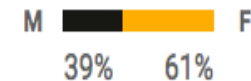
Influenced Players

12%



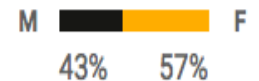
Tentative Followers

21%



Passive Players

27%

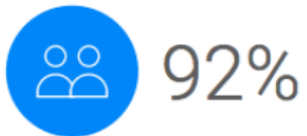


MOBILE GAME PLAYERS - TARGET MARKET

How do they discover the mobile games?



Connected Enthusiasts



My friends are playing the game



Seeing someone else play the game



Advertising in other games or apps I use



Playful Explorers



Top charts in app stores



Advertising in other games or apps I use



YouTube (gaming videos)



Influenced Players



My friends are playing the game



Seeing someone else play the game



Advertising in other games or apps I use



Tentative Followers



My friends are playing the game



Seeing someone else play the game



Top charts in app stores



Passive Players



Advertising in other games or apps I use



Top charts in app stores



Ratings of game in app stores

MOBILE GAME PLAYERS - TARGET MARKET





MOBILE GAME PLAYERS PLAYER PSYCHOLOGY



**Make
players
wait**

**Can play
with one
hand**

**Have
multiplayer
options**

**Update
frequently**

**Use
psychology
of colours**



MOBILE GAME PLAYERS - PSYCHOLOGY OF COLOURS



Optimistic & youthful. Used to grab attention of players



Energetic. Used in urgency situations



Trust and security. Seen in banks and service business



Wealthy. Used to make players feel relax



Aggressive. Used to creates a call to action



Romantics & feminine. Often used for women or young girls



Power. Usually connected with luxury products



Trust and security. Seen in banks and service business

RECOMMENDATIONS



“I would recommend to other companies that the most important thing is to make a cool game that people are proud to play and love playing. It is important to create the game with social aspect where players can play with their friends or family. “

Jonathan Dower- Game Lead & Artist, Supercell

“Don’t wait for the marketing budget to be ready. Just start to market your games as soon as you can. There is always something unexpected, so just start early as you can.”

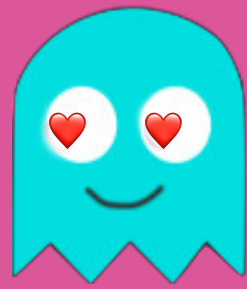
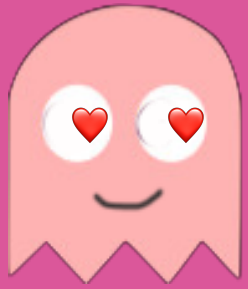
Paula Penttinen - Marketing Manager, Full XP



“I would advise mobile game companies or start-ups to spend more time to carry out research about marketplaces, players as well as the best marketing channels for the games. There is no luck that will bring people to download your games. “

Elina Arponen - CEO & Founder, Quick Save





Game Over

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