**15 Things Square Enix Can Do To Fix Final Fantasy**

* BY [**TRISTAN JURKOVICH**](https://www.thegamer.com/author/t_jurkovich/)

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*Final Fantasy XV* was an amazing game, and it renewed my faith in the franchise. However, it still has a long way to go before everything is right again. My biggest concern is the lack of a unified vision for the *Final Fantasy* series. It’s seen more as a cash cow than anything else. Square Enix doesn’ to seem care about the integrity of the series since a new spinoff is announced and or released every month if not more. That may be an extreme exaggeration, but let me give you a history lesson to put things into perspective. Then we’ll see if I’m crazy, or not.

Since its debut in 1987, the main series was released at a steady pace up until the launch of *Final Fantasy XI* in 2002. In fifteen years they made eleven games, which is pretty impressive not to mention spinoffs. From here, though, the series took a dive for various reasons. In the same time span of fifteen years, 2002 to 2017, Square Enix made only four main entries. As if that fact wasn’t mind blowing enough, let’s compare spinoffs. Between now and 2002 they launched over thirty games across multiple consoles, handhelds, and mobile devices. There’s way more than thirty, but I lost count after that point when my brain exploded. So yeah, *Final Fantasy* has some problems. I could blame it on all these spinoffs, but that’s only a small fraction of the problem. Fear not because I’ve got some suggestions on how Square Enix can make *Final Fantasy XVI* the best game yet.

**15**Bring Back The Fantasy Setting

An obvious choice to bring back dormant fans would be to pull a *Final Fantasy IX*. Take the series back to its fantasy roots. That was sort of the idea with *Bravely Default: Flying Fairy* on 3DS. It’s basically a reboot of *Final Fantasy* in all but name, and it’s fantastic. At that point, *Final Fantasy* was even worse off than it is now so I was okay with *Bravely Default* hypothetically taking over as the flagship franchise, but they muddled things up with the second game. Go figure. That’s another article of complaints just waiting to happen. Anyway, yes, bring us back to classic *Final Fantasy*. That’s an easy first step. And yes I do know *Final Fantasy XIV* did that, but that’s an MMO, so I’m not counting it.

**14**Bring Back Towns

You know what I miss most about *Final Fantasy*? The towns. Yeah *Final Fantasy XV* brought them back to some extent, but most of the locations were just pit stops. Good, but it can be better. If you don’t make the overall world unique, at least give culture to each new town. Draw from *Final Fantasy VII* for inspiration. Each town had a distinct vibe to it from the desolate city of Midgar to the red cliffs of Cosmo Canyon to the snowy fields of Icicle Inn. That’s just a very brief example. You don’t even have to make the towns gigantic. Those towns weren’t and I’m thankful for that. Keep them simple, but make them more than truck stops.

**13**No Multimedia Projects

One of the more baffling aspects of *Final Fantasy XV's* long development cycle was the announcement of its multimedia projects. My immediate reaction was a big screw you to Square Enix. Just give us the game! No one (and I mean literally NO ONE) asked for any of that. Why did you think putting time into all this side projects was going to make up for your crummy time management? You can build on the world afterwards, but then and only then. Talk about counting your chickens before they're hatched. Geez, Louise. So yeah don’t do that again and don’t announce a release date with an arbitrary red button. You can [hear me rant about this more](https://youtu.be/emDW4PlMbxc) in a video I produced after the *Final Fantasy XV* unveiling event. Good times.

**12**No Patches On Day 1

Your game should work on day one. I'm not just talking about glitches either. Those are fine as long as they don't affect my gameplay and it saves. A little jank never hurt anyone (especially if it's hilarious). Sure, let my character momentarily start floating off the ground. That's okay, but I shouldn’t, at any point, feel like this product is unfinished like the last third of *Final Fantasy XV*. You took over ten years to release *Final Fantasy XV,* and it still wasn’t completely done? So what do you announce? A list of free updates to fix everything. Good on you for doing that, but that shouldn't have even been a problem in the first place. Great game overall, but it’ll also always be one of the craziest train wrecks in video game history.

**11**Job Systems

Unless you count *Final Fantasy XIV,*a class system hasn’t been used in the main series since *Final Fantasy V.*That was in 1992! *Bravely Default* and *Final Fantasy Tactics* perfected what was already pretty great back then, but they are spinoffs. It’s time for a main entry to put a twist on the Job System once again. Gaining levels is one thing, but giving players one more thing to level up, like a class, makes battles more enticing. The variety alone can create an endless array of strategies for all types of gamers. If you hate magic, fine. Beef up your team with Warriors, or the like. Hate melee, well that’s cool too. Wizard powers activate!

**10**Give It A Distinct Style

If you’re not going to turn it into a fantasy RPG then at the very least give the game a unique sense of style. Off the top of my head, I’d say go cel-shaded, but there are so many other RPGs that do that already like the *Tales* series. Best not to attract haters that would complain about copying. The same could be said for making it into a Western, *Wild Arms*, or a space opera, *Star Ocean*. They need something distinctive that hasn’t been done before. My solution? Send out scouts to various locations for inspiration. What about the tundra of Russia, or the deserts of Africa? There are so many gorgeous untapped locations at your disposal. It’d be expensive, yes, but it’d be worth it. Just stop development on your hundredth iOS game to save some dough.

**9** Your Party Should Be Relatable

Whether your party is lead by a woman, or a guy everyone else around them should be memorable. Give them flaws and little quirks, but don’t define a character by those traits either. My favorite cast on a whole is from *Final Fantasy IX*. Everyone from the main party to the sub-characters to the villains all show growth throughout the adventure. This is thanks to the Active Time Event system that let players warp around to other characters in order to play out little scenes. Just do that again. *Final Fantasy XV’s* cast was so weak because you had to watch a bunch of extra stuff, not in the game, in order to understand their backstories. Wrong way to do that Square Enix. All motivations for the characters should be clearly defined within the game.

**8**Less Melodrama, More Heart

*Final Fantasy XIII* was the worst offender of melodrama. In contrast to my favorite cast in *Final Fantasy IX,* I think this game has the worst cast. Sazh is the only character that doesn’t feel like he was ripped from an anime. Everyone else is so cliché and or annoying especially Hope. And I say this as someone who actually liked *Final Fantasy XIII*more than most by the way. This extends beyond characters too. Don’t turn the overall plot into a soap opera. Make it epic, but grounded. Give everyone and everything a reason to be part of your story. Write from the heart and don’t base anything off of trends. I better not see a fidget spinner, or hear any dubstep so help me God. Also, Squall sucks. Don't make an archetype like him again.

**7**An Ever Present Villain

Square Enix has developed some of the most iconic villains across all of their properties especially *Final Fantasy*. Sephiroth and Kefka chief among them. Creating a villain that is an ever-present threat gives the game stakes. It doesn’t matter if they’re trying to destroy the world, or simply take over a kingdom either. The antagonist could change over time too. *Final Fantasy IX,* to bring it up again, kept switching things up as there was always someone controlling another. It was twist after twist after twist. Don’t do that again exactly, but whomever you chose, again, just make sure that their presence embodies danger. Also don’t give them an angel wing, or silver hair either. A female villain could be pretty cool too since I already advised a female protagonist. Mother vs. Daughter? Sister vs. Sister? Girlfriend vs. Girlfriend? I think I’m just inputting porn suggestions now.

**6**Airships!

The exclamation point says it all. Please bring back airships. In turn, I guess that means I miss a true world map as well. Discovering new areas only accessible after you get new vehicles was always one of the best feelings in those games. An open world that was big, but not daunting. Now fast travel has become the only acceptable mode of transportation since these environments are too massive. Whatever happened to quality over quantity? Bigger doesn't always mean better. Scale back to an open-world with a more dense population of activities with a bunch of vehicles likes boats, buggies, and, of course, airships. I want this world to be filled with them too like in *Final Fantasy IX* and *Final Fantasy XII*.

**5**Make The Protagonist A Woman

Only two games in the main series have starred a female as the central hero. Terra from *Final Fantasy VI* and Lighting from *Final Fantasy XIII*. Bringing back a lady protagonist could show a sense of progression from the company. Better yet, what about a group of ladies? *Final Fantasy XV* had the boy band after all so what about a girl one? Also, don’t turn her into a sexual object. *NieR: Automata* is a recent game from them that comes to mind. Fantastic game — and 2B is an awesome heroine. However, you can look up her dress and there’s a trophy tied to that. Come on.

**4**A Mini Game Central To The Plot

For the most part, mini-games are tedious diversions we all do because the rewards are worth it. For example, the Chocobo Breeding in *Final Fantasy VII*. Amazing items, but damn does it take a long time. That's not to say there aren't good mini-games I gladly invested my time in. The two that come to mind is Tetra Master from *Final Fantasy IX*and Blitzball in *Final Fantasy X*. A third of my time was devoted to each of those diversions if not more. What's great is that they were introduced organically through the story. I want that again, but with what? Cards and racing have been done to death so not that. I think another good twist on a sport could be cool. Just don’t make it be about a phone game my bros play with me.

**3**Keep The Combat Action Oriented

Splice the action combat from *Final Fantasy XV* with the Job System, of course! It was the game’s best feature, and I don’t want it to go away anytime soon. Look. I love turn-based battle systems just as much as the next guy, but I’ve evolved past that for my console experiences. If it’s on a handheld sure give me a classic turn-based RPG any day, but playing one on a big screen TV isn’t appealing anymore. *Persona 5* looks great on the TV, but part of me really wanted it on the PS Vita because it’s still turn-based. Grinding just feels better on a portable. Preferences aside I think a class-based system with an action-oriented edge could be amazing. That certainly hasn’t been done before, right?

**2**Consult Alumni Like Sakaguchi And Uematsu

Now I’m not saying the father of *Final Fantasy*, Hironobu Sakaguchi, and the original composer, Nobuo Uematsu, should return in full force. They have their own stuff going on. Giving them some sort of input would be a nice incentive for classic fans to come back though. Have Sakaguchi design a character and Uematsu compose the new theme. My idea goes beyond that though to all of *Final Fantasy’s* alumni. Bring in a fresh director and have these legends advise him, or her. New blood is exactly what this series so just do that literally. You could even market it a series of developer diaries with the new director sitting down with Sakaguchi, Uematsu, Nomura, Tabata, and the list goes on. Boom! Done deal. Everybody wins.

**1**Don’t Take Ten Years Again

All and all this leads to the most important factor that I've already danced around. Square Enix, are you listening? DO NOT TAKE ANOTHER TEN YEARS! What I mean by that is don’t announce it before production has even begun. If it takes ten years to make that’s fine, but you shouldn’t talk about it until it’s ready to release. Pull a *Fallout 4* like Bethesda did. More importantly keep Tetsuya Nomura away from this project at all costs. Love his games, but that man does not understand the concept of time. I wished for a new director earlier, but seriously anyone will do as long as it’s not him. Phew, I'm exhausted. Ranting about *Final Fantasy* is an obsession of mine so thanks for sticking with me. If you want more of my opinions on *Final Fantasy,* I also [ranked them](https://www.thegamer.com/every-main-final-fantasy-game-ranked-from-worst-to-best/).