**Team Liquid**

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**Maintenance Plan**

**Introduction:**

This maintenance plan will take a look at the yearly cost of maintaining the game created by Team Liquid. It assumes that all three members will continue to work for the team and that all costs are costs associated with being in Lawrence, KS. Any other assumptions used for calculations of costs will be noted at the time of the cost. The maintenance plan will look at the costs for the team in a variety of areas ranging from salaries for the developers to the cost of advertising and spreading the word about the game to the cost of living for such a small team. Ultimately, many of these costs would be incorrect in the current situation, but this will be discussed at the time of each cost.

**Personnel Costs**

As is currently stands, the team consists of three developers. As stated by Sokanu.com,

Video Game Designers earn a median salary of $71,150 per year. Salaries typically start from $44,050 and go up to $108,490.1

This is a pretty wide range of salaries and looks comes out to about $21 per hour. Since the team is just starting out and no one actually has a degree in the field yet and isn’t quite marketable outside of the original team, the team will assume a cut in pay and earn something closer to $14 per hour, which works out to about $29,000 per year per developer.

Already, it is apparent that the current cost of maintaining the game would be a little outside of the current funds for the team so an even more realistic wage is needed. Using “Living Wage Calculator” by Carey Anne Nadeu at MIT provides a better look at the living wage for an adult. The calculation for Lawrence, KS suggests a Living Wage for 1 adult to be about $10 per hour with a poverty wage at $5 per hour and minimum wage at $7.25 per hour. Seeing as no one wants to actually live in poverty and there are variety of efforts to boost the minimum wage in the US, the low ends of the calculations will use the $10 per hour wage. At 2080 hours for a full time job in one year, this works out to $20,800 per year per developer.

This takes care of the team as it currently stands, but where the team struggled the most was in the animation and graphic design aspect of the game. To fix this, the cost of maintenance will assume that an animator would be hired to help with this part of the game. Since this person would need to be professional that is not tied to the game and has other opportunities for employment a more appropriate wage would be necessary. The average starting salary for an animator in Lawrence is at around $48,000 per year2. Since this in average and the budget is already tight, the team would probably look to hire in a graduate around $45,000 per year.

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| **Category** | **Yearly Cost** |
| Current Team Salaries | $62,400-$87,000 |
| Animator | $45,000 |

**Advertising**

In order to sell the game to be able to support the maintenance plan that is being proposed, an advertising campaign is needed to spread the word about the game. The first thing would be creating a site about the game and the company/team that is developing the game. A site on Weebly costs $25 per month3 when paid annually and would be maintained by the development team since it is a site that is able to be run with little to no web development skills. This leads to $300 per year in website hosting.

The next step would be showcasing the product at events. A 10’ x 10’ booth at PAX South costs $417 per day for 3 days4. Assuming the team needs as much exposure as possible, PAX East has the same setup for $465 per day and PAX South is assumed to be around the same cost. This leads to about $1500 of booth time, plus travel and accommodations at $100 in food per day per even and $300 per night per event and $500 in travelling (driving to save from the high costs of flying). So it is $2000 for booths and travel and $3600 in food and room which brings it to $5600 per year in showcasing. This number will be rounded up to $6000 per year to try and accommodate for any issues that may arise in traveling.

Beyond the booth itself, gear is needed for the conventions. To avoid constant rental costs, the team would buy TV’s outright and bring personal laptops for showcasing. Plus a table and a sign are needed. This adds about $1000 in equipment for the year.

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| **Category** | **Yearly Cost** |
| Website on Weebly | $300 |
| PAX events | $7000 |

**Day-to-Day**

Currently the team is three college students and a hired in animator is projected. So the location for development could easily take place in an apartment with all three members living in the apartment. This would be cheaper than all members living individually. The average cost of a 3 Bedroom apartment in Lawrence is $1200 per month5. This creates $14,400 per year for living and working space. Then with an assumed $100 per month in electricity and office supplies for the project along with $10 per month in bank fees and $50 per month in rental insurance6, there are $160 per month in office costs for maintaining the project. This works out to $1920, which is rounded up to $2000 per year for unexpected costs.

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| **Category** | **Yearly Cost** |
| Rent | $14,000 |
| Office Expenses | $2000 |

**Game Hosting**

This doesn’t have any cost associated, but is an important part of the project. A big question is always about how a product is going to be deployed. Luckily there is a platform readily available for indie game developers called Steam Greenlight. This service only requires an upfront fee with no monthly fees to host the game. Steam just takes a 30% cut of the sales of the game.7 Therefore, there is no foreseen maintenance cost for hosting and distribution of the game.

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| **Category** | **Yearly Cost** |
| Distribution | $0 |

**Total Annual Cost**

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| **Category** | **Yearly Cost** |
| Current Team Salaries | $62,400-$87,000 |
| Animator | $45,000 |
| Website on Weebly | $300 |
| PAX events | $7000 |
| Rent | $14,000 |
| Office Expenses | $2000 |
| **Total** | **$130,000 - $154,600** |

**Conclusion**

As shown above, the total yearly cost for developing the game totals in at around $130,000. This is a pretty high number that would require a large amount of sales in a game that arguably has a lot of work required before it is marketable. Clearly there is the option to not hire an animator and take a pay cut and not attend PAX events, but for the sake of looking at an ideal situation of full time development of a full game, this is what can be expected.

**Sources**

1. <https://www.sokanu.com/careers/video-game-designer/salary/Kansas/> pulled from US Dept. Bureau of Labor Statistics but page is gone now
2. <https://www1.salary.com/KS/Cartoonist-Animator-salary.html>
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6. <http://www.siegesloth.com/single-post/2016/04/12/The-Funding-and-Costs-of-Making-Our-First-Indie-Game>
7. <http://www.eurogamer.net/articles/2013-07-10-sega-sues-bankrupt-thq-for-630k-over-company-of-heroes-2-pre-orders>