idomoo

The Gaming Industry's Secret To Boosting Player Engagement

How 6 of the World's Top Gaming Brands Use Video To Drive ROI

idomoo.com

Your players are incredible. They travel galaxies, defeat enemies, build cities and more in the worlds you've created for them.

But they're not an easy audience to wow. They're used to next-level digital experiences. In fact, they expect them.

So if you want to capture their attention — to announce a new product, get them to reengage, jumpstart a referral program or just build brand love — you have to speak their language. And that's the language of immersive, interactive video.

Top gaming companies like Activision, EA, Ubisoft and Epic Games have found that by changing how they communicate with players, they can easily beat benchmarks from other mediums. And that's not surprising considering video is the most popular form of online content.

Here are just a few of the results we've seen when gaming companies leverage data-driven video:

17x
more lapsed players returning to the game

10x
higher engagement

81%
conversion rate

56%
uplift in app store visits

49%
increase in social sharing

68%
higher sales

In this guide, we'll share real campaigns from gaming brands of all sizes, explaining how they drove sales, engagement and player loyalty.

Ready? Let's go.

Standing Out From the Crowd

The gaming industry is lucrative, worth around $300 billion, according to a new report by Accenture.1 But all that money is attracting competitors. As more gamers enter the scene — 500 million new players in the past 3 years alone — more companies join as well. In this crowded landscape, you need to stand out.

How do you do that? First, let's look at who you're talking to. Newer gamers, who've started playing in the last 4 years, aren't the same as veteran gamers. And the reasons people are playing now aren't what they were pre-COVID.

Who They Are

Male	52%
Female	46%
Other genders	2%
5+ years of gaming	79%
Based in China	35%
Based in the U.S.	8%
Based in Japan	3%

Why They Play

To connect with those with similar interests	52%
To meet new people	46%
To stay in touch with friends	2%

How They Spend Their Time

Hours per week playing: **16**

Hours per week with gaming streams: **8**

Hours per week interacting in gaming forums: **6**

New Players

Gen Z	30%
People of color	33%
Female	60%

On average, new players are younger and more diverse than longtime gamers, and most people find gaming helps them connect with others. Another trend you'll notice is that players spend a lot of time immersed in the world of gaming even outside of playing the game itself.

What does that mean for brands?

People at home are looking for connected experiences.

Give them a way to connect with others beyond the game. Make the content you create shareable. If gaming is important to them, why not give them a way to show others, even non-gamers, what they're passionate about? But remember that a connected experience is emotional, human and personal.

Gamers are interested in engaging with gaming-related content.

We know gamers invest time in online gaming communities — and with online gaming content. We've seen players love their Personalized Video so much they watch it more than once. When you create compelling content around something they care about, you're making it easy for players, many of whom are influencers and micro-influencers, to talk about you with their peers.

You need to consider Gen Z, the new video-loving generation.

In particular, we know that Gen Z, more than any other generation, expects online personalization.[2] They want a seamless, integrated digital experience, and they want authenticity from brands. When you're speaking to Digital Natives, keep it genuine, personal and relevant.

Empowering Players To Become Creators

Gaming is ultimately a creative experience. When you're immersed in the game, you're creating your own adventure as it unfolds.

You can do the same thing with data-driven video. Give viewers creative control over their video to drive engagement and social sharing.

Essentially, you're taking a brand video and turning it into a UGC video.

User-generated content has grown exponentially in recent years. People love sharing content they create, and social media allows great content to reach millions.

User-Generated Content Is King

9.8x
more impactful than influencer content

79%
of buyers influenced by UGC

2.4x
more authentic than brand-created content

Source: Stackla[3]

Why do people share branded UGC? One survey found the top motivator was the chance to get their content liked or featured.[4] (Brands assumed it was because of incentives like prizes. That helps, but it's not the top driver.)

So make it easy for them. **Let your players choose what they want featured in their video.** Let them customize it by changing colors or even adding their own photos. Whatever field you want to make editable, you can — then they have the power, with one click, to generate a new, customized video of their own making in real time.

Fortnite Season 9 Wrap-Up

This is what Epic Games did to launch their next season of Fortnite. By leveraging data-driven UGC videos, the company saw social shares and reach skyrocket.

Players could select the stats they wanted featured in their video to create their own one-of-a-kind Season 9 wrap-up video. The vast majority of views on social media came from these UGC videos — even though there was a "default" option to let Epic create the video.

Videos were scripted, produced and distributed in just 2 weeks. And because they were data-driven, scaling up to Fortnite's massive audience, including 13 languages, was simple and fast.

Building Brand Ambassadors

The natural next step after you empower gamers to become creators is to turn them into brand ambassadors.

brand ambassador
/brand amˈbasədər/

An advocate who speaks positively about your company, often on social media

To promote brand advocacy among your top customers, there are a few key principles to keep in mind:

> **Give fans a way to talk about you.** Make it easy on them. Video, as the most consumed content type online, is the most effective. Be sure to include a way players can drive referrals just by sharing their video.

> **Have a clear goal.** What do you want your brand ambassadors to do? Increase awareness for a new feature? Boost in-app purchases or player acquisition? Make sure the content you ask them to share supports your target objective.

Incentivize brand ambassadors. It doesn't have to be a lot. Give company swag or in-game points. We've seen clients have success with both. This motivates players to participate, and it could make the difference between someone sharing your content or not.

CCP

CCP Games followed the three principles above with their "My Year in EVE" campaign.

Personalized for over a million of their top *EVE Online* pilots, the campaign was ideal for brand advocacy. Gamers could handpick achievements to include in their video, even the character they wanted to spotlight. Then they rendered their video in real time and shared it on social media.

The kicker? The video share came with a custom referral page for friends. If a friend signed up, both the player and friend received extra points. The videos drove 66% more traffic to the EVE Online recruitment page, a top KPI for the campaign.

The Art of the Recap Video

As you can see, recap videos work well in the gaming industry. It's the classic year-in-review. Let's look back together on what we accomplished over the last 12 months.

But here's the catch: No one cares about "we" — they care about themselves. To drive real engagement, you need to make your recap about **your individual player and their memories**.

Data-driven stats are an easy way to do this. Here's an example from Plarium for their game, Raid: Shadow Legends.

Imagine you were Alex, an absolute dungeon beast as you'll discover in his video. How would you feel watching your recap — excitement, energy, pride? A personalized recap video can be a great tool to promote player reactivation because of the strong emotional appeal of past experiences and achievements.
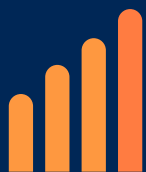
One video game company generated over 750,000 sign-ups from players who wanted to receive their personalized recap video the following season.

What does a recap video do?

- Rewards players so they want to play more
- Reminds them how much they enjoy playing
- Empowers brand advocacy

Here's another example from Ubisoft. For the launch of Ubisoft Connect, their new ecosystem of player services, they wanted to recap 5 years of gameplay — an ambitious goal. Making it personalized for nearly 5 million players? That's where it gets interesting.

The videos covered **over 30 games in 11 languages**. The split-screen montage below shows just a glimpse of how diverse these Personalized Videos were. Remember, these came from one master video. Data and logic determined what was included in each final video, meaning no two were alike.

As you can see, the videos are dynamic and engaging. Players thought so, too. Campaign performance exceeded industry benchmarks across the board.

5x
increase in social sharing

270%
uplift in CTA click rate

Nearly
3x
higher video download rate

To make your recap even more compelling, consider showing footage from actual gameplay. Dynamic video-in-video allows for an immersive personalized experience gamers love. It's a great way to create a "wow" moment for your players.

Another way to upgrade your recap and make it more shareable is to convert it to an infographic. Ubisoft used this alternative medium to **reach 100 million players**. And the graphic didn't take extra design time — it was generated dynamically from the data-driven video scenes. And just like the video, the infographic was personalized for every player.

Where Engagement Meets ROI

One of the biggest levers on your bottom line is player retention. Churn represents the loss of any future revenue from that player, and the customer you already have is the customer that's the easiest to get.

↗ The Value of Retention

68%
of customers come from current customers

A successful sale is
42x
more likely with a current customer than a new one

Current customers are
50%
more likely to try your new product

Loyal customers spend
67%
more in their sixth 6-month period than their first 6 months

But among mobile apps, gaming has

the lowest 30-day retention rate: 27%

Source: Semrush[5]

This makes player reactivation and reengagement essential. Your players are worth more the longer they stay with you, meaning you should ramp up targeted, personalized retention strategies as the customer lifecycle progresses.

Consider the forces that affect player churn. Novelty is highest at the beginning. Then the player develops expertise in the game. As these two factors diminish, a loyal player should receive targeted nudges and engagement opportunities to draw them back into the game and its community.
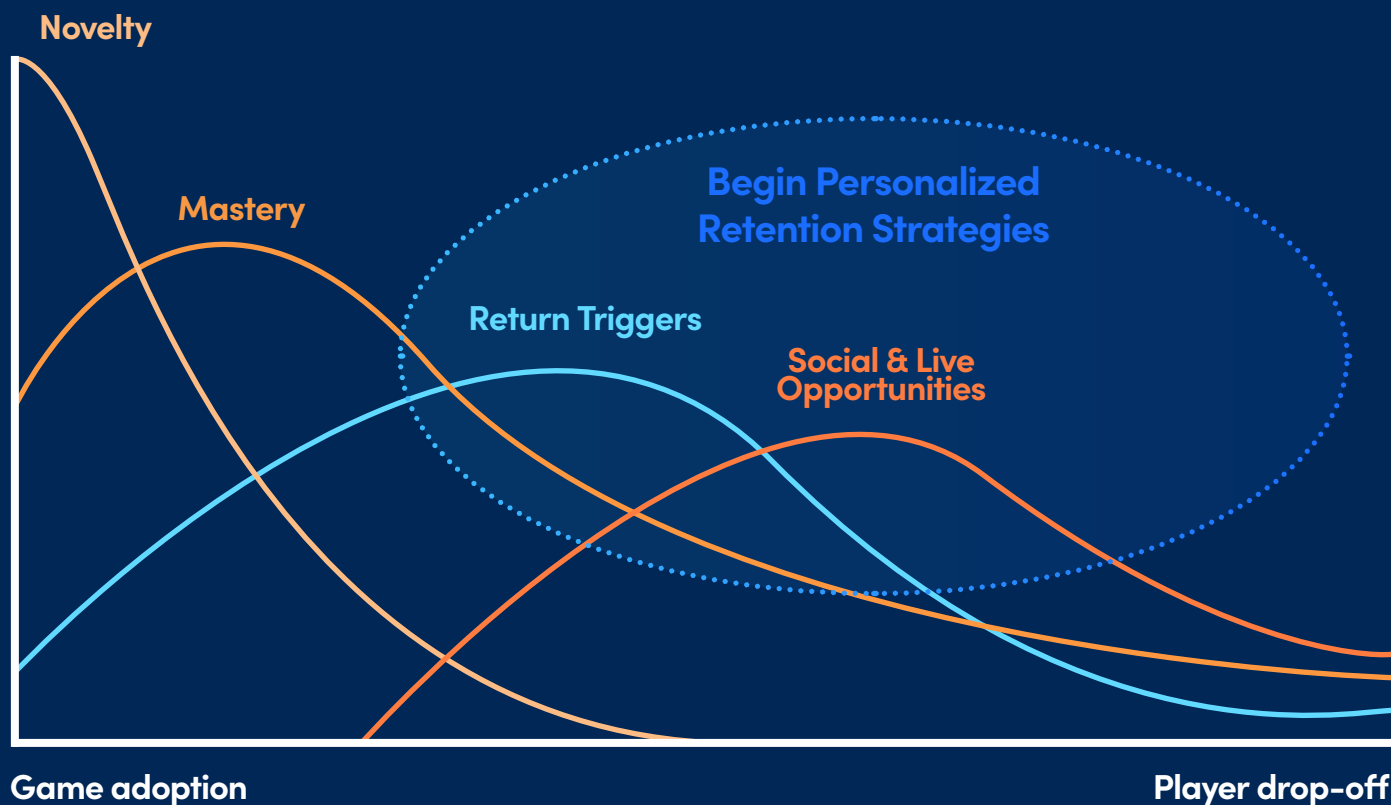
Novelty

Mastery

Begin Personalized Retention Strategies

Return Triggers

Social & Live Opportunities

Game adoption

Player drop-off

Chart data: Department of Play[6]
Design: Idomoo

Data-driven video is a particularly effective tool to reach lapsed or disengaged players at this stage. You can recapture their interest by reminding them why they love the game. You can create expanded opportunities for engagement through real-time customization and social sharing.

Even better, make your reengagement efforts immediately actionable, so players can sign in, make a purchase or try a new feature with CTAs right inside the video.

The right call to action can be powerful. When a CTA was included in a personalized anniversary video as part of a loyalty and retention campaign, one gaming company saw a 50% increase in average sales volume and a 68% increase in average total sales.

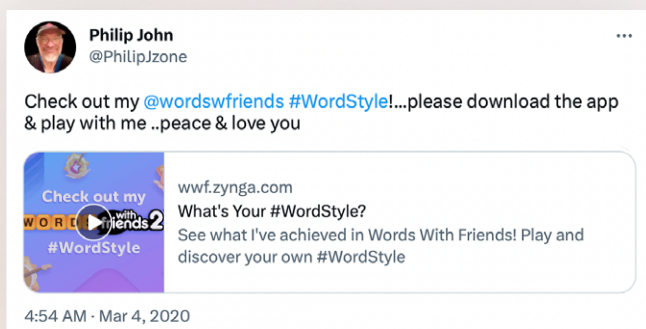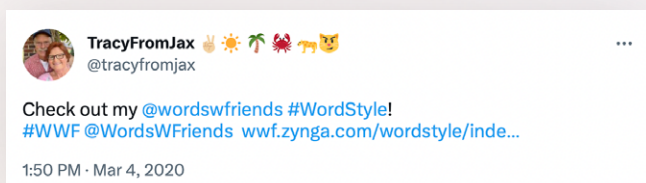Reengagement was a top goal for Zynga in their #WhatsYourWordStyle campaign.

To bring disengaged players back to the Words With Friends game, they created a Personalized Video to identify an individual's word style based on their past gameplay. You might be a rockstar, social butterfly, word nerd, trailblazer... don't you want to know which?

At the same time, they wanted to increase adoption of their recently launched Achievements feature, driving players to take advantage of this new offering.
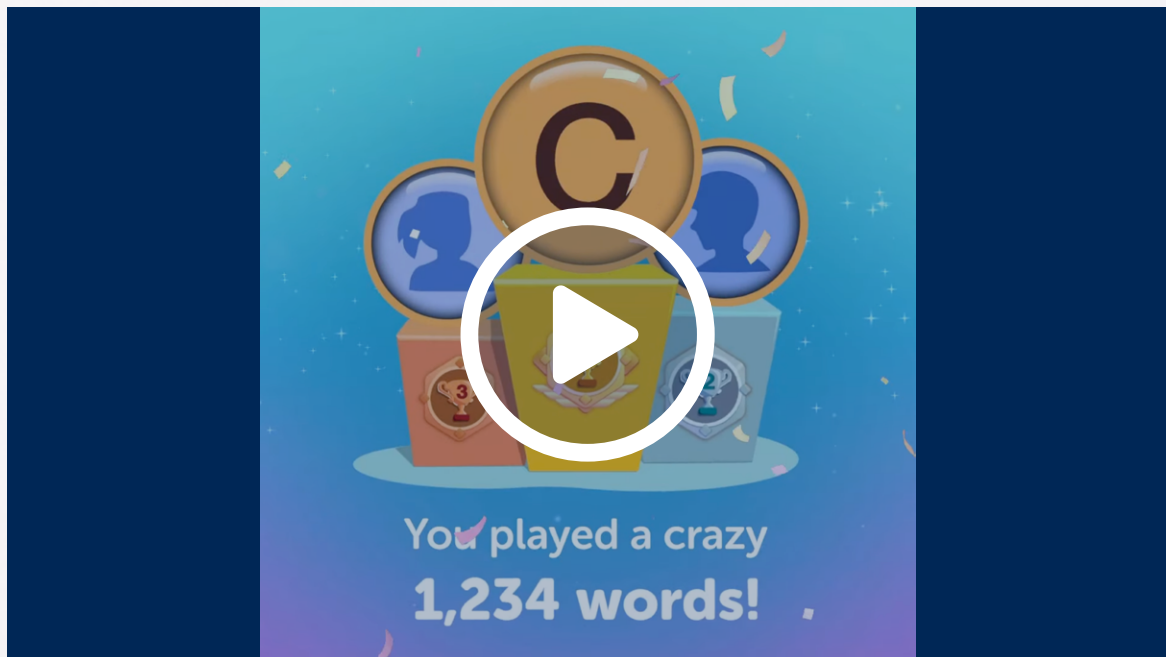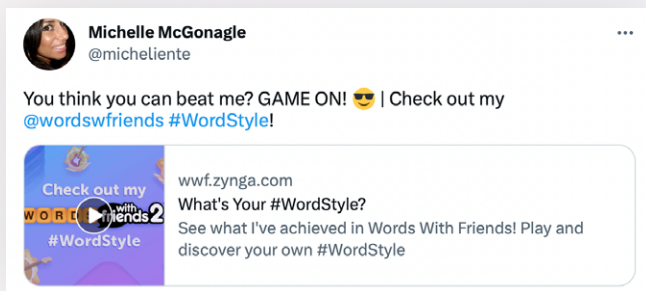

The campaign was a success on both counts, resulting in increased feature adoption, massive social media shares and an 116% uplift in email CTR. Online sentiment was overwhelmingly positive.

Even Twitter, that bastion of internet snark, had no negative comments with the hashtag.

TracyFromJax 🦷☀️🌴🦀🐅😼
@tracyfromjax

Check out my @wordswfriends #WordStyle!
#WWF @WordsWFriends wwf.zynga.com/wordstyle/inde...

1:50 PM · Mar 4, 2020

Philip John
@PhilipJzone

Check out my @wordswfriends #WordStyle!...please download the app & play with me ..peace & love you

wwf.zynga.com
What's Your #WordStyle?
See what I've achieved in Words With Friends! Play and discover your own #WordStyle

4:54 AM · Mar 4, 2020

Martha Gray-Heffner
@MightyMartha7x

Thanks for compiling my personalized #WordStyle

Words With Friends ✓ @WordsWFriends · Mar 7, 2020
Fun fact: Some of you have played enough Words With Friends tiles to make it to outer space 🚀! What's the most surprising thing you've seen about your personalized video?

Find your #WordStyle here: words2.app.link/achievementstw

What's your #WordStyle? Find out in WWF2!
0:02 365 views

4:40 AM · Mar 9, 2020

Similarly, Activision marked the start of the new Call of Duty: Warzone 2.0 by inviting players to celebrate their legacy from the original game with their very own Personalized Video. The videos included over 30 unique data points for an audience of millions, available in 10 languages and watched in 99 countries. Player response was overwhelmingly positive, with gamers tagging their squadmates and the campaign going viral.
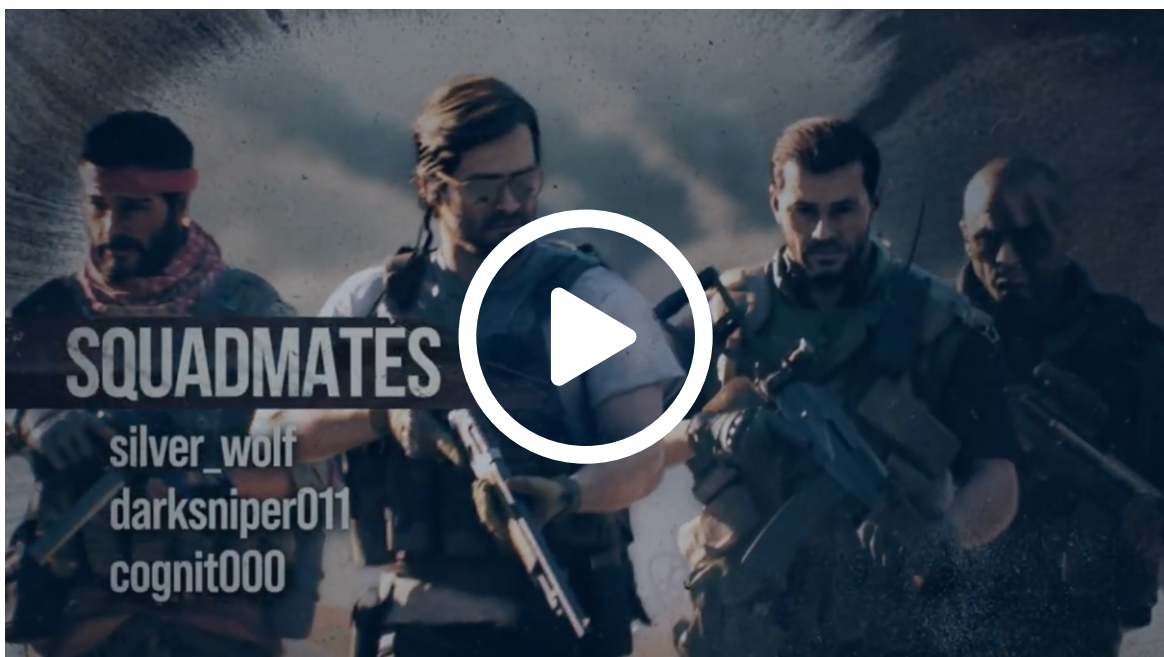
Boosting Your Bottom Line

If you're looking to maximize ROI, you'll love data-driven video. It's data-driven on the front-end, created using relevant information about your players. But real-time analytics throughout your campaign and at the end make tracking KPIs a breeze.

After years of working with top gaming companies to personalize their communications, here's what we've learned works best when it comes to generating positive ROI.

- **Always have a benchmark.** If you want to know how data-driven video works, you need to compare it to generic video. If you want to know how video works, you need to compare it to text. Having a baseline lets you see what drives incremental value.

- **Let your players know their Personalized Video is coming.** Build up the hype well in advance across channels, from social media to email. This is what Zynga did, effectively doubling their engagement rate on social media with campaign teasers. People love personalization, and anticipation is half the fun.

- **Create a seamless user experience.** Your multichannel approach should be seamless and strategic. Make it easy for players to access their video from any platform: an app, SMS, email, etc. Map out the user journey, and make sure each step is fast so you don't lose players along the way. Our videos render in up to 100x real time.

You can see an example of a user journey below for CCP Games' recent campaign where a top goal was social sharing. Clear CTAs guide players every step of the way — and there aren't too many steps. As a rule, keep it to 3 or fewer. Less is more.

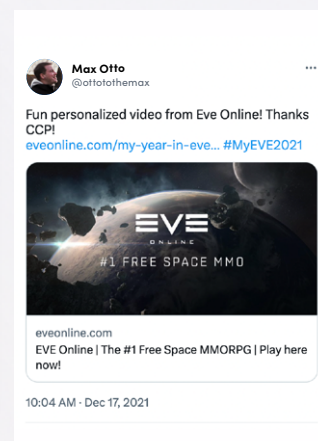| **1**	**2**	**3**
Email	**Landing Page**	**Convert**
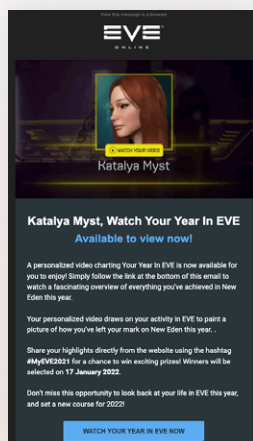
| Personalized GIF directing the player to the landing page | CTA buttons for downloading and social sharing | Social media post with the player's Personalized Video |

Making Data-Driven Video Work for You

Before we go, here are some final tips to help you make the most of your campaigns — a few tips and tricks we've picked up along the way.

1   Show personalization right away.

Your viewer is busy and overwhelmed with content. Research shows you have around 10 seconds to grab a viewer's attention with your video.[7] Make sure gamers know right away that your content is different by including personalization within the first 5 seconds of the video. A name or username works well for this.

2   Personalize visuals beyond video.

Again, this is a visual cue to your audience that something is different. Use a personalized thumbnail of your video to prompt them to click. A personalized GIF, as Ubisoft created, can be another great extension of your data-driven video.

3   Add interactivity.

Whether it's a clickable CTA or allowing your gamers to customize their video, your video should be interactive, drawing gamers into the experience just the way they're drawn into your game. As the stats shared above show, adding interactivity boosts both engagement and conversions.

4   Make it a tradition.

Once your community knows to look for their personalized gaming recap or custom offers, they'll want more of it. Be ready to scale up your efforts and deliver. With our fully open, enterprise-grade platform, you can create as many videos for as many gamers as you need, from bespoke creative for top influencers to massive campaigns for millions. (Our record so far is 22 million concurrent video renders.)

Want To See How It Works?

Check out more successful gaming campaigns or schedule a call to talk with a Personalized Video pro.

SCHEDULE A CALL

Sources

[1] Accenture   [2] WP Engine   [3] Stackla   [4] Offerpop   [5] Semrush   [6] Department of Play   [7] Ad Age

idomoo

idomoo.com