



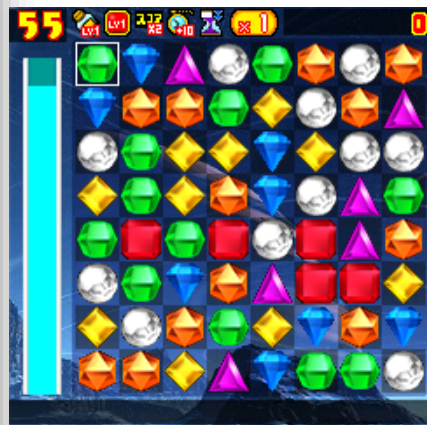
# Effective LiveOps Strategies

**James Gwertzman**

CEO, PlayFab

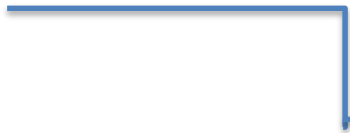
**F2P** FREE TO PLAY  
SUMMIT

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MOSCONE CENTER · SAN FRANCISCO, CA  
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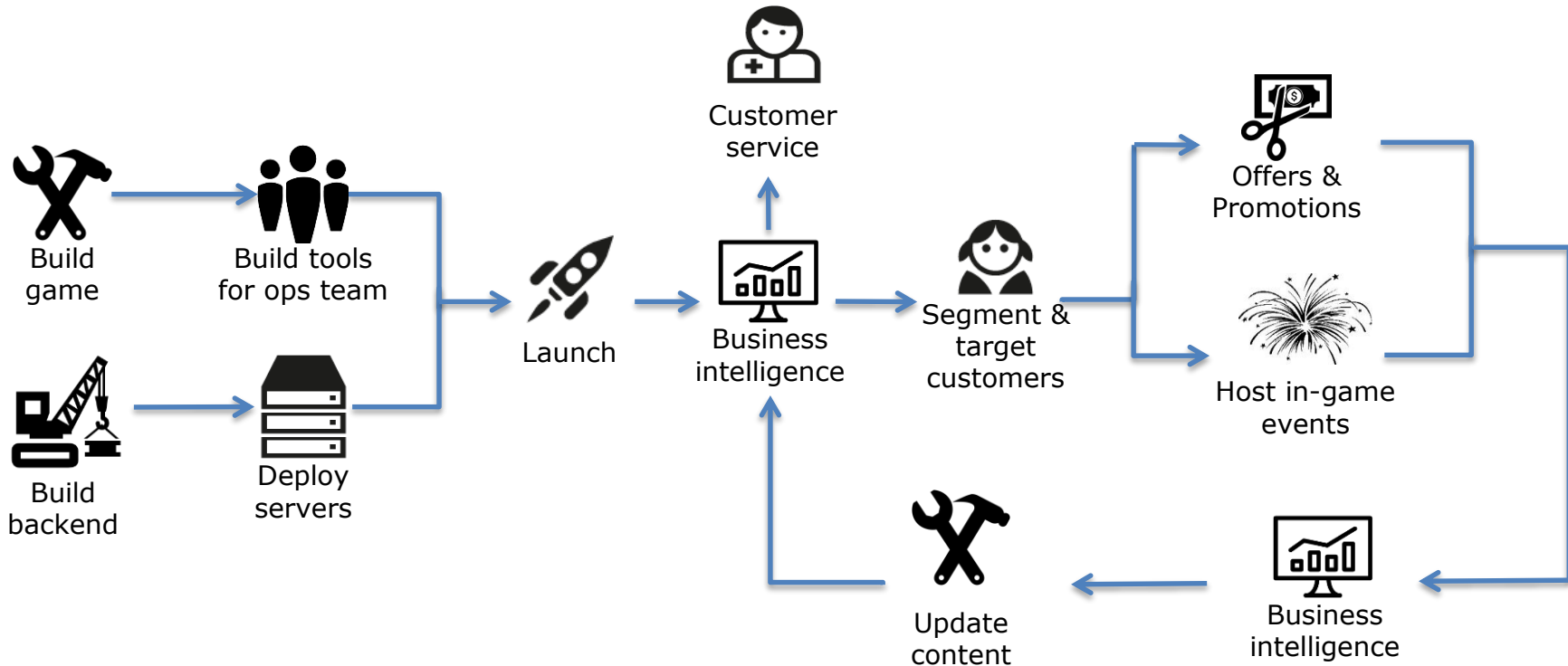


# The old days...





# Nowadays...



Download Ranks **Grossing Ranks**

Hour Day







# How I'm defining Live Ops

- Changes to the game after it goes live
- Generally without changing game code

## Live Ops

- New cosmetic item
- Limited time offer
- Weekend event
- Paid UA campaign

## Not Live Ops

- New functional item
- New crafting mechanic
- New tournament mode
- New viral mechanic



# Live Ops depends on tools

- What can you do w/o bugging engineers?
- The ultimate “growth hacking” discipline

## The Live Ops Tools Continuum



Writing SQL  
Hacking game DB

Fully integrated toolset  
Key game params exposed





# Key components of Live Ops

- Business Intelligence (analytics)
- Events
- Offers & promotions
- Store / catalog management
- Customer service
- User acquisition



# Key tools in the toolbox

- **Business Intelligence (analytics)**
- **Events**
- **Offers & promotions**
- Store / catalog management
- Customer service
- User acquisition



# What is good BI?

## It's not...

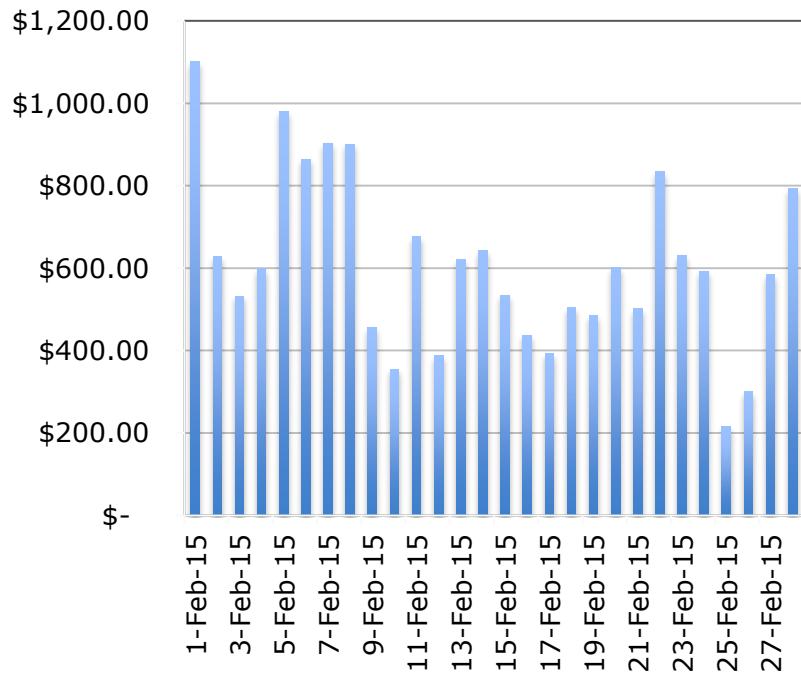
- “Glamor metrics” (DAU, ARPU, etc)
- Bolted on later

## It is...

- Tied to player behavior
- Insight generating
- Able to show changes over time (cohorts)
- Directly actionable
- Open-ended

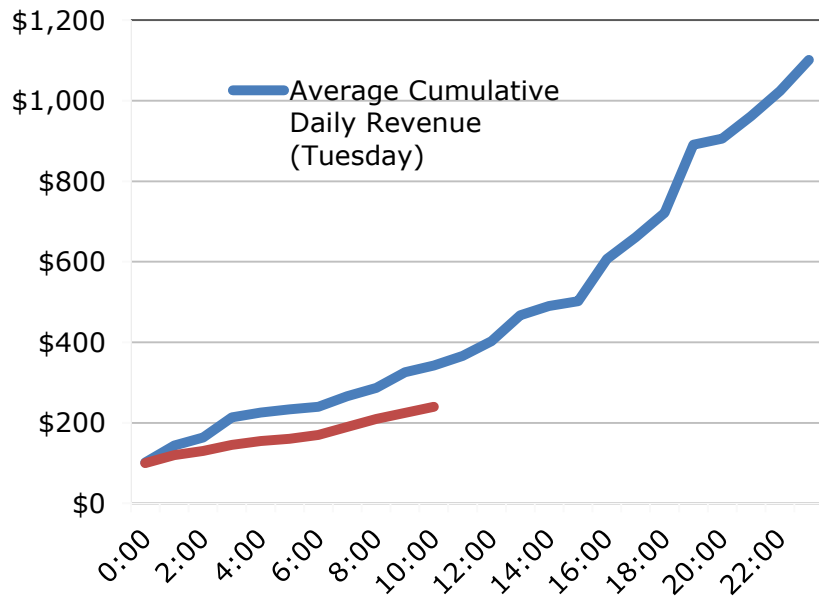


## Monthly game revenue



VS.

## Today's Revenue vs. Historical Average



Which is more actionable?





テトリス®モンスター

App Details

Estimates

BETA Usage

NEW Demographics

NEW Related Apps

Daily Ranks

Rank History

Keywords / ASO

Featured

★ Ratings

Reviews

THE MATH  
BEHIND

## テトリス®モンスター [App]

Store

iOS Store

Price

Free

Compatibility

Universal

Publisher

Electronic Arts

Unified App

Tetris Monster (2 apps)

App Franchise

Tetris (18 apps)

## Rank History

Device

iPhone

Countries

Japan

Date Range

Feb 1, 2015 ~ Mar 2, 2015

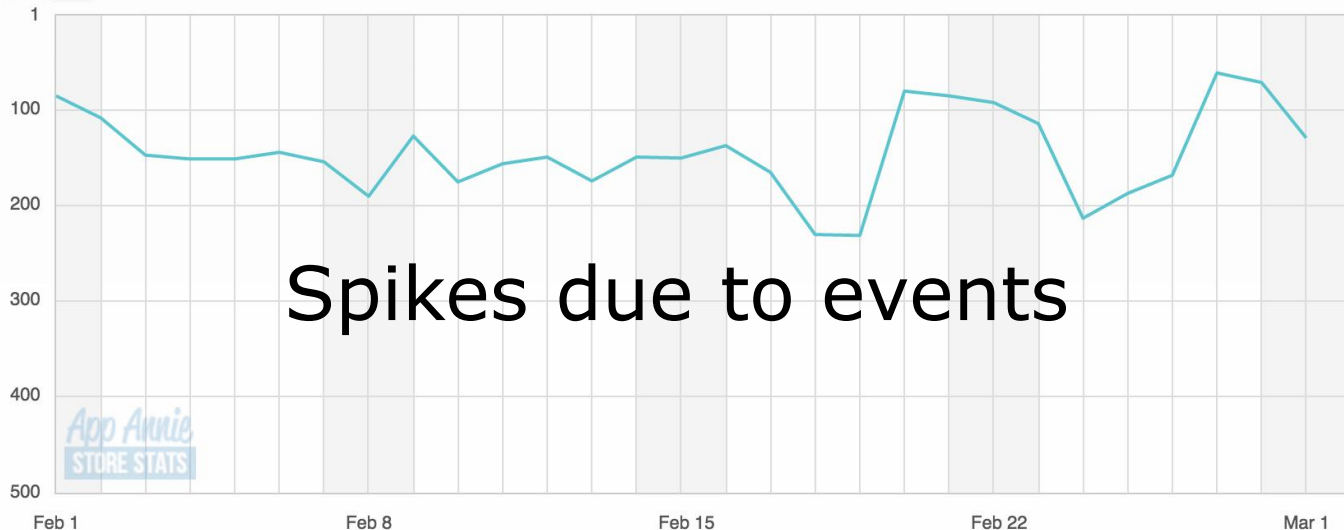
iPhone - Japan - Feb 1, 2015 ~ Mar 2, 2015

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Grossing Ranks

Hour

Day



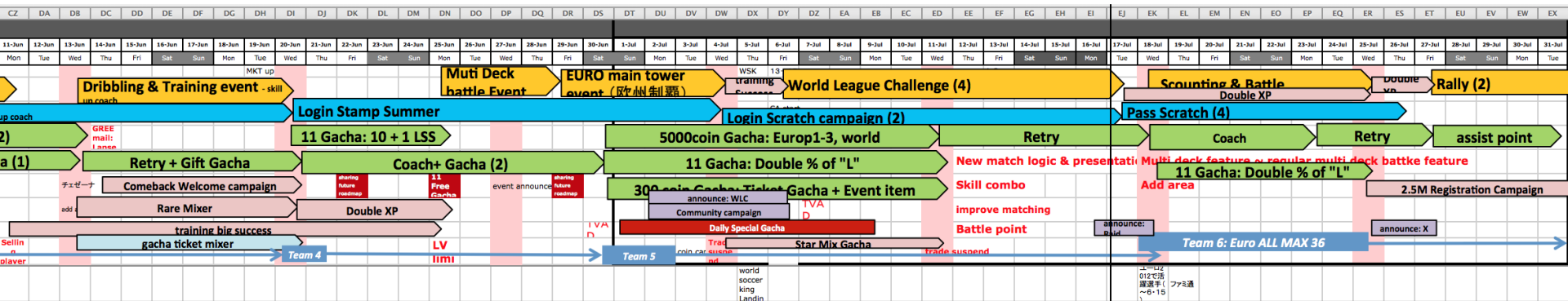


# Sample event types

- Fun – boost engagement
- Monetization – boost revenues, fix economy
- Marketing – cross promote another game
- Content – promote new update
- Tactical – wielded like a scalpel
- Blend of the above



# It starts w/ a calendar



KPI actuals

KPI forecast

Chart Area








# Tailoring events for your players

## Bartle's Player Type





# Event mechanic vs. fiction

Name	Mechanic	Fiction	Duration	Banner
Ultimate Dragon Rush	Special dungeon, available only after normal dungeon "Starlight Sanctuary" is cleared. Legendary Plus difficulty, stamina cost of 99	The skies are ominous and the earth trembles beneath our feet. Behold! The legendary dragons come forth and bring you a challenge to remember. Do you have what it takes to enter their realm? Or will you kneel before their will?	2/28 (Sat), 12:00AM – 3/1 (Sun), 11:59 PM	
Pal Egg Event	Special Pal Egg machine, each pull is 1000 Pal Points. Seven special new monsters are available, including Life Dragon, Cao Cao, and Lu Bu.	They may be small, but their stature is great!! Originally just Five Elements Gods, the minis have now reached the Three Kingdoms period.	3/4 (Wed), 12:00AM – 3/10 (Tues), 11:59 PM	
Descended Challenge	Special dungeon with 15 floors, each floor with powerful enemies. No continues are allowed. Each floor gives special rewards.	One Descended Dungeon, with the right team, and you think "Okay, not too bad. I can handle this." You think you've won, but instead you keep going. They keep coming. Like meteors from the sky, impacting on the Earth and forcing you to run!	2/27 (Fri), 12:00AM – 3/10 (Tues), 11:59 PM	



# Fun event examples

- RPG where GM's have playable characters and hang out in game
- Game emphasizes cosmetic item purchasing

Hide and Seek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• GM is hiding somewhere in the world</li><li>• Find him/her, and win a reward</li></ul>
Fashion Show	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Post image of decked-out character on FB</li><li>• Community votes</li><li>• Winner gets displayed on launcher screen for a week</li></ul>
Guild Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Guilds compete to capture &amp; hold a castle</li><li>• Whoever holds it the longest wins the event</li><li>• Winning guild gets a rare item for all guild members</li></ul>

**[Forum Event] Trick-or-Treat**

**GM appears:** 10/30 - 11/1 GMT+8

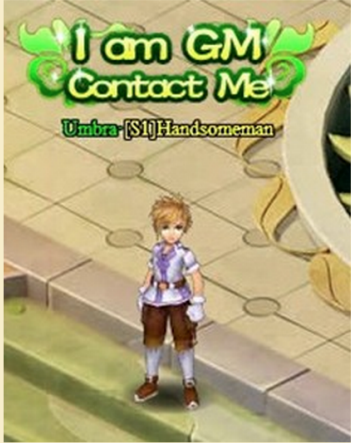
**Reply Time:** 10/30 - 11/3 23:59 GMT+8

**Description:** Halloween is here, and those tricky GMs are well prepared. For the following week, they'll be randomly appearing in the game, announcing their locations using the bullhorn, ie, "Come one, come all! I'm at Savage Deadzone!" However, there's one thing that you must know: not all GMs are friendly - some will KILL you! However, if you're lucky, some of them will send you special items through the mail. GMs may appear during the following times:

**Oceanic:** 09:30 - 10:00 (server time)

**US East Coast servers and European servers:** 22:00 - 22:30 (server time)

Once they've announced themselves, the GMs will stay online for just 10 minutes. They'll only be appearing a few times per server for the duration of the event, so keep your eyes open for their announcements and their special titles, which look like this:



Regard the green title "I am GM Contact Me"

Finally, players who join in the server event can also participate in a bonus forum event, right here. Take a screenshot of yourselves with the GM and post it in this thread. We'll then select 5 players to randomly to receive a special prize pack. Screenshots must include both you AND the GM in picture, as rewards will be sent based on the character name that appears. This event is open to all players, whether you received a special trick-or-treat gift or not.

**Rewards:**

- Lucky Players Prize: 500 Gold (Bound), Little Demon Wings (7 days)
- Participating Prize: 200 Gold (Bound)
- Trick-or-Treat GM Gift: You'll see when you receive it!







# Recurring Events

## STRANGLETHORN FISHING EXTRAVAGANZA

EVERY SUNDAY

A fishing tournament, competed along the coasts of Stranglethorn Vale. Catch as many tastfish as you can! Will you be one of the first to catch forty fish and win a prize?

[LEARN MORE](#)





## Sweet Spot Screenshot Contest

Posted on Feb. 7, 2013 by Ozma



Show us your creativity and wow us with your imagination. The Sweet Spot Screenshot Contest starts now and lasts until 11:59 p.m. PST on Tuesday, February 12. We'll announce the winners on Valentine's Day!

### Details

When: Now to 11:59 p.m. PST on Tuesday, February 12. We'll announce winners on February 14.

Instructions:

1. Take the most romantic screenshot you can—get creative with your outfits, settings, and poses.

Keep it PG, please. The emphasis is on *romance*.

No editing, please—just raw imagery from the game.

Keep your screenshot under 4MB in size. Submit it in .GIF, .JPG, or .PNG formats.

## "Hey, Baby, What's Your Class?" Contest

Posted on Feb. 8, 2013 by Ozma



Join us on the Celestial Hills server at 5 p.m. PST on February 13 at the Mysterium Mansion outside of Velika to participate. Players from other servers are welcome—just roll up an alt and join in. This is **NOT** erotic role-playing, so please keep it clean. You're breaking the ice in an awesome way, not turning the creepification dial to 11.

We'll judge each entrant and pick the top three lad/ladykillers. The winners will each receive the **kill BAM** or **black magic** costumes!





# Monetization event examples

- BCG that just released a star 6-card "Death Dragon" set
- Special "Hell's Bog" map appears rarely, and only if you equip one

Limited time event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hell's Bog available for next 72 hours</li><li>• Special Death Dragon packs on sale for 72 hours w/ 5x chance of dropping a Death Dragon card</li></ul>
Spender rewards week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Receive gifts for spending certain amounts<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>\$50 --&gt; 3 Premium Card Packs</li><li>\$100 --&gt; 5 Death Dragon Card Packs</li><li>\$200 --&gt; 5 Premium Card Packs, 5 Death Dragon Card Packs</li><li>\$300 --&gt; 10 Premium Card Packs, Death Dragon 1 card</li><li>\$400 --&gt; 10 Premium Card packs, Death Dragon 2 card</li><li>\$500 --&gt; 10 Premium Card packs, Death Dragon 3 card</li></ul></li></ul>





# Monetization event (2)

- A game's economy is out of whack – sources/sinks didn't match
- Need to suck raw materials out of world ahead of a new update

Crafting event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All crafting has a 3x rate of success</li><li>• Certain catalyst materials are on sale</li></ul>
High-value auction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Auction off rights to name a street in the game</li><li>• Sell lottery tickets for rare aesthetic items</li></ul>



If you reach a tier, you will receive that reward  
and **all tiers below it!**



\* = exclusive

## Magical Kitty Rewards

### EVENTS

#### Fall Crafting Festival Has Begun!

Events | October 01, 2014



The Fall Crafting Festival has returned! Fall has arrived and the Dwarves know no greater way of celebrating this time of year than by increasing the crafting of fine armaments for everyone! To celebrate the **Fall Crafting Festival**, the Dwarves have increased the success rate on normal R1, R2, R95, R99 recipes. They've also reduced the Augmentation removal fee and much more, but only for a limited time. Log in today and join in on the Fall Crafting Festival, going on from **October 1st to October 15th**.



# Content event examples

- An MMORPG releases a new dungeon and wants to build hype
- The dungeon boss releases very rare loot

Triple boss  
drop rate

- Rare loot drop rate is tripled for first week after launch



# Marketing event examples

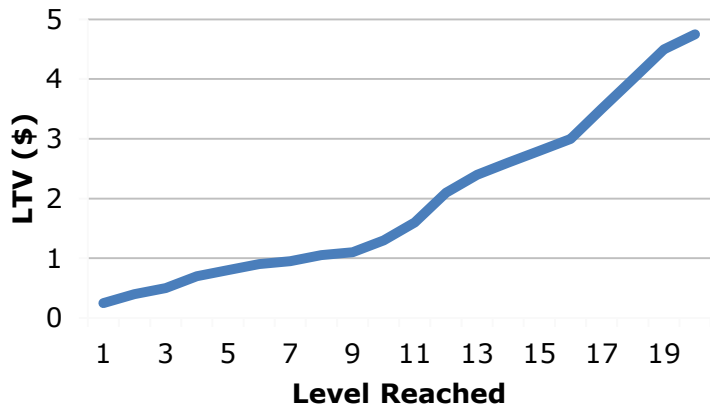
- Ninja-bee wanted to cross-promote its 3 titles by providing exclusive content for purchasing new games
- E.g., World of Keflings:
  - See a unique new buildings in tech tree
  - To obtain blue print, install & run Raskulls
  - New building adds cute new characters



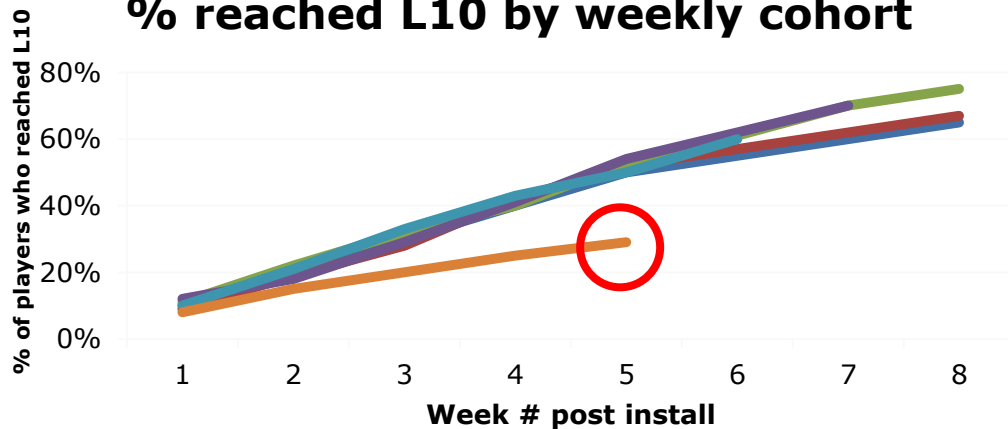


# Tactical event example (1)

## Weekly \$ by level



## % reached L10 by weekly cohort

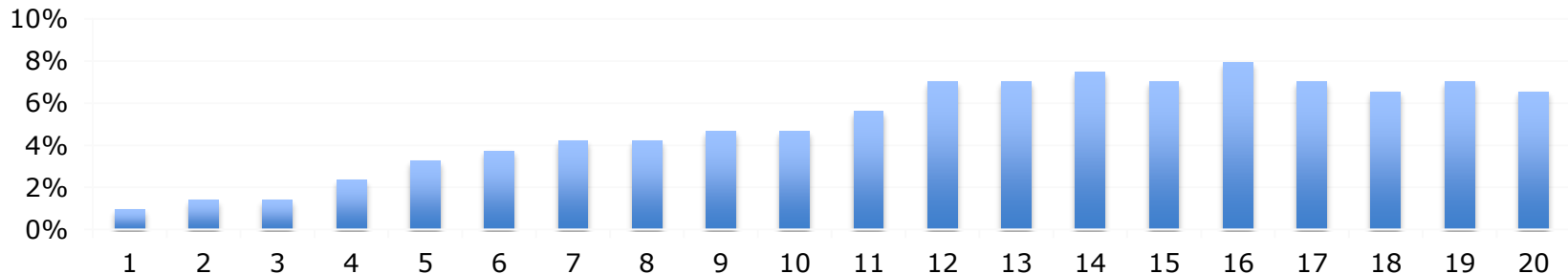


- A MMO strategy game achieves highest rate of spend after level 10
- Most players reach level 10 around week 5
- Current week 5 cohort is lower L10 % than average
- Solution: targeted XP event – triple XP for week 5 cohort < L10



# Tactical event example (2)

## Player distribution by level



- An empire builder is getting old; new player installs are down
- Players are therefore concentrated at higher levels
- Therefore not enough competition for new players
- Solution: leveling event that cuts building times in half for levels <5; event runs unpredictably to avoid creating expectations





# BUY ONE, GET ONE

— BUY ONE DELICIOUS ENTRÉE, GET ONE **FREE!** —

AVOCADO CLUB CHICKEN

CLASSIC SMASH™

## BUY ONE ENTRÉE GET ONE **FREE**

SMASHED FRESH. SERVED DELICIOUS.™

\* Limit one coupon per person per visit. Not valid with other offers or discounts. Not valid with Groupon. FREE Burger must be of equal or lesser value to entrée purchased. Taxes not included. No photocopies. Valid at participating locations only. Valid only in the following markets: Minneapolis, SLC, Tulsa, New Jersey, Illinois, San Antonio, El Paso, North Dakota, Shreveport, Lexington, Des Moines, and Loveland. Expires 10/1/13 PLU 6805 © 2013 Smashburger Master LLC.





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Faculty &amp; Research › Case Studies › AT&amp;T/MCI, The Long-Distance Phone Wars (A), MCI Introduces "Friends and Family"

## AT&T/MCI, The Long-Distance Phone Wars (A), MCI Introduces "Friends and Family"

By Chip Heath, David Hoyt

2002 | Case No. M298A

Organizational Behavior

In March 1991, MCI, a distant second to AT&T in the long-distance telephone market, introduced "Friends and Family," a new approach to long-distance service. Under this plan, subscribers could set up "calling circles" in which calls within the circle were made at discounted prices – as long as both parties were MCI subscribers. Prior to this announcement, there had been an intense battle among the long-distance carriers based primarily on complicated competing discount plans. Friends and Family immediately changed the dynamic of the market, and drew a great deal of attention. The case, in three parts, describes the situation. The "A" case (8 pages), takes the story through the Friends and Family introduction.

Faculty Authors



**Chip Heath »**  
Professor, Organizational  
Behavior





# Promotion examples:

- Featured items
- Bundled items
- Discounted items
- Limited time promotions
- Instant offers
- Shuffle around object order
- Send come back offers



[illegible]



Founders Packages	Virtual Currency	Founders Decals	Tiki Mask Gifts	Permanent XP Bonus	SWAG Merch	Name Reservation	Army Reservation	Personal Transport
<b>\$75</b> / WAS 100 \$285 VALUE <b>COMMANDER</b>	<b>\$120</b>  OF RED BEAN VALUE		 +9 for Friends*	PERMANENT <b>15% XP BONUS</b> +10% SQUAD XP	 FIREFALL Beanie** ++	 NAME RESERVE FOREVER	 ARMY RESERVE FOREVER	 LIGHT GROUND VEHICLE
<b>\$37</b> / WAS 50 \$130 VALUE <b>LIEUTENANT</b>	<b>\$55</b>  OF RED BEAN VALUE		 +4 for Friends*	PERMANENT <b>10% XP BONUS</b> +5% SQUAD XP	 ARCLIGHT Poster** +	 NAME RESERVE FOREVER	 ARMY RESERVE FOREVER	
<b>\$15</b> / WAS 20 \$40 VALUE <b>ENSIGN</b>	<b>\$20</b>  OF RED BEAN VALUE			PERMANENT <b>5% XP BONUS</b>	 Our Eternal Gratitude	 NAME RESERVE FOREVER		





**WE ARE THANKFUL FOR YOU**

**It's Happy Hour with  
two free Boosts and  
50% off Coins!**

**LIMITED  
TIME  
OFFER**

**CLICK TO GET COINS**



# “Lapsed user” promotions

- Send a local notification to your inactive (dead) players to bring them back!
  - Day 4: No benefit
  - Day 8: Small benefit
  - Day 15: Medium benefit
  - Day 30: Big benefit



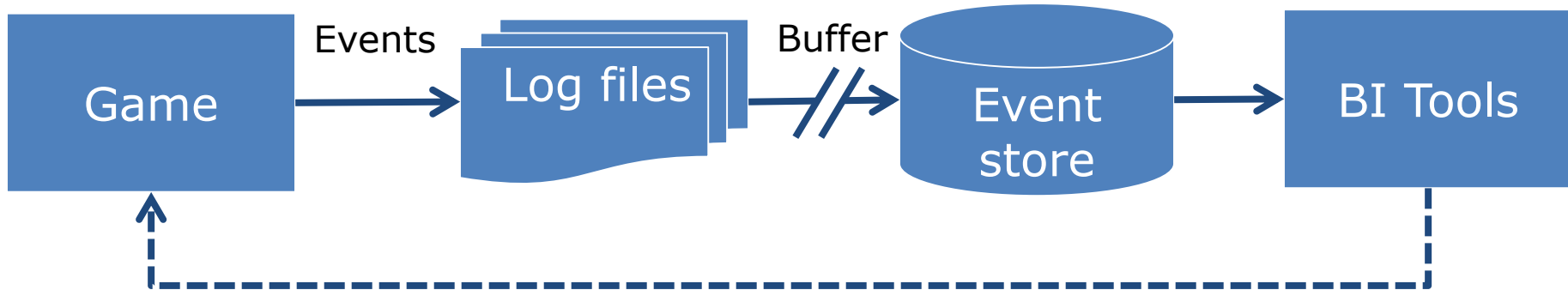
# Key technology building blocks

- Business Intelligence (BI)
- Localization
- Messaging
- Gifting / awarding
- Targeting / segmentation
- Ability to change key game variables



# Good BI challenges scalability

- Most DB's optimized for reads, not writes
- But BI is all about writes... lots of writes
- And the reads are across lots of data

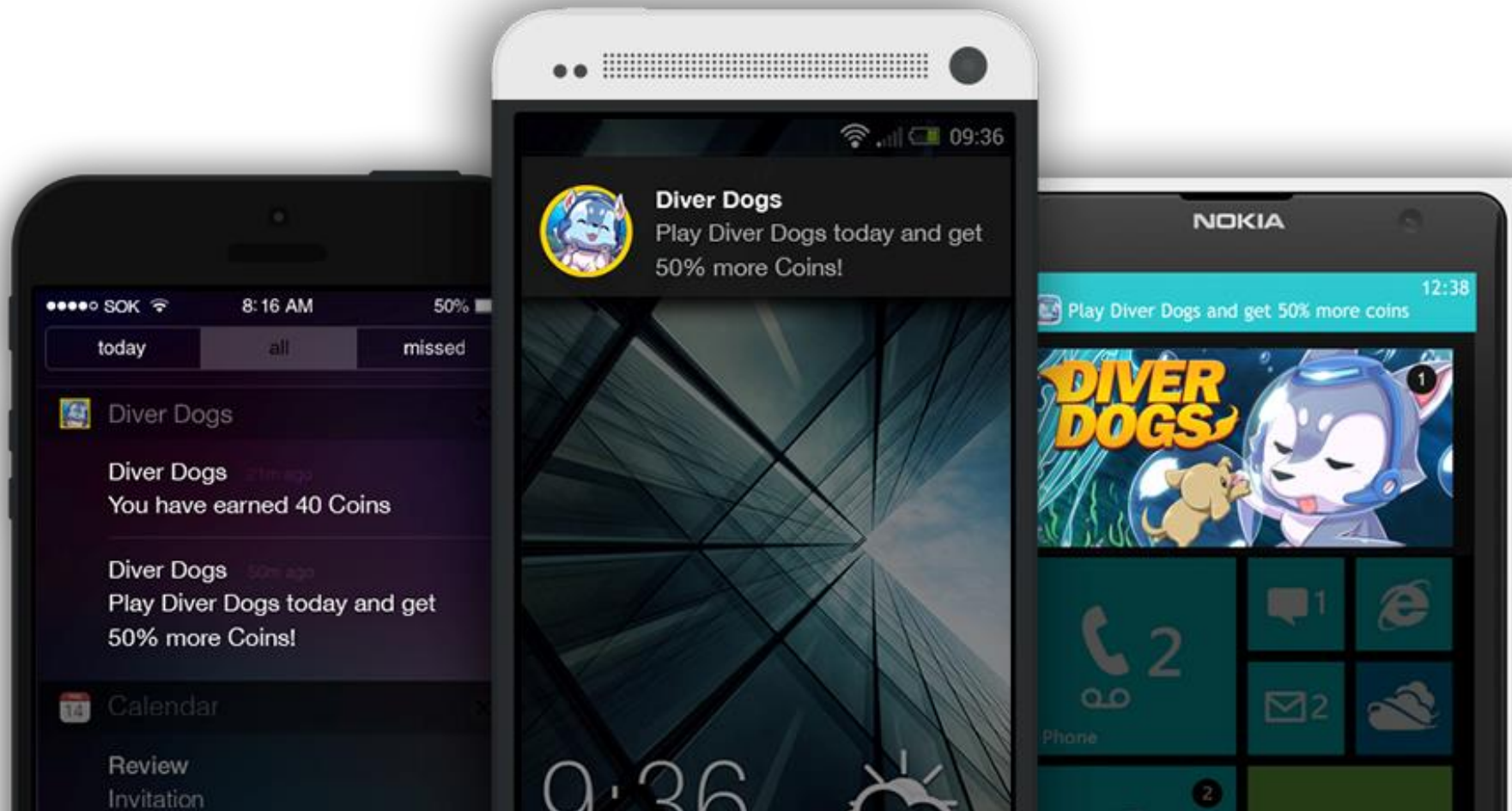




# Localization

- Can boost revenue 30-40%
- But more than just the game...
  - All events & event messaging
  - All offers and promotions
  - Requires rapid-turn around
- Machine translation not yet good enough







# In-store promotions





# Interstitials







# Social media messaging

## The Simpsons: Tapped Out

February 20 at 1:57pm · 🌐

Join Fallout Boy, Pieman, and more to stop the rising tide of evil (and do nothing about the regular rising tide) in the newest Tapped Out update!  
<http://www.ea.com/thesimpsonstappedout/>



## The Simpsons Tapped Out

The Simpsons Tapped Out: the mobile game that's life-ruiningly fun! Free to download and play on the iPhone, iPad, Kindle and on Android devices.

EA.COM

Like · Comment · Share · 👍 4,005 💬 6,881 ➦ 133

## The Simpsons: Tapped Out

February 14 at 10:00am · 🌐

Sir Loves-a-Lot is here to love you lots. Log in today and get this Valentine's Day gift for free! And don't ask, they were out of Lord Huggington.

<http://www.ea.com/thesimpsonstappedout/>

Like · Comment · Share · 👍 978 💬 4,355 ➦ 20



## Glory of Rome

June 29, 2013 · 🌐

Get Centurion Training on sale for only 10 Gold! Also if you buy Gold today you can get awesome bonus items! Check ingame msg for more info!

Like · Comment · Share · Hootlet · 👍 6 💬 9



## Glory of Rome

June 28, 2013 · 🌐

Time can be on your side with the Sundial Chest III on sale today for only 150 Gold!

Like · Comment · Share · Hootlet · 👍 8 💬 4



## Glory of Rome

June 27, 2013 · 🌐

Get the Imperial Fortune Box on sale for only 10 Gold today! You can win some great items for your city!

Like · Comment · Share · Hootlet · 👍 7 ➦ 1



## Glory of Rome

June 26, 2013 · 🌐

Get the War Chest II on sale for 60 Gold! There's still time to earn Fortuna's Favor by spending Gold. Check in game msg for more info!

Like · Comment · Share · Hootlet · 👍 5 💬 1



## Bejeweled Blitz

February 27 at 12:45pm · 🌐


It's a Hot Cocoa Happy Hour! Enjoy TWO free boosts and 50% off Coins.



Like · Comment · Share · Hootlet · 👍 857 💬 72 ➦ 41



# Community web site

 **iamisom** Community Manager  
a month ago

**FOUNDATION: PART 1 COMING THURSDAY, NEW VIDEO**

LIKES 10


COMMENTS 25

OFFICIAL REPLIES 1

VIEWS 829

Foundation: Part 1 comes out on Thursday! Watch this new video to prepare yourself.


Dungeon Defenders II - Foundation: Part 1 Patch Preview





**PATCH PREVIEW**  
**FOUNDATION: PART 1**


READ MORE...


World of Warcraft > Game Guide > Events > In-game Events


 **LUNAR FESTIVAL**  
Feb 16 - Mar 2


 **LOVE IS IN THE AIR**  
Feb 2 - Feb 16


 **NOBLE GARDEN**  
Apr 6 - Apr 13

 **CHILDREN'S WEEK**  
Apr 27 - May 4

 **MIDSUMMER FIRE FESTIVAL**  
Jun 21 - Jul 5

 **PIRATE'S DAY**  
Sep 19 - Sep 20

 **HARVEST FESTIVAL**  
Sep 21 - Sep 28

 **BREWFEET**  
Sep 20 - Oct 6

## In-game Events


There's always an event to participate in somewhere on Azeroth! From weekly contests to yearly recurrent holidays, and a monthly carnival in-between, you'll never have to look far for a celebration in World of Warcraft.

### Current Event

**LUNAR FESTIVAL**  
FEBRUARY 16 - MARCH 2

Every year the druids of Moonglade hold a celebration of their city's great triumph over an ancient evil.

LEARN MORE







# Message-of-the-day (launcher)





# In-game chat window



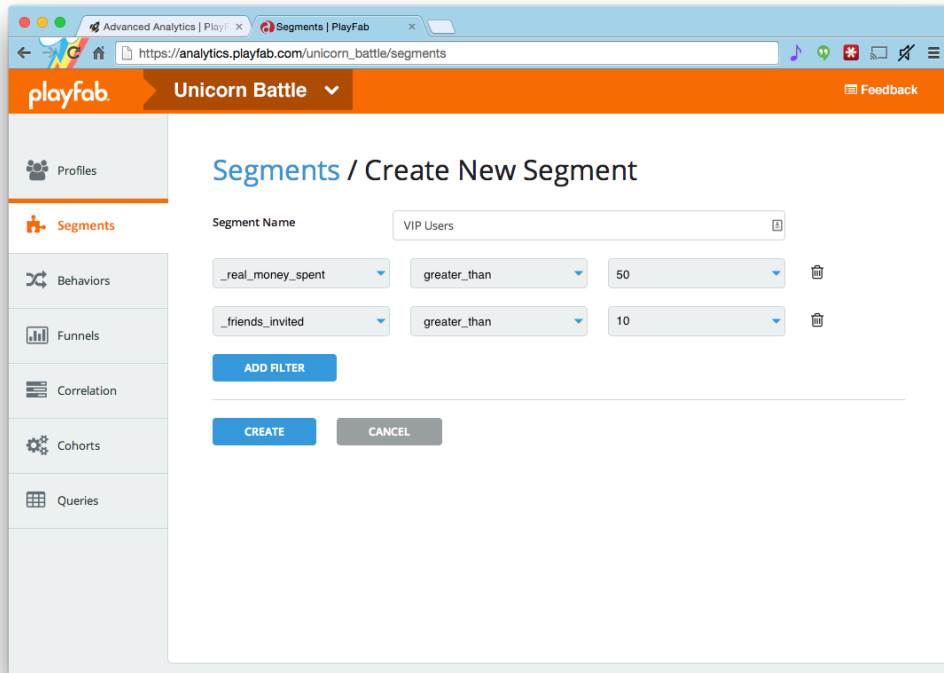


# In-game mail





# Targeting / Segmentation



- Should be able to act on all actions captured by the game



# Modifying game variables for events

- Rate of XP gain
- Loot drop tables
- Energy recharge rates
- Prices





# Live Ops checklist

- Can your BI tools analyze player behavior?
- Can you set up different types of events?
- Can you message to your players?
- Can you modify game variables?
- Can you create limited time offers?
- Can you grant items to players?



# Special thanks to...

- CoverFire: Chris Ko & Jim Hughes
- Mike Pagano
- Matthew Smith
- Steve Taylor



# Questions?

Contact me:

James@playfab.com  
@gwertz

(psst... we provide solutions for LiveOps.  
Check out our platform at [playfab.com](http://playfab.com))