

Research Assignment

Yacht Club Games

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Assignment 1.2

Yacht Club Games is a game developer and publisher founded in 2011 by former employees of WayForward Technologies. Yacht Club Games has seen amazing success for an indie startup, having released five successful cross-platform games in the past decade and becoming self-funding after the first game released.

Founding and Growth

Yacht Club Games was founded in 2011 on a shoestring budget with no publicly known external investors. The first and only external investment in Yacht Club Games came in 2013 when the Kickstarter crowdfunding campaign for Shovel Knight exceeded its goal of \$75,000 by over 300%. Aside from the initial crowdfunded investment, Yacht Club Games has been able to build upon their success and fund their subsequent games and ports internally. Yacht Club Games remains a small private company and doesn't rely on external funding to grow its development team or branch out into other services like game publishing.

Marketing Strategy

The marketing strategy of Yacht Club Games has mainly been comprised of two things. Yacht Club Games has always had a very open discourse with its audience, which has led to a lot of word-of-mouth advertising as well as influencer advertising. The sheer number of articles interviewing Yacht Club Games' founding members during the release window of Shovel Knight and still to this day is a testament to how much marketing is being done without the use of explicit advertisements. The second marketing strategy that Yacht Club Games began employing after the initial success of Shovel Knight was through cross-promotion and brand deals. The character of Shovel Knight appears in over a dozen other games, and as of March 2021 Yacht Club Games has even entered a cross-promotion deal with Arby's. Another integral element of Yacht Club Games' marketing strategy has been their consistency and style. The consistent art style of the studio and their messaging makes their advertisements very appealing to customers in their target market.

Challenges

The biggest challenge any startup faces is the initial and continued funding, which is also Yacht Club Games' biggest challenge. Yacht Club Games overcame the problem of initial funding in two ways. First, the studio's founders embodied the entrepreneurial spirit by cutting unnecessary cruft and wearing many hats, such as the studio's lead artist acting as community manager and being responsible

for finding a health insurance provider for the company (Loughry, 2019). Second, Yacht Club Games overcame the challenge of initial funding by seeking crowdfunding via Kickstarter to complete their first game, which became a huge success.

References

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