



Inspiring 249 Million Strangers

Art Direction for a Global Audience



Hi!

Riana McKeith

Art Director, King London



249 million Monthly Active Players

(Yes, this even includes politicians)

The Challenge



- ☑ New Game & IP
- ☑ Underserved Audience
- ☑ Narrative Focused



The Approach



Auteur



Intuition



Data



Data

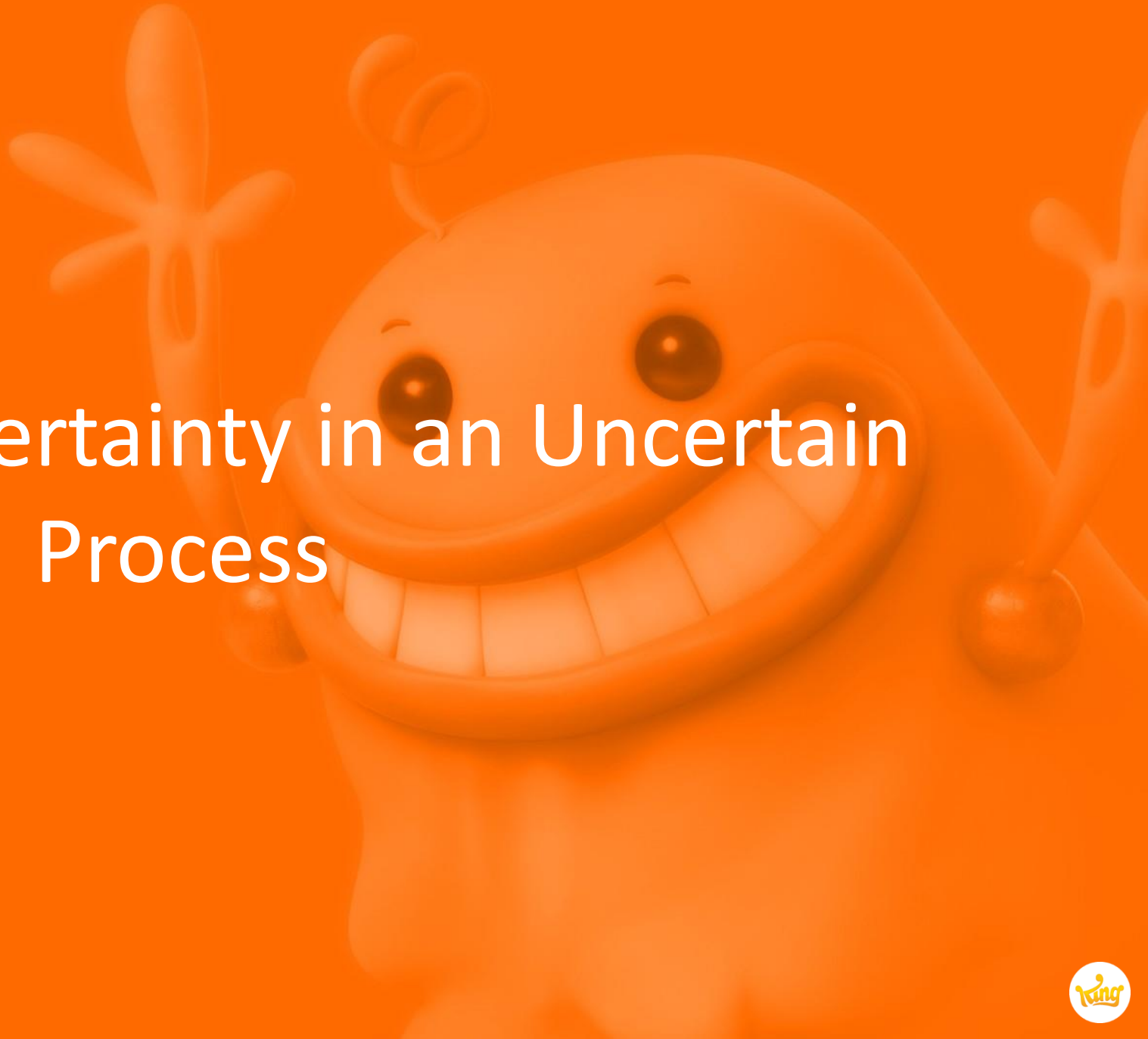
1 Player Insights Team

2 Market Research Team

3 Globalization Team



Reducing Uncertainty in an Uncertain Process



1 Pitch Phase | Who is our Audience?

2 Vis Dev | What is our Theme & Tone?

3 Pre- Production | What is our Market Fit?



Have you used any of the following?



Age



Gender



Location

The data is easy to get, right?



But does it help?



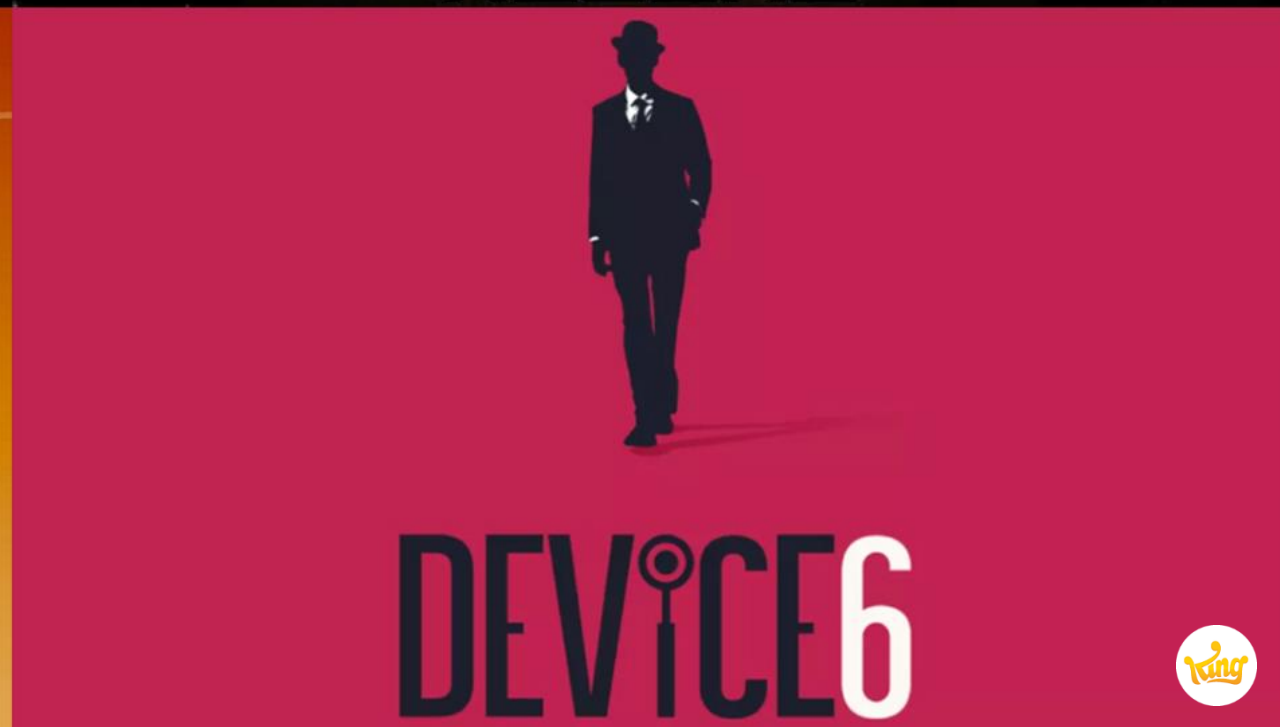
And does this help?



- I'm 70 years OLD
- I'm a WOMAN
- From IRELAND
- I'm MARRIED
- I'm RETIRED
- I'm WELL EDUCATED
- I'm MIDDLE CLASS



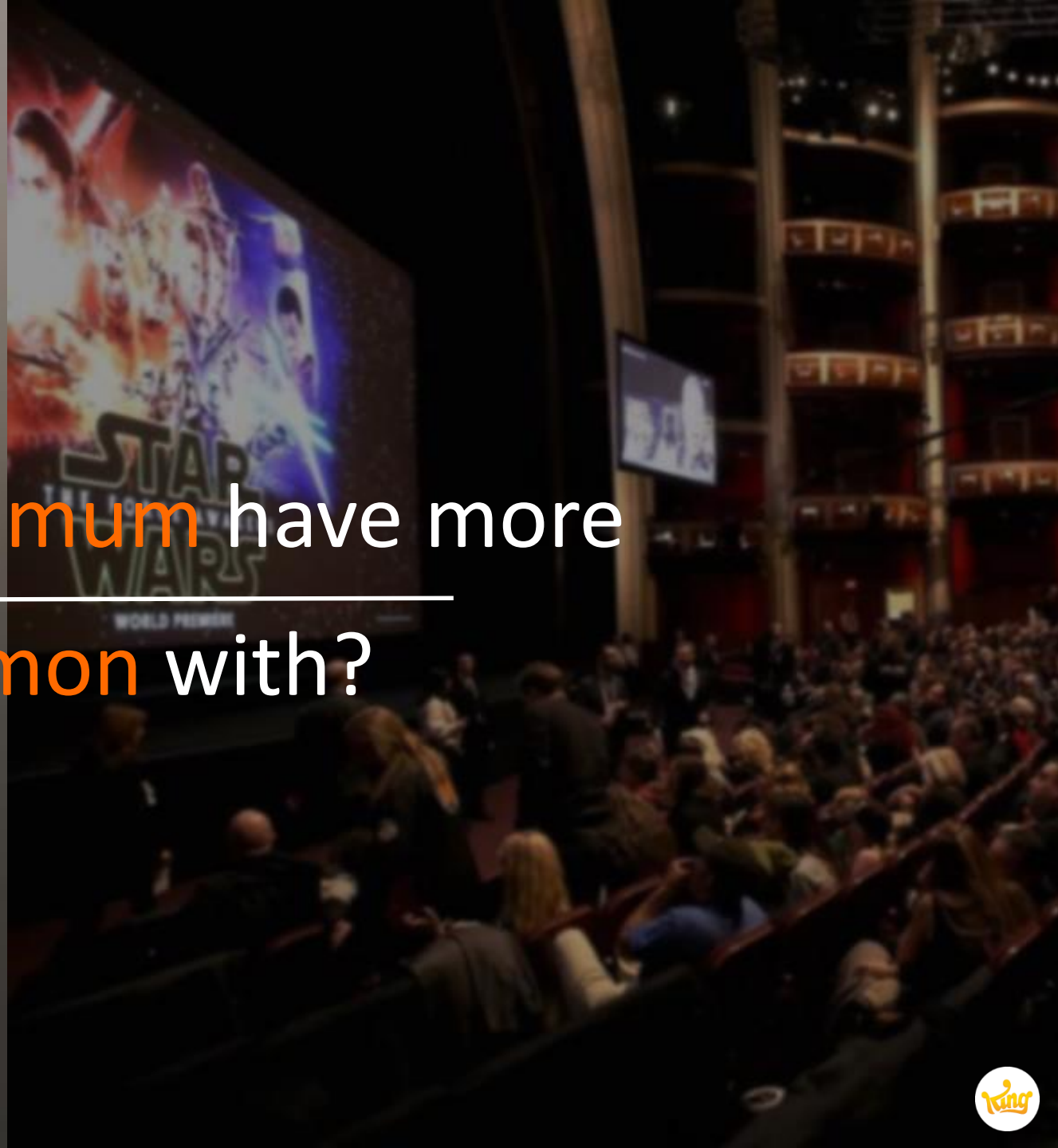
- I've a **PhD in Chemistry**
- I worked in **COMPUTER SCIENCE & IT**
- I love **COMIC BOOKS, FANTASY, CRIME & SCI FI**
- I write **SHORT STORIES**
- I've **NOT MUCH TIME TO PLAY**
- I love a **CHALLENGE**
- I've got **ARTHRITIS**





Who does my **mum** have more

in **common** with?



NETFLIX

NETFLIX ORIGINAL RUSSIAN DOLL

Demographics are False Friends

Watch Season 1 now

Reunite your friends, bring back a forgotten life, and find out what's really going on. The series is about to get even more interesting and more real.

Remember your watchlist? Check it out now.

What should we use instead?



Motivations



Interests



Lifestyle

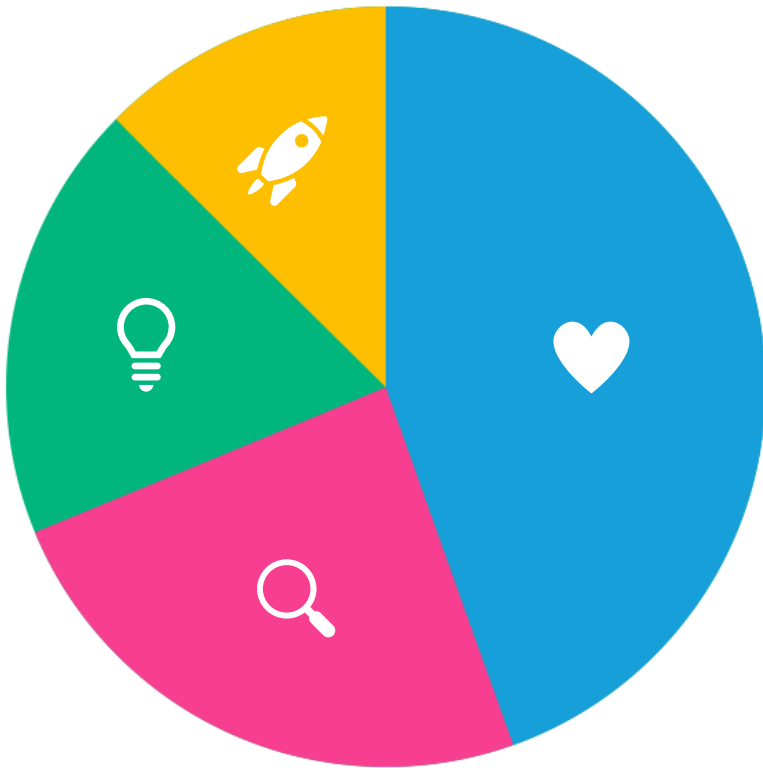
And how do we estimate the size?



Let's find a target
audience – with Data!

Finding an Area of Interest

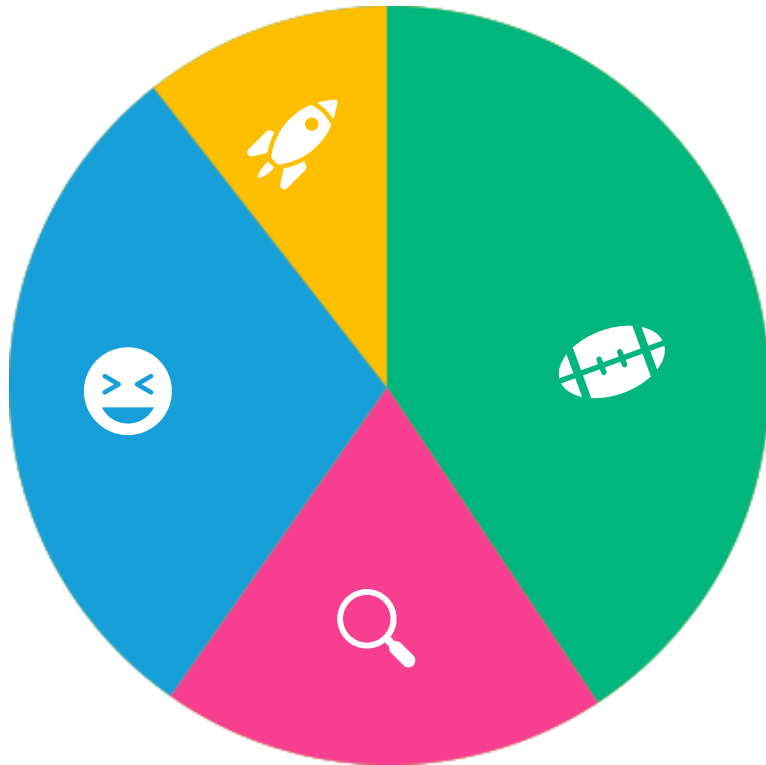
Literature



Highest Grossing Genres of Literary Fiction

Romance	\$1.44 Billion
Crime	\$728.2 Million
Religious/Inspirational	\$720 Million
Science Fiction/Fantasy	\$590.2 Million

Finding an Area of Interest TV



Highest Watched Genres of US TV

Sports	59.84 Million
Comedy	43.43 Million
Crime	27.84 Million
Science Fiction/Fantasy (Game of Thrones!)	15.19 Million



Hmm, crime looks
interesting....

What Now, Chief?



Challenge

Our players love a challenge and progression, they're not motivated by dominance or competition



Crime

Our players are huge crime fans, they're interested in mysteries, murder and suspenseful storytelling



Short Sessions

Our players lead busy lives, they'll play our game in short sessions throughout the day, maybe even in front of the TV

- 1 Pitch Phase | Who is our Audience?
- 2 Vis Dev | What is our Theme & Tone?
- 3 Pre- Production | What is our Market Fit?



what now
CHIEF

I'm being attacked by vicious
zombies, survival is uncertain
against such horrendous odds

What sort of game do
you imagine?





Tone

How does the **art** make you **feel**?



But how should we
choose?



Tone Workshop

Getting to your tone means getting to the heart of your game. So get your team together & ask plenty of questions.

Ah, ok!



What Now, Chief?

Overall Tone

Light Entertainment



Higher Accessibility

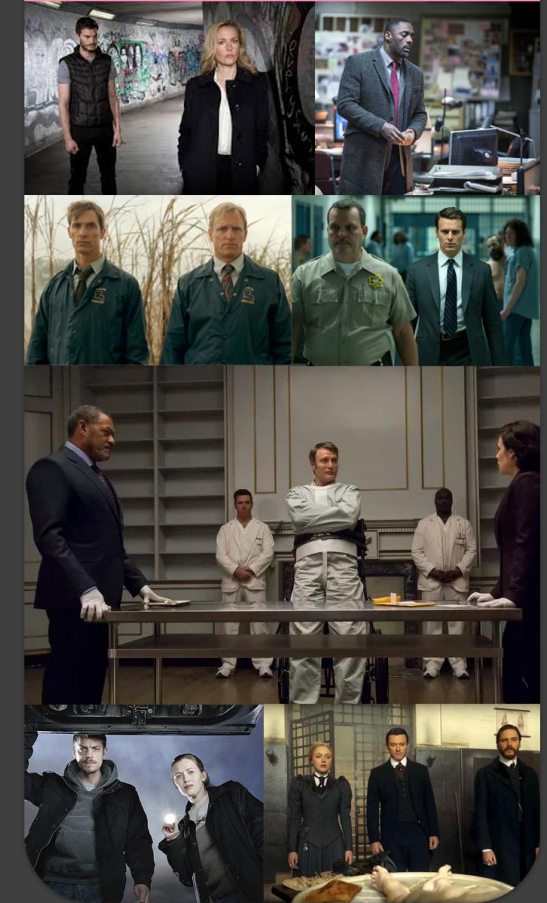
Acton Comedy



Dark Humour



Gritty



Higher Player Impact

What Now, Chief?

Scale

Personal



Higher Agency

Local



Urban



International



Higher Importance

What Now, Chief?

Violence & Gore

Family Friendly



Accessible but possibly
alienates crime audience

Low Gore



Medium Gore



Extreme Gore



Morbidly fascinating but could
become grotesque



what now, **CHIEF?**



Tone Mismatch

Creates dissonance for the audience.
The game they got isn't the game they expected.

Eh, what?!

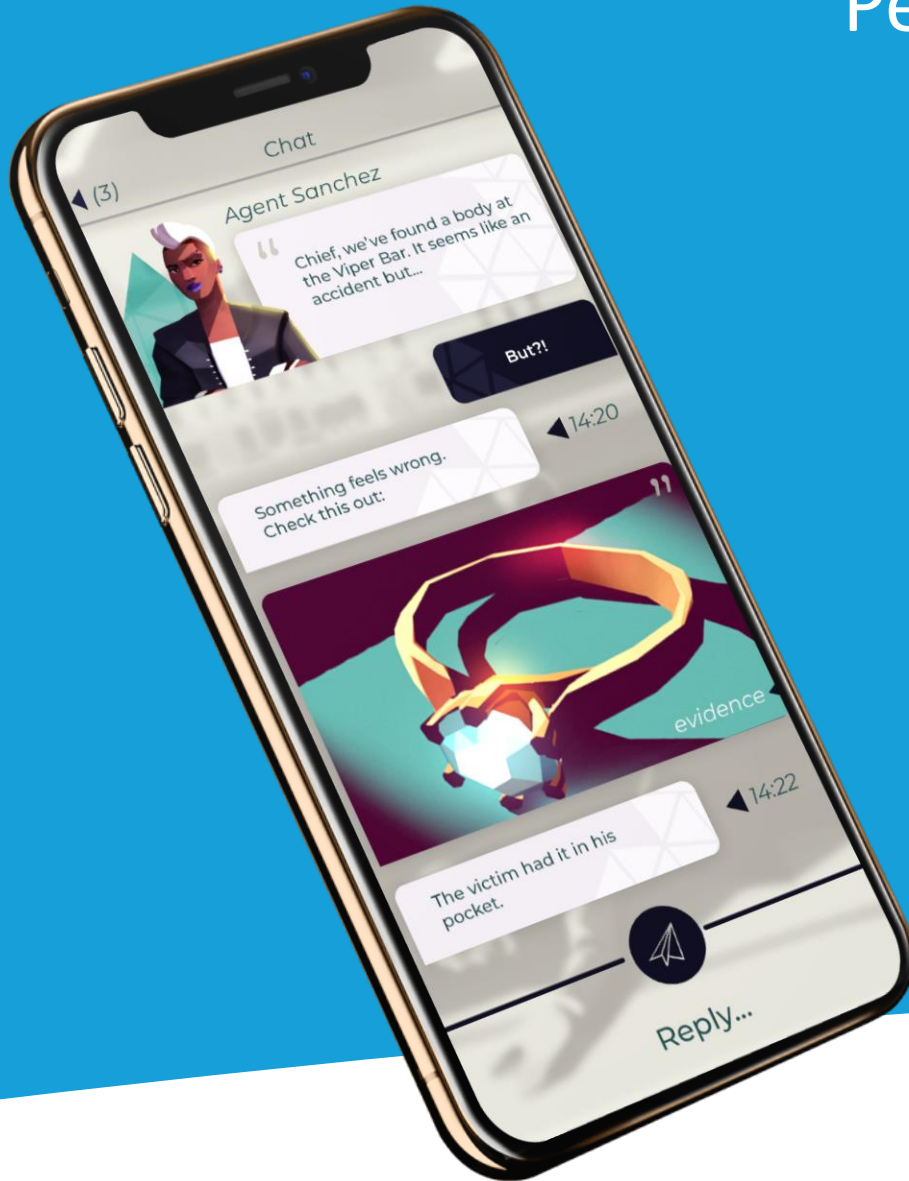


The tone of your artwork
needs to accurately
represent the tone of
your game

We can test that!



Perception Testing | Focus Groups



? Does the art tell the story you want it to tell?

✓ Test on Devices & in Context

✓ What to ask

- What sort of game do you think this is?
- How will it play? How does it make your feel?

✗ What not to ask:

- Do you like this?
- Would you play this game?

So Your Test Went Well?

- ✓ Great! Lock in your theme & tone. Inform your stakeholders & move on

So Your Test Went Badly...

- ✓ Your artwork is not consistent with the tone of your game! Iterate until it is.
- ✗ Avoid changing your theme – it's defined by your target audience
- ✗ Avoid changes to your desired tone! Could lead to mismatch

What now?

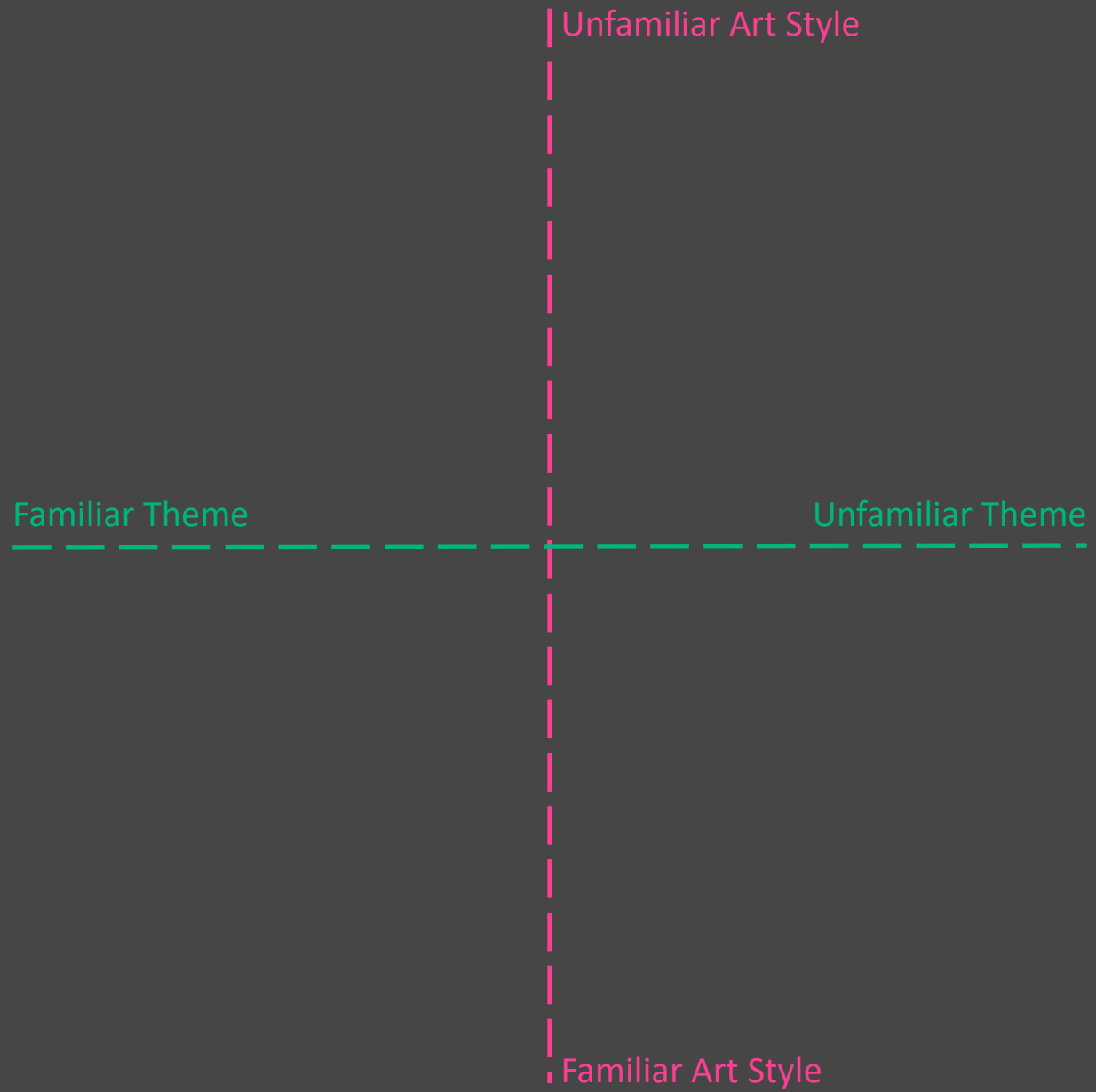


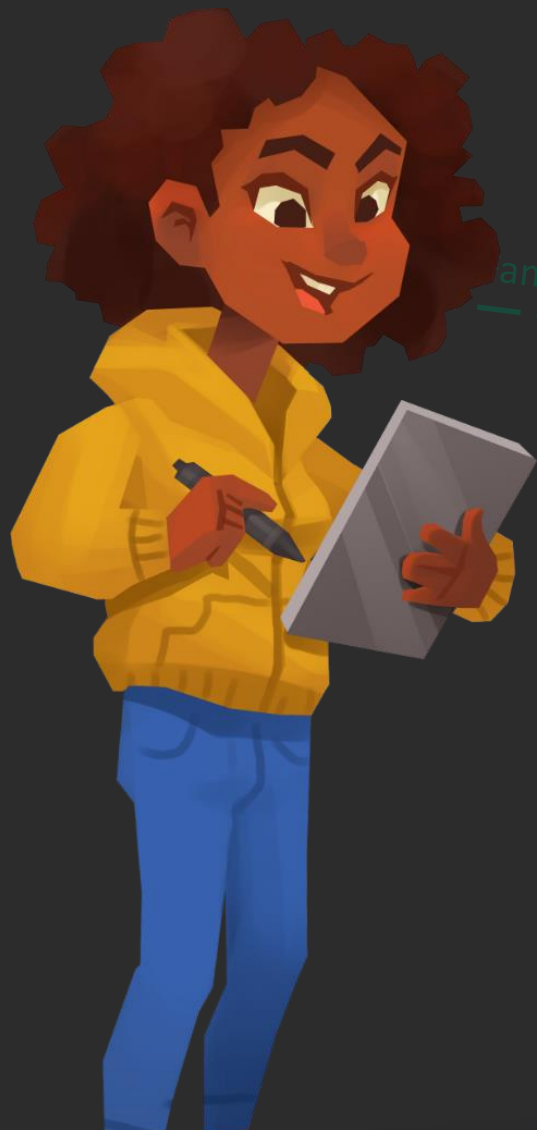
- 1 Pitch Phase | Who is our Audience?
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Time to please all
249 million of us!







Hmmm, let's keep
this simple for
now.

Familiar Theme

Unfamiliar Game

Unfamiliar Art Style

Familiar Art Style

Unfamiliar Theme

Unfamiliar Art Style

Familiar Theme

Unfamiliar Theme

Familiar Art Style



Unfamiliar Art Style

Niche Audience

Lack of familiarity leads to difficulty anticipating gameplay – great opportunity for indie/cult classic.

HYPER LIGHT DRIFTER is an incredibly



beautiful game, but is unlikely to reach a global, mass market audience

Familiar Theme

Unfamiliar Theme



Familiar Art Style

Unfamiliar Art Style

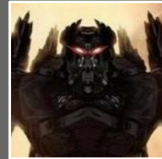
Familiar Theme

Unfamiliar Theme

Small Audience

Fatigue & familiarity mean your product is in the bland zone.

ATLANTIC RIM is a mockbuster of Pacific Rim & would struggle to gain market share even if it was amazing



Familiar Art Style

Mass Market Opportunity

Comfortably familiar meets excitingly original.

INTO THE SPIDERVERSE used a distinct visual style to reimagine the Spiderman story



Unfamiliar Art Style

Familiar Theme

Unfamiliar Theme



Familiar Art Style

Unfamiliar Art Style

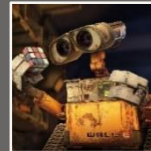
Familiar Theme

Unfamiliar Theme

Mass Market Opportunity

Comfortably familiar meets excitingly original.

PIXAR consistently marries a distinct theme with an approachable art style to inspire their audience



Familiar Art Style

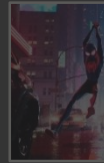


Unfamiliar Art Style

Mass Market Opportunity

Comfortably familiar meets excitingly original.

INTO THE SPIDERVERSE used a distinct visual style to reimagine the Spiderman story



Niche Audience

Confusion & lack of familiarity leads to difficulty anticipating gameplay – great opportunity for indie/cult classic.

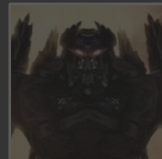
Let's look at an example

Familiar Theme

Small Audience

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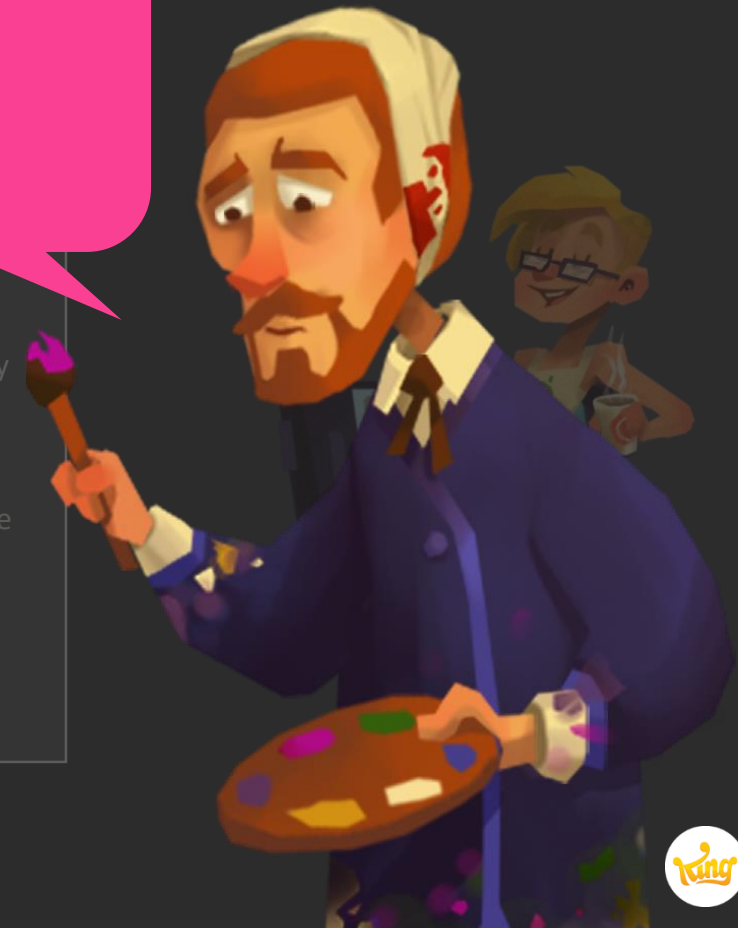
Mass Market Opportunity

Comfortably familiar meets excitingly original.

PIXAR consistently marries a distinct theme with an approachable art style to inspire their audience




Familiar Art Style





Far too familiar! This
could be any game



Ah, getting
much better!

So Your Test Went Badly... Part 2

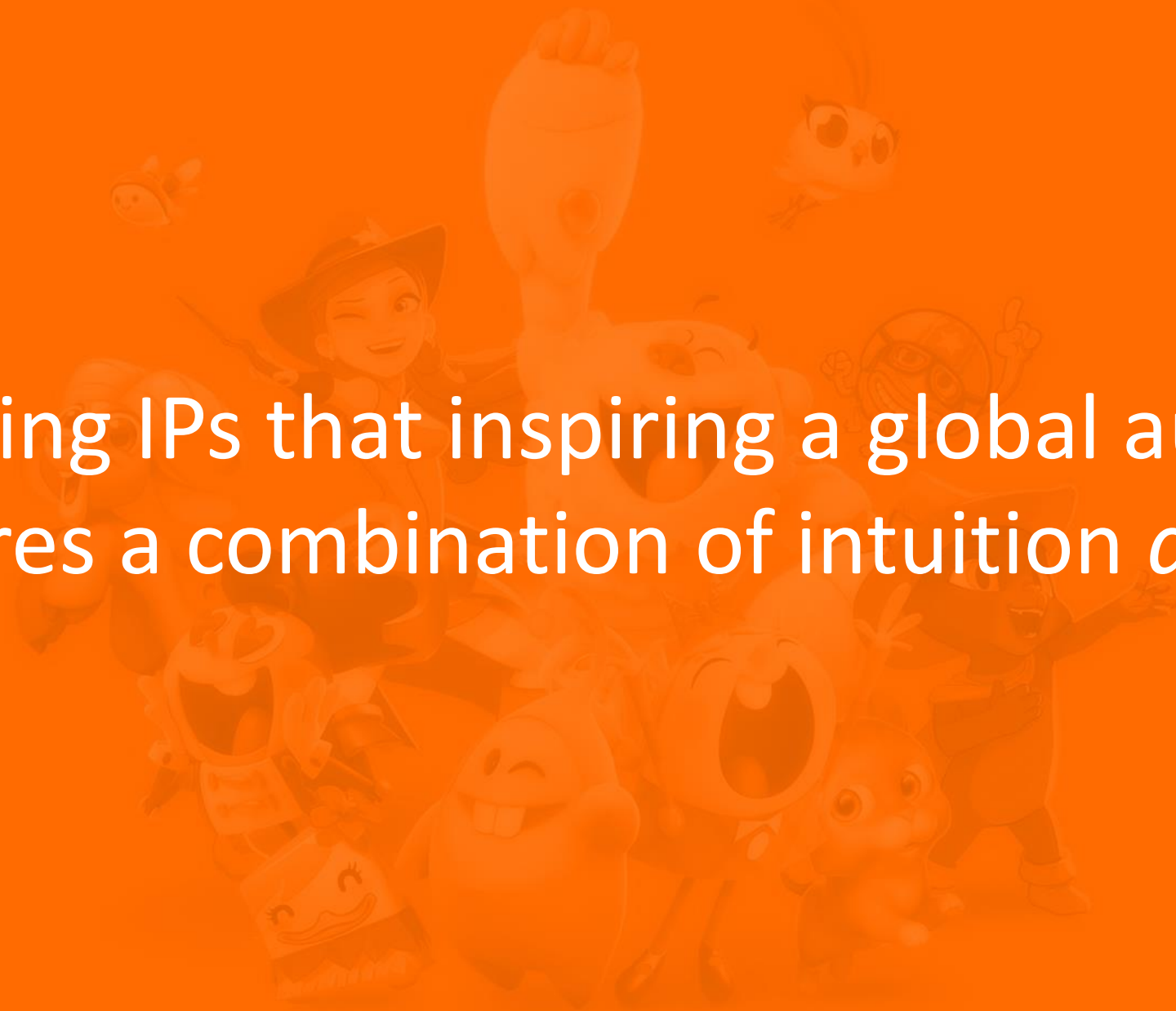
- ✓ Maintain your market position – originality will often test worse than familiarity!
- ✓ Do adjust for appeal
- ✗ Don't iterate out your uniqueness
- ✗ Avoid iteration on theme *or* tone at this stage

What now?



Few teams wants to be in the **bland zone**,
but we can all easily arrive there

Your **IP** needs a **USP** in the same
way your game does



ing IPs that inspiring a global audience
 es a combination of intuition and

Demographics are
false friends



Your audience's
interests can inspire
the theme of your
game



The tone of your
artwork should
support the
emotional core of
your game



Blend originality &
familiarity in your art
style for mass market
IP



Any Questions?

 @RianaMckeith

Thank you!



Making the World *Playful*