

The GDC logo is displayed in a large, white, sans-serif font. A small orange icon with a white speech bubble is located in the top-left corner of the slide.

GDC

March 20-24, 2023
San Francisco, CA

No-Budget DIY Marketing for Indie Games

Michelle Lega
Senior Producer, Armor Games Studios

#GDC23

The slide features a blue background with a fine white dot pattern. In the top-right and bottom-right corners, there are abstract, colorful shapes resembling stylized planets or molecules, composed of various colored circles and lines. In the bottom-left corner, there are a few small, overlapping colored circles.



Hi, I'm Michelle.

she/her

Marketing/PR for **6 years**

Senior Producer at **Armor Games Studios**

Worked on: **Cozy Grove, Sail Forth, Baladins,**
others





Overview

01 Your Message

03 Hour A Day
Marketing Plan

02 Foundations
of Followings

04 Launch and
Post Launch



01

YOUR MESSAGE

What is your game about?



An online and local party game of teamwork
and betrayal for 4-15 players...in space!

Among Us



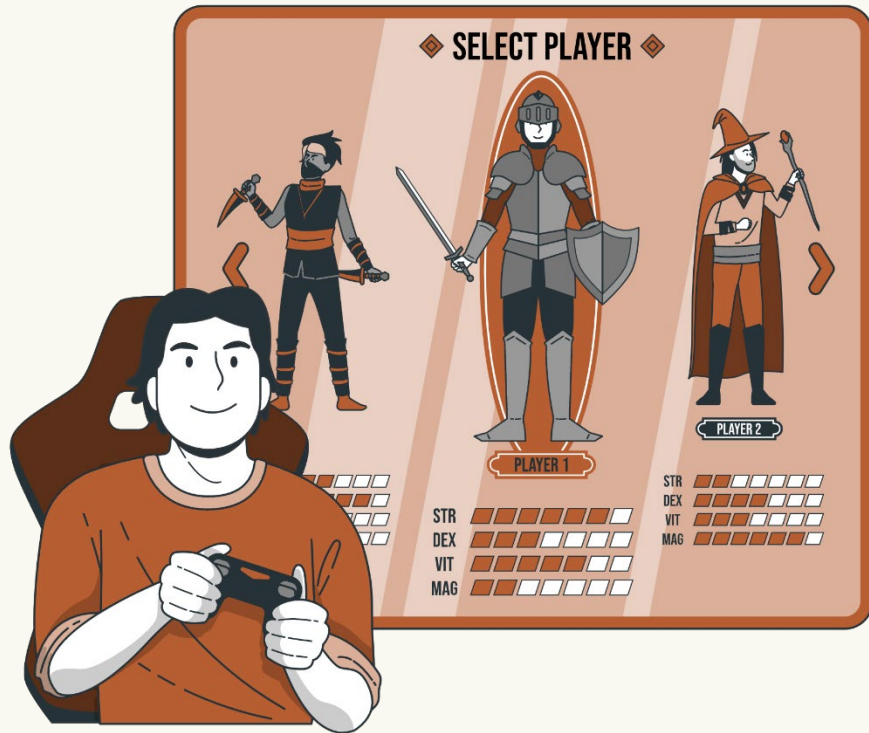
Even the smallest person can make a big difference. Join Alba, as she sets out to save her beautiful island and its wildlife. And possibly start a revolution.

Alba: A Wildlife Adventure

Define Your Audience

Who do you think will play your game?

- People like you, hopefully
- People who like x genre
- People who like x mechanics
- People who like x story beats
- People who have interests or hobbies aligned with your game





Write Your Pitch

“*Verb* in a *noun* while you *verb*.”

“*Game name* is a *genre* where you *verb* and *verb*.”

“*Story details*. Will you *verb*?”



Bullet Points

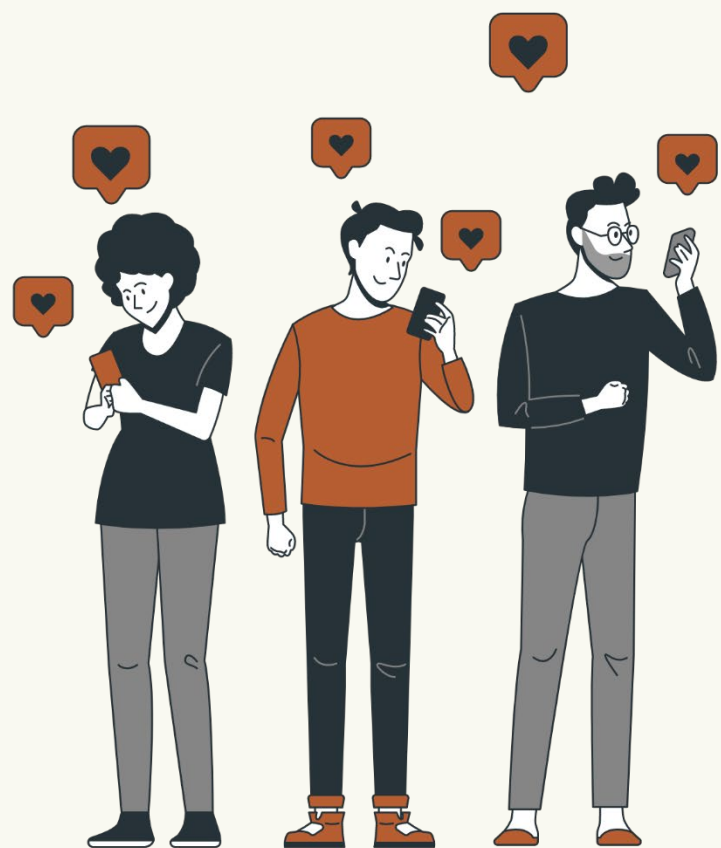
Narrow down 6-7 features of your game

- Gameplay
- Story
- Art style
- Soundtrack
- Number of levels/worlds
- Multiplayer, online, etc.
- Length of campaign

What makes these unique?

Shovel Knight

- Design, art, and audio hearken back to the days of **8-bit**.
- **Leap** over gaps! **Duel** with foes! Uncover treasure! Find Secrets! **Upgrade!**
- Multiple awesome **soundtracks** by Jake "Virt" Kaufman with additional songs by Manami Matsumae!
- Detailed, living background art and animation! **Big, beautiful pixels!**
- **Balanced gameplay** is a warm welcome to newcomers, and an old embrace for experts.
- A **light touch to narrative** with humor, levity, and heart.
- **Challenge Mode** - Up the ante in every imaginable way with over 100 full-featured challenges.
- **Co-op!** – Grab a friend and play through Shovel of Hope as a fully cooperative adventure! Or uncover Story Mode together in Showdown!



02

FOUNDATIONS OF FOLLOWINGS

How do people find your game?



How To Build a Following

- People follow people
- Engage, engage, engage
- Cultivate a community
- Be kind



Where To Start



- Choose your social media platforms and set up accounts
- Set up a website and a presskit
- Set up your Steam page
- Set up a Discord
- Put up a demo



Twitter

- What kind of account? Studio? Game? Personal?
- Remember - people follow people.
- Post about more than just your game!
- Hashtags? Eh.

Examples



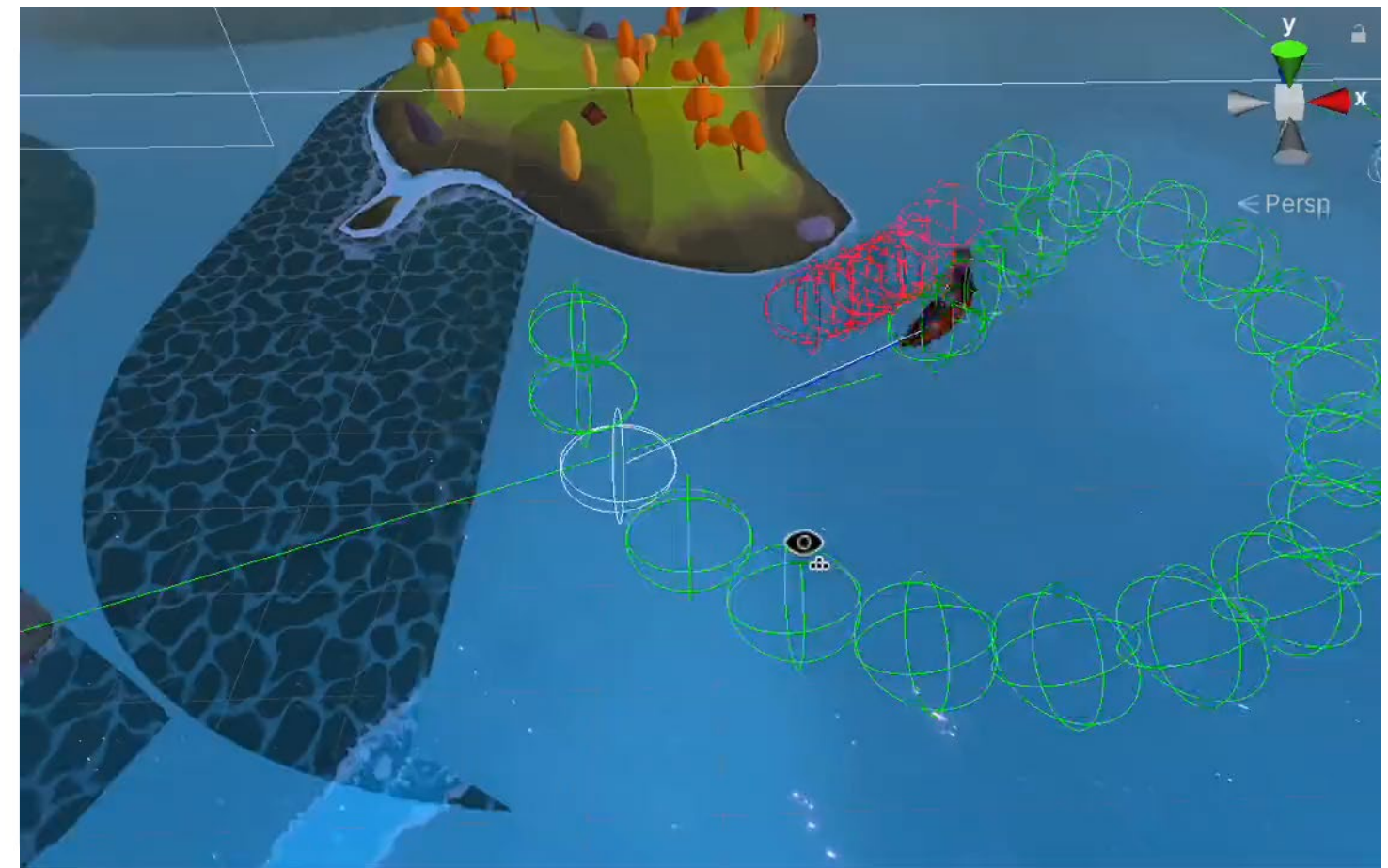
David Evans
@festivevector

Balcony
#gamec

been working on an improved method for detecting navigation obstacles, think I'm onto something now!



this costs 1 raycast per frame and maintains a 'radar' around the boat that I can use to adjust steering on the fly



9:12 AM ·

7:09 PM · Feb 8, 2023 · 155.3K Views

826 Retv

284 Retweets

11 Quote Tweets

3,326 Likes



TikTok

- This is where to be.
- Have fun with it, follow trends.
- Can drive HUGE spikes in wishlists/interest.
- Expect to fail before you succeed.



@onemoremultiverse

@mustard.soup

@landfallgames

@inkyfox_

@anaopara



@onemoremultiverse

274

Following

164.6K

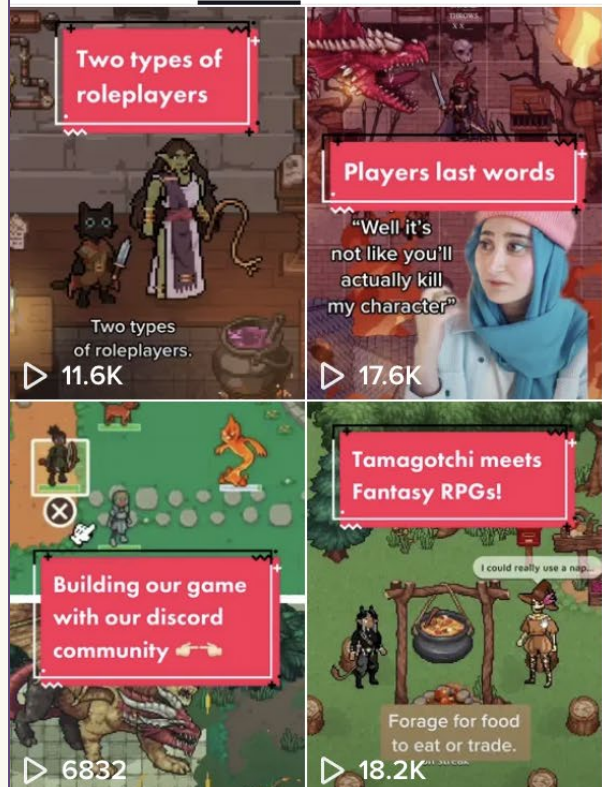
Followers

Follow



Play + build roleplaying games online
OUT NOW! ✨ multiverse.com/

🔗 Multiverse.com



@mustard.soup

311

Following

157.1K

Followers

Follow

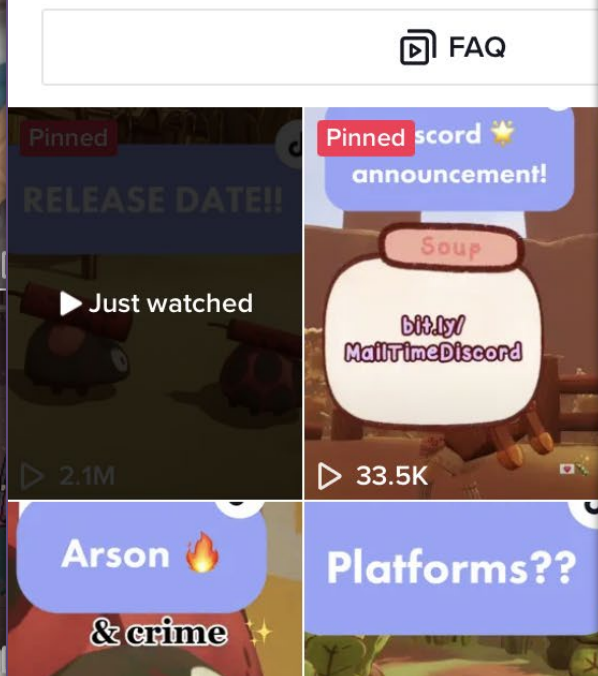


She/Her ✨ making Mail Ti

Bestie, join the cozy discord! (13 a

🔗 https://discord.gg/mailt

🔗 Q&A



@landfallgames ✓

134

Following

1.4M

Followers

Follow

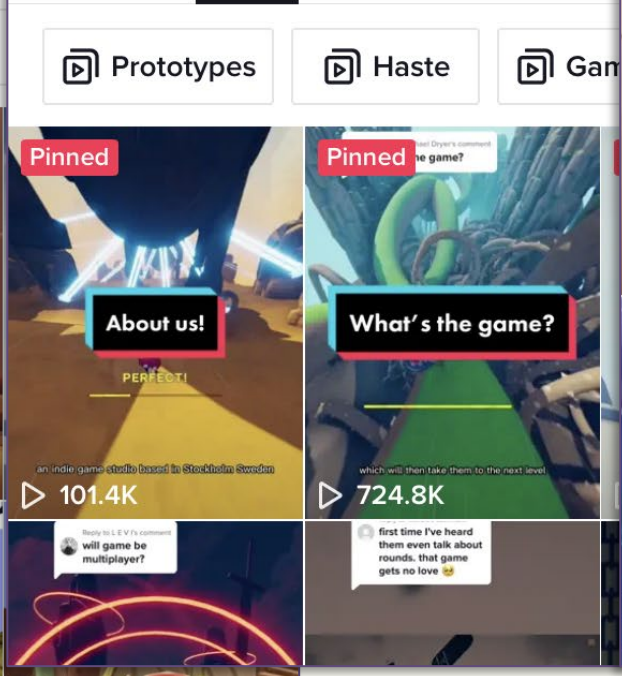


Makers of TABS, TABG, Stick Fight, C
Knightfall, ROUNDS and HAS

🔗 www.landfall.se

📧 Email

🔗 Q&A



@inkyfox_

17

Following

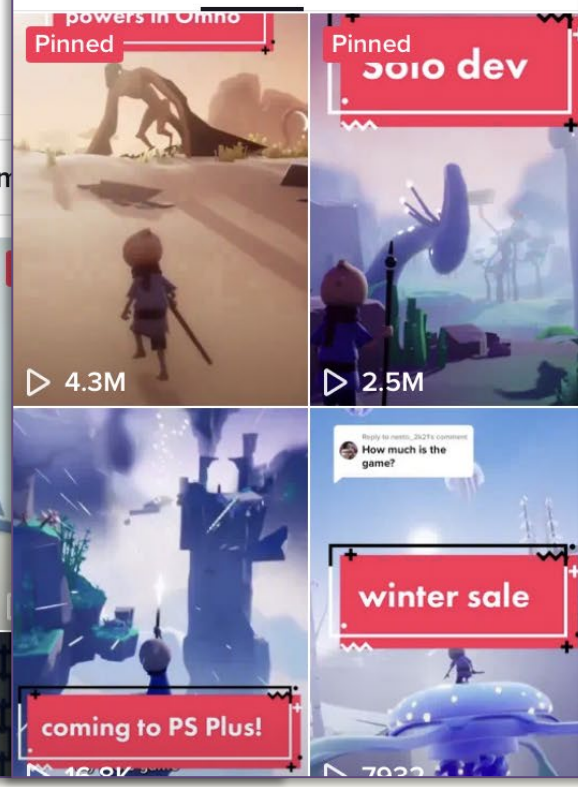
221.5K

Followers

Follow

Solo indie dev, making Omno // out n
Switch & PS4! Links belo

🔗 https://tap.bio/@Studiol



@anaopara

133

Following

492.0K

Followers

6.8M

Likes

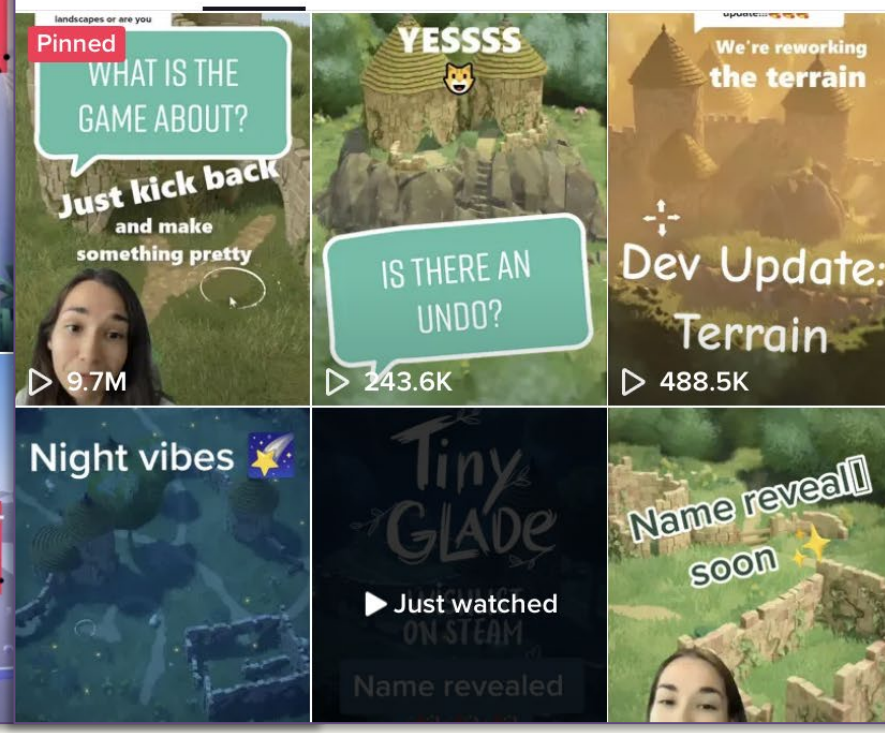
Follow



We are making Tiny Glade, a castle doodling game
coming to PC 🎮🌿 Wishlist 📌

🔗 https://s.team/a/2198150

🔗 Q&A





Discord

- A good Discord community can make an indie game.
- Your community is a reflection of your game and you.
- Chat with your fans!
- Give perks to people who are in your Discord.



Steam

- Set up your Steam page as soon as you can.
- Art doesn't have to be final.
- Wishlists convert anywhere from 10-30% in first year.
- Use the Steam events feature!



Word of Mouth

- Talk about your game IRL.
- Heck, tell strangers about it!
- Business cards, handouts, game build



Other Platforms

- **Kickstarter** is A LOT of work, but it gives you a built-in following and funding.
- **Reddit** is the wild west.
- **Instagram, Facebook, Tumblr**: meh.
- **Cohost, Mastodon, Hive** ???



03

HOUR A DAY MARKETING PLAN

What do you actually do?



Hour A Day Marketing Plan

MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI
Social Media	Press List	Network Festivals	Devlog Steam Page	Content Creation



Monday Social Media

- Post and schedule posts!
- Engage with community
- Follow other people



Tuesday Press List

- Spreadsheets, baby.
- Big outlets and smaller streamers and niche sites.
- Make it easy to reach you!



Press List Example

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	First Name	Last Name	Email	Twitter	Sites	Link	Platforms	Location	Notes
2	Horsy	McHorseface	mchorseface@hor	HorsyMcHorseface	Twitch, YouTube	twitch.tv/mchorsef	PC, PlayStation	USA	Loves horse games
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									



Wednesday Network / Festivals

- Join your local indie dev group.
- Make friends!
- Submit to upcoming festivals / awards shows

theindiehouses.org/festivals



Thursday Devlog / Steam

- Devlogs don't have to be long or unique.
- Cross post to your website, Discord, link to it from Twitter.
- Steam maintenance – marketing copy, art updates, wishlists, analytics



Friday Content Creation

- Take screenshots / videos throughout the week.
- Consolidate assets.
- Good job!

Hour A Day Marketing Plan

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04

LAUNCH AND POST LAUNCH

How do you bring it all home?





Marketing Beats

- Game announcement.
- Launch time frame announcement.
- Demo and/or festivals.
- Exact launch date announcement
- Launch day!



Launch Day

- Post everywhere.
- Send to your press and content creators list.
- Don't be afraid to ask for reviews!
- Launch with a launch discount.



Press Release

- Write a press release for your launch.
- Get 6-10 nice screenshots, including key art.
- Send press release and screenshots to gamespress.com.
- Include a way to contact you.



Measuring Success

- Set realistic expectations.
- Success doesn't has to be measured numerically.
- What matters to you?



Post Launch

- Be proud of what you made!
- Discount planning.
- Updates / patch notes.
- Continue to submit to festivals and Steam events.
- Keep your fans engaged for your next game!



Anything Can Be A Marketing Beat!

- Localize your game!
- Post a new trailer.
- Release on another platform.
- Find non-games related connections.



Relevant GDC Talks

today, 5:30 pm **Independent Games Summit: Indie Soapbox**

Tuesday, 1:20 pm **Independent Games Summit: 'Unpacking' Fan Expectations and Driving Engagement Post-Launch**

Wednesday, 10:30 am **Collaborative Curiosity: Crafting the Pre-Release Community for 'TUNIC'**

Wednesday, 5:00 pm **Validate, Hype, Release: A Strategic Approach To Reduce Your Next Game's Risk to Flop**

Thursday, 11:30 am **Growing an Internet Cult: 'Cult of the Lamb's' Social Strategy**

Thursday, 2:00 pm **So You've Made a Video Game, Now What? Promoting Your Game in the Modern Marketplace Roundtable**

Thursday, 2:00 pm **The Golden Rule of Game Promotion: No One Cares About Your Game**

Thursday, 2:00 pm **What Is Normal? Real-World Numbers from Hundreds of Indies Marketing Their Games**

Thursday, 3:00 pm **Finding Your Voice on TikTok**

Friday, 11:30 am **How a Three-Eyed Horse Changed Meme Marketing Forever**

Friday, 3:00 pm **Planning Marketing Beats that Increase Wishlists and Won't Disrupt Development**

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Twitter: @michelle_lega

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