



March 20-24, 2023
San Francisco, CA

Planning Successful Marketing That Won't Disrupt Development

Alex Van Lepp
Director of Marketing
Graffiti Games

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Introduction

Who am I

- 13+ years in video games
- Marketing Director at video game publisher Graffiti Games
- Partner at VIM Global, an award-winning PR, marketing and consulting group

About This Talk

- Talk focus
- Why it's important
- Takeaways

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The Most Impactful Marketing Beats

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Marketing Beats Example

- Steam Next Fest
- Online Digital Events
- Special Social Beats
- Launch Leadup



Total Wishlists at Launch	Wishlist % From Beats
45,640	72%

Marketing Beat	Wishlist added
Guerilla Collective 2	10,850
Halloween tweet	875
Steam Next Fest	2,416
MIX Showcase	1,674
E3 event Steam page	1,708
MIX Next 2022	1,026
Steam Scream Fest	983
Jingle Jam	1,233
Launch Leadup	11,782
Total From Major Beats	32,637

Online Events and Showcases

Example 2

Total Wishlists	MIX Showcase	E3 Events	Tiny Teams	MIX Next
28,485	6,794	6,443	2,613	933

59% of Wishlist come from major online events

Monthly Wishlists Breakdown

- Major events in March, June, August and October
- Major community beats in June, December, January and February

March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.
7,353	2,036	704	7,732	1,067	3,070	443	1,382	746	1,266	1,222	1,464

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Why Disruptions Happen

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No Proper Marketing Plan or Timeline

- No schedule for development to plan for marketing activities
- Additionally, too loose of a schedule

DATE	KEY BEAT	ACTIVITIES	NEEDS
SEPTEMBER 14, 2022	ID@XBOX Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Game reveal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First trailer
SEPTEMBER 14, 2022	Game reveal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Press blast• Media outreach• Social media posts• Steam announcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Same trailer as reveal event• Press kit materials
OCTOBER 27, 2022	MIX NEXT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appearance in the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New trailer
DECEMBER 2022	Launching in 2023 pitching	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Media outreach• Streamer outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None
JANUARY 2023	The Big Adventure Event (potential)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appearance in the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TBD
JANUARY 2023	Media and streamer previews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Media outreach• Streamer outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demo

Lack of Communication

- No sync between marketing and production schedules
 - Teams aren't honest with each other
 - Build status
 - Major marketing beats

January 2022	#4 Alpha 2	<u>By January 31st, 2021</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Localization Support Added<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. All localized text and localization fixes have been integrated into the game. The game will automatically detect the system language and run accordingly.2. Porting Support<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Provide ongoing support by communicating with and providing documentation to a 3rd party developer to ensure that console porting goes as planned.3. Beta Build – External QA<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. An updated PC build downloadable via Steam with critical bug fixes for an external QA team to verify.b. Documentation and debug commands (i.e. skipping levels, toggling invincibility, etc.) have been shared with testing team to facilitate the QA process.
February 2022	#5 Beta	<u>By February 28th, 2021</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Beta Build<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. An updated PC Beta build downloadable via Steam that includes all bug fixes, game balance, and optimization changes. An external testing team has thoroughly tested the PC version and verified that all major defects have been addressed.2. Demo for Steam Winter Game Fest (or tradeshow)<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. A demo version of the game on PC, hosted on Steam, that can be used to showcase the game in future digital events or in-person tradeshow. The demo / teaser should be limited in scope (i.e., 1-2 locations, 15 minutes of gameplay maximum)3. Nintendo Lotcheck Submission

Being Reactive, Not Proactive

- Planning activities last minute
 - Good marketing takes time to plan, create and execute
- Wait and see approach
 - Don't wait to see if you get selected for an event

Inexperience with the Time Investment

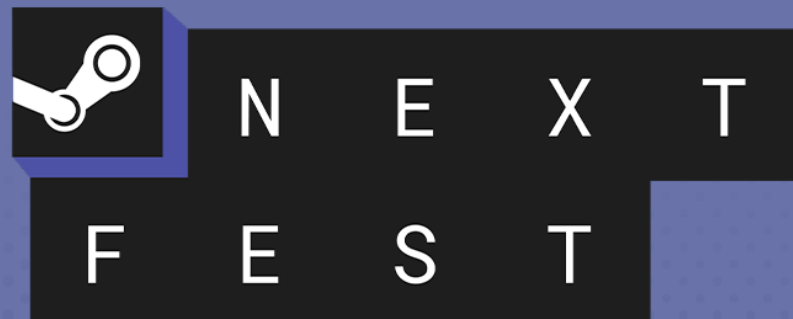
Example: Key art process



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Steam Next Fest & Online Events

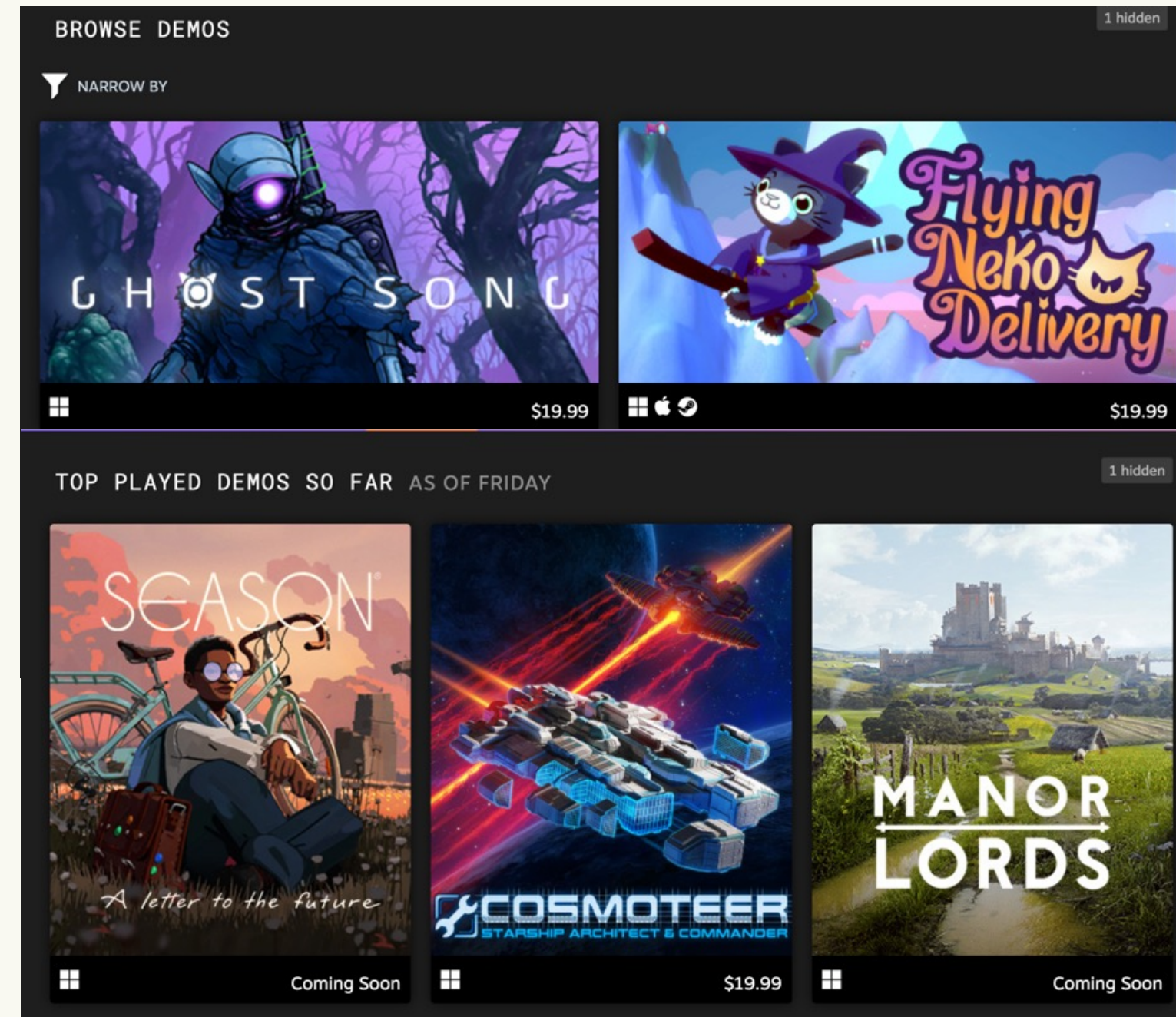


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Demo

Development Impact

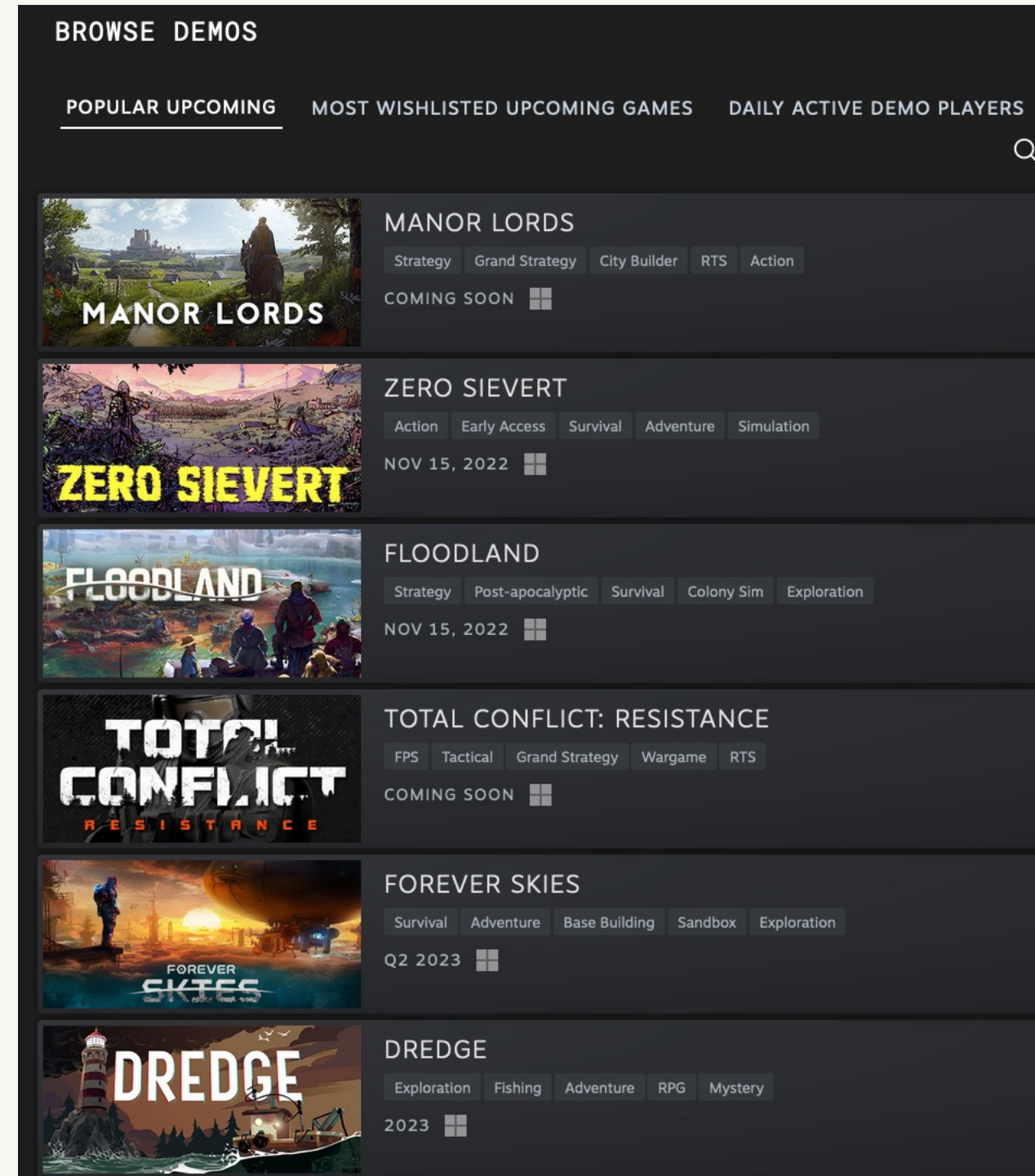
- Building a Demo
 - What features to work on and have in the demo
 - Might require polishing an area that wasn't planned for
- Testing
- Updating



Demo

Tips to Alleviate

- Plan your demo from the very start
 - Decide which Steam Next Fest you will be in
 - Watch for delays in development
 - Complete a demo at least six weeks in advance
- Limit the demo scope
 - Decide what features are important to share
 - Keep to 10-20 minutes



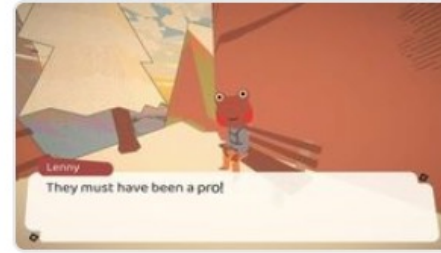
Trailers

Development Impact

- Scripting
- Footage capture
- Trailer editing
- Developer interviews
- Recorded developer intros



Barney
Interaction.mp4



Bench Joke 2.mp4



Bench Joke.mp4



Benjamin
Interaction.mp4



Climbing Up M...ntain
2.mp4



Climbing Up M... Card
1.mp4



Climbing Up M...ntain
3.mp4

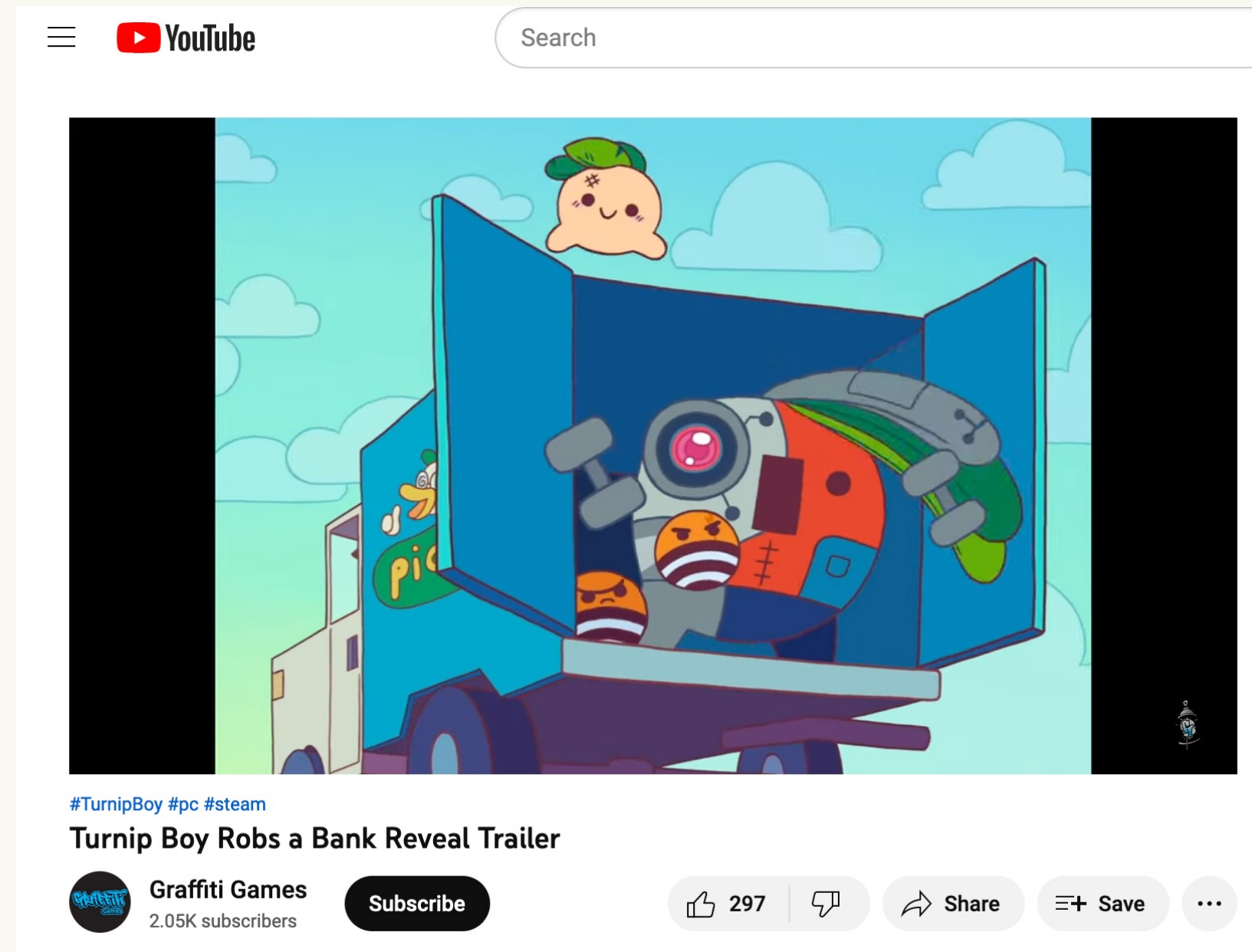


Climbing Up M...ntain
4.mp4

Trailers

Tips to Alleviate

- Planning
 - Have online events and needs in a marketing timeline
 - Create a script with a shot list
 - Make walkthrough videos and shorter, teaser trailers
- Communication
 - Talk with production
 - Share potential developer time investment
- Other tips
 - Always be capturing footage
 - Manage all aspects of trailer creation
 - Use an existing trailer



Steam Page Refresh

Development Impact

- New marketing assets
- New marketing copy
- Demo app setup

Tips to Alleviate

- Use captured footage to create assets
- Allocate time in your marketing schedule
- Plan for new key art one month in advance
- Set up your demo early for approval

Event Promotion

Development Impact

- Social media posting
- Marketing assets
- Announcements
- Media/streamer coordination
- Livestreaming
- Community support

BROADCAST SCHEDULE

LIVE NOW

LIVE

Moonshine Inc.
Join Our 2nd Live Dev Stream f...

LIVE

INU - A Glimpse of Infinity
Atmospheric Fractal Exploratio...

LIVE

Blacken Slash
Retro roguelite with turn-base...

UP NEXT

2:00 PM

Camp Canyonwood
Developer Livestream + Q&A

2:00 PM

Pre-Purchase FAR: Changing T...
Steam NextFest Developer Co...

2:00 PM

The Plague Doctor of Wippra
STEAM NEXT FEST - The Plagu...

See all upcoming events

Event Promotion

Tips to Alleviate

- Treat Steam Next Fest as an in-person event
- Work ahead (announcements, social media posts, marketing assets)
- Start code distribution as early as possible
- Prerecord streams to run on the game's page



Graffiti Games @Graffiti_Games · Feb 21

We're excited to be part of @Steam's Next Fest! Starting today, you can check out awesome demos for Camp Canyonwood, Elderand, and Restless Soul until Feb. 28. Livestreams start tomorrow, so keep an eye out for them! #indiegames #indiedev #videogames #graffitigames #gamedev



Finding and Submitting to Events

Time Impact

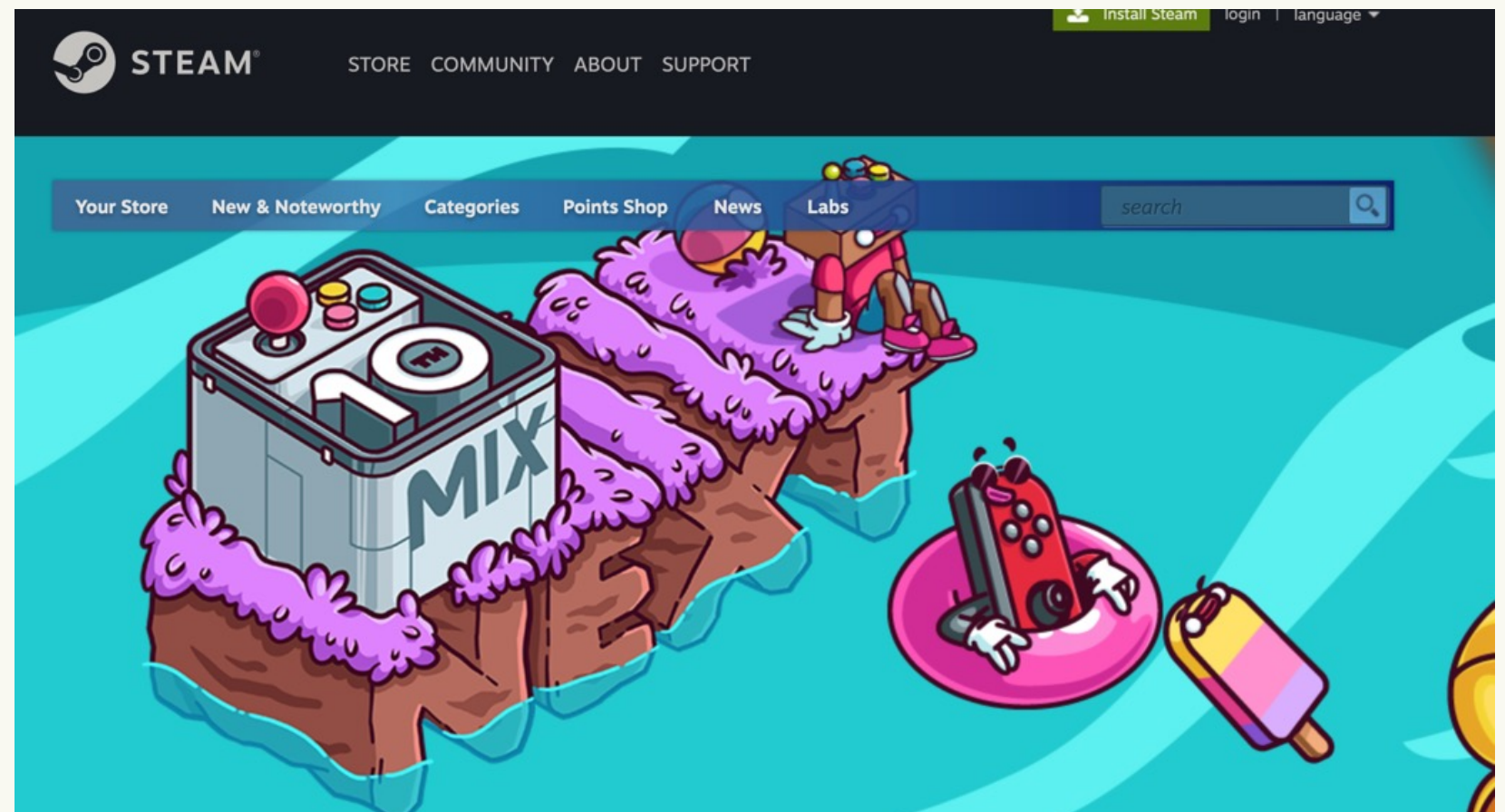
- Finding and submitting to events
- Coordinating with organizers

Tips to Alleviate

- Online resources such as Events for Gamers
- Track and subscribe to events
- Criteria for which events to target
 - Cost
 - Reach
 - Steam featuring
 - Media integration
 - Required materials

Note for Publishers

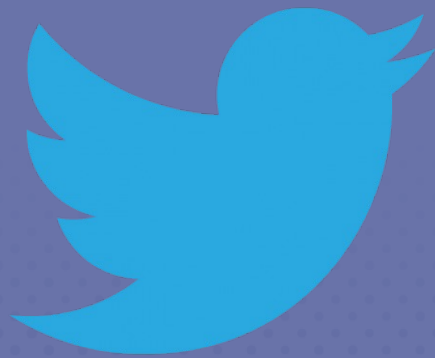
If your developers keep bringing up events, take the lead to show you are looking for and submitting to events. Make them keep their focus on development.



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Special Social Beats



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Special Social Beats

Major Time Disruptions

- Creating and posting content
- Coordinating cross-promotions
- Giveaways and contests

Tips to Alleviate for Publishers

- Create the assets for everyone to use
- Provide developers a best-practices document
- Provide feedback to posts
- Run the giveaways and contests (developers repost)
- Set up the cross-promotions



Special Social Beats

Tips to Alleviate for Developers

- Bring on a community manager to help with launch
- Carve out 30-60 minutes to create a 2-week content schedule
- Dedicate specific months for asset creation
- Leverage programs such as Hootsuite to set up future posts
- Limit the number of contests you run
- Reuse existing assets



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Launch Leadup

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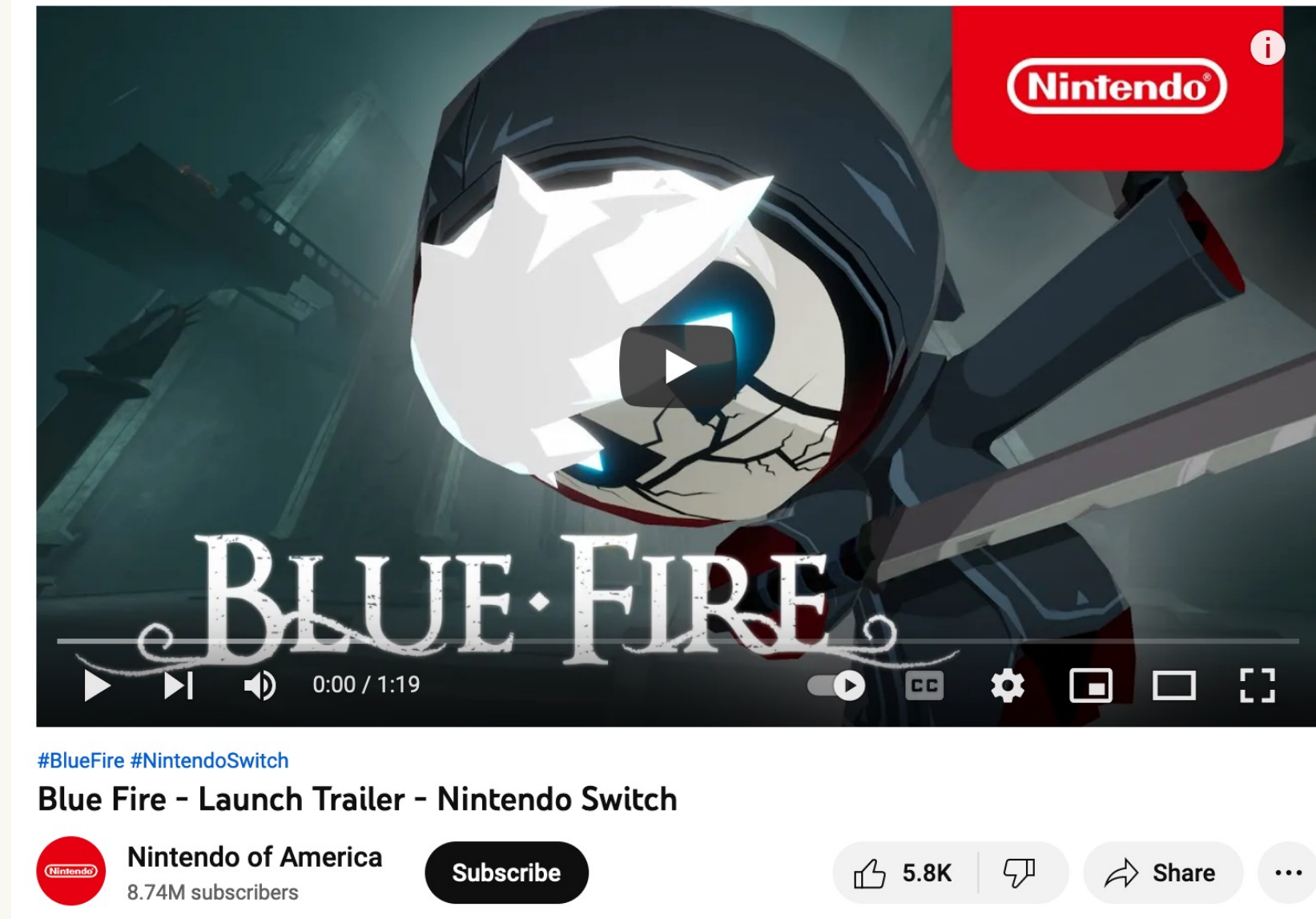
Activities that Impact Development

Major Disruptions

- Launch marketing assets
- Community efforts
- Media and content creator efforts (code allocation)

Tips to Alleviate

- Publisher: handle all aspects to relieve developers
- Create launch assets in advance
- Solo developers: Have a target list for code outreach
- Work with a paid content creator network



Activities that Impact Marketing

Major Disruptions

- Delay in launch
- Delay in review codes
- Lotcheck/cert delay
 - Console page not live
 - Can't line up first party support
 - Can't receive codes

Tips to Alleviate

- Communication is key
- Adjust launch dates months in advance, if needed
- Submit to lotcheck/cert at least two months prior to launch
- Allow six weeks from passing lotcheck/cert and launch
- Plan for launch assets in advance
- Hire a PR agency launch help

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Other Tips

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How to Shift if Marketing Causes Disruption

Tips to Alleviate

- Sync the teams to determine what needs to be prioritized
- Alter marketing based on current development
- Determine if launch needs to shift
- Publishers
 - Limit any demands marketing may have for developers
 - Handle asset creation yourself
- Developers:
 - Consider outside help
 - Determine on the team who can tackle marketing

How to Shift if Marketing Causes Disruption

DATE	KEY BEAT	ACTIVITIES	NEEDS
OCTOBER 2022	MIX NEXT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Press blast Media outreach Social media posts Steam announcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New trailer (completed)
DECEMBER 2022	Indie Live Expo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitted to the event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
DECEMBER 2022	Launching in 2023 pitching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media outreach Streamer outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
JANUARY 2023	Media and Streamer Previews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media outreach Streamer outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codes
JANUARY 2023	Community Closed Beta (Playtest)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media posts Steam announcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demo
FEBRUARY 2023	Steam Next Festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamer outreach Social media posts Steam announcement Livestream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demo
FEBRUARY 2023	Escapist Indie Showcase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitted to the event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None

The Future

- **More online showcases**
- **Publishers potentially running developer social media accounts**
- **More one-off marketing contractors brought on for projects**
- **Pipe Dream**
 - Games will be developed more like movies

Thank You!

avanlepp@graffitigames.com