Building a brand around a free-to-play MMO game
Establishing an Asian free-to-play title as Western premium MMORPG

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Table of contents

Building a brand around a free-to-play MMO game

1. Creating the Brand

- The starting point: Taiwanese license "Radiant Arcana" with large potential

- The challenge: Title needs to be adapted systematically according to the requirements, preferences and taste of the Western MMO community in order to be able to succeed

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1. Creating the Brand

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Development of new Brand: Runes of Magic –

Logo and Key Visuals developed inhouse according to Western premium standards

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1. Creating the Brand

Key Visuals – before and after

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1. Creating the Brand

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1. Creating the Brand

Adaption of essential graphical and gameplay aspects to the Western market

- Character Design
- Quest Design
- Zone Design

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1. Creating the Brand

Integration of shop items according to Western taste

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1. Creating the Brand

Integration of shop items according to Western taste

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1. Creating the Brand

Very early beta start to collect feedback of the European and

North American community from the very beginning and to reach out to the core players

→ Building up credibility in the community

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2. Positioning as Premium Product

- The Challenge:

  Free-to-play games have been seen as low budget games with minor quality

→ Systematic orientation to premium segment in marketing and PR

- Regular media relations activities with focus on the large amount of features in the game and its quality.

- Press tours, presentations and many interviews focusing on the high quality ambition. Regular exclusives for the most important media.

- Regular community activities and events.

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2. Positioning as Premium Product

Key Message:

Runes of Magic has the quality and scope of a subscription based MMO game, …

- Dual class system with eight classes and unique elite skills
- Player housing and guild castles
- PvP arenas and battlefields
- Guild wars
- Over 2,800 quests with epic quest-lines
- Wide range of mounts
- Extensive dungeons and raid content with up to 36 players
- Entertaining mini-games for single players and groups
- Dynamic crafting and customization of items
- Versatile role play elements including a marriage system

… but is for free!

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2. Positioning as Premium Product

- Development of high quality assets such as artworks and screenshots
- Regular trailers and in-game videos to showcase own quality ambitions
- Orientation to competitors in the full price subscription segment, not to free-to-play market

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2. Positioning as Premium Product

Preparing the launch

- Announcement in June 2008

- Frogster presence at Gamescom 2008 focused on Runes of Magic:

  Appointments and presentations with all important Western special interest media
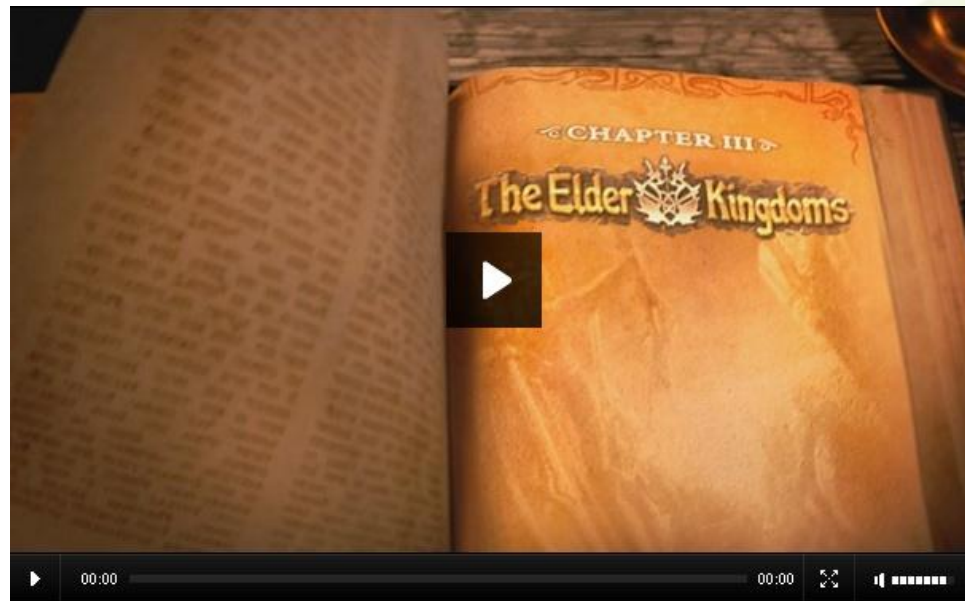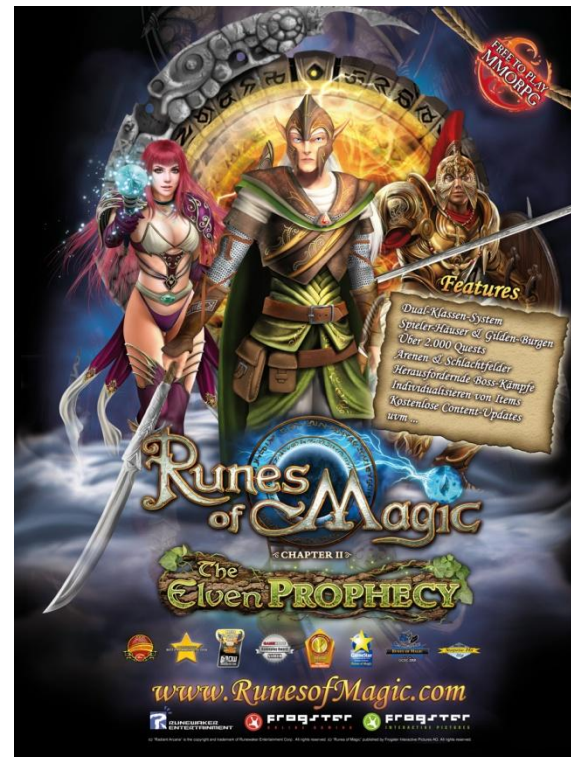
WE TAKE YOU TO A NEW WORLD!

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2. Positioning as Premium Product

Media Quotes 2008

- "The most beautiful free-to-play online role play game I've seen to date."

  GameStar

- "This game is sure to be a top contender in the MMO world, catering to both serious and casual gamers alike."

  MMOSITE

- "You know, it's been a while since we've used the term "WoW Killer" – with this list of features, ... Runes of Magic could be the next contender!"

  MASSIVELY
  DAILY NEWS ABOUT MMOs

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2. Positioning as Premium Product

- Impressive media feedback and coverage, particularly from the leading US MMO portals
- First Awards e.g. as "Surprise Hit", Ten Ton Hammer

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2. Positioning as Premium Product

Marketing strategy according to premium positioning – Print Advertising

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2. Positioning as Premium Product

Marketing strategy according to premium positioning – Print Advertising

Spread – double page

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2. Positioning as Premium Product

Box version for all chapter launches with valuable collector's content like posters, world maps, manuals and exclusive items

The editions for all chapter launches ranked first in German sales charts, although the client was available free for download.

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2. Positioning as Premium Product

- Systematic distribution of the client
  - Partnering with most important download networks and portals
  - Covermounts on print magazines
  - Early and extensive distribution of beta keys and special items

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3. Brand building

- Premium campaigns with high visibility in most important print and online media for all chapter launches
- Systematic brand marketing
- Extensive PR campaign

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3. Brand building

Early on brand development with media and marketing cooperations that create high awareness and underline value and significance of Runes of Magic

Series of bi-monthly magazines about Runes of Magic
(circulation 30.000 - 50.000 copies per issue – 9 issues so far)

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3. Brand building

Presence at the most important exhibitions and conventions

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3. Brand building

Gamescom 2009

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3. Brand building

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3. Brand building

Many awards from special interest media, appreciation and respect although free-to-play

GAMERSHALL.DE Silver Award	Gamona Gold Award	Becket Massive Online Gamer	GameStar Extraordinary
Silver Award	Review Chapter II	„Best Free MMO 2009"	Value for Money
Gamershall.de (11.10.2009)	Gamona.de (16.10.2009)	massiveonlinegamer.com (24.03.2009)	GameStar Magazin (Ausgabe 6/2009)

LevelUp Award 2010
Best Free MMOG
Play-mmorpg.de (01.01.2009)

Onlinewelten-Award 2008
„3rd Place Most Wanted MMOG"
Onlinewelten.com (12.01.2009)

Gamona Reader's Award 2008
„3rd Place Best MMORPG"
Gamona.de (09.02.2009)

Reader's Choice Award 2008
„Best New Game"
MMOsite (20.02.2009)

7 Reader's Choice Awards
in seven categories
Massively.com (01.01.2010)

GAMEZONE
Gameplay Award Silver
Gamezone.de (30.04.2009)

MMORPG CENTER'S
„BEST Free MMORPG of 2008"
mmorpg-center.com (26.12.2008)

GCDC 2008 Awards
„Best Free-to-Play - Runes of Magic"
tentonhammer.com (16.09.2008)

2008 Best of F2P Awards
„Surprise Hit 2008"
tentonhammer.com (14.01.2009)

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3. Brand building

Merchandise – Cooperations with Trydim and Compad

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3. Brand building

Ultraforce Branding Computer – including box version of Runes of Magic

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3. Brand building

MSI – Retail Bundle Laptop and exklusive in-game Pet

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Creative – Headset with exclusive In-game Pet

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Iiyama – Retail Bundle TFT Screen with Box version

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3. Brand building

Runes of Magic Novel

by writer Michael T. Bhatty

known for Far Cry novels and as Lead Game

Designer for Sacred

- Top position in German Amazon charts
- Sequel already in the making

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3. Brand building

Van Canto – Cooperation with unique a capella heavy metal band

- Runes of Magic Songs "Quest for Roar" and "Magic Taborea"
- Flyer integration album release
- Performances on Role Play Convention and Gamescom

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3. Brand building

Van Canto – In-game Music Video

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Media Cooperation Sevengames Pro 7

- TV Spots on Pro 7

- Top integration on Sevengames.de – one of the largest German-speaking casual games sites

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3. Brand building

Marketing Cooperation Mobile Phone Provider Callmobile.de

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Kingston USB Stick – "Runes of Magic to go" including item bundle

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3. Brand building

Fashion Collection – Fashion Show on Main Stage of Gamescom 2010

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3. Brand building

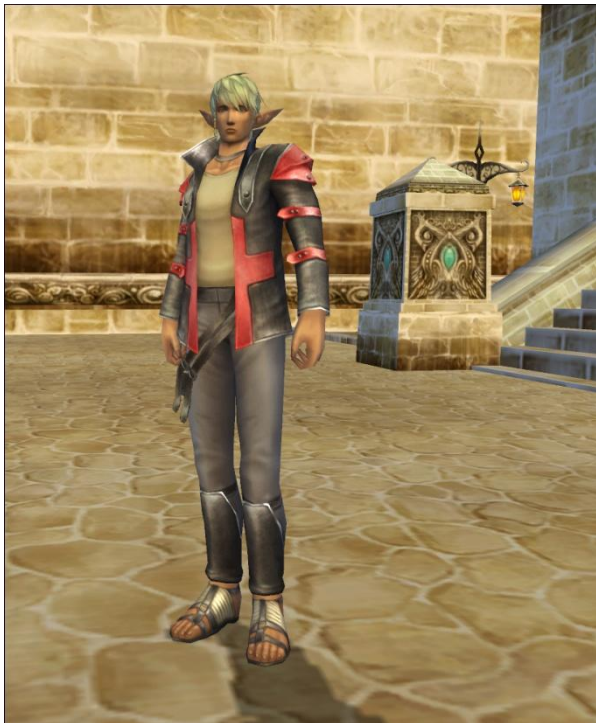Fashion Collection – Retail partner for sale of collection items

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3. Brand building

Fashion Collection – Virtual costume sets for the game world

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Cartoon Series "Flo & Andy"

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3. Brand building

Cooperation Call a Pizza

RoM Players vote their favorite pizza

Integration in nation-wide pizza menu

(Circulation 2,5 million)

Distribution of exclusive Pizzabaker Pet

to every customer

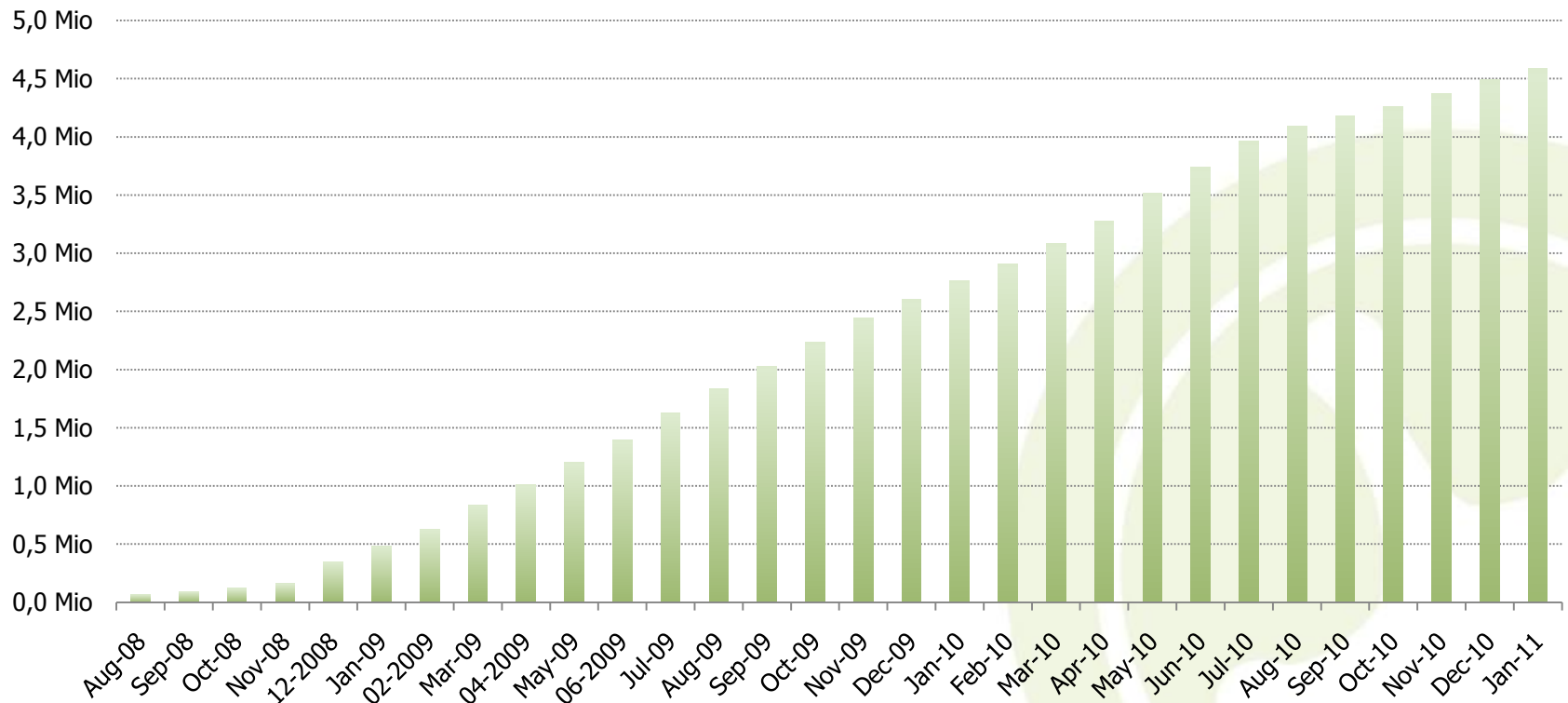# Building a brand around a free-to-play MMO game

4. Results

- A lot of organic traffic and word of mouth effects in the community

- Sustainability of the marketing due to brand building activities

- Over 4.5 million registered players in North America, Europe and Oceania

- 30 server worlds with a very active community in six languages

  (English, French, Spanish, German, Polish, Russian)

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4. Results

Runes of Magic – Registered Players North America, Europe and Pacific Region

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4. Results

„Best Online Role-Playing Game 2009"
Gamestars Awards
(Febr. 2010)

"Best International PC Game" /
"Best Online Game"
German Game Developer Award
(2009 & 2010)
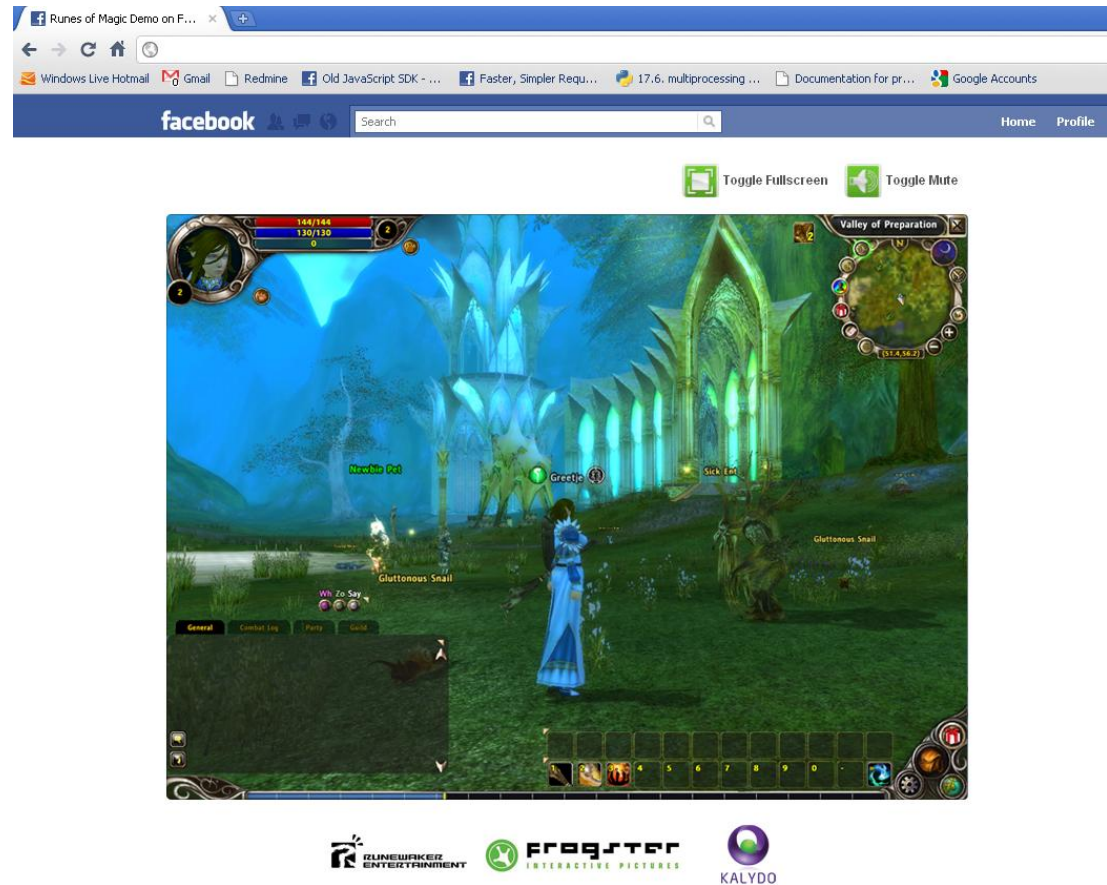
„Winner in MMO Category"
Computec BÄM! Award
(August 2010)

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4. Results

What´s next?

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4. Results

Questions?