Game Design Document (GDD)

Super Video Game Company CEO Simulator Deluxe: Advanced Edition

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1. Introduction

1.1. Scope of the document

This document is meant for the development team as well as the reviewers of our video game. Interested readers can use this document as an inspiration for future projects.

1.2. Elevator pitch

This is a casual serious game about managing a video game corporation in terms of working conditions (employees count), investment (shareholders) and reputation (press) with the purpose of maximizing a score ("golden parachute") by gauging these metrics, by neither keeping them too low nor too high, from a sequence of binary choices represented as cards. Different minigames are proposed to the player on failure to meet the aforementioned criteria as a chance to maintain their progress.

2. Game Overview

2.1. Game concept

The player is tasked with maximizing their score, defined as a "golden parachute" which is a combination of the various factors influenced by their choice on a sequential set of binary choices, by either sweeping left or right. This score is maintained as long as the player does not:

- keep the employees count too low, which implies a lack of working force;
- keep the employees count too high, which implies they might unionize;
- keep the shareholders count too low, which implies bankruptcy;
- keep the shareholders count too high, which implies encouraged dependency or corruption;
- keep the reputation too low, which implies a lack of consumers;
- keep the reputation too high, which implies overexpectations.

The objective of this game is to provide engagement to the player with the simplistic gameplay and the idea of managing a working environment, not only by offering them to understand the intricacies of a management position and of the management process from the impact of their decisions, but also the difficult executives' choices that employees have to tolerate.

The player shall find enjoyment in the process of decision-making thanks to a dependent cards system implicitly displaying progress. It is expected that the player finds interest in trying to beat their previous high-score by developing strategies.

The player should not feel anxious about their decision. One idea is to offer a second chance by allowing them to save their company through the success of a minigame, such as the "writing an apology letter" or "speed-typing a discourse" challenges.

2.2. Audience

The game is intended for casual players in all age ranges with no necessary background in either management or as an employee, a shareholder or a journalist in the video game industry.
This game is expected to appeal to players interested in strategy or strategic management games, and to players interested in similar work positions, and finally to players looking for a simple game with little input.

2.3. Genre

This game is categorized as a strategic management game with random aspects. (categories "alea" and "mimicry", eventually "ilinx")

2.4. Setting

This game takes place in a video game corporation work environment where previous untold events happened before the player's takeover.

2.5. World structure

The player progresses linearly in the game through card swipes.

2.6. Player

This is a singleplayer game where the player incarnates the main character, the CEO of a video game company. No multiplayer is available.

2.7. Core loop

The player can read and acknowledge the dilemma and be able to swipe cards left or right based on their decision, using mouse inputs. The different minigames offer alternative controls to the player. For instance, the suggested "writing an apology letter" and "fast-typing a discourse" minigames require keyboard actions.

2.8. Look & Feel

The video game's layout is inspired by the game "Reigns" as in the picture above. The visual style is influenced by a "pixel art" style and mostly consists of colorful "feel-good" or comical images, with some animations (cards appearing, typewriter-like text animations) to make the game appear interactive to the player.

3. Gameplay

3.1. Objectives

The main objective given to the player is to maximize a score depicted as a "golden parachute", that is by not failing to maintain the sliders in the median range on the given sequence of decisions. Second-hand "main" objectives depend on the different minigames and are as such :
- "Writing an apology letter" minigame : The player must fill in the blanks with the correct words;
- "Speed-typing a discourse" : The player must type a given text rapidly.

3.2. Progression

The player's progression is measured from their score ("golden parachute"), and through the game from their decision, which may infer a dependency on the next decisions and consequently a sense of progression on the gameplay and the story.

3.2.1. Difficulty curve

The difficulty remains constant throughout the game. Different minigames have their own difficulty level, which does not change for the same minigame.

3.3. Play flow

The player is tasked to perform a choice every time. Despite the relaxing feeling of the game, the gameplay may feel tense in certain extreme situations, yet playful, with a lot of suspense as each decision could lead to prosperity or doom. The player should feel both curious and cautious, aware that each swipe could lead to unpredictable outcomes that

shape the company's fate. Moreover, while the challenge and strategic abilities remain constant throughout the game, the player is expected to not feel too anxious or bored as a result of the game's challenge and progress.

3.4. Difficulty

The difficulty is mainly decided from the game's usage of random. The game is considered to be rather easy for the average player for them not to feel overwhelmed by the game. The minigames also mostly offer a simple challenge.

4. Mechanics

4.1. Rules

The rules are presented as such:
- The player can only swipe cards left or right. Each swipe affects the three aforementioned metrics;
- The player should maintain their metrics in the median range. Failing to do so may trigger a failure or a minigame which is decisive to the player's game;
- The player should succeed in the given minigame, which allows the player to continue their attempt in maximizing their score. Failing a minigame forces the player to restart and logs the player's score. The rules of each minigame are as such :
  - "Writing an apology letter" minigame : The player should complete the blanks with the valid words;
  - "Speed-typing a discourse" minigame : The player should maintain their typing speed above a certain given speed.

4.2. Game universe

The story and universe of the game progresses as the user progresses, with no particular events happening outside of the player's scope of actions.

4.3. Physics

Non-applicable.

4.4. Economy

Non-directly-applicable. In fact, the three sliders can be considered an economy and more precisely as a potential exchange format between the employees, shareholders and press scores but is not considered as such in the game. It can be gained or lost depending on the cost of action of the choices given to the player and is a core component of the game. The golden parachute is not considered an economy as it is not used for trading.

4.5. Character movement

Non-applicable.

4.6. Player interaction

The player can interact only with the card in the core game. In the minigames, the player can only interact with its elements made for this specific purpose, such as the text boxes for the "Writing an apology letter" and the "Speed-writing a discourse" minigame.
Feedback is given to the player before they confirm their interaction by holding on the swept card. It shows the related answer and what metrics will be influenced, either positively or negatively from this choice.

4.6.1. Game menus

The game features a single menu with four options, and appears when the player joins the web page :
- **"Start"**, that allows the player to start the game;
- **"Options"**, that can be tweaked by the player to their liking;
- **"How to play"**, which is a small tutorial sheet on how to play the game;
- **"Credits"**, or the list of persons who worked on this project and their associated tasks.

4.6.2. Saving

None. The player will lose progress on quitting.

4.6.3. Game options

In the options of the game, the player may just change the volume of the sound effects and the music to suit their preferences. They can also choose to experience the game in full-screen.
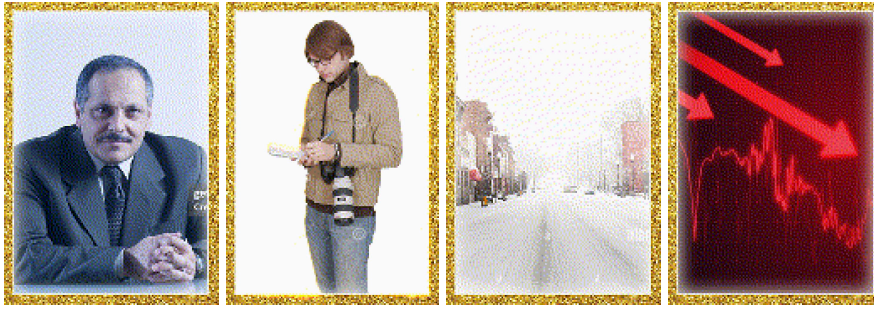
4.7. Assets

The assets are comprised of :
- **The background texture**, or the office environment. In this case, the boss's desk;

- **The cards textures**, which is a set of many different pixelated characters, places or concepts that are applied to the cards in the game. Below is a partial list of assets, not encompassing the entire list.

- **The texture for the score ("golden parachute") and the metrics**, that are filled as their value changes;

- **Credits assets**, the game designers' discord icons (not included in this document) and other creditting icons such as for the music and sound effects :
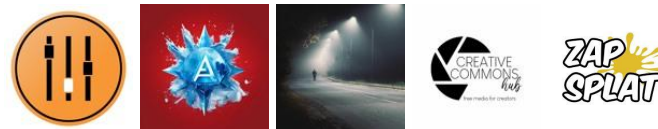
- **The font**, which is Minecraft's font.
- **The music**, which is a selection of diverse lo-fi tracks :
  - Horthy Kristóf - Midnight;
  - ANtarcticbreeze- After Sunset;
  - HIPEG - Waiting The Sun;
  - RomanSenykMusic - Dreamy LoFi;
- **The sound effects** provided by Zapsplat (https://www.zapsplat.com/), such as the cards "whoosh" sounds, the typewriter sounds (such as for the character's name), etc.

5. Graphics and audio

5.1. Visual system

The visuals are 2D and pixelated, suitable for the simplistic appearance of such a game.

5.1.1. Player camera

The player will see all the information at once on the screen, presented in a standard, 2D web environment.

5.1.2. Landscape

The landscape, or background image, is an office environment.

5.2. Interface

The interface is divided into two main parts :
- The golden parachute and the main metrics are set in the top banner.

-   The main, central part is where the game takes place, and consists of the dialogue on the top of this part, the card in the center and the name of the character or event associated with this dialogue. The player can only interact with the card in the center.

The minigames have their own popup window opening up when triggered.

5.3. Audio system

5.3.1. Game music

The game features looping, relaxing lo-fi tracks from the free creative commons.

5.3.2. Audio look & feel

The relaxed, calm music complements the overall "feel-good" vibe and hints at the player about the slow pace of the game.

6. Story and narrative

6.1. Backstory

The company was a thriving video game enterprise in the hands of the parents of the current CEO who inherited their wealth and position. It is the main event of interest that happened before the game took place.

6.2. Main plot

6.2.1. Plot

The plot follows the backstory in which our character aims at managing their company in the best way possible. Events unfold as the player and the plot progresses, with different new story-related choices depending on the player's actions.

6.2.2. Plot progression

The plot will progress naturally from the player's decisions and the different dialogues with the game's characters.

6.3. Cutscenes

Certain dialogues may appear in order for them to give insights to the player about the ongoing story of the game, but do not affect the gameplay.

7. Characters

7.1. Main characters

The main character of this game is the CEO (the player) :

7.1.1. Backstory

The character has inherited from their parent's wealth and position in the company. Their experience in this domain is only defined from the user's experience in the game.

7.1.2. Personality

The character's personality matches the player's personality as the character doesn't partake in the dialog. However, the character exhibits traits of greed through nature and actions.

7.1.3. Appearance

No specific appearance.

7.1.4. Abilities

Implicit management abilities.

7.1.5. Relationships

The CEO has a relationship with their parents as implied in the backstory, as well as with the employees and potential other characters that will be listed in the next section.

7.2. Supporting characters

The game makes use of various supporting characters to enhance the gameplay and the plot :

- **The shareholder**, who is only interested in money rather than the company's work or ethics that he does not manage to grasp. He may sometimes issue an ultimatum to the company.
- **The nerdy employee**, a relatively serious, credulous and compliant character who can easily be taken advantage of. He can barely tell that he is being exploited and will rarely stand up against something.
- **The human resources person**, whose main concern is the company's image. Detached and pragmatic, this character tends to "sweep the dust under the carpet" when problems arise, and strictly respects hierarchy.
- **The manager**, who is used to a position of superiority in the company's hierarchy, tends to show characteristics that are halfway between those of a nerdy character and the typical company manager, with a strong leadership that he relies on to maximize production.
- **The journalist**, an ethical third party known for cherry-picking their information. In addition to common ethical concerns, personal biases and potential corruption may impact the company's reputation.
- **The lobbyist**, inspired by the G-man character from Half-Life, is a scary, deceitful character who does not mind helping the company whenever it's crucial to. This character is very disconnected, with limited ethics.
- **The influencer**, inspired by Jack Black, is a character that lives from views generated from the content produced on the company's video games, and directly influences the games' reputation. He is very trendy, highly connected with the youth, and is relatively laid-back when something goes in his direction.

7.3. Enemies

Non-applicable.
Note : The employees, shareholders or the press are not made to be an obstacle to the player, but as neutral entities that can either be an advantage or a disadvantage to the player.

8. Game world

8.1. Look & Feel of the world

The game environment is not expected to distract the player but rather to complement the overall feel and story of the game. The color is chosen to contrast with most of the necessary information on the screen.

8.2. Locations

The main location in the game is the work environment where the player plays as the CEO. This location is closely tied to the concept of the video game as the player is tasked to manage it.

8.2.1. Connection to the plot

The company is tightly tied to the backstory, which is our CEO's working place.

8.3. Levels

8.3.1. Tutorial levels

Non-applicable. The "How to play" menu option is used for the specific purpose of helping the player. Furthermore, the first set of card swipes in the main level already acts as a tiny tutorial with limited impact on the rest of the game, as the gameplay will remain similar.

8.3.2. Main levels

The main levels consist of the binary choice proposed to the player upon receiving a new dilemma to make up their mind to.
The minigames are considered required to not fail the game and are accessible from the previous levels when the player enters the failure state.

8.3.3. Optional levels

Non-applicable.