Getting to Greenlight at King
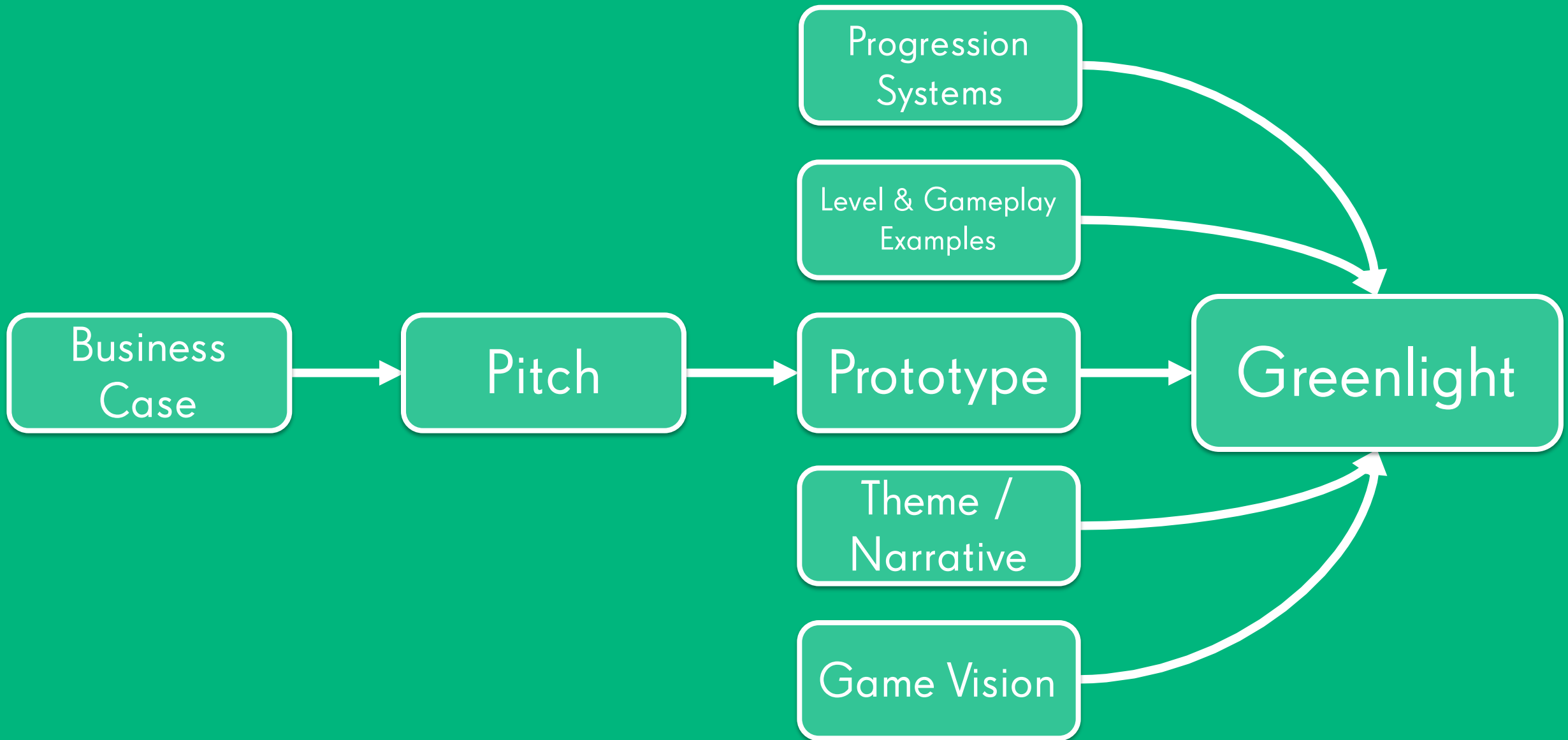
Tristan Clark
Game Designer

What Does "Getting to Greenlight" Mean?

Any process is an empty shell unless you bring the right experience and attitude to it

Why should the player care about your game?

Caring about the core

Caring about progressing

Caring indefinitely

Caring about
the core

Caring about
progressing

Caring
indefinitely

Farm Heroes:

Match 3 gameplay & collection goals & "+1" mechanic

The "+1" mechanic was the seed of difference that allowed Farm Heroes to find its own audience separate to Candy Crush

But it's easy to get it wrong...

Magic Miko

Farm Heroes: Lots of Ticks!

✔ Freshness

✔ Balance of luck & skill

✔ A single, simple input

✔ Wide variety of outputs

✔ Right amount of choice

✔ Clear consequences

✔ Clear improvement path

✔ Additive innovation

Magic Miko: It's Complicated

✓ Freshness

✗ Right amount of choice

✗ Balance of luck & skill

✗ Clear consequences

✓ A single, simple input

✗ Clear improvement path

✓ Wide variety of outputs

✗ Additive innovation

Innovation is risky. But if you don't innovate at all, you will not succeed.

How Can You Stay on Track?

Support structure

Targeted innovation

Lots and lots of testing

Why should the player care about your core mechanic?

"I did this, and then *that* happened!"

"It was so easy to grasp and get into"

"I could totally master this thing"

"I get to make meaningful decisions"

"It's similar to that other game, but different"

"Huh? Oh I'm sorry, I wasn't listening"

Caring about
the core

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Ensure your core loop is expandable

Zoo Lasso:

A Core we Couldn't Expand

An Expandable Core

- In Farm Heroes, we took the base "+1" mechanic and the collection goals and pushed as far as we could

"It's Like Chess!"

Farm Heroes moved further away from Candy Crush and developed its own "language"

Ensure your expandable gameplay is presented clearly, simply, and rewardingly

Mighty Fin:

Fun Core, Muddled Progression

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Fun Core, Muddled Progression
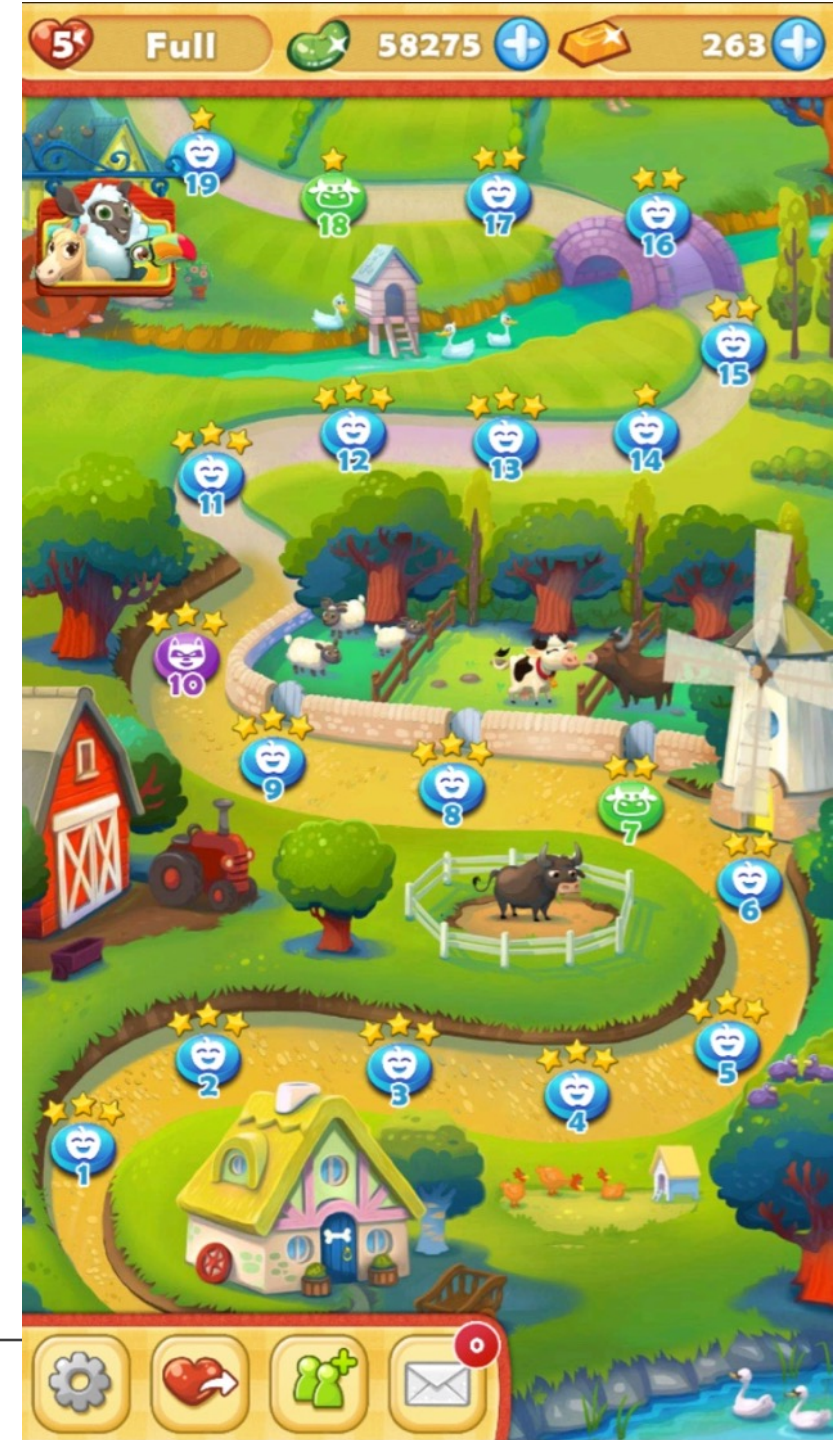
Saga: Dangling the Carrots

Map

Linear levels

Friends & foes

Familiar routine

Controlled ramp-up

A good progression system increases your potential audience by catering to many different types of players

Why should the player care about progressing?

"There are always fresh features to learn"

"When I think I've seen it all, the game surprises me with a new twist"

"I'm so much better now, but the game still challenges me in different ways"

"That collectable would look amazing in my collection"

"My friends are helping me out...

...but I'll still cackle as I beat them!"

King

Caring about
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Caring about the core

Caring about progressing
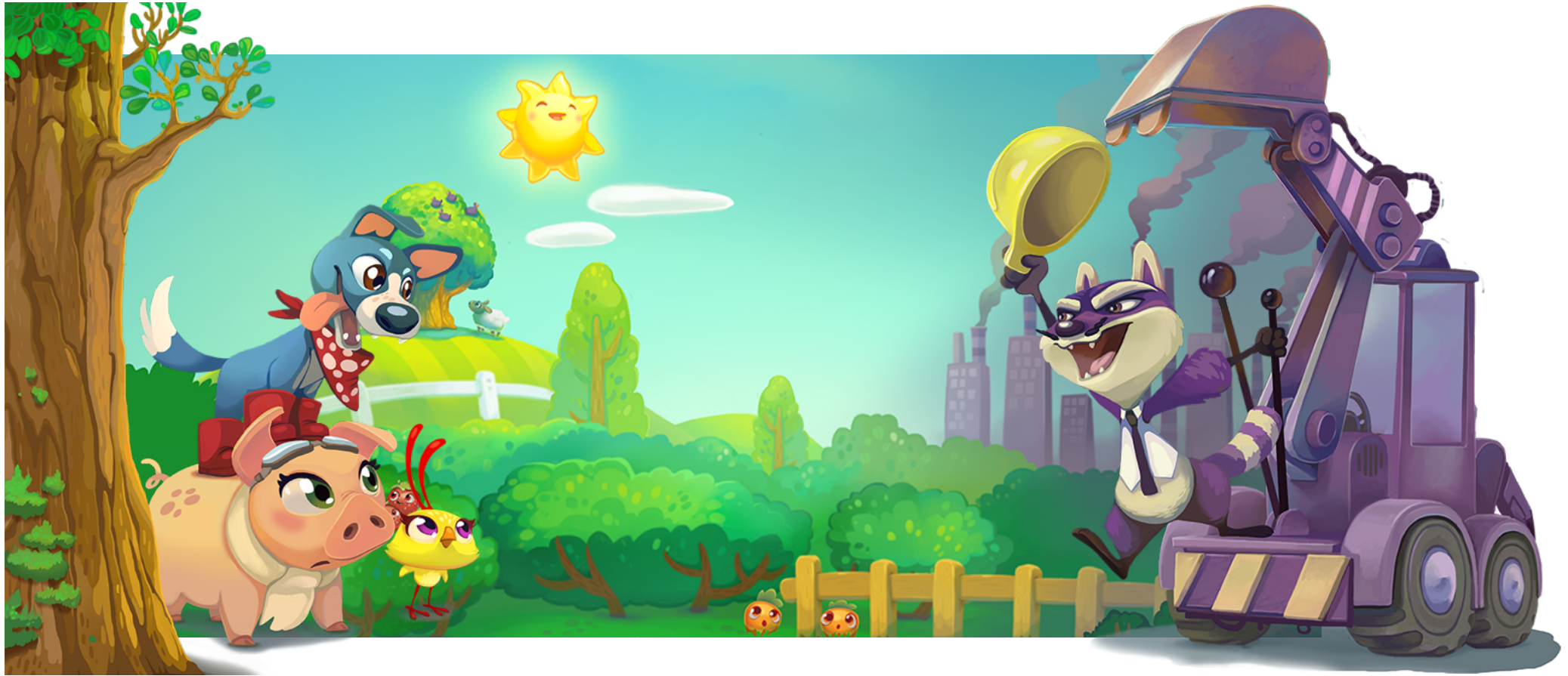
Caring indefinitely

Theme

Theme bookends your experience, drawing players in before the core, and keeping them engaged long after they've mastered the gameplay.

Theme gives your team a unified vision

Theme gives your game a unified vision

Theme increases retention

Theme increases virality

Theme gives marketing a story to tell
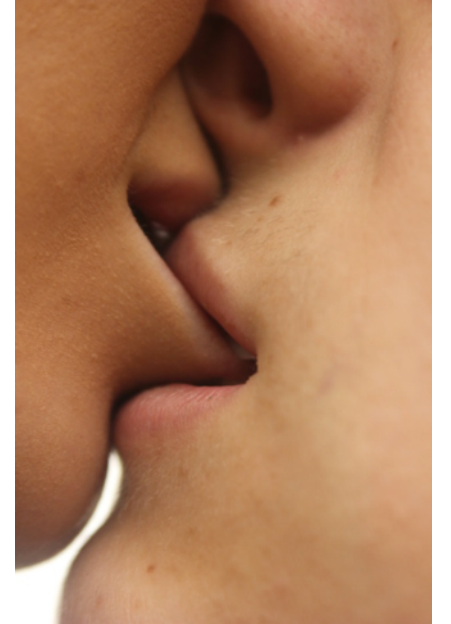
Theme gives everyone a story they want to hear

So what do you do?

Ask "Why" Like You're a Toddler

 = ???

Find a universal experience and replicate the emotions behind it

The Joy of Flight

"You should feel like you're soaring when you play this game. You will feel fast, agile, nimble and elegant as you leap, run, bounce and twirl through a level."

Not Talking About Cutscenes

Doing > Showing > Telling

Environmental storytelling

Characters & animations

Why should the player care intensely and indefinitely?

"This game feels so welcoming"

"I get to be a celebrity!"

"My skills in this game help advance the story"

"I know why I'm playing this game"

"I can't believe I cried over a mobile phone game"

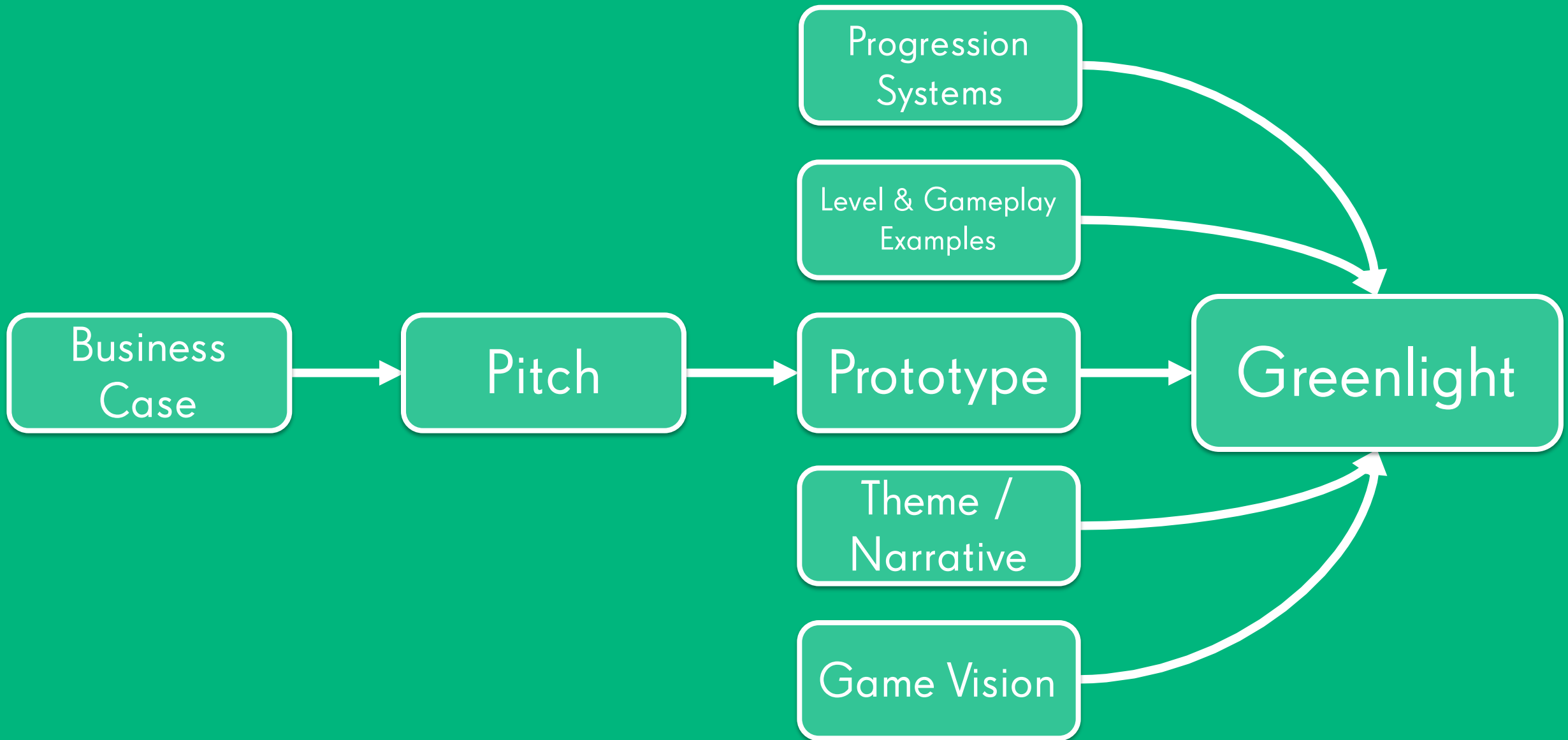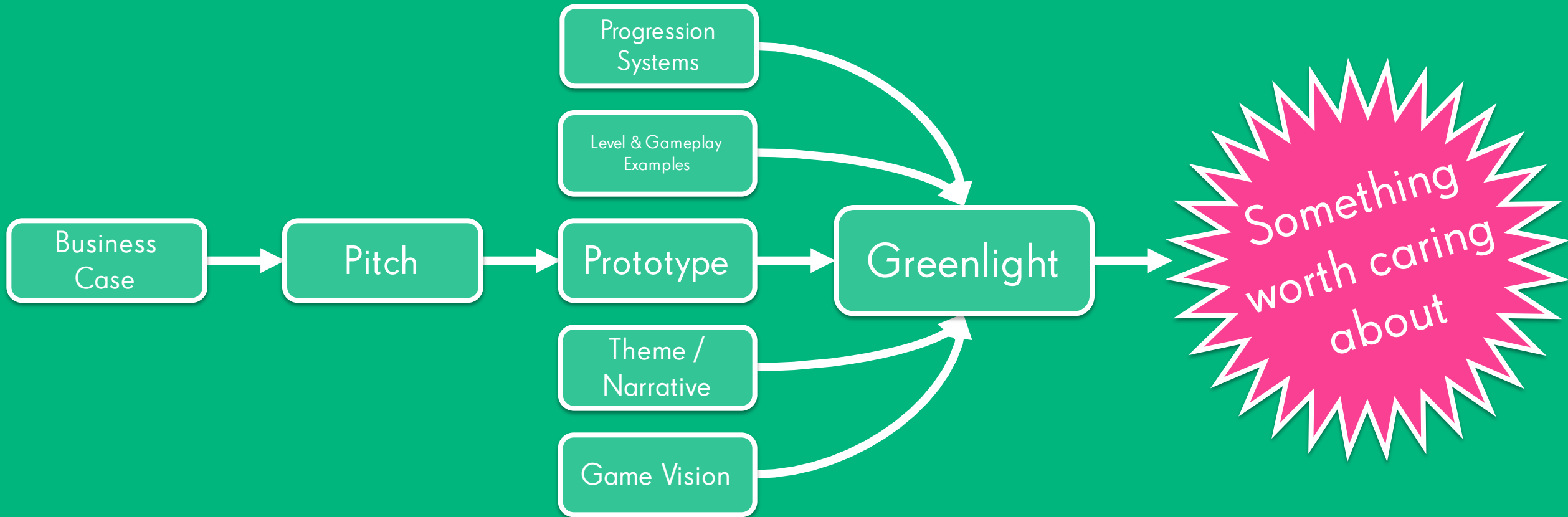"I have to find out what happens next"

Caring about
the core

Caring about
progressing

Caring
indefinitely

Ask yourself: "What would it take for me to fall in love with this game?"

Progression Systems

Level & Gameplay Examples

Business Case → Pitch → Prototype → Greenlight

Theme / Narrative

Game Vision

Business Case → Pitch → Prototype → Greenlight → Something worth caring about

Progression Systems

Level & Gameplay Examples

Theme / Narrative

Game Vision

Thanks!

Questions?

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