

## Firelock Marketing Plan

Viral Marketing and promotion through YouTube and streamers can both be viable marketing strategies, but they are not always effective for indie game developers: with no established brand, you risk being ignored amongst the many other games clamouring for attention from the same streamers, making this method of marketing a poor attempt at gaining awareness.

The clearest way to stand out is by providing a hook to get people talking. While it is not a video game, the original Blair Witch Project first popularised the use of viral marketing through the creation of a website which fleshed out the lore of the film's narrative, and was extremely cheap as marketing tactics go. They only spent \$1,000,000<sup>1</sup> on the film's marketing, and it became something of a cultural touchstone. This is not to say we should copy this strategy while marketing our game, as it has been done before, but it demonstrates how to effectively invoke an audience's emotions to promote a piece of media.

Our audience, for instance, is above 16 years of age, predominantly male and have a low source of income. They will most likely be students or at school, and thus have a lot of free time to play games of all kinds, but will likely hold a keen interest in something slightly more cerebral.

In order to market Firelock alongside other games of its type, and to our audience, we need to ensure it will be noticed. In order to do this, we intend to create physical objects which relate to our game. We will 3D print models of our in-game rune items containing LED lights, which will be low cost as the campus we are based on offers 3D Printing services. These will be provided

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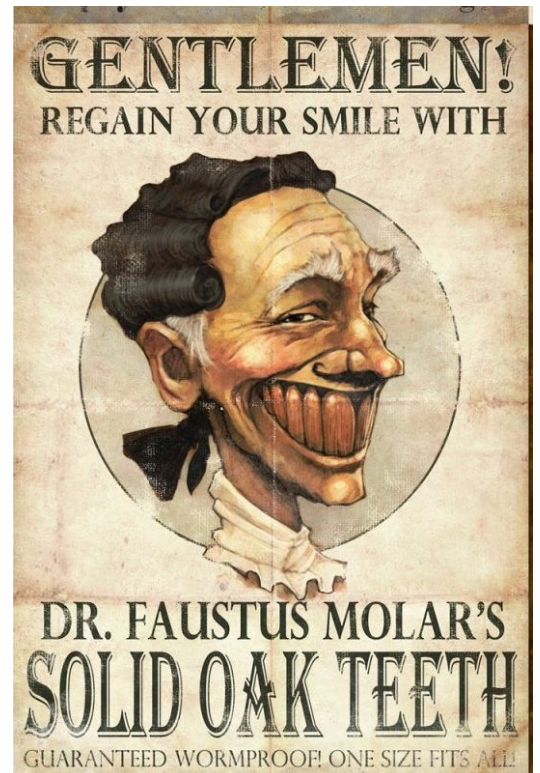
<sup>1</sup>Davidson, N. (2016). *The Blair Witch Project: The best viral marketing campaign of all time*. [online] MWP Digital Media. Available at: <https://mwpdigitalmedia.com/blog/the-blair-witch-project-the-best-viral-marketing-campaign-of-all-time/> [Accessed 30 Nov. 2016].

with accompanying information about the lore and world of our game, presented as a historical document, and a download key for the game on Steam. A close comparison point will be the Mysterious Package Company<sup>2</sup>. They send out bizarre objects steeped in the history of what they represent, and always draw significant attention and word of mouth.



To echo this, a small element of our marketing will be comprised of packages sent to streamers and content creators will contain propaganda posters from the game's story. The inclusion of a high-quality physical object (fig 1) is much more likely to draw attention to our game. In doing this we are taking inspiration from the marketing of games

such as Grand Theft Auto V, by combining traditional methods with a guerilla angle, such as tying the literature of our materials directly to the lore of our game. The propaganda (fig 2) will detail information about the characters and the conflict, giving an idea of the systems within the game. This will make it much more likely that content creators will check out our game, which in turn will lead to their followers discovering Firelock - yielding more sales of the product. The developers of Democracy 3 and Race The Sun have highlighted the impact of this tactic; stating that while it does not yield an immediate increase in sales, the extra attention that can be garnered is enough to have a sizeable impact compared to



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<sup>2</sup> Mysteriouspackage.com. (2016). *The Mysterious Package Company*. [online] Available at: <https://www.mysteriouspackage.com/> [Accessed 30 Nov. 2016].

marketing via the traditional games press.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, streamers have been known to increase the popularity of games thought to be beyond their traditional “shelf life”; Skate 3 is the chief example of this. Due to the popularity of YouTuber Pewdiepie’s videos of the game, Skate 3 has managed to re-enter the charts in the UK<sup>4</sup> despite being a rather old game. This suggests that while content creators are not guaranteed to be the greatest area to increase sales of our game, it is certainly a worthwhile area to target, and so we will pursue this avenue of marketing.

### Guerilla Marketing

We will employ a guerilla marketing strategy, by placing posters relating to the fiction of the game around our local area and wherever we travel, which will draw attention to it through curiosity about the product. The use of posters and stickers around the campus and local area will hopefully be able to capture prospective players’ imaginations while keeping costs low. Furthermore, we will leave fliers on trains in order to capture a wider net of interest in our game. The posters could contain a cypher containing a code for the game: if people are able to solve the puzzle, they will gain access to the game. There is a strong social media presence on the campus, and as such word may spread quickly, especially if hype is generated around Firelock. In turn, the limited access can make people more keen to play our game: a similar effect was noted by the developers of Nitro Nation<sup>5</sup>. They gave away 1000 closed beta keys during Gamescom, and found that people had become jealous of those who had access, and by the

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<sup>3</sup> Rose, M. (2016). *Is YouTube killing the traditional games press?*. [online] Gamasutra.com. Available at: [http://www.gamasutra.com/view/news/219122/Is\\_YouTube\\_killing\\_the\\_traditional\\_games\\_press.php](http://www.gamasutra.com/view/news/219122/Is_YouTube_killing_the_traditional_games_press.php) [Accessed 30 Nov. 2016].

<sup>4</sup> Hoggins, T. (2016). *Ten years of YouTube: How the streaming site affects the business of video games*. [online] Telegraph.co.uk. Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/video-games/11422943/Ten-years-of-YouTube-How-the-streaming-site-affects-the-business-of-video-games.html> [Accessed 30 Nov. 2016].

<sup>5</sup> pocketgamer.biz. (2016). *Flappy Bird was the perfect accidental guerilla marketing campaign, says Creative Mobile*. [online] Available at: <http://www.pocketgamer.biz/news/57293/flappy-bird-was-the-perfect-accidental-guerilla-marketing-campaign-says-creative-mobile/> [Accessed 30 Nov. 2016].

time beta sign ups were complete, they had 100,000 people interested in playing the beta of their game, showing that restricting access to a game intentionally can act in a “reverse psychology” sense. This is demonstrated in the demand for certain products, such as the iPhone or the Wii -- these products tend to be limited upon release, which creates a larger demand as most people are unable to have it immediately and feel they are missing out.

We will also employ the traditional marketing angle of exploiting social media - having an active and continually updated web presence. We will establish our brand on Facebook and Twitter accounts, on which people can see small scale versions of development blogs, and so will be able to track development from start to end. Building and involving a community during the development of the game makes them invested over a long period of time, which increases engagement and interest in the product, coupled with a website to host a development blog and a series of trailers for our game. These will clearly relay how the game functions to the market. This will allow us to target an audience beyond the people on campus and those who frequent gaming websites, as the trailers could be played on Youtube or other online services, and will expose Firelock to a wider audience.

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