Press “start” to play

Leveraging gaming for your brand

Developing a vision

We hope that by now we have convinced you that it is time to stop sitting on your hands and to get off the bench and enter the gaming arena with your brand. But what are the first practical steps that need to be taken?

Right from the start, it is essential that you develop a vision of what you want to achieve through your involvement in gaming. Who are your target consumers? What is their relationship with gaming? What are the key insights that connect them to gaming? The answers might lead you to formulate a very simple, short-term objective like “to achieve brand-awareness among a new target group.” Or, it might be more strategic and long term, such as “to build a 21st-century globally-scaled leveragable marketing asset for our brand across all markets, that opens up new audiences, new media, and new routes to market.” Whichever way you choose to do it, you should put the consumer at the heart of your vision, and whatever you hope to achieve, it is crucial that you are clear about your intentions.

Next, look at where in your mix gaming can deliver most effectively and ensure that gaming is properly integrated with your brand objectives. This is an obvious exercise, but a useful one in our experience, as gaming may well be able to deliver in more ways than at first seem obvious. Its multi-dimensional nature – providing a new media channel and a new media vehicle, as well as offering a new audience and a new sales channel – means it may present longer term opportunities that stretch way beyond the initial targets you are setting. So, consider formulating a multiple-horizon vision, where, for example, the first horizon is about new audiences and a
new media channel, with the second horizon being about new marketing properties and the third, new routes to market.

Finally, create clear key performance indicators (KPIs) by which to measure yourself. It is especially important to do this in any new area, so that everyone involved knows which targets to shoot for when faced with new issues and choices.

Protocols

As we saw in Chapter 3, it is vital to remember that gaming is a completely new media with its own codes and practices, its own private language and protocols. At a first glance, it might look similar to movies; after all, it has a similar global scale and reach, some of its themes are similar and some of its audiences overlap – but don’t be fooled. Gaming, let us repeat, is unlike any other media you will have dealt with before.

So over the portal to the gaming arena, engrave the following Dos and Don’ts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DO</th>
<th>DON’T</th>
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<tr>
<td>stay out of the game itself ... unless you feel your brand will be perceived as real and credible in that particular context.</td>
<td>do your own content ... unless it is right at the cutting edge and you are certain that it will blow people away.</td>
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<tr>
<td>use your size and power to do something that only you can do ... if you have the scale to do something really impressive then that’s exactly what your consumers will be expecting of you.</td>
<td>just jump into bed with anyone ... certain gaming brands hold far more sway than others, so take advice from someone who really understands the industry.</td>
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Although gaming dangles the potential of access to a genuinely global market, beware of treating that market as homogenous. Even though computer gaming has a dominant language (US English) and straddles cultures and countries far more comfortably than