GREAT PITCH, AMAZING PRODUCT

I'M OUT

quickmeme.com

[Pitching a movie idea to Walt Disney]

"Alright so there's an adorable little deer..."

Walt Disney:

u/mixodes

Kill his mom

PITCHING GAMES

GDV110: GAME DESIGN PRINCIPLES

CHRIS GARNIER

PITCH CONTENT

ANATOMY OF A PITCH

TITLE	*Attention catcher, main selling point*
ELEVATOR PITCH	*Core of the game, why it's unique*
MARKET	*Why it's worth making*
BUSINESS MODEL	*How you/they will make money*
COMPETITION	*How this game stands out from others*
TEAM	*How are you the best suited to make it*
PROGRESS	*Showing you can actually do it*
BUDGET	*What you need and how you use it*

FORMAT

SHORT AND SWEET

- Low number of slides
- Short text
- Big font

PROFESSIONAL

- Clear theme
- Readable font
- One idea per slide

VISUAL

- Illustrations
- Diagrams
- Flowcharts
- Videos/Builds

TITLE SECTION

MOST IMPORTANT SECTION

Goal:

- Give good first impression
- State your main selling point
- Keep people's attention

Should understand within 5 seconds what the main selling point is.

Questions can help retaining attention for a longer period.

Using a high quality concept art here can help getting attention and have people start imagining what it's about.

Game Vision

**HOW DO YOU KILL A BEAST
THE SIZE OF A PLANET?**

https://www.hellblade.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/RazerGDD_01_Overview.pdf

EXAMPLES:

- STRANDED: How would you survive on a deserted island... infested by zombies?

- CASUAL PUZZLER: Crushing Candies is so 2000's, Unicorns and rainbows are the new sweet puzzle addiction!

- DAYZ: Are other players friends or foes? Only one way to find out

ELEVATOR PITCH

- Short & sweet, max 2-3 sentences

- Don't bore with details, this is supposed to get people excited. Avoid walls of text

- People should get the core of the game and what makes it special within 15 seconds.

- What's the hook? SELLING POINTS
    - What makes it exciting or unique?
    - *NOT tech/features,*
    - *NOT beautiful art/story*

- Main game premise, and core gameplay experience

It's an ELEVATOR pitch.

The point is you should be able to pitch the idea during the time it takes for an elevator to go up a few floors.

So keep it FOCUSED on the MAIN selling points

Game Vision

HOW DO YOU KILL A BEAST THE SIZE OF A PLANET?

How do you kill a creature big enough to have swallowed our world, adapting to everything humanity has every thrown at it?

It will take **millions of players** using every ounce of skill on the battlefield, coordinating strikes where it hurts, sharing resources, intelligence and strategy.

This is 3rd person action on a Massively Multiplayer Online scale. Killing the beast is **the world's biggest boss fight.**

https://www.hellblade.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/RazerGDD_01_Overview.pdf

MARKET

- Target Audience
- Target Platforms
- Market Analysis

Translates to:

- Why is the game worth making?

- Who is going to buy the game?

- How big of a market is it reaching?
  - Is it a niche?
  - Is anyone else in it?
  - Which platforms?

- Why is now a good time?
  - *No other similar game is planned to ship at the same time*
  - *There hasn't been many games like this recently*
  - *Or, the genre trend is becoming popular*
  - *…*

Target Audience has to be specific. "Everyone" is not a target. Age range, genders, type of gamers, students/employed etc…
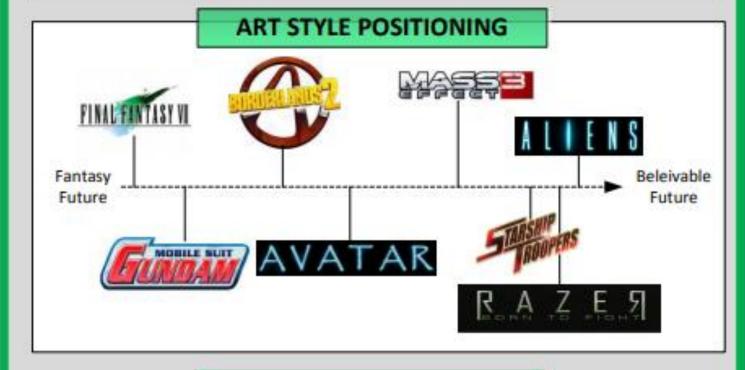
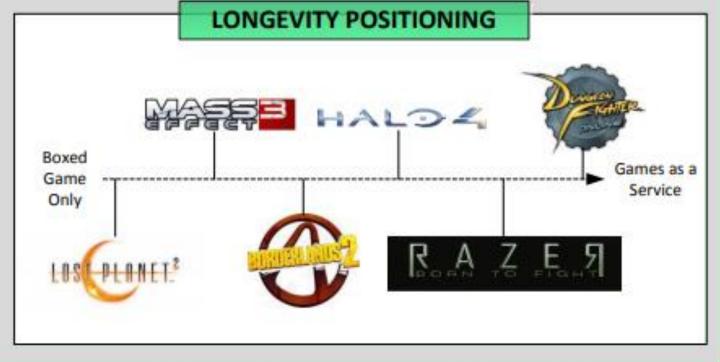## Target Market

Primary: Action/Sci-fi Blockbuster gamers

- Core gamers who are fans of Action/Sci-fi games.
- Medium male bias, aged 16-40.
- Will buy "must have" titles.
- Need for instant action and gratification.
- Eagerness to delve into worlds and stories.
- Regular online players.

Secondary: Hardcore Online players

- Hardcore gamers who are fans of deep mechanics and limitless customization.
- Heavy male bias, aged 16-40.
- Will buy games that promise deep exploration and the chance of earning elite online status.

Positioning

META GAME POSITIONING

ART STYLE POSITIONING

LONGEVITY POSITIONING
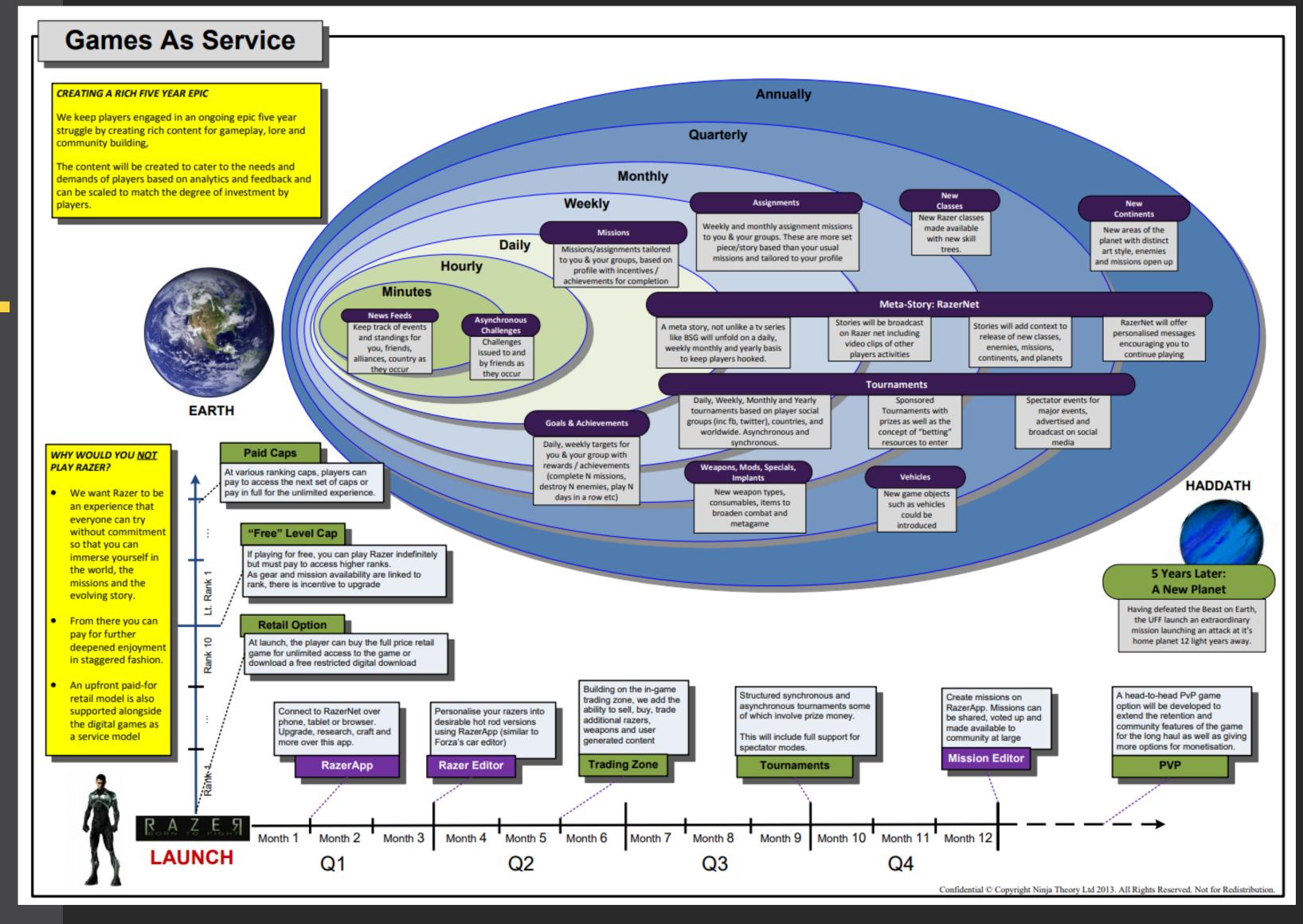
BUSINESS

- Monetization

- Use of IP

- Business Strategy

Translates to:

- How are YOU going to make money?
- How are you going to reinvest the benefits?
- How is the PUBLISHER going to make money?
- How is that going to create a long term dev relationship with the publisher?
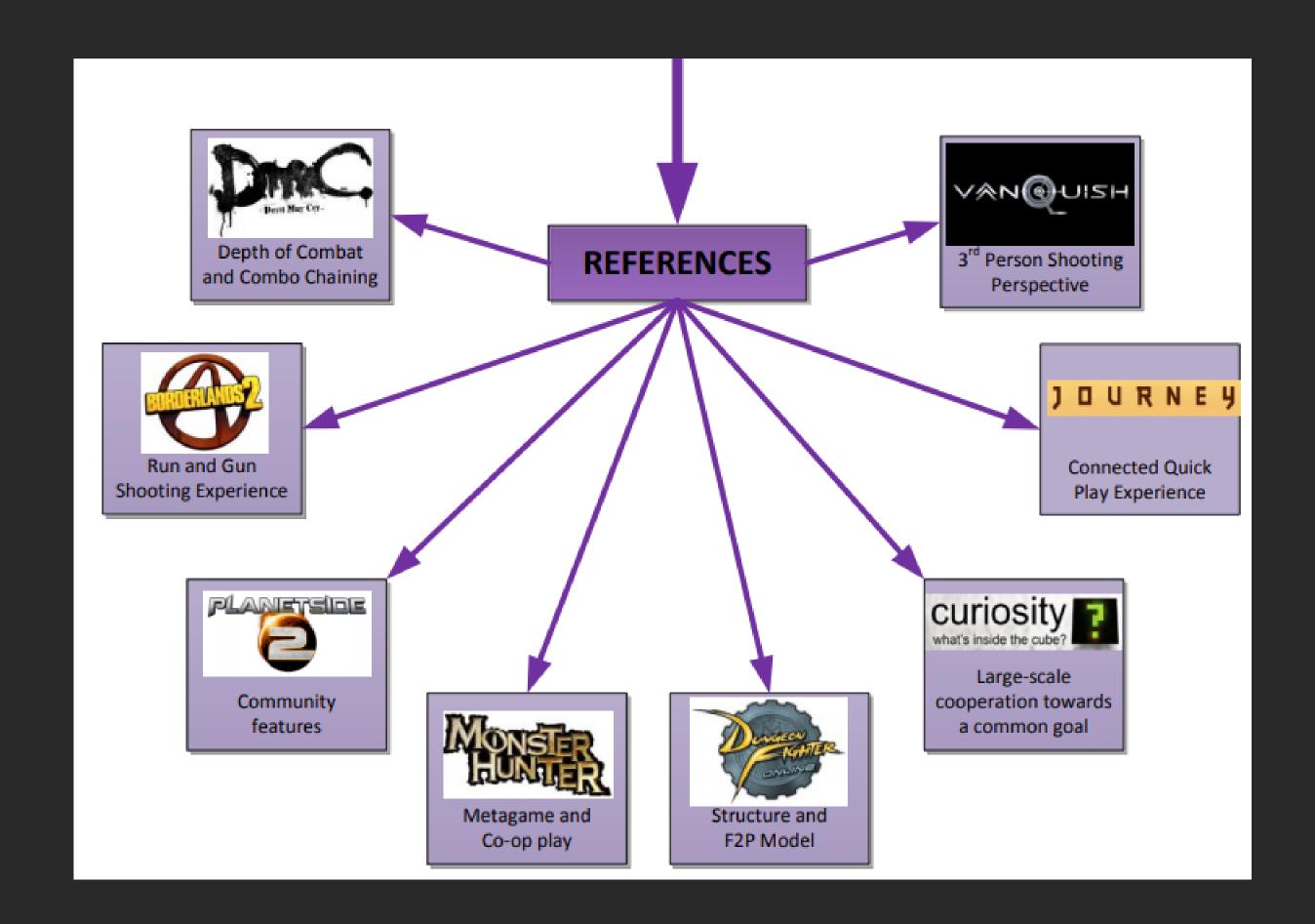
COMPETITION

- Any competitors

- Competitors strengths

- Competitors weaknesses

- What makes YOUR game better?

Translates to:

- Who else is in that market niche? Any existing game that taps into the market and genre of your pitch?
- What do they offer? What is good about what they offer? Are they doing anything differently?
- What are they doing that isn't working, or not getting them the whole market? What (and how) can you do it better?
- What is your magic ingredient? What makes you better than competition? Different/unique? (unique gameplay/features?, are you adding a twist to the genre?)

Your game will always be compared to existing competitors, so you must make sure you've analysed the competition before starting production.

It's easy to say "it's dark souls but better", but you better make sure it's WAY better or it is going to get destroyed in reviews. Also be humble, a small indie team has very small chances of doing better than an experienced AAA studio who has been doing that genre for years

https://www.hellblade.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/RazerGDD_01_Overview.pdf

TEAM

- Key Members
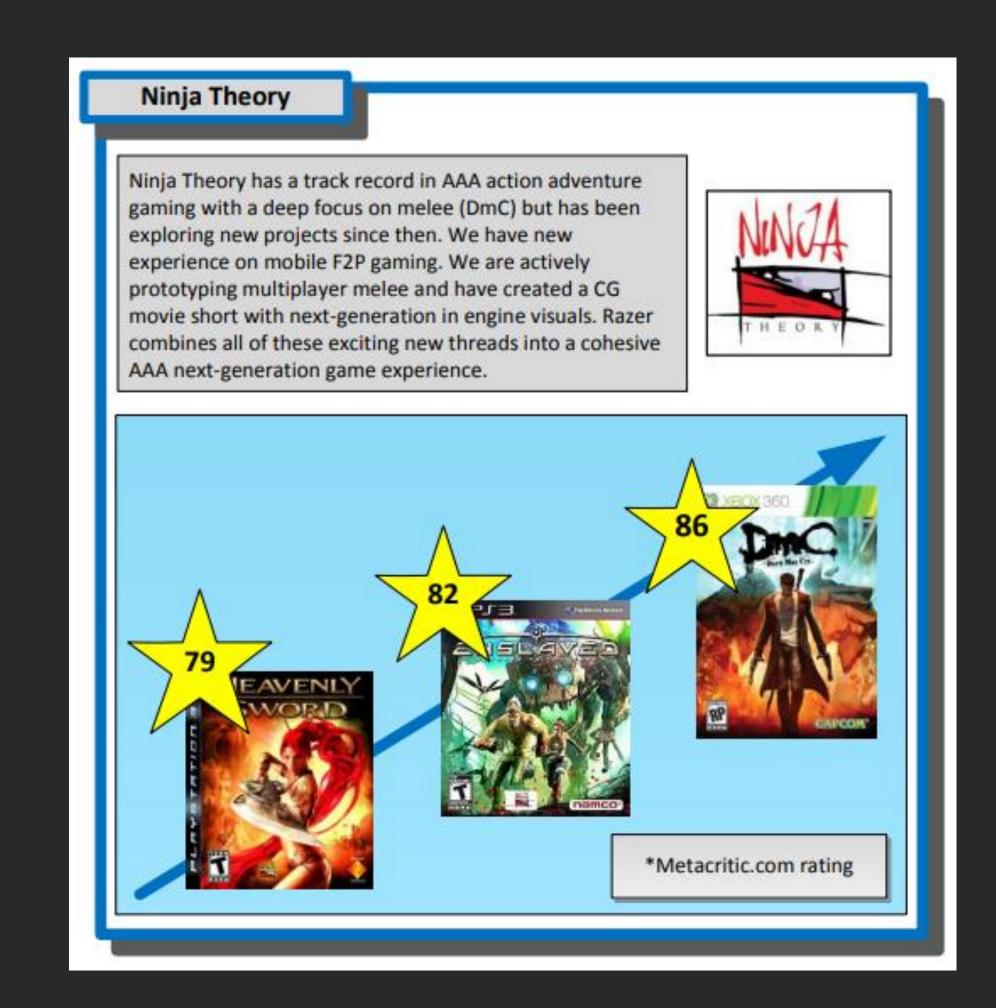- Past Achievements
- Team ramp up requirements

Translates to:

- List the key members of the team (publishers don't care about every single members of your 15 people team, they just want to know the key members) and list any previous experience the key members have
- What the team has previously achieved (any game released or not, prototype…) anything that can show them the team can actually get it done
- If you need more team members, or your team is not complete yet, list all the positions you will need, so they know what to expect.

The point of this is not to lie about your ability, but to:

1) Show them the team actually has the required human power to make the game in time.
2) Inform them of any additional team members in the budget

Even if a game concept is amazing and perfect, it doesn't mean anything if you don't have a good team to actually pull this off

ALWAYS include gameplay/target videos or builds in a pitch, nowadays publisher don't tend to bother without any of these
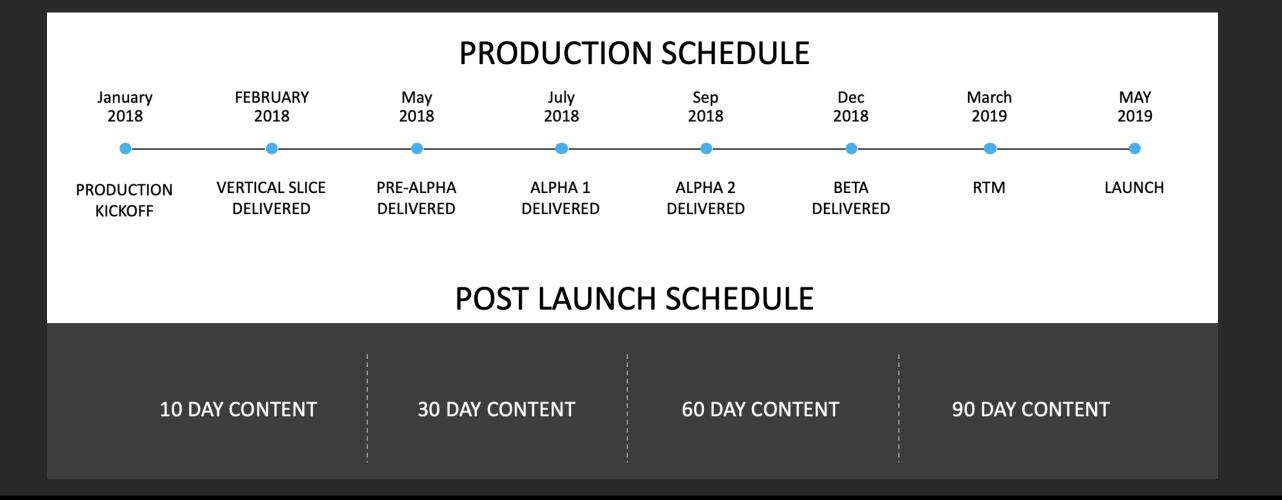
PROGRESS/STATUS

- Current project status

- Existing progress

- Milestones schedule

Translates to:

- Where is the project at right now? Is it only an idea? Or has it been through iterations already? Have you gone through pre production already? Prototyping? Do you have an alpha?

- If the game has already gone through iteration phases, 100% show any result you have from these past iterations. Pitches with builds or gameplay videos get way more attention than just slides.

- Get an estimation of the time required to complete the project, listing every milestone on the way, with passing criteria's.

Be conservative in your schedule and don't try to make it look like you can finish this in 3 months. Be realistic, things WILL go wrong at some point.

PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

January 2018	FEBRUARY 2018	May 2018	July 2018	Sep 2018	Dec 2018	March 2019	MAY 2019
PRODUCTION KICKOFF	VERTICAL SLICE DELIVERED	PRE-ALPHA DELIVERED	ALPHA 1 DELIVERED	ALPHA 2 DELIVERED	BETA DELIVERED	RTM	LAUNCH

POST LAUNCH SCHEDULE

10 DAY CONTENT	30 DAY CONTENT	60 DAY CONTENT	90 DAY CONTENT

Gameplay target video, Experience trailer, and UE4 procedural landscape art test for Razer

BUDGET

For publishers this is the most important part of your pitch, do not underestimate it. They need to know all of this.

- Existing funds
- Resources Required
- Estimated Budget
- Budget use

Translates to:

- Do you have any fund already? Grants/fundraising etc…
- What resources will you need, list everything out: salaries, equipment, software licenses, expenses etc..
- How much you estimate everything to add up to
- How you will use the budget you're asking for

Don't go too far with crazy spreadsheets etc… all you need is a list of what you need and a chart that shows your expenses by category vs expected sales/revenue

Art Personnel	Number	Monthly Rate	# of Months	Cost
Lead Artist	1	$8,000	24	$1,92,000
Concept Artist	1	$6,000	10	$60,000
World Builder	5	$6,000	12	$3,60,000
Object Artist	3	$6,000	8	$1,44,000
Animator	2	$6,000	8	$96,000
Design Personnel				
Lead Designer	1	$8,000	24	$1,92,000
Designer	4	$6,000	18	$4,32,000
Writer	1	$6,000	6	$36,000
Engineering Personnel				
Lead Engineer	1	$8,000	24	$1,92,000
Networking Engineer	2	$6,000	16	$1,92,000
Sound Engineer	1	$6,000	12	$72,000
Tools Engineer	3	$6,000	18	$3,24,000
AI Engineer	2	$6,000	12	$1,44,000
Production Personnel				
Producer	1	$8,000	24	$1,92,000
Associate Producer	1	$6,000	18	$1,08,000
QA Personnel				
Lead QA Analyst	1	$8,000	24	$1,92,000
Tester	6	$6,000	10	$3,60,000
GRAND TOTAL	36	$1,12,000	268	$32,88,000

Hardware	Number	Rate	Cost
Computers	36	$3,000	$1,08,000
Console Development Kits	18	$10,000	$1,80,000
Graphics Cards	14	$300	$4,200
DVDs	200	$2	$400
Software			
Perforce	36	$750	$27,000
3DSMax	9	$4,000	$36,000
Photoshop	3	$600	$1,800
Visual C++	9	$3,000	$27,000
Licensing Fees			
Planet Utopia Licensing Fee	1	$1,00,000	$1,00,000
External Vendors			
Voiceover	1	$60,000	$60,000
Music	1	$20,000	$20,000
Cinematics	1	$1,00,000	$1,00,000
Localization	4	$30,000	$1,20,000
Food			
Snacks	12	$200	$2,400
Late Night Dinners	24	$200	$4,800
Shipping			
International Postage	1	$300	$300
FedEx	1	$500	$500
GRAND TOTAL			$7,92,400

The Game Production Toolbox
By Heather Maxwell Chandler

TIPS

How to not make it boring

EMAILING PITCHES

Pitching by email should be kept even more focused and to the point.

The key points remain:

- Team

- Game elevator pitch

- **VISUALS** target/gameplay video/build

- Budget needed

- Market/Competition

Put yourself in the publisher's shoes, they receive thousands of these a day.
Try to stick out of the lot, look professional, add eye catching visuals, keep it short (no walls of text), try to be unique/different

https://venturebeat.com/2018/05/24/the-indiebeat-tips-from-publishers-and-how-to-pitch-to-them/

PITCH CONTENT

VISUALS

Add visuals, SERIOUSLY!

- Concept art
- Gameplay sketches
- Diagram/Charts instead of long text.
- Videos of visual target, or gameplay target
- Video of live gameplay
- Video of a build or prototype

BUILD/TARGET VIDEO

Increase your chances, don't pitch too early.

Most publishers will expect a prototype or some playable version of the game

- Add a link to a playable build, even if it's still greybox. Important is how it plays
- Add videos of art or gameplay test, or fake targets
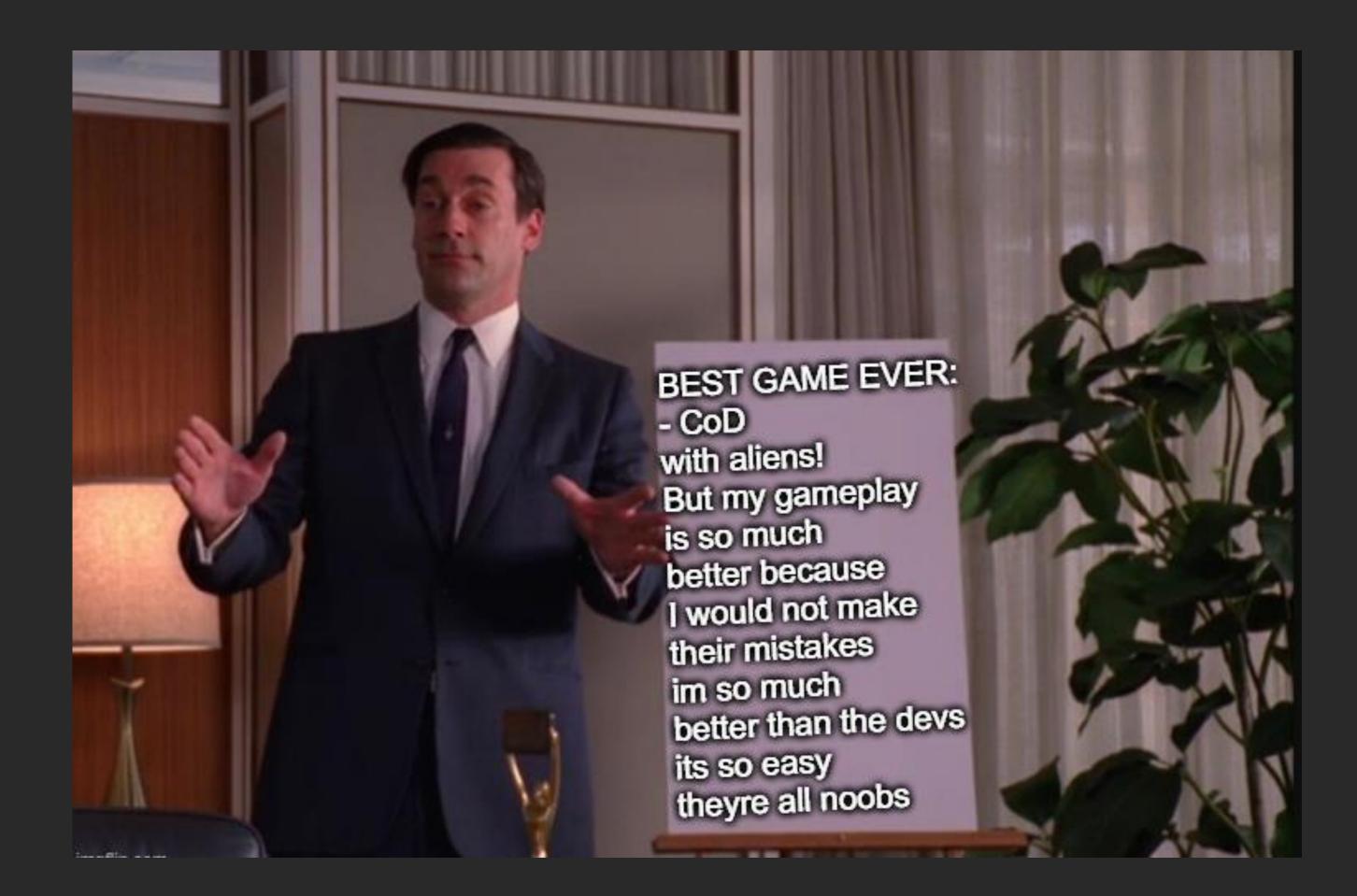
PRESENTING

GET PUMPED!

Try to be exciting when presenting, you should sound extremely stoked for people to be excited by what you're saying.

- Avoid literally reading the slide text, use it as reference
- Watch your voice tone, speak clearly don't be a boring robot you can barely hear.
- PRACTICE your presentation

BE PREPARED FOR ANYTHING

- Be prepared for questions, you need to be professional and able to answer any question with expertise.
- Don't take things personally. People will often give feedback or suggest changes, just take the feedback and thank them for it. (see previous lectures)
- Don't be defensive, if you receive feedback against something or the build doesn't work, the slides don't show up, remain professional and confident and just keep going, you know the game you can do without slides.
- Have backup plans. You could get a straight NO right at the second slide. Be prepared for it and have other pitches ready (it's hard to get a publisher's time)

https://venturebeat.com/2018/05/24/the-indiebeat-tips-from-publishers-and-how-to-pitch-to-them/

POST PRESENTATION

ASK FOR QUESTIONS/FEEDBACK

- Be open to feedback (even negative one) and thank for it
- Be prepared for requests to change scope and even direction

PROVIDE A SUMMARY DOCUMENT

It is common practice to provide a one page summary document so that publishers can easily discuss the project between them/other departments and have a easy quick reference to elements of the game.
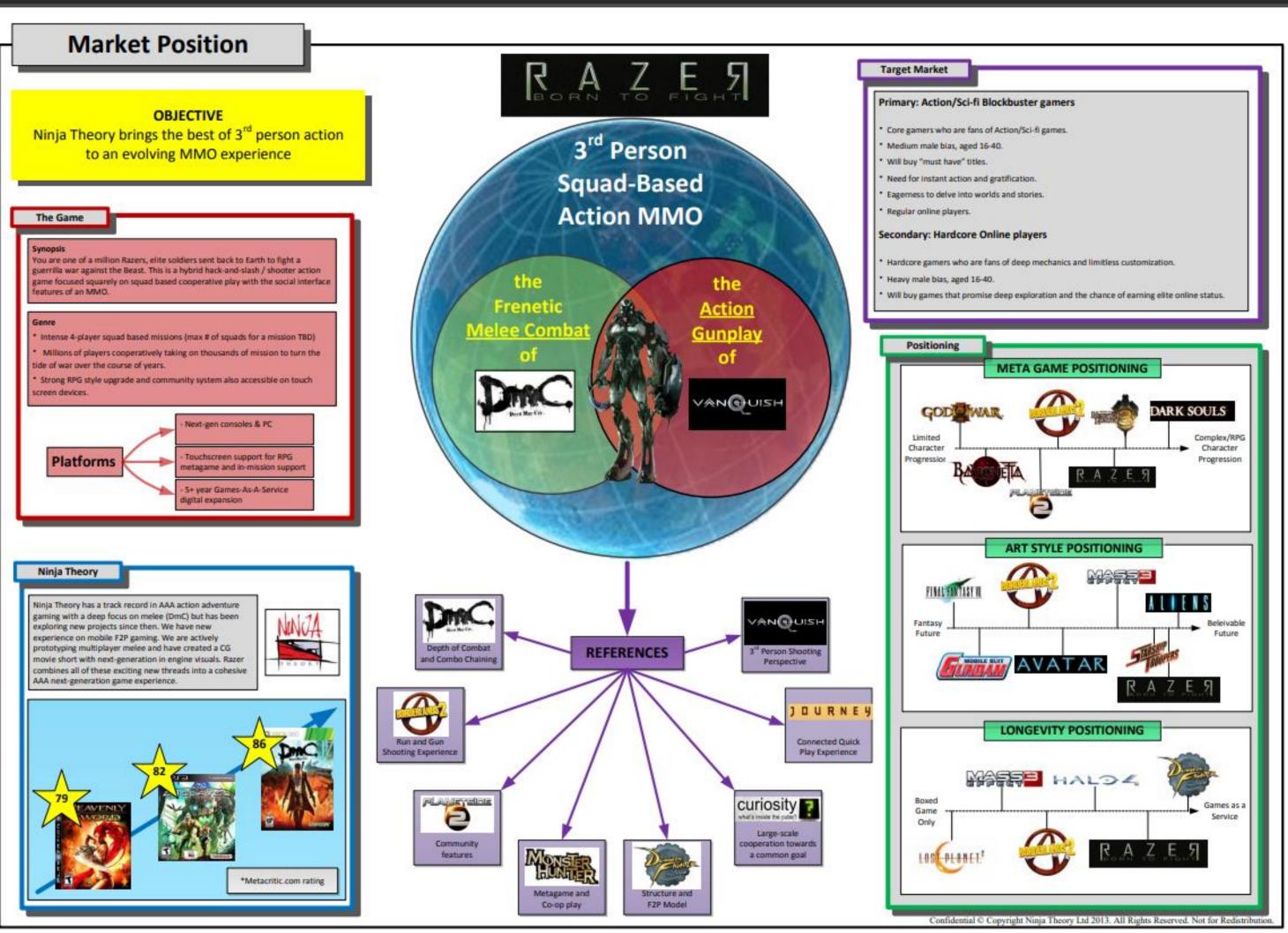It should contain a VERY BRIEF list of:

- Selling points
- Elevator pitch *(Game Premise, Core gameplay experience)*
- Target audience/platforms
- Team
- Market/Competition
- Budget

PROVIDE MATERIAL

- If you do have a playable build (or even a video), make sure you have provided them with a link or a USB of the build.
  Don't be lazy and give them project files that requires them to download Unity/Unreal and open the project themselves! (Yes it has happened!)
- Provide several printed copy of your pitch AND summary document
- Ask for a follow up (set up an appointment or time for them to provide more feedback/update)

https://www.hellblade.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/RazerGDD_01_Overview.pdf

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