The Prototyping Process

Prove your ideas before committing to it

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Have the right mindset

- Don't think of your prototype as a game but as a product

- Don't think as a gamer, it will help you stick to the plans

- You might not investing money, but you're investing your time and efforts

- Having a gamer's mentality will make you lose time in details that are not needed

- Aim for a deliverable that will be published on the store

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Have a clear vision

- Core mechanic

- Core interactions

- Theme

- Audience

- Genre - study what other similar games do

- NEVER CLONE

- How will the game scale

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Define the scope

- 1 week time

- At most one meta/economy loop

- Don't focus on the content, you're trying to prove the core

- Think of a clear on-boarding (tutorial)

- Target early retention

  - D1 > 40%… Good to have a D7 >10% but its not required

- Always plan for the unknown unknowns

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Work on your pitch
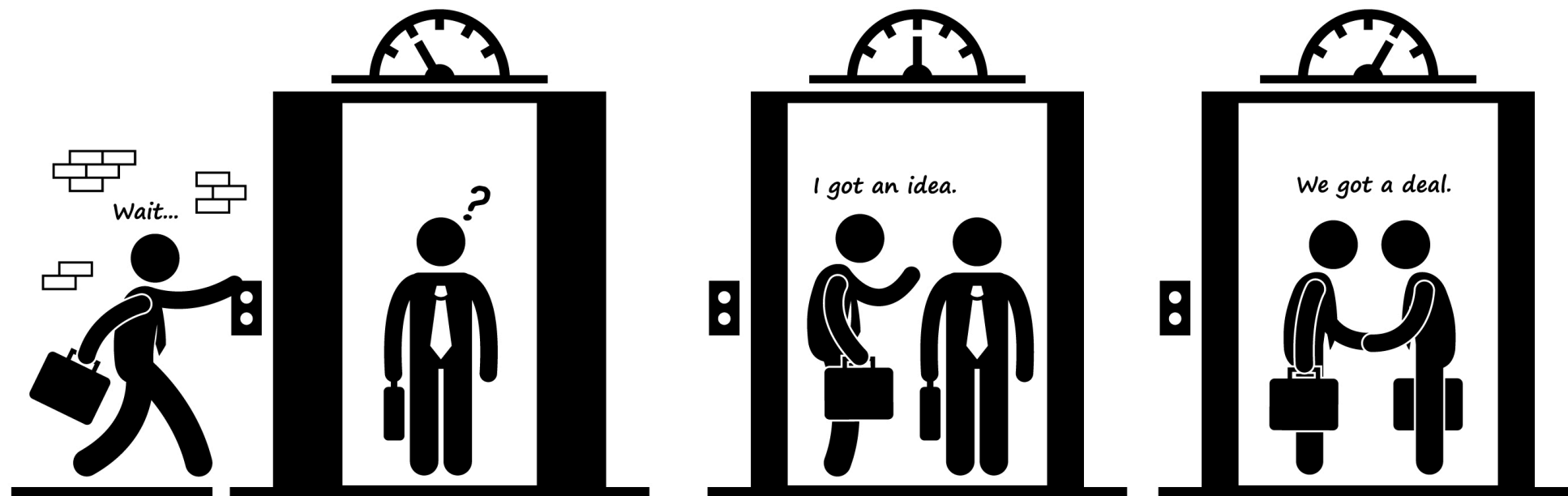
- Describe the core mechanic and the main loop in a sentence

- Don't describe the content

- Don't describe how the game scales

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Example

- It's a game about heroes that have different skins and different abilities with different cool-downs and you can evolve them by crafting weapons.

- It's a game about matching the same items to evolve them so it clears the room for gold. Gold is used to buy more items.

Plan with your team

- 3-4 people in a team

- Plan the code and art progress for the week and have deliverables each day

- Be ready to wear different hats

- Be flexible in changing things that are not major, never re-pivot until the end of the week

- Communication is key!!!

- Playtest as a team at the end of each day

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Coding?

- Don't build a framework unless you really need one

- Use GIT or any VCS

- Turn your mind off and hack, you need speed not quality

- Get the core done in half a day

- Use what you know, don't explore

- Use a simple engine and a simple programming language

- Be a quick coder, not an engineer

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Art and visual effects (VFX)

- Work in 'phases'

- Do something quick and understandable for the user

- Re-use as much as you can

- Use only 1 visual effect

- Better integrate the assets later but not too late

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Audio… do you need it ?

No, thank you…

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Publishing and Analytics

- Focus on Android, publishing and updates are much faster

- Use 3rd party tracking SDKs

- Implement tracking events

  - First Login of the day

  - Start and end of sessions

  - Sessions length

- What to extract ?

  - Daily retention %

  - Average session length

  - Average amount of sessions per day

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Marketing and User Acquisition (UA)

- Have good store assets and a gameplay video

- Use 1-2 Ad networks for the acquisition

- Get around 1000-2000 users

- Acquire through the whole week

- Acquire from tier 1-2 countries

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Community and Support

- Ignore all emails from users

- Ignore store ratings

- Ignore store reviews unless its about a game breaking bug

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Review Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Remove the app from the store

  - Risk of cloning

  - Risk of app being published on other websites

  - You don't want people to complain too much about the game

- Check retention

  - < 40% ?

  - Check your sessions

  - Maybe try one more iteration

  - Kill it

  - > 40 % ?

  - Delete the codebase and start fresh

  - Use the numbers for investment or publisher support

  - Use the numbers to grow your team

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Does this process work for indie companies?

Does this work for bigger games ?

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Thank you!

Questions ?

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github.com/adizhavo/gg_prototyping_process

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