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WHY GAMES ARE THE FUTURE OF MARKETING

Everything you need to know about using games to improve your marketing efforts

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Using Games for Marketing

In this digital age, marketing is highly competitive across all industries. With the latest digital platforms, trends, and innovations, brands and marketers alike have to leverage every channel at their disposal to stay ahead. Because of this, the line between entertainment and marketing has been blurred.

Audiences look to brands not just for quality services or products, but also for compelling and worthwhile experiences. With that in mind, a new frontier in marketing has emerged: games.

What do games and marketing have in common?

Games have entered the marketing sphere because of a highly popular strategy called "gamification". Gamification is the use of game elements and game mechanics in non-game contexts. Through this strategy, brands are able to increase revenue, boost consumer engagement, improve customer loyalty and retention, widen brand reach, and more.

Under gamification, casual games can also be used as a kind of content to encourage target audiences to engage with a brand. Games can also be used to create a unique, branded experience to reach your existing audiences and new ones.
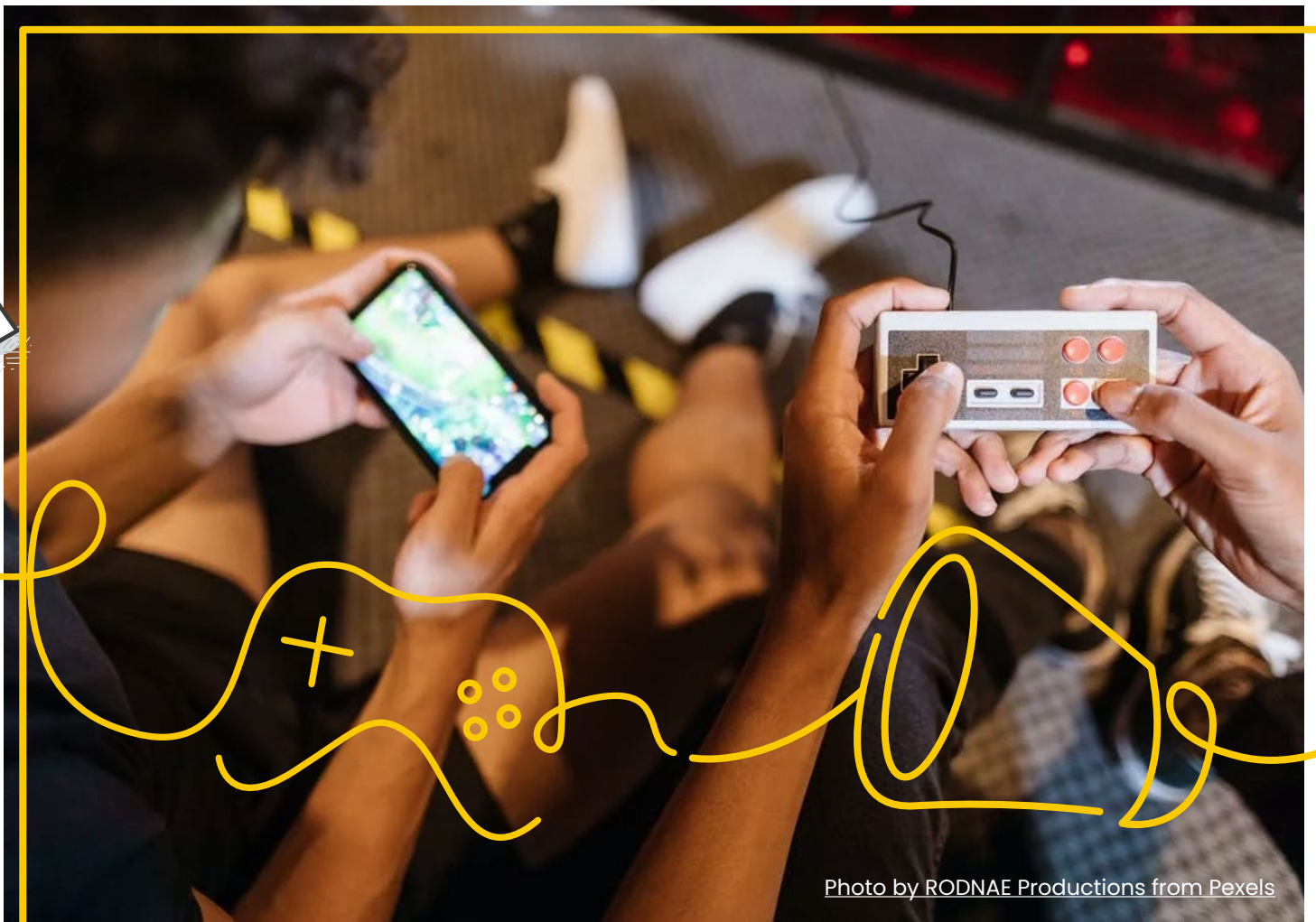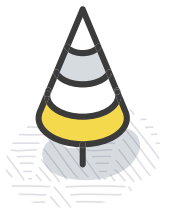
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Photo by RODNAE Productions from Pexels

How can brands benefit from using games for marketing?

Games have become an inescapable part of the digital landscape, with 79% of the global online population engaging with games in some way or form (Newzoo). By leaning into hypercasual games–games that are instantly playable in short sessions through simple but fun mechanics–you can target multiple audience demographics.

These games give brands high-quality, exciting content for audiences to engage with. In turn, this engagement can be used to achieve KPIs such as boosting platform engagement, nurturing customers, and increasing brand reach.

This can be done through licensing games to integrate on your existing platforms, or by opting to rebrand an existing game for release on other platforms as well.

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Game Licensing & Game Rebranding

As mentioned in the previous chapter, games are an exciting way for brands and marketers to engage and reach their target audiences. There are two ways this can be done: through game licensing and game rebranding.

What is game licensing?

Game licensing involves paying for a license to host an existing game on an app, website, or platform. Game distributors and publishers often have a library of available games that brands and marketers can opt to license for their specific needs.

This is one of the easiest ways to incorporate games into your marketing strategy, as it only requires minimal technical effort and investment. With the right game distributor or publisher, you can guarantee that the licensed game is high quality and will perform as expected.

Additionally, certain licenses will allow the game to be hosted for a fixed amount of time. This gives you more flexibility to renew the license or allow it to expire, depending on the specifics of your campaign.

Game licensing is best suited for achieving goals such as:

- Improving app/platform stickiness
- Boosting user engagement
- Increasing conversions

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What is game rebranding?

Game rebranding, also known as game reskinning, involves engaging with a game publisher to customize an existing game with branded elements. The resulting game is similar to the base game but makes use of elements such as the brand name, logo, color palette, and other related imagery.

Choosing to rebrand a game allows you to leverage an existing, high-quality game and have it tailor-fit to the overall brand image. Some publishers may even allow for further customizations to enhance the experience and make it more unique. In turn, these key points enable players to associate their gaming experience with the brand itself.

Additionally, these unique elements allow rebranded games to stand on their own on third-party platforms. This can be used to effectively market to previously-un-reached audiences.

Boosting engagement from existing customers

Expanding brand reach

Game rebranding is best suited for achieving goals such as:

Improving brand recall

Creating hype & buzz around a product/service

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What are the benefits of game licensing and game rebranding?

Overall, both types of game acquisition make games a more accessible marketing channel for a number of reasons:

It eliminates the need to create a new game from scratch

Game development requires specialized technical knowledge–from conceptualizing the overall game mechanics and elements, to developing and testing the game itself–and investments in time, resources, and effort.

Most brands are not equipped with the knowledge, nor the professionals needed to develop a fully-functional and enjoyable game. Through licensing and rebranding, brands and marketers can easily use games for their marketing purposes.

It is cost-effective

As discussed above, investing directly into developing a game in-house can be an expensive and time-consuming investment.

Opting to license a game means receiving an already-finished game that is ready to be accessed by your audiences. For rebranding, production time will be drastically reduced, as brand elements can easily be integrated into the existing game, much like a template.

It is easily integrated into the chosen platforms

A common misconception is that video games are only accessible through consoles or high-end computers. In reality, modern games can be found everywhere–from websites to mobile apps.

Brands and marketers can easily pick and choose among game distributors and publishers for games that are compatible with their chosen platforms. Depending on the distributor, they may even provide back-end support to ensure that the game is integrated seamlessly into the existing system.

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Creating a Gamified Experience

Game licensing and game rebranding both fall under the wide scope of gamification. With gamification, the goal is to use these games to create an experience that will serve a brand's overall business goals and attain certain KPIs.

That being said, the success of your gamified experience will depend on a number of factors.

What do you need to create a gamified experience?

Below are some of the essential elements to creating a successful gamified experience for your brand:

State your business objectives

Gamification should serve your overall business objectives. Before choosing to license or rebrand a game, it is important to understand what you aim to achieve by doing so. Are you looking to promote a product or service? Do you want to drive traffic to your website or app?

Making your objectives and goals clear will help you decide which method will work best. It will also provide the foundation for your overall strategy and marketing efforts.
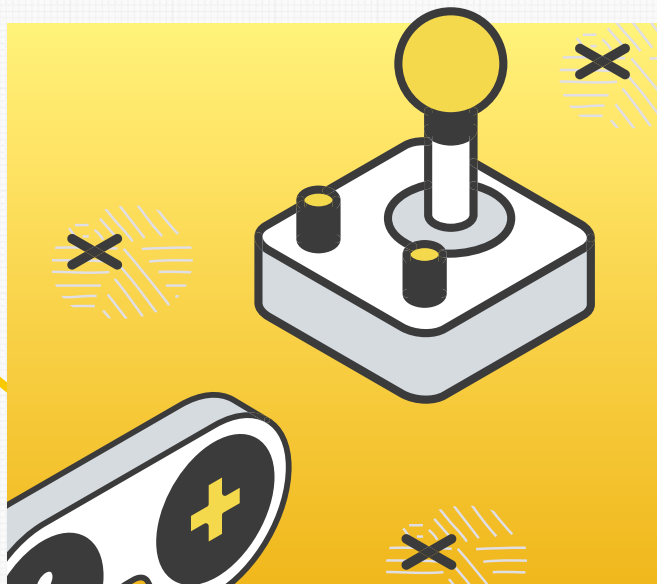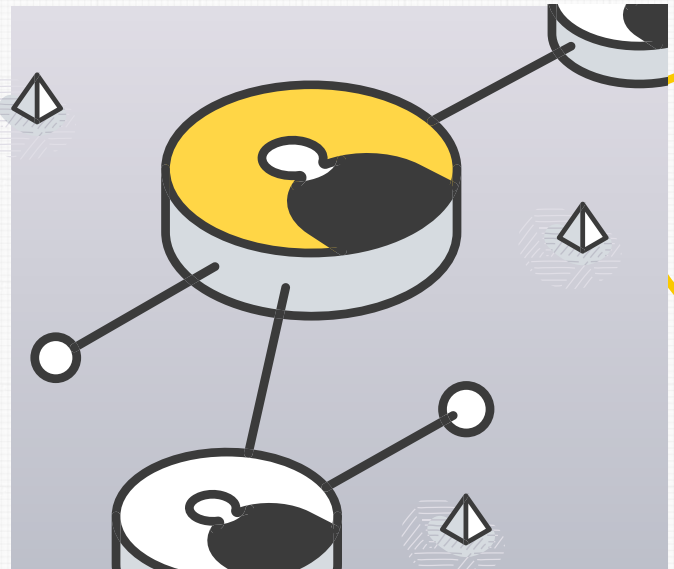
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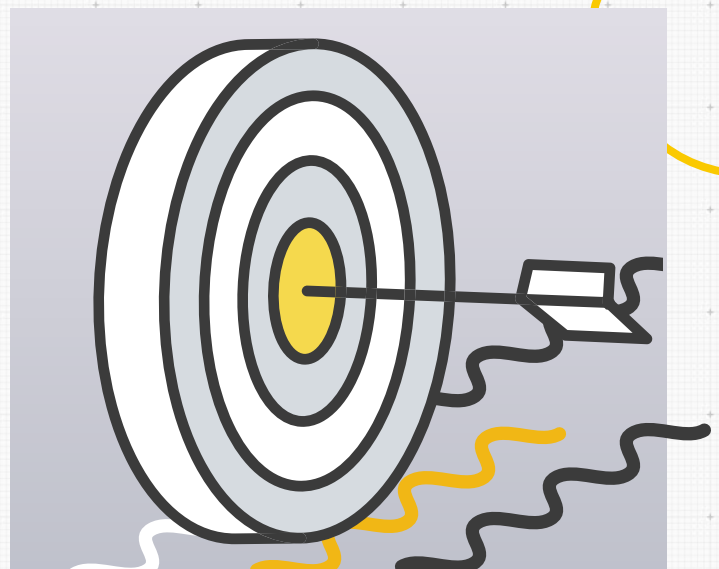
Prepare a marketing plan

Your marketing plan should not only align with your business goals, but should also provide the necessary structure in order to sustain your marketing efforts and deliver the desired results.

Your marketing plan should include how to promote your gamified experience to the public, how to onboard customers for your gamified experience, and other necessary activities to ensure your goals are met.

Understand your target audience/s

Like any other marketing activity, knowing your audience–their habits, motivations, and desires–is critical to success.

Having this information can help you determine what kind of game to license or rebrand, which platforms to put it on, whether or not rewards should be given, and so on. In the case of rebranded games, understanding the audience present in existing game platforms will factor into deciding where to distribute it.


Select platform/s for your game

It goes without saying that your game should be easily accessible to your target audience. Deciding on the platforms to host your game on should be decided by your business objectives and target audiences.

It is important to decide on this before committing to a game license or re-branding. Otherwise, you may end up spending on a game that is not compatible with your chosen platforms.

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Find the right
game distributor/publisher

There are many game distributors and publishers nowadays, especially with the boom of smartphones and online gaming. There are companies that cover a wide range of game genres and platforms, while others may have offerings that are more focused on certain niches.

The right distributor or publisher should not only have games that align with your chosen platforms and overall goals, but also provide high-quality games and professional work.
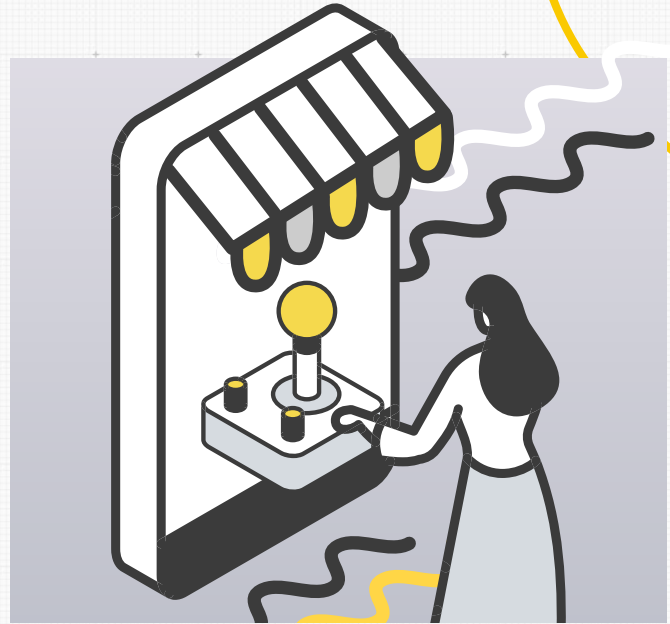
Gather actionable data

At the end of the day, your game serves to boost your brand marketing–making it essential to monitor its progress and performance. It also provides your brand with the unique opportunity to learn more about the behaviors of your audiences.

Ensure that the necessary KPIs are recorded and analyzed regularly. From there, you can fine-tune your strategy to sustain good practices and quickly rectify ineffective ones.

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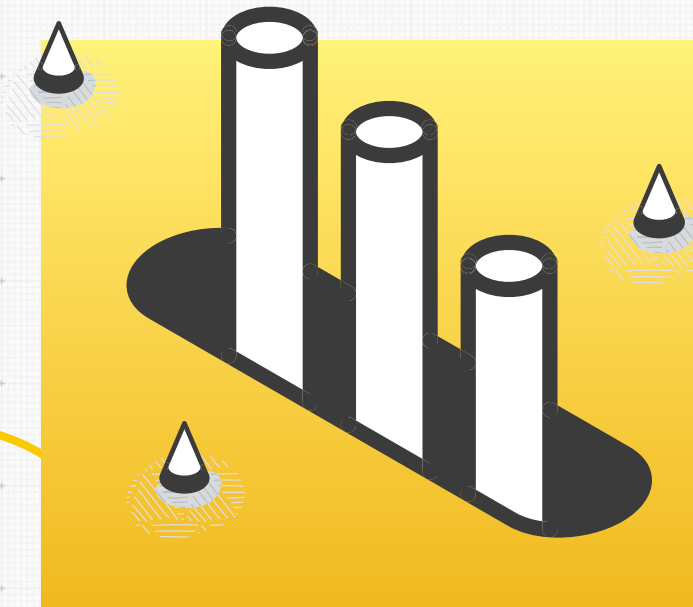
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Key Takeaways

Marketing in the digital age has created a unique space where advertising and entertainment can merge together. As a result, gamification–the use of game mechanics and elements in non-game contexts–has become a highly popular marketing strategy for brands and marketers alike. Under gamification, even games themselves can be used for marketing purposes.

With this, games have become accessible marketing channels through two methods: game licensing and game rebranding. Both options allow brands to create a gamified experience for their target audiences without the enormous barrier of engaging in game development firsthand. Selecting which method will work best for your brand is dependent on your unique business needs and overall goals.

Take your brand to the forefront of the digital age and create a gamified experience today!

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