We all know how tough it is to break a new topic in marketing – despite the fact that marketing is supposed to be a hotbed of new ideas! Which is not to say that marketeers aren’t open-minded, free-thinking, innovative risk-takers, of course. It’s just that any involvement of brands in gaming will almost certainly have to be signed off by people who may be ... what shall we say? ... not quite so close to the cutting edge of contemporary culture.

So if you do find yourself in the position of advocating a gaming strategy to a skeptical finance director or a quizzical CEO, here’s a simple way of bringing the key points to life. It may also come in handy as a reference for press calls, team meetings, and briefings. These are our answers to the ten questions that most often come up when discussing the role of gaming as a new marketing asset.

1. Is gaming really that big?

For such a massive global phenomenon, gaming seems easy to miss. It is rarely covered by the news media and sits below the radar of most mainstream advertisers and marketeers. This, despite the fact that our research suggests that in some parts of Europe as many as 83 percent of people play some form of computer or video game on a regular basis. And Europe lags some way behind the world’s real gaming hotspots in the Far East, where in countries like South Korea gaming is now the national sport, reported on national TV news right after the main bulletin and before the soccer and basketball scores. Indeed, at its lowest level it’s almost as if some people game without realizing they’re
doing so! If you don’t consider yourself a “gamer,” ask yourself – have you ever played a quick game of Snake on your mobile phone? Have you ever played Solitaire on your PC? Have you ever helped out a daughter or niece with *The Sims*?

The huge global nature of gaming translates into some pretty impressive figures, too. Gaming has a market value of over $25 billion. That’s bigger than the film industry, bigger than the music industry, and even bigger than the home video industry. More striking still is the industry’s growth rate. While the other media mentioned are growing slowly, have reached a plateau, or are even in decline, analysts at PricewaterhouseCoopers have projected the worldwide games industry revenue (revenues from hardware, software, and peripherals) to increase from $25.4 billion in 2004 to $54.6 billion in 2009. Which means the games industry is doubling every five years! And the businesses that serve this industry are booming as never before.

PlayStation is now the most successful division of Sony, while the top games publisher Electronic Arts has muscled its way into the list of the *FT’s* Top 500 Global Companies. In fact, gaming has spawned a whole new culture with its own international competitions and megastars, its own language, and its own unique social events and occasions. We believe that gaming has the potential to be as important a marketing medium as radio, cinema, or TV. No, let’s take that back. It has the potential to be bigger!

### 2. Isn’t gaming just for teenage boys?

Sure, teenage boys are some of the most enthusiastic gamers around, but that’s far from being the whole story. Look at the age profile of Sony PlayStation 2 owners and you can see this straight away: 29.2 percent of PlayStation 2s are used by the 24–34 age group and there is even a significant proportion in the 35+ age bracket. That means half of the user base of the world’s most popular games-dedicated console is made up of people over 24 years old – in other words, out of college and already earning. And when you think about it, that would have to be the case; these consoles retail at somewhere between £200 and £300, so it is hardly something that teenagers or students can pick up with their loose