Pitching Ideas

TERMS

turn-based (adj.) A game system in which the sequence of play is broken down into rounds during which a player takes some limited number of actions.

real-time (adj.) A game system in which play proceeds without stoppage.

pitch (n.) A concise description of your game, meant to sell the experience to a specific audience.

elevator pitch (n.) The shortest possible version of your pitch, usually 30 seconds to one minute.

logline (n.) A marketing pitch in one or two sentences describing the core experience of your game.

PITCHING IDEAS

Pitching your game is a relevant skill at nearly every stage of the design process. The art of pitching is modifying your message so that it connects with each specific audience. When crafting your pitch, consider the following:

1. **Pitch from the perspective of the player.** Don't lead with a genre or compare your game to others on the market. Instead, describe the feelings a player will experience while playing your game. Talk about the control your player will have and the interactions that will be available to them. Have the pitch audience playing your game in their head while you speak.

2. **There is no "one size fits all" version of a game pitch.** Potential team members want to hear about something they would be proud to build. Investors want to hear why your game will be successful. Game journalists want to hear why your concept is fresh and innovative. Refine and modify your language based on who you're talking to. No matter your audience, always demonstrate enthusiasm and passion for your game.

LEARN MORE

• Read the book *Blood, Sweat, and Pixels* (HarperCollins, 2017) by Jason Schreier about the trials and tribulations of various professional game studios. Pay particular attention to how a studio will adapt their messaging to the demands of their audience, whether it be publishers, investors, or journalists.

• The logline will be the strongest part of your pitch, and the first thing to appear in marketing materials for your game. Read the loglines from the marketing materials of popular games reproduced below. Note how the language of each logline starts to build an experience of the game and creates expectations in your mind, helping you begin to build a mental model about how it operates during play.

1. *Hotline Miami* from Dennaton Games (Devolver Digital, 2012)
   — "Hotline Miami is a high-octane action game overflowing with raw brutality, hard-boiled gunplay, and skull-crushing close combat."

2. *Stardew Valley* from ConcernedApe (Chucklefish, 2016)
   — "You've inherited your grandfather's old farm plot in *Stardew Valley*. Armed with hand-me-down tools and a few coins, you set out to begin your new life. Can you learn to live off the land and turn these over-grown fields into a thriving home?"

3. *Super Meat Boy* (Team Meat, 2010)
   — "*Super Meat Boy* is a tough-as-nails platformer where you play as an animated cube of meat who's trying to save his girlfriend (who happens to be made out of bandages) from an evil fetus in a jar wearing a tux."

4. *Bully* (Rockstar Games, 2006)
   — "*Bully* tells the story of mischievous 15-year-old, Jimmy Hopkins, as he goes through the hilarity and awkwardness of adolescence. Beat the jocks at dodgeball, play pranks on the preppies, save the nerds, kiss the girl, and navigate the social hierarchy in the worst school around."

"The first game you're actually designing is the pitch."

ASSIGNMENTS

• Take one of your favorite game concepts, or prototypes from your library, and write an elevator pitch for it specific to these audiences: 1) your team, 2) some possible investors, 3) a general media journalist, and 4) a games journalist.

• *Writing your own logline:* Draft several versions of a logline for your Capstone Game. Write from the perspective of the player and describe their experience. Focus on using clear game nouns, strong game verbs, and evocative adjectives. Try to build a small model of your game in the reader's mind. Once you settle on one sentence, record it in the logline subheading (1.b) of your Game Design Document.