



Breaking Through the Mobile Clutter: Marketing Your iOS Game

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GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE* March 14-18, 2016 · Expo: March 16-18, 2016 #GDC16

@dtrebella



Who Am I?

- Founder of marketing, PR, and strategy company: Spoke & Wheel Strategy
- Worked on 10+ mobile games w/ more than half landing Apple features and several ranking in top 20 games on App Store
- Past games have included titles such as: Piloteer, Pivvot, Age of Defenders, Baller Legends, Mucho Party and more.

Presentation Roadmap

- Why you should start planning marketing early
- How to tell a compelling, consistent story
- Marketing asset tips
- Tips for contacting Apple
- Media outreach
- Case study of Piloteer

Start Planning Your Marketing Strategy Early!

- Have a strong plan and strategy from early on in the development of your game.
- Choose a strategy and stick to it! Consistency is key!

Tell Your Story in a Compelling and Consistent Way

- The story you tell about your game should consist of more than just the game itself.
- Always answer the questions:
 - Why should anyone care about my game?
 - Why is my game different, really?
 - Why was I motivated to make this game?
 - What experience am I trying to create?
- Create an elevator speech.
- Don't compare your games to other games!

How to Create An Elevator Speech

- A short, to-the-point way to quickly communicate your game in 1-3 sentences.
- Should immediately convey what your game is about and why it's unique in an exciting way.
- Don't compare your game to other games.
- To uncover this, spend time brainstorming about the deeper-level questions of your game.
- Should be the first thing you lead with about your game to anyone you talk to.

Create Marketing Assets

- Minimum Required Assets:
 - Teaser Trailer/GIF
 - Trailer
 - Screenshots
 - Press Kit (dopresskit.com)
 - Press Release

Press Outreach At Launch

- Look for people who have covered games similar to yours.
- Target, tailor, and customize your outreach.
- Treat streamers and traditional press differently.
- Always include codes. Don't ask people if they want it.

Tips for Apple

- Always give apple at least three weeks notice before your launch.
- Use general information box at appstorepromotion@apple.com or appstoremarketing@apple.com
- Provide them Apple-specific information (i.e. Apple likes when you use their new features) so tailor your messaging to them.
- Provide the press kit, trailer, and press release to them directly.

Overarching Game Marketing Launch Tips And Considerations

- Always launch on a Wednesday afternoon/evening.
- Never announce a launch date until approved by Apple.
- Research what else is going on when you are planning to launch (game conventions, other launches, etc.)
- Be active on Twitter and make real friends!
- Test your game in real life. Make sure it's a viable product.
- Don't rush the launch! You spent a lot of time making your game; why not spend time on marketing it?

Piloteer: A Case Study

About Piloteer

- An iOS Game
- Landed in top 15 paid games upon launch in June 2015
- A serenely challenging jetpack game



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Here's How It Happened...

Early Buzz...

- Announced back in October with a screenshot.
- Screenshot was picked up by several outlets with editors speculating what the game was going to be about.
- From the art, press could tell it was going to be a different project for the dev.
- *“With Piloteer being seemingly character-driven, this could be a huge departure indeed”*



Whitaker Trebella Announces His Third Game, 'Piloteer'

Whitaker Trebella has just announced his third self-developed title, *Piloteer*, is in development. People praying for his next game to not have a 'p' title after *Pivot* [\$0.99] and *Polymer* [\$0.99] will find themselves plenty peeved by the persistent p-usage. Details are rather light, as he's just announced the game's title and a bit of art, but we do know the game is coming to mobile. And his Twitter feed is full of 3D work in Blender, so it's quite possible that we can expect that.



Trebella has made a nice name for himself as a developer with the well-regarded *Pivot* and *Polymer*, his first two games. Long-time iOS gamers will recognize him as a composer who got his start doing music for *Tilt to Live* [\$2.99 / Free / Free (HD)], before doing the soundtrack for *Super Stickman Golf* [\$2.99] and countless other games, along with learning how to make his own titles, though he's still contributed music to recent games, like the Noodlecake-published *Mmm Fingers* [Free]. With *Piloteer* being seemingly character-driven, this could be a huge departure indeed from his previous games, but it should be worth keeping an eye on in the coming months. But with another 'P' game from him, here's another great P-thing, the pumpkin dance. Is the mysterious pumpkin dancer Whitaker Trebella himself? Well, he hasn't denied it. So on that note, here's one last pumpkin dance, but remember: it's always pumpkin dance time in our hearts.

Consistency in Strategy

- People were interested but we purposefully chose to keep the majority of the game under wraps.
- We teased on Twitter regularly but never shared concrete facts about the game until close to launch.

We Took Advantage of Opportunities

- Used mystery as a way to book press and YouTuber meetings at GDC.
- Prepared talking points for GDC meetings w/ press.
- GDC press meetings resulted in more mysterious press articles.
- Showed game at lots of local Chicago events with other devs to get feedback, which ultimately shaped the game.

148Apps



GDC 2015 - Piloteer is Whitaker Trebella's Latest Project, and it's Definitely Something Different

Posted by Rob Rich on March 3rd, 2015

Universal App - Designed for iPhone and iPad

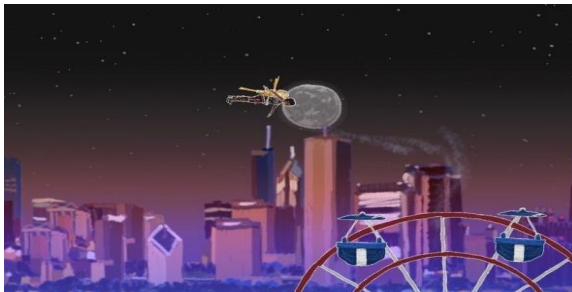
\$0.99

Buy Now

You know *Pivot*, right? Of course you do. You're probably also familiar with *Polymer*. And if you haven't played either you probably should, because they're excellent. Well, the mind behind both of these Editor's Choice games, Whitaker Trebella, is at it again with yet another game that begins with a "P" - *Piloteer*.

Piloteer is about an inventor who loves (loves) jetpacks. She loves jetpacks so much that she's decided to make it her personal mission to convince a society that hates them to, well, love them. And the way she'll do that is by completing a bunch of crazy jetpack-related tasks that may or may not be likely to result in a horrible crash. Imagine trying to fly a jetpack in *QWOP* and you'll have a general idea of how it plays, actually.

Piloteer should hopefully be seeing an App Store release in May, at which point you can rest assured that we'll have a review raring to go.

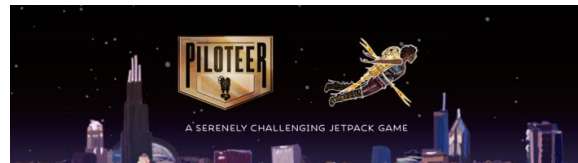


Tell Your Story in a Compelling Way

- Here's what we used to cultivate the unique story about the game in our marketing assets:
 - Serene art and music with dichotomy of very hard game
 - Showcased new game style for the dev
 - Inspired by Chicago
 - Quirky game that doesn't take itself too seriously

Translated to Compelling Marketing Materials

- Trailer
- Press Kit
- Press Release
- Screenshots
- Included this all very simply in emails



Never Compared

- Piloteer elicits clear comparison to QWOP.
- We never brought this up ourselves. Many editors came to this conclusion on their own.

"Imagine trying to fly a jetpack in QWOP and you'll have a general idea of how it plays" - 148 Apps

"Piloteer is basically QWOP with a jetpack" - IndieGames.com

"Piloteer takes the physics approach of Happy Wheels or QWOP..." - Polygon

"Imagine putting a jetpack on the guy from QWOP. Now imagine feeding him some strong wine, spinning him around a few times, and then ordering him to fly a certain distance before landing safely. That's Piloteer in a nutshell." - Slide To Play

Started Apple Communications Early

- We first started talking with Apple back in February.
- Approached them with a quick game description and a screenshot as well as a tentative launch timeline.
- Made sure to highlight the aspects of the game that would be relevant to them:
 - Use of Apple-specific features
 - Super difficult game
 - Looks great on the iPhone
- Contacted them again in April closer to launch with updated assets. Followed up with them when buzz started happening.

Strategically Chose Our Launch Date

- We waited two months after Apple approval to launch
- There were too many other conventions/games launching in early June.
- There's still always unpredictability (we launched on the same day as Her Story).

Created Lots of Buzz at Once on Multiple Sources

- A shorter launch cycle: didn't reach out to media with release date and trailer until week before launch.
- We used multiple sources for marketing (Twitter, media etc.) to build buzz. Don't put all your eggs in one basket!
- Apple typically likes seeing media interest and can sometimes be a determining factor in features.
- Landed tons of launch and pre-launch buzz.
- Twitter community rallied around us.



'Pivvot' Developer Whitaker Trebella Reveals Release Date and Trailer for 'Piloteer'

Whitaker Trebella, indie composer and developer known for *Polymer* [\$0.99 / Free] and *Pivvot* [\$0.99], is finally getting ready to release his next game, *Piloteer*. He's finally announced the release date, June 25th, and released a teaser trailer showing off a bit of the game. It's been in the works for a while – it was announced last October – but the game has undergone a lot of tweaking and structural changes to make it all work. Check out the teaser below:



Whitaker Trebella's Piloteer Launches This Week

While the game's creator Whitaker Trebella describes *Piloteer* as "A Serenely Challenging Jetpack Game," I've coined what I feel is a much more accurate phrase to describe it:

QWOP Rocketeer.

Trebella has been fairly good at keeping a tight lid on this game since [announcing it last Fall](#), but having gone hands on with an early copy, don't let its maker fool you – it's about as serene as a bag of hammers in a washing machine. It's presentation is mellow, with gorgeous paper-style environments and a hauntingly mellow soundtrack by Trebella himself – but controlling your piloteer will endlessly result in hilariously tragic results.



Rob Rich
@RobateenOne



Piloteer Piloteer Piloteer Piloteer Piloteer
Piloteer Piloteer Piloteer Piloteer Piloteer
Piloteer Piloteer!!!

⌕ View translation

Some of What We Saw at Launch...

Categories Games

Paid Free Top Grossing

12 MONOPOLY Game Games \$0.99

13 Five Nights at Freddy's Games \$2.99

14 Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas Games \$6.99

15 Piloter Games OPEN

16 Angry Birds In-App Purchases \$0.99

toucharcade
Keeping you in touch with the latest in iOS gaming

'Piloter' Review - Joyride in a Jetpack

★★★★★

Author: Nathan Reininger
Posted on: 2016-06-28 12:04:32
\$2.99, 5 stars, Arcade, Games, Reviews, Universal

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I was about five years old when the The Rocketeer hit theaters, so I don't remember a whole lot about the character or plot. What I do remember is snapping a pair of 2-liter bottles to my back and zooming around my backyard like a Jetpack. I'm almost afraid to re-watch the movie now that I'm older, because I have nothing but good feelings about it currently and I don't want cold hard reality to tarnish them. That childhood wonder I felt while pretending to fly around in an awesome deerskin dipstick was pretty precious, ya know?

Piloter (\$2.99), the latest iPad game from Flipout Productions, seeks to recapture that feeling and shrink it down into a mobile-friendly package. And, I'm happy to report, it pulls it off. It's absurdly challenging, but incredibly fun once you get the hang of it. Except there's a good chance you won't ever fully "get the hang of it," but don't worry—that's actually part of the fun.

148Apps.com

Piloter Review

Our Review by Ron from June 29th, 2016
Rating: 5 stars (1 FIVE A BADGE)

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Piloter is like trying to teach an octopus with an inner ear problem how to fly a jetpack, and I absolutely love it.

Universal App \$2.99

Whitaker Trebella (@whitabella · Jun 28)

Piloter, my serenely challenging and ridiculous jetpack game is now live on the App Store! itunes.apple.com/us/app/piloter



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PILOTER (Phone Gameplay Video)



remember - Frustration is part of the fun in this one.



Take to the skies and fabulously crash in Piloter

She pilots—er, she pilots there

Product: iOS, Android, Publisher: Flipout Productions, Format: iPhone, Genre: Puzzle

Platform: 3, Version: 1.0.0, App version: 1.2

by Henry Slater

I'm almost incomparably bad at Piloter. But I'm pretty sure that that's the point. This is a laugh, utterly ridiculous, pack simulator that's as much about the landings you don't make as the ones you do.

But then you'd expect nothing less than extreme difficulty from the new best-of-the-year. Piloter takes things in a slightly different direction, or several different directions, and none of them is ever the direction you want to be heading in.

Crash landing



Some Key Takeaways to Wrap Up

- Plan your strategy early and be consistent.
- Be authentic to who you are.
- Think beyond game features.
- Never compare your game to others.
- Always email Apple and highlight things they care about.
- Shorter launch cycle for iOS is more effective.
- Try to build buzz at launch on multiple media platforms.
- Make real friends on social media and utilize community resources available to you.

How to Contact Me

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Q&A!