℅ An Indie Game Developer's Marketing Checklist

, The Must-Haves

/ A Website – Ideally, you should have one site for your company and another for each game you create. This way, gamers will be able to identify you by both your brand name and products.

/ A Development Blog – Whether you incorporate it into your main site or not, having a blog is essential. It allows gamers to track the progress of your game, and lets them see that you are, in fact, real human beings.

/ Facebook Account – Use your team's Facebook page to display media, share development stories and to connect with like-minded developers. When someone searches Google for your team, your Facebook page will be one of the top results, so keep it updated.

/ Twitter Account – Use Twitter as a secondary means of announcing news. You'll find that most gamers would rather glance at their Twitter feed than scour a bunch of websites. Just don't use Twitter to beg game journalists to review your game.

/ RSS Feed – Never a bad idea, and really simple to implement, an RSS feed will provide your fans with yet another way to view news regarding your company.

/ A Trailer – The single best way to entice gamers to buy your game is through filming a captivating trailer. It doesn't have to be overly flashy or dramatic, but it should leave viewers with a lasting impression of your game.

/ A Playable Demo - You'll need to have one of these to send to journalists, show off at conventions, and to let potential players download from your site.

, The Press Kit

/ Relevant Screenshots – Screenshots should showcase the very best your game has to offer. Avoid sending stills of your User Interface, Menus, and Game Over screens. Instead, try to capture your game's most magnificent moments.

/ Video – Most press kits include embedded YouTube videos, although some contain links to high-resolution downloads. As with screenshots, your videos should display critical gameplay sequences. Try to showcase the features that make your game special.

/ Press Coverage – This one is a bit of a Catch-22. The purpose of a press kit is to gain coverage, so how do you fill out this section if you don't have any? The simple answer is that you don't. Consider this section a work in progress.

/ Game Info sheet – This is a one page – and only one page – summary of your team. Keep it concise, factual and casual. Talk a bit about the history of your team, what other games you've developed and your current project. Break it down into sub-sections.

/ Fact Sheet – Provide links to your website, dev blog, Twitter and Facebook accounts, as well as your email address. List your prior releases (if any) with links to each game's homepage.

/ Logos and Awards – If you have a professional logo, there's no reason not to show it off - but realise most journalists won't care how good it is. If your game was recognized for any awards, display them as a simple list near the end of your kit.

/ Use presskit() (dopresskit.com) - an excellent, free resource for indie game developers who want to assemble a press kit, but don't know where to start. The program was created by indie developers for indie developers.

, Contacting the Press Via Email

/ The Subject Line – Don't use just the name of your game as the subject line of an email. Instead, ask yourself what sets your game apart from others in the genre, and use the answer as your subject line.

/ Avoid Bad Titles – "Hiro Fodder: A Blue Hope," "Hiro Fodder – A Game You Must Play," "16-bit RPG about to drop."

/ Use Better Titles – "Divergent Games releases first gameplay trailer for Hiro Fodder: A Blue Hope – a 16-bit, retro infused JRPG parody for the PC,"

/ The Structure - Keep your email short and to the point. If you can't prove that your game is newsworthy within a few sentences, the journalist will likely look for one that is. Focus on fun features of the game, interesting gameplay mechanics, and so on.

/ Use Bullet Points - The best way to relay the facts about your game is through short bullet points. They allow journalists to see vital information about your game. Release dates, price points, platforms and distribution channels should all be highlighted

/ The Tone - Keep your emails super casual. You're not applying for a job, so your email shouldn't read like a cover letter. Starting your email with the line "Hi [first name]" is a perfectly suitable way of addressing a journalist.

/ The Conclusion - Don't assume that the journalist knows you've attached a press kit, demo, etc, to the email. Use both the subject line and the last sentence to remind them that if they'd like to learn more about their game, they can view the attachments.

Who Should You Contact?

/ Rock, Paper, Shotgun – These guys run one of the biggest and more reputable gaming sites on the planet. But, unlike other big name sites, they'll actually take the time to preview indie games.

/ Kotaku – Another behemoth, Kotaku is great because they're willing to take on delicate and controversial subject matter. If you're creating an JRPG, be sure to contact the author of the weekly column, Random Encounters.

/ Indie Games – The Weblog – Not as big as Rock, Paper, Shotgun or Kotaku, but even more indie friendly, Indie Games will cover just about anything - from the most obscure XBLIG game to a casual mobile one.

/ Gaming Blend – A sub-site of Cinema Blend, Gaming Blend covered our game Hiro Fodder: A Blue Hope, without us even asking. The site is still finding its bearings, but has shown signs of steady growth. Definitely worth a shot.

/ TIGSource - I was shocked to see a myriad of very low budget indie games featured on this site. They also seem to cater towards games entered in the Independent Games Festival. If your game is quirky, unusual, or just downright strange, shoot them a mail.

/ The Indie Game Magazine – IGM requires that you submit a playable version of your game (demos are ok) to the site before being considered for a preview or review. They're a bit particular over which games to review, but that's fair.

/ Trendy Gamers – This mid-sized site must have 100 journalists working for them, because they'll review just about any decent game. From Triple-A console titles to casual iPhone titles, they do it all. That's good news for you.

/ Indie N - Another prospering indie site that primarily focuses on PC releases, Indie N loves to feature games that are currently on Steam's Greenlight.

/ The Indie Mine – A smallish site that is particularly friendly towards indies of all walks. Reviews and features PC, mobile and XBLIG games.

/ Indie Gamer Chick - She seems to shy away from PC games, but she's such a thoughtful, insightful writer that landing a feature on her site would be well worth your efforts. Just don't submit a crappy game, or you'll be at her mercy.

Alternative Marketing Strategies

/ Crowdsourcing - Sites like Kickstarter and Indiegogo are not only great places to procure funding for your title; they're also fantastic means of raising awareness.

/ Alphafunding - Distribution portals like Desura now offer Alphafunding. This allows you to get your game out into the public eye before its released, and maybe make a few bucks in the process.

/ Steam Greenlight - If your game is not of the casual variety, I would recommend placing it on Steam Greenlight. It only costs 100 bucks, and even if you aren't selected, you'll get plenty of exposure. Recommended for feature-rich, nearly complete PC games

/ Indie Databases - Indie databases like TIGdb tend to be flooded with titles, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't at least consider placing your game on one. Remember, anything that nudges public awareness up even a little bit is still worth doing.

/ Reddit - Reddit has a subreddit called Indie Games. Perfect. Use it to link to your YouTube trailer, website, or press release. The only downside is that the channel tends to be flooded, so make sure your description stands out from the crowd.

/ Gaming Conventions - If your budget and time permits, secure a booth at an event like PAX. You'll meet dozens of other developers, and potentially thousands of gamers, all looking for the next big thing.

08/05/2013

Printed with Wunderlist – My beautiful and simple to-do list
It's free for iPhone, Android, Mac, Windows PC and Browser! – **www.wunderlist.com**

2/3

/ Contests and Game Jams - Submit your nearly finished game or demo to a variety of contests that recognize outstanding indie games. The IGF and Dream, Build, Play come to mind, but there are smaller just-for-fun compos.

Checklist written by Robert DellaFave for Tuts+.

Check out the full thing here: http://gamedev.tutsplus.com/articles/ business-articles/promoting-your-indie-game-checklist/