



# Marketing Plan

## Introduction

The growth plan of Sad Pumpkin Games is a slow-rolling advancement of content and budget, and the marketing plan will follow the same paradigm. Each stage of the growth plan has its own corresponding marketing strategy and budget which builds onto the marketing plan of the previous stages. The aim of this tiered plan is to ensure the appropriate level of marketing is applied to both Sad Pumpkin Games and the individual game titles as they grow and to prevent the over-expenditure of assets.

## Stage 1 – Ideation and Identification

The first stage of Sad Pumpkin Games growth plan focused on building and testing the tools and frameworks that will be used in later stages to quickly iterate on game prototypes and release small games quickly and on minimal budgets. Along with developing tools, this stage is when the founding team will be identifying and researching communities of gamers in order to target games to them. This stage has a flexible timeline which extends for as long as is necessary to build the appropriate tooling. Stage one is pre-seed capital, which means the budget will all be out-of-pocket for the founders and is severely limited.

The marketing plan for stage one is primarily focused on creating a digital footprint and fostering the growth of the brand and community before any products are released. This includes the creation of corporate social media accounts on the major networks like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram which can cross-post with one another in order to spread news and information easily with the audience. Additionally, creating a company website and registering accounts under the company's name on the major game distribution platforms will

streamline efforts in future stages. The market identification segment of this stage will help the team focus their grass-roots marketing effort on the target audience and will be incredibly helpful in future stages of the marketing plan in order to maximize the effect of the marketing budget.

Since this stage is pre-seed, the budget is incredibly small. As such, stage one will be primarily focused on spending as little money as possible while still slowly growing the marketing presence of Sad Pumpkin Games. Posting YouTube videos previewing progress on prototypes, posting developer blogs on the founders' experiences in the game development industry both professional and independent, and being present in forums and social media circles are all viable ways of ensuring that Sad Pumpkin Games has at least some presence before it attempts to release any product.

## Stage 2 – MVPs and User Research

Stage two of Sad Pumpkin Games' startup plan is the stage in which multiple minimum-viable-product games are launched into specific target markets in order to gauge interest and gain insight into users' behaviors and expectations.

The marketing plan for stage 2 of growth is to try and foster the growth of communities around the MVP games that are released by Sad Pumpkin Games. Before each MVP is released there will be a series of setup steps for the title, including the creation of social profiles, subdomains under the main Sad Pumpkin Games website, and the creation of store pages on the major game distribution platforms. These profiles and pages will be used to market the upcoming releases and engage with the target communities prior to the launch of each MVP by posting status updates, developer blogs, concepts, and community polls. Engaging the audience and making them feel heard by the development team will hopefully provide a significant boost to the marketing strategy in exchange for the minimal time and effort investment.

The budget for marketing in stage two, like in stage one, continues to be very minimal. This minimal budget will be counteracted by the cross-promotion and cross-posting of the individual MVP games' and Sad Pumpkin Games' social media accounts. Any profits that do come in through the multiple MVP titles will be reinvested into marketing targeted towards cohorts which overlap with the current communities for those MVP titles to grow those communities incrementally.

## Stage 3 – Iteration and Hiring

Stage three of Sad Pumpkin Games' development plan is entered when multiple of stage two's MVP games find communities and those communities are growing at a rate faster than the founders can keep up with. This stage is the first where outside funding is sought, and the first where Sad Pumpkin Games has a chance to see a nominal profit.

The marketing plan of stage three is focused on the growth of communities and iteration on the successful titles launched in stage two. A significant portion of any profits brought in from the successful titles will be reinvested into the marketing efforts for those titles and for Sad Pumpkin Games, as well as into bolstering other less-successful titles which show promise but have yet to develop a sustainable growth. As the social media presence and community engagement from stage two will already be in place at this point, stage three will focus its budget into targeted advertising campaigns through ad servers like Google Ads. As Sad Pumpkin Games' overall strategy is to develop a catalog of small, self-sustaining games and not a single cash-cow product, the specific marketing strategy is primarily focused growth of the brand and communities versus the growth of any specific title.

## Stage 4 – Expansion and Continued Growth

Once Sad Pumpkin Games has proven itself capable of funding itself through the games developed in the prior stages, the final stage is to expand the studios offerings and provide continual improvements for all the games that maintain active community engagement. The marketing strategy for this stage of growth partially mirrors that of stage three by reinvesting a fixed percentage of each title's profits back into the marketing budget for that title and for the studio as a whole and growing the communities each title is developed for. In addition to the reinvestment into existing titles and communities, stage four's marketing plan sets aside a percentage of the marketing budget of each title in preparation for advertising upcoming games. This extra budget pool for new game marketing will primarily be used for strong, targeted marketing campaigns immediately before and after a new title's release in order to seed interest and engage the new target community. Tying the marketing budget to the profits for each title will guarantee that as titles grow in profit the marketing budget will correspondingly increase.

## Conclusion

The four stages of Sad Pumpkin Games's growth and marketing plan are in preparation for the far future, which leaves the specific marketing strategies and implementations greatly reliant on assumptions and expectations. While this is less than ideal, we believe that the primary approach of tying marketing budgets to individual title profits and focusing on community-driven marketing is a fitting strategy for the type of studio that Sad Pumpkin Games intends to be. Sad Pumpkin Games' success is intrinsically tied to fostering the growth of communities around games through constant, open communication with those communities, which feeds directly into the grass-roots marketing strategy of reinvesting into community growth.

## References

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