**Pixel Brothers’ Marketing Report**

Eric Chan 100518326 - Executive Summary, Proposition Statement, Business Objective

Aaron Alphonso 100466698 – Company

Donald Smith100362985 – SWOT Analysis

Rehan Rameez 100489357 – Action plan

Usman Variava100522053 - Justification

Thomas Whiting 100517132 – Brand Analysis

**Company Overview:**

Pixel Brothers is an indie developer company, making the current state of the company profitable in order for the game to have still been made. In terms of the effectiveness of the advertising campaigns for the game, one of the ideas to advertise our game is to get well known indie developers such as Double Fine to help advertise our games. This is an ideal plan to have because endorsements from other well-known developers would allow the game to be more recognizable by gamers if they see their favorite company was to recommend our game. Another way that we can advertise this game is through YouTube, specifically in the “let’s play” and “gamer” channels. As of lately, many of the most well-known games such as *Amnesia: the Dark Descent* and *MineCraft*, have become well known due to certain You Tubers such as Total Biscuit, OfficialNerdCubed and FarFromSubtle, or certain channels like Polaris and Screwattack. Since recent trends see people watching a lot of let’s players and gaming videos on YouTube, similar exposure will allow for the facilitation of game recognition of our game “Misthaven” by allowing gamers to view footage of the game ultimately allowing them to decide on whether or not they want to purchase the game. As of right now, the only product that Pixel Brothers have created is their first game, “Misthaven”.

Pixel Brothers do not have any form of brand images, brand equity or market share. Since Pixel Brothers is an indie game developer company, we currently do not have any form of stock price similarly to several ‘AAA’ video game companies or well-known indie developers do.

**Executive Summary:**

“Once upon a time in Misthaven”, or “Misthaven” for short, is a hack and slash adventure game where the player must fight his way through various levels and arenas in order to progress. Misthaven is set in a world where a cataclysmic incident caused the land to break apart into floating landmass, each inhabiting its own kind of fierce monsters. The player plays through the eye of the hero who is on his own quest to save the lives of those he loves before they are sacrificed, his own girlfriend being one of them. The hero must take his vengeance upon the very dragon that have destroyed the world and brought destruction to the lands of Misthaven.

We plan to deliver a game that is focused heavily on the story, we are aiming to make players create emotional attachments towards the characters in Misthaven and to understand the reasoning behind the emotion. We also want to ensure that the game is also fun for the player to play as well. The game features a hack and slash element as the player uses his sword and magic spells when fighting the enemies of Misthaven. The game will have the looks and feel inspired by old Nintendo games like Pokémon and The Legend of Zelda, both of which have 8-bit stylistic feel. The game will also feature unique enemies for the hero to battle his way through the levels, including the creatures of the woods, looking for food, to the cultist of the dragon who are sacrificing people to the dragon and will stop the hero from rescuing them.

**Group’s Executive Summary**

Eric’s Executive summary:   
 During my time working with Pixel brothers for my first year of university, one of the things I’ve learned about is how difficult the work process is for people. During the fall semester, I have been dealt with a rough situation with problems on dealing with the amount of school work for course to the passing of my grandfather that would affect my ability to work at full capacity. Situation where people do not work as expected has also occurred with other people in my group that lead to the idea that in gaming industry that these situations are reasons that some games are forced to be either delayed or are released with bugs that would require the games to be updated constantly. Another thing I learn about is that when working on games, everyone is very dependent on each other. I was able to learn this when the programmer had some complications that would require the rest of the group to attempt to adapt as possible without a 100% expected result. Thankfully the Programmer was able to contribute enough work to allow us to make the group fully functional. In the end, I felt that despite some mishaps, this was a life experience that I would need to learn and I fully appreciate it to happen now instead of later where risk would be far greater.

Aaron’s Executive Summary:

"Misthaven to me was a stepping stone, a way for me to make the transition from simple text based games to actual windows applications. I learned many things during this project. I learned to do pixel art and created all the art assets. I also learned to take the art and produce sprites that actually animate and work in game. I contributed to the art related and state transitioning programming of the game. Overall the project taught me time management; class programming and game logic, game art, and what it means to produce an actual Windows based game. We aren’t selling the game as the development cycle was short (4 month), and although the game has gotten a lot of good feedback, it is still far from selling material. However we do wish to polish it up and balance the gameplay, keeping it only as a part of our portfolio work. Misthaven overall was a great learning experience.”

Donald’s Executive Summary:   
 Every one of us had different opinions on where we wanted to take Misthaven. For myself, I suspect the group will no longer exist in our second year so my primary goal is to polish it up during the summer. The primary reason I don’t want to release the game itself is that after its release I don’t want to be distracted in my future projects by the inevitable bugs that would consume my resources from the development cycle of my next project.  
 Therefore, Misthaven, to me is a valuable steeping stone and great learning experience that I will take with me into my future as a Game Developer.

Rehan’s Executive summary:

I feel like I learned a lot through this experience like how time management is a very important aspect of game developing and also how much the team is dependent on each other. When one of the people on your team does not do their job it can really affect the rest of the team negatively. I also learned that patience is very important. Without patience, some people on the team can get a little angry when things are not done. Overall, I loved this experience because of how much it thought me about game development.

**Proposition Statement:**

“Misthaven” is a hack and slash adventure game of a fictional world where the hero is tasked to saving the sacrifices from being made to a dragon. It is presented in an 8 bit pixilated art style to represent as a form of inspiration to the older Nintendo games such as Legend of Zelda and Pokémon. The gameplay is also an inspiration to the older legend of Zelda series with its similar controls. The game will also feature a total of 5 levels, all of which would show off different varieties of the Misthaven world.

The game “Misthaven” is intended to target the people who are interested in games with a hack and slash element and wants to destroy any enemies. The game also features a heavily driven story that will appeal to those looking for storytelling and emotional experiences that would affect the players. Because the game is made in an 8-bit style, the game is also targeted to people who have grown up with older Nintendo games and to people who enjoy nostalgic visuals. The game is also targeted towards anyone 10 and up with the ESRB rated E 10+, similar to that of the older games. This would allow a wider range of audience to have access to the games as the game attempts to mix the amount of content available for those of early age and for those old enough.

The game is targeted to be released as a digital game as a indie title and have been selected to target digital distributers such as Steam, Indie Game Stand, Desura, Indie gala, and GOG.com. Steam is one of the largest digital distributions of pc games in the market who are willing to accept indie titles to sell to the market. Other websites such as GOG.com and Indie Game Stand are also other sources of distribution for our game but have the advantage of not having DRM such as steam to play. The reason we decide to distribute the game to many different sites is because in the pc gaming community, a lot of people are not so keen on the idea of DRM and those who do. We decide to distribute the game with and without DRM in order to please both sides of the community. We have also decided that we would also port the game to mobile devices like the android and the IPhone once the game have been a success on the PC.

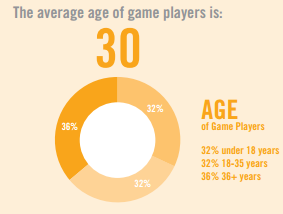
To advertise our game, we plan to use websites such as Rock, Paper, Shotgun, PCGamers, and Indie Static to attract attention for any gamer who is interested in “Misthaven”. We want to advertise our game at major PC game sites in order to allow the majority of the PC gaming audience that our game will be available for them to play as soon as the game is finished. Some sites that are focused on Indie games are also a choice to advertise the game as our game is considered an indie title and we could get attention from people who are more interested in indie title instead of most of the commercial games that are available in the market. YouTube will also be another form of advertisements for our game and we hope to get Gaming YouTubers such as Total Biscuit, Projared and FarFromSubtle to show off our game. As of currently, majority of games are able to gain recognition due to Let’s Players and Gaming Channels who shows off the gameplay of the game. Such games that have received recognition include games such as *Minecraft*, *Amnesia the Dark Descent* and *fez*. When the game would reach the point to having to arrive on to mobile devices, we have planned to advertise the game through Facebook and App advertisements.

The game is not decided to be released to the public as the purpose of the development of the game is to be a learning curve for the developers as we are still first year students. As first year students, we felt that the game would have a tremendous amount of experience making the game and was able to teach us a lot of responsibility and the possible situations that we have encountered in our future. Misthaven was developed to allow us to understand the process of making games and was to teach us about the development of many games. However, if we had to decide for the game to be released, it would most likely be released when we have completed the development of the content that would be in the game and have found and fix the bugs that would be found in the game.

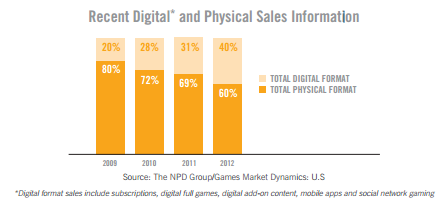
**Business Objective:**

The Target market for the people will be toward the gamers on PC. The PC is our decided platform for the game to play on and is home to the majority of the gamer population. The pc is also easier to distribute the pc gaming is mostly distributed digitally. “Misthaven” also has a heavily driven story and would be considered as a game for people who are focused on the game’s story and emotional attachments. We also want to make the game feel like the older Nintendo games such as Pokémon and Legend of Zelda as inspiration. Because of this, the game can be considered a target towards people that grew up with the older Nintendo games. It is also targeted to people enjoy hack and slash elements as it is one of our major gameplay mechanic in the game.

One of the things that we would need to consider is the age demographic that the game would be targeted towards, specifically which age group would show interest in the game and whether they would be able to access the game. When looking back at the games that Misthaven is inspired by, it is noted that a lot of the older games were rated E for Everyone and was available for everyone to play. It was then that we’ve decided that the game will be rated E 10+ to allow all gamers to be able to enjoy the game once the game have been released. According to the Essential Facets about the Computer and Video game industry 2013 Demographics, 32 % of gamers in the United State are under 18, while another 32% are between the ages of 18 to 35 and the rest are after the age of 35. The demographic also shows that of the games released in 2012, the ESRB have rated 67% of the games that have been released either an E for everyone or an E10+ rating. The rest of the statistics show that 24% of games were rated T for Teens and 9% were rated M for Mature. This suggest that in 2013, a lot of gamers of any ages, mostly older than 18, would most likely have played a lot of E rated games.



Another strategy that we would need to consider is which platform to release the game on. This is crucial information as we want the game to be available openly to for gamers to purchase. According to the 2013 demographic the “Recent Digital and Physical Sales Information” from 2008 to 2012 shows that the favor of Digital Format have increased over time. In 2008, 80% were of total physical sales with the remaining 20% as Digital Format, making the ratio of 4:1. In 2012, the Total Physical Format had dropped to 60% while the Total Digital Format increased to 40%, changing the ratio of sales from 4:1 to 3:2. Considering this, it is then decided that the game Misthaven would be distributed digitally to meet the demands of gamers. This would allow us to save cost on producing physical copies of the game and would allow gamers quicker access to the game when purchasing it.



When deciding on the platform, we consider it best that it would be best to select multiple platforms that would accept our game as an Indie title. Currently, there are 4 main gaming platforms found on the PC gaming market. This includes Valve’s Steam services, Electronic Art’s (EA) Origin, Ubisoft’s Uplay and GOG.com (Good Old Games). When selecting the platform to distribute the game, we have decided that both Steam and GOG.com were the best choices of the four as both Origin and Uplay would not usually distribute indie games and are mostly focused on games under the publisher’s brand. Steam holds the largest PC gaming demographic with an estimate of 75 million users as of January 2014. We also decided that GOG.com would also be another place to distribute out game to as the site is known to distribute a lot of games without any DRM or always online requirements, which is considered one of the many issues plaguing the PC gaming industry.

When having to deal with the price of the game, one of our focuses was based on the average cost of other indie games available in the market. The key things about Indie titles are that they are usually ranged from a little more than a dollar to at least $14.99 at most. We also consider the cost of games on smartphones for the future mobile port and know that they range from $0.99 to $6.99. Based on the content that Misthaven have, we decided that the best price of the game on PC would be $2.99 while the cost of future mobile version would be $0.99. We believe that the suggested price would allow easy access for gamers to pick up without any economic struggle and would make the game have a better chance against any competitive games on the market.

**Brand analysis**

Pixel brothers is a group of six who got together to create a game. The brand message of Pixel Brothers is to make throwbacks to older games, adding on the modern appeal. The modern appeal is better graphics, mechanics and UI changes like interchangeable controls. The product brand and the company brand are one and the same.

The Pixel Brothers Company’s strengths are the strong references to older more successful games like Zelda and Pokémon and the deep story and rich lore. There is the fact on how the team can help each other out by splitting up the work load for multiple people. Each member of the team is specifically tasked to work on a certain part of the project. Since our team is small and independent, we can work without any form of pressure from publishers.

However we do have weaknesses. For a small team, making a game requires large amount of work and time. Despite having to work together, each person has their own strengths and weaknesses, which can affect the progression of the development in bad ways. Due to the constraints place upon us there is no punishment aside from peer reviews near the end of the term where the damage of a team mate not contributing is already done.

The expected competitors of Misthaven are other types of indie games, some of which share similar aspects as Misthaven does. When asked about stacking up Misthaven to other competition, Misthaven will offer both a visual and a story telling advantage over the other independent games that are available.

**Marketing analysis:**

The expected competition for Misthaven would be of other indie titles that will be released on the same platform as Misthaven is. Some of these indie games that Misthaven will stack up to will also share some aspects as Misthaven does.

One of the competitive advantage over the competition is that the Misthaven, while is inspired by older Nintendo games like Legend of Zelda and Pokémon, captures the feeling of those games when they were initially released. This allows the game to feel challenging and exciting for gamers to play Misthaven and recapture that exact feeling when they played the older Nintendo games.

Another advantage that Misthaven has over its competitors is that Misthaven has an emotional story to drive players to play further into the game. The story is heavy and rich with emotions and will make players want to continue playing to see what happens next.

The four P’s, Product, Price, Place and Promotion, for Pixel Brothers are as follow:

* Product: The game Misthaven is the product itself
* Price: Misthaven will be marketed on PC for $2.99 while the mobile versions will be marketed for $0.99
* Place: On PC, the game will be distributed to Steam, GOG.com, Indie Game Stand and Desura. Mobile version will be distributed to major application distributor platforms such as Google Play, ITunes and Windows Phone apps.
* Promotion: The game will be advertised on major PC gaming websites, gaming channels on YouTube, advertisements on mobile apps and Facebook.

The benefit of our game Misthaven is to bring back nostalgic experience found in older games to the modern audiences while also bringing enjoyment for customers when playing the game.

The opportunity to market this game is that because Misthaven is our first game to distribute to the gaming market and if the game were to do successfully in the gaming market, then Pixel brothers will be confident to being to work on other games in the future. However, the risk about marketing our game is that it is unclear if our game will be able to reach enough audiences to warrant a continuation on developing games.

**SWOT Analysis:**

Strengths:

Misthaven is a game with very few ‘strengths’. Due to the short development cycle of four months Pixel Brother had to construct a game that had advantages over the competition. We decided to focus on only two strengths but they are both very strong. Misthaven has two major strengths.

Strength 1: “*Once a time in Misthaven”* is a large reference to past history of games and media. The game has extremely similar graphics as to games like Zelda and Pokemon. Misthaven also has very similar hack and slash gameplay and mechanics that relates to older games. The game also gives an update on the aesthetics giving it a crisp new feel while still retaining that appeal of older games that are loved so much. However one thing to note is that our game is a throwback to the older games but does not retain the difficulty; we are striving for the player to have a good game, not to quit due intense levels of difficulty.

Strength 2: In Misthaven, our lead writer masterfully created a story that the player will experience. This is our second driving point, story. We anticipate that the players will be deeply involved and attached to the main character of the story.

As a company and a group of players, we want the player to enjoy our game on both levels of gameplay and story. This well help them grow to enjoy the classic appeal of older games while still retaining the appeal

Weakness:

Misthaven is not without flaws. As we had a very short development cycle of four months, we were able to create a game with two strong points but two large weaknesses. The weaknesses will be very similar when matched up with another game with a similar development cycle, depending on the game.

Weakness 1: Misthaven is riddled with bugs and glitches. As a team that had only two programmers there are bound to be unintended bugs and glitches. They may be fixed in later builds of the game but when adding new content glitches will crop up.

Weakness 2: Misthaven had a very short run. So we couldn’t implement all of the things we planned for. These potential additions include more enemies and more secrets that will ultimately add depth to the gameplay.

Opportunities:

There is an opportunity for Misthaven to fill into the slot of a cheap hack and slash game, The PC market houses the largest amount of gamers than any other platforms. PC’s allow for more accessibility for players than consoles do. This includes control customization, system requirements and mobility. PC also allows us to update our game more efficiently than on consoles. Games can be played without requiring online services and DRM that consoles would usually have

On the mobile end, in terms of market shares based on mobile devices, Android and iPhone altogether takes up 92% of the smartphone market as well as 91% of the tablet devices as well. Additionally, the numbers of gamers on mobiles, including casual gamers, have been increasing ever since as well.

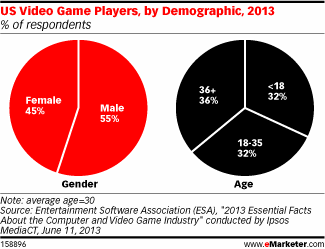
Threats

Piracy is the biggest issue when releasing games on PC as it can harm the sales of Misthaven. Like other PC games, Misthaven is digitally released only and will require online access to purchase the game. Sites such as GOG.com do not offer auto updates and will require players to reinstall the game for every update.

**Plan: Market segment, Market size, and Addressable market**

We are planning to market towards the gaming industry and the large audience that it already has. Since our product is a game, we have planned out that the target market of our game will be everyone that is aged 10 and up.

The market size of our game is considerably large. Since our game is going to be rated E10+, there are many people who belong to this category.



Above are two pie charts, one that displays the gender of players and one that shows the age of players. We think that our game should be rated E10+ because the art style and the overall feel of it would fit this demographic. We felt that if we made our game too cartoonish with the storyline and art, people would not consider it to be a serious contender in the gaming market. We kept the pixel art style because we wanted it to appeal to both modern gamers and retro gamers (people that grew up playing older games like Pokémon, The Legend of Zelda, and Super Mario Brothers).

Business Objectives

The objective of our business is to complete and have Misthaven ready for sale on the PC market. We would like to have all 5 levels completed for the first release of our game. We would also like to have the game available on steam, GOG.com, Indie Game Stand, and Desura soon after release. Another objective would be to have the game advertised on all of the places stated earlier in the marketing plan.

In the future, we would like to also have Misthaven on mobile platforms such as Android and the iPhone as well to increase the sales of our game. We would also like to have the game on Indie bundle stores such as the Humble Bundle, Indie gala and bundle star. These will be considered in the future once the game has been released.

The ultimate objective of our project is to have the game completed and ready for the market. Sufficient sales of our game and customers to the brand of the Pixel Brothers would be a very pleasant reward for our efforts on making the game and completing the project.

**Justification**

Our marketing plan will succeed because we are using a variety of distribution markets for customers to purchase the game. We are also considering porting the game to mobile devices such as Android, iPhone, and Windows phone. The marketing of our game will also be successful due to the fact that we will create awareness of the game by having it advertised in major Pc gaming websites such as PCGamer or Indie Static. We will also advertise it through gaming channels on Youtube.

Another reason that our marketing plan will be successful is due to the fact that we’ve chosen the PC as the main area where our game will be marketed and played on. We chose the PC because it houses that largest amount of gamers, more than any other platform. Pc’s also allow for more accessibility for players than consoles do. This includes control customization, system requirements and mobility. PC’s also allow us to update the game more efficiently than on consoles and can be played without requiring online services and DRM.

The justification of why we’re putting our game on the Android and IPhone as well is in terms of market shares. The market shares for Android and IPhone together takes up 92% of the smartphone market as well as 91% of the tablet devices as well. Also, the number of gamers on mobile devices, including not only hard-core gamers, but casual gamers as well, has been increasing a lot.

We’ve also taken into account our competition and how we’re going to overcome it. The expected competitors of Misthaven are other types of indie games, some of which share similar aspects as Misthaven does. When asked about stacking up Misthaven to other competition, Misthaven will offer both a visual and a storytelling advantage over the other independent games that are available.

We have a few plans in case the market changes or if there are potential changes that can impact our plan. If the pc gaming market dies out and moves more towards mobile devices, we have already planned to distribute our game on the mobile market as well and would easily be able to convert to a mobile focused game. We would work on making the game more accessible in the mobile market and also more focused on mobile play. We would also change some aspects of our game to make it more easily playable on the mobile platform and also add some features that would make the game more fun on the mobile platform.

Another potential change that could occur is that more games would start offering trial play before the customer would actually buy the game. We will combat this change by setting up our own trial play which would allow the user to test the game and see if they like it before purchasing it. We already have a tutorial level within our game, and we feel that the tutorial level would be the perfect trial for our game.

**Bibliography:**

Steam Tops 75 Million Users. (n.d.). *IGN*. Retrieved April 11, 2014, from http://ca.ign.com/articles/2014/01/15/steam-tops-75-million-users

Vast Video Game Audience Puts Fewer Dollars to Gaming. (n.d.). *- eMarketer*. Retrieved April 11, 2014, from http://www.emarketer.com/Article/Vast-Video-Game-Audience-Puts-Fewer-Dollars-Gaming/1009979

Essential Facts about the computer and video game industry. (n.d.). *theesa*. Retrieved April 11, 2014, from http://www.theesa.com/facts/pdfs/esa\_ef\_2013.pdf

Now Available. (n.d.). *Welcome to Steam*. Retrieved April 10, 2014, from <http://store.steampowered.com/>

TotalBiscuit, The Cynical Brit. (n.d.). *YouTube*. Retrieved April 11, 2014, from <https://www.youtube.com/user/TotalHalibut>

GOG.com. (n.d.). *GOG.com*. Retrieved April 11, 2014, from http://www.gog.com/

farfromsubtle. (n.d.). *YouTube*. Retrieved April 11, 2014, from https://www.youtube.com/user/farfromsubtle