

Airships: Conquer the Skies Marketing Plan

Version 2, January 4, 2018. Confidential - please do not share without permission.

Current State

Sales of the game have been mostly driven by a few powerful YouTube channels. Most importantly, Stuff+, who has made dozens of videos over the years, including one that had 180 000 views. Other channels with a large number of views include Lathland, Deluks and Bluedrake42 in English as well as Dan Field in French and 皮老 in Chinese.

The game appears to be a good fit for YouTube because it allows channels to create their own content and tell their own stories. Viewers can see the large number of possibilities in the game and purchase it for themselves. This is the opposite of cases like "That Dragon, Cancer", where to watch a video of a game is to basically consume the game's entire content.

Written media, on the other hand, has had very little impact. The game has been featured in a local newspaper and a few small websites, but no larger outlets like Rock Paper Shotgun, Polygon, PC Gamer or similar. The main reason for this is likely the game's early access status as well as a lack of media connections.

Apart from spikes caused by popular videos, sales have grown mostly organically.

Plan Summary

- Influencer marketing, especially YouTube. YT channels have driven a large proportion of sales so far. I will hire Nevaly, an influencer marketing company, to handle the majority of connections, and supplement this with connections via Bluedrake42, a YouTuber I have worked with previously.
- Activating existing users via email, forums, and discord to spread the word, participate in events, and generate content.
- Careful use of social media channels (Twitter, Reddit, Imgur). These are very sensitive to how things are presented, and there's a limit to how much this can be pushed.
- "Traditional" marketing: media outreach, etc. via Evolve PR.
- Showing the game at two major events in 2018, ideally one in the US and one in Asia. Which ones these will be depends on whether applications are accepted.
- Online tournaments administered by myself, with commentary videos on replays of important matches.

Timeline

Assuming a release date of April 3. All dates provisional.

January 8

- Announce GIF contest, rewarding players for good game footage with keys.
- Formally hire Evolve PR. (CHF 9 000)
- Apply to Europe-based events and awards.
- Commission cinematic trailer images (CHF 2 500)
- Apply to BitSummit Kyoto.

February 1

Indie Arena Booth decision expected. This will determine whether we're going to PAX East.

February 20

- First strategic multiplayer version expected. Media and mailing list push to get people playing the new multiplayer system.
- Final decision on release date.

March 1

Begin influencer marketing through Nevaly (CHF 12 000) and Bluedrake42 (CHF 5 000).

March 10

Create and distribute influencer challenge level. Influencers who make a video of them completing the challenge get keys, etc.

March 19-23

GDC. Not exhibiting the game, but promoting it one on one.

March 29

Immediate pre-release push. Activate existing user base via mailing list, forums, and Discord chat to help promote the game.

April 3

Release day. Launch trailer. "Defeat the developer" online challenge.

April 5-8

PAX East with Indie Megabooth, if approved. (CHF 4300: CHF 1 800 for flights, 1 500 for the booth, 300 for materials, 700 for accomodation)

April 10

First formal online tournament. Commentary videos on replays of important matches.

May 3

Surprise "direct ship control" extra feature release.

May 12-13

If accepted, BitSummit Kyoto. (CHF 3100: CHF 2 500 for flights, booth is free, 300 for materials, 300 for the hostel)

May 31

Partnership with Nevaly and Bluedrake42 ends.

June 3

Announce Naval Expansion.

June 31

Partnership with Evolve PR ends.

July

Potentially going to China Joy Shanghai. (CHF 4800: CHF 2 200 for flights, estd. 2 000 for the booth, 300 for materials, 300 for the hostel)

August

Potentially going to Gamescom with Indie Arena Booth. (CHF 5600: CHF 600 for flights, EUR 3 500 for the booth, CHF 300 for materials, EUR 400 for the hostel)

September

If PAX East fails, may apply to go to PAX West instead.

November

Potentially going to g-star Busan. (CHF 4200: CHF 1 800 for flights, estd. 1 800 for the booth, 300 for materials, 300 for the hostel)

December

Potentially participating in the Steam Winter Sale as the first major sale event.

Costs

Estimated CHF. Not including labor costs.

Evolve PR	9000
Cinematic Trailer	2500
Influencer Marketing	17000
Two Major Events	10000
Total	38500

Targeted YouTube Channels

Name	Related Content Shown	Subscribers
Flabaliki	Management and sims	242 000
iSorrowproductions	Strategy	119 000
Many a True Nerd	Indie, management, sims	275 000
Quill18	Strategy	445 000
Seniac	Simulation, building	187 000
SplatterCatGaming	Rimworld, Prison Architect	391 000
TheXPGamers	Indie PC Games	307 000
WeaselZone	Rimworld, Prison Architect	399 000
Mr Falcon	Indie, FTL	112 000
BaronVonLetsPlay	Battle Sims	843 000
Blitz + network	Totally Accurate Battle Simulator, Indie	1 036 000