



LION STUDIOS
BY APPLOVIN

Capturing the Merge Games Market at Hyper Speed

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Agenda

- 03 About Lion Studios
- 05 Lessons from our Merge Games
- 19 Different Approaches for Hyper-casual and Casual
- 26 Questions?

Lion Studios Today



Launched in 2018 by AppLovin



100 employees across 6 countries



Over 100+ games downloaded 3 billion times

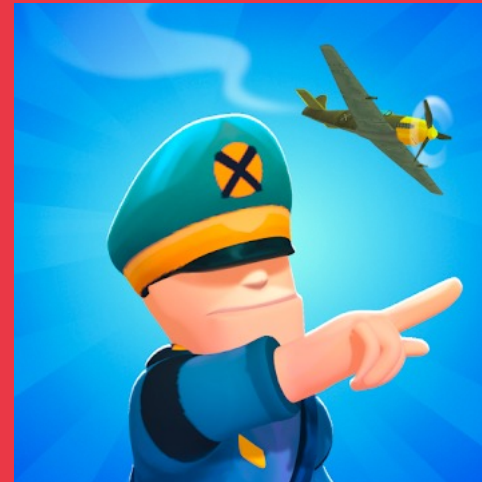
Some of Our Games



Match 3D



Mr Bullet



Army Commander



Hooked Inc

What is a board merge game?

Generate Items



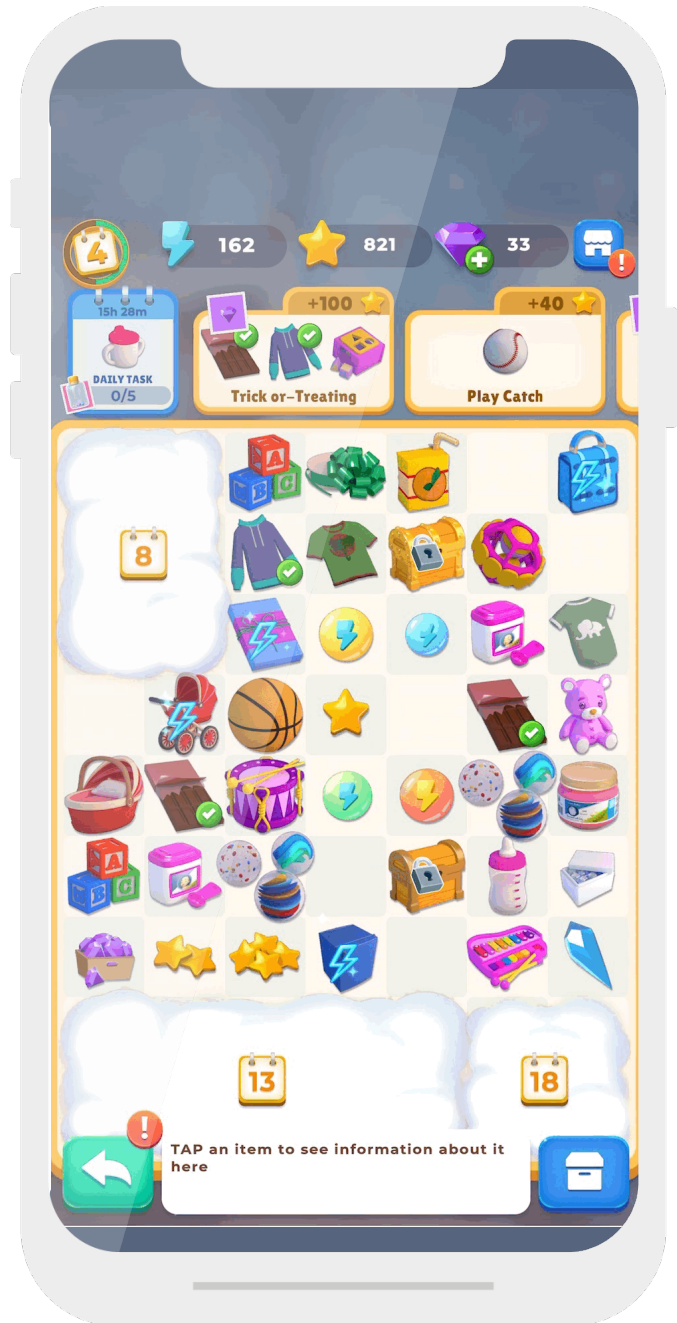
Merge



Complete Tasks



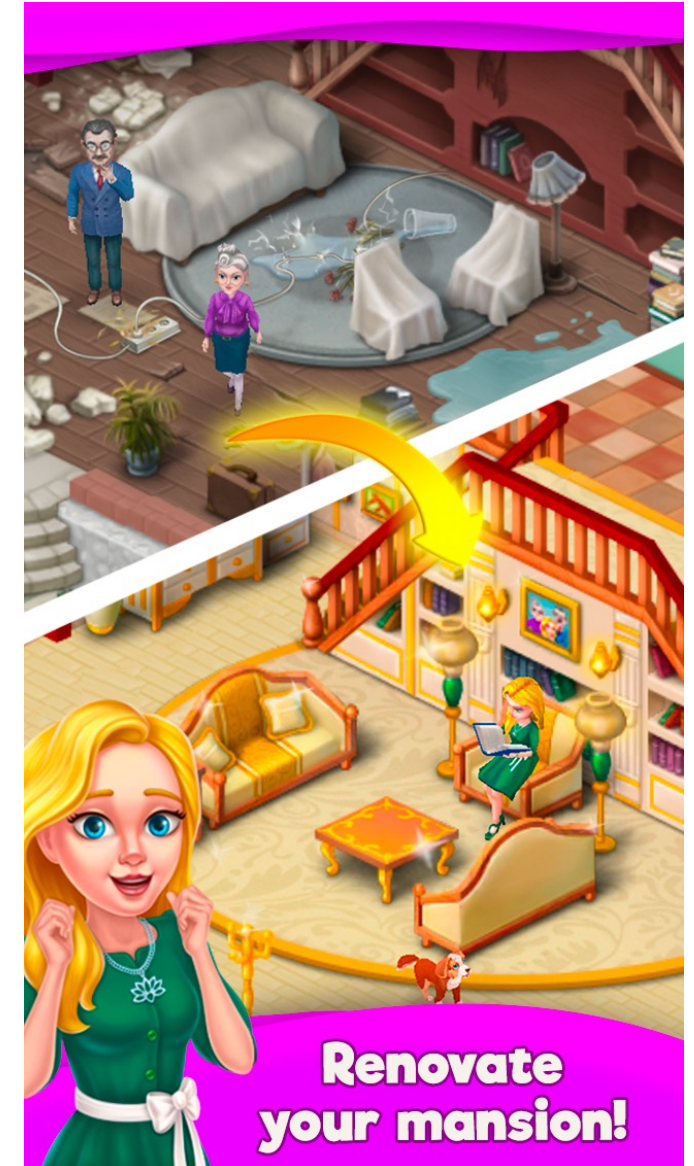
Complete Meta Tasks



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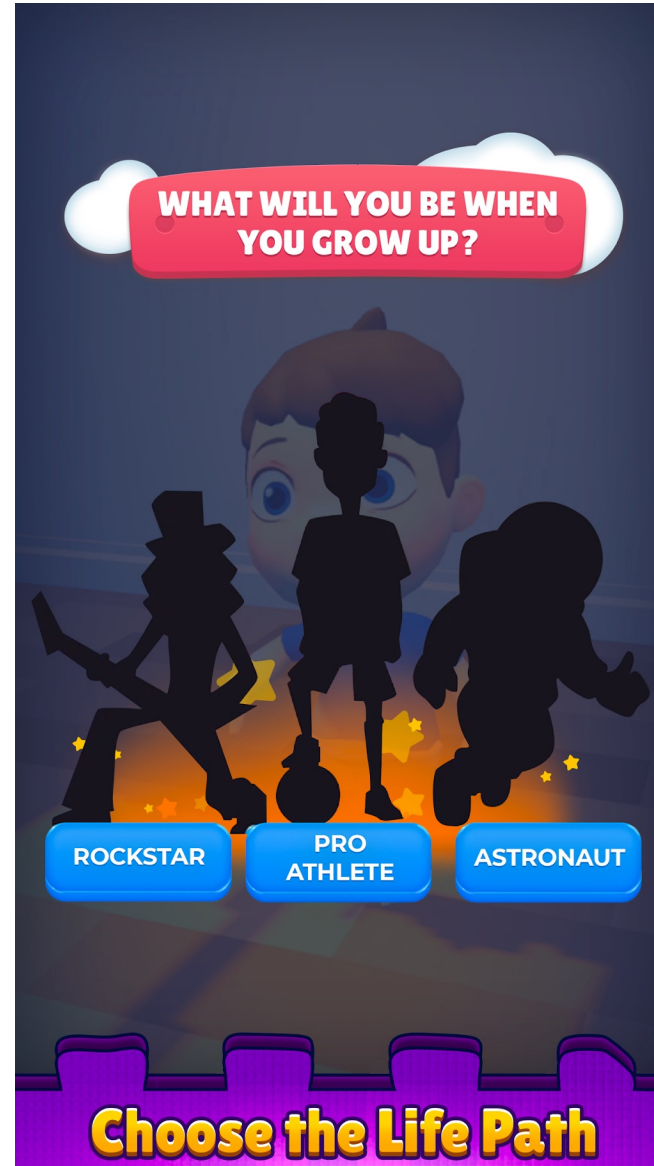
Merge Villa

- 1 month to prototype
- 1 month to refine and add monetization
- 2 months from concept to launch
- 15+ million downloads



Merge Life

- Developed fully internally by Lion
- 1 month to prototype
- 3 months from concept to launch
- 5+ million downloads





**How did we get to
market so quickly?**

Re-use another game's meta.

Meta should align with intended audience

Save time on one of the most asset-heavy parts of a game

Can also test without a meta for a v1 to prove out core mechanics



Test with IAP ASAP.

Once core mechanic is proven out, next focus is IAP

Don't be fooled by high retention, it is not enough – IAP conversion → everlasting games. Retention may degrade



Merge Life

| Retention | Day 1 Retention | Day 7 Retention |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Testing | 70% | 35% |
| At Launch | 45% | 25% |

| Purchaser Retention | Day 1 Retention | Day 7 Retention |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Testing | 90% | 25% |
| At Launch | 90% | 63% |

Don't fall into the bottomless pit of iteration.

First to market is meaningful

Tweaks can always be made later

Can do continuous UA at low scale



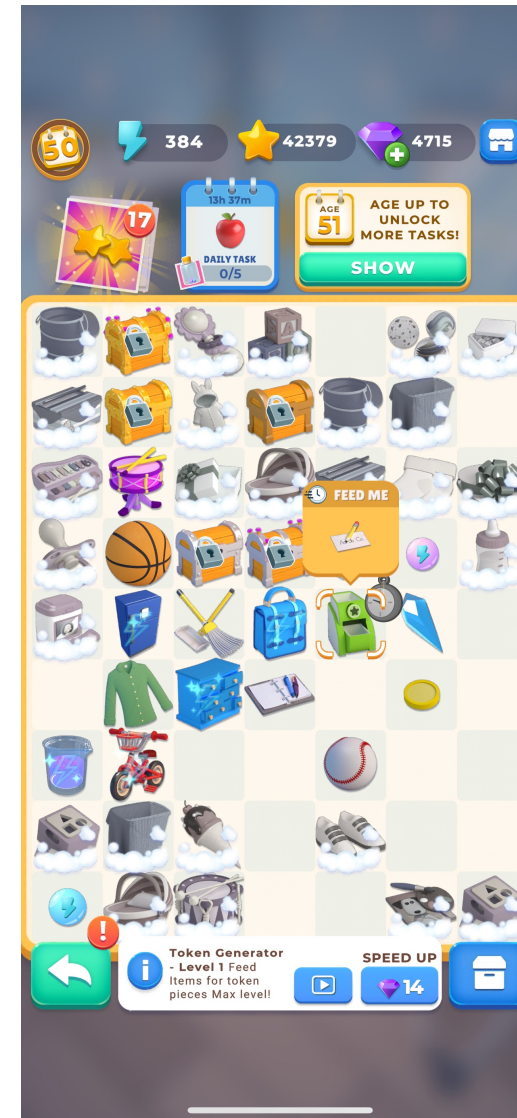
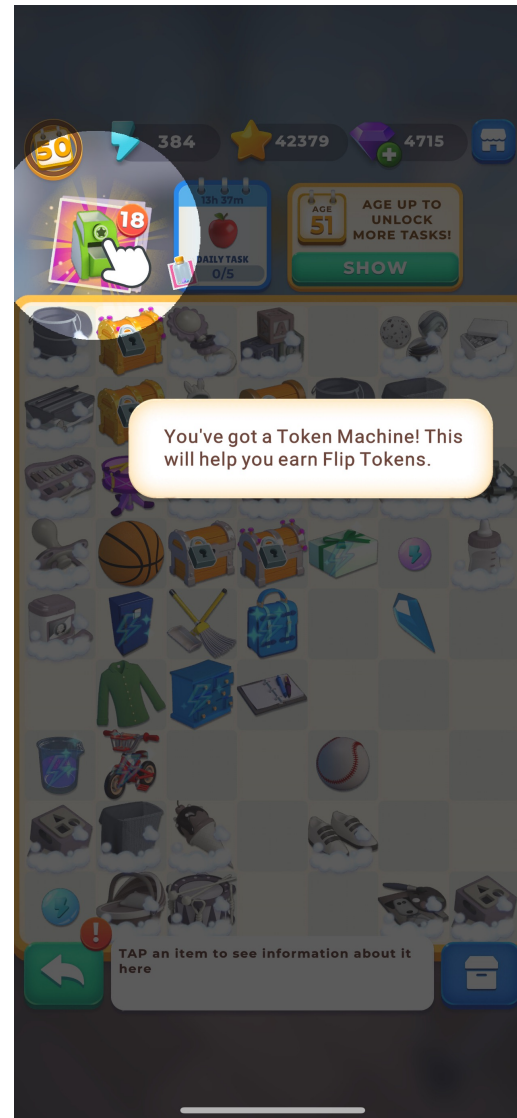
Learn from successors.

See what new games in the space are trying

Pay attention to updates from existing market dominators, and how they handle the late game







Found a formula that works? Double down.

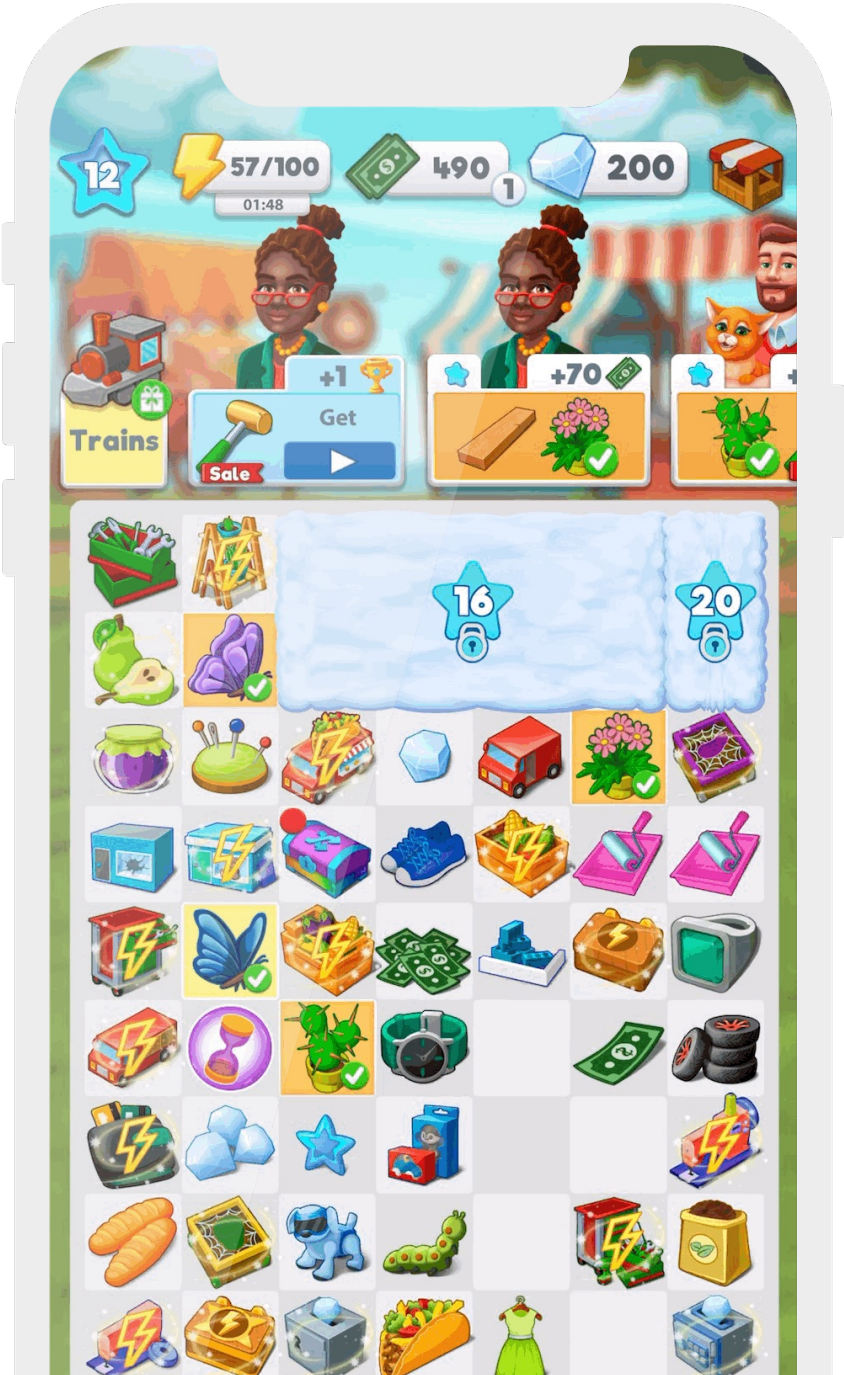
Consider more marketable themes for the framework

Successive prototypes can be built faster
(use same balancing, IAP strategies, ad
placements) - Merge Life, Riverside Merge

New learnings have multiplicative effects



Riverside Merge



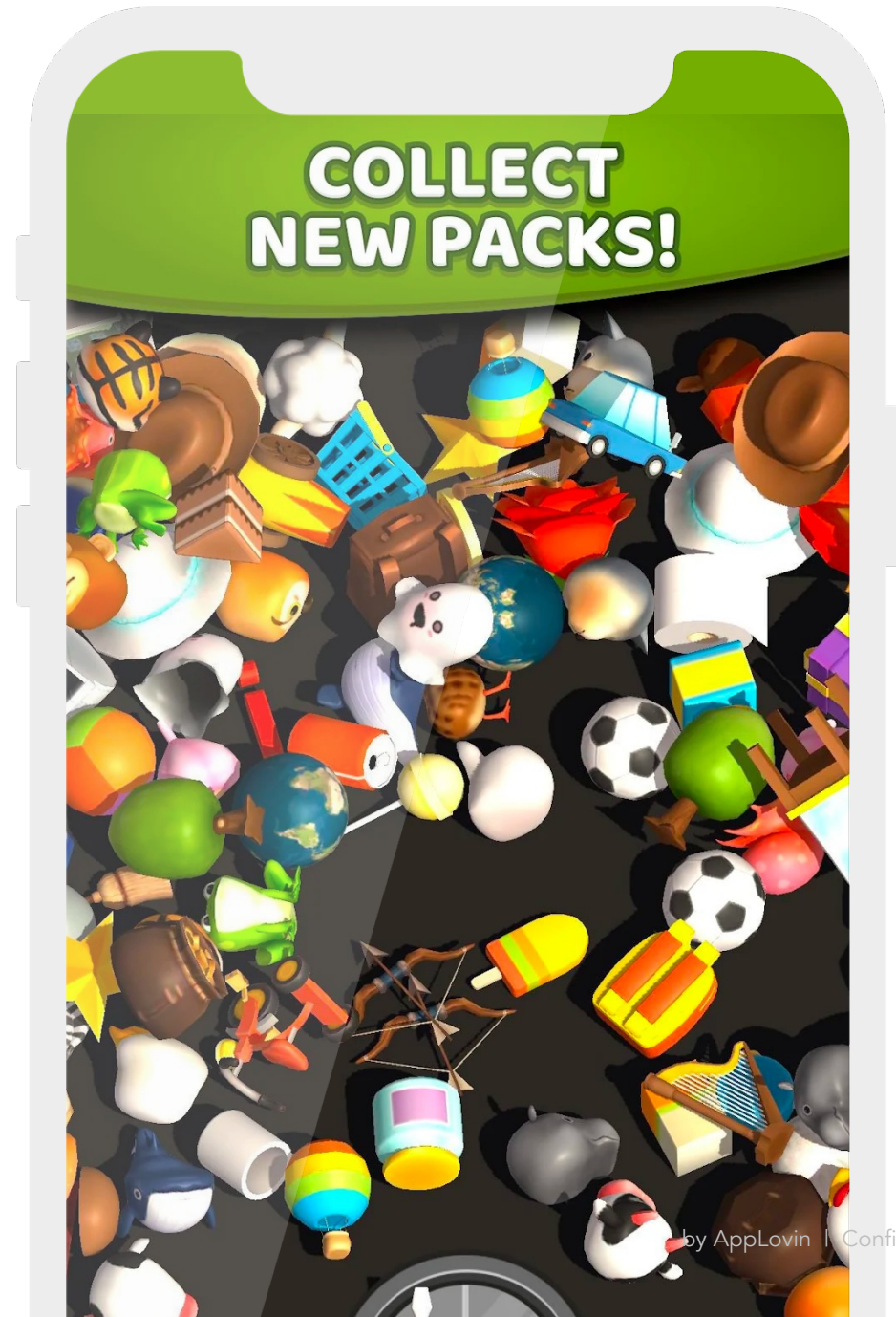
Merge Cafe



Approaching development differently from hyper-casual to casual

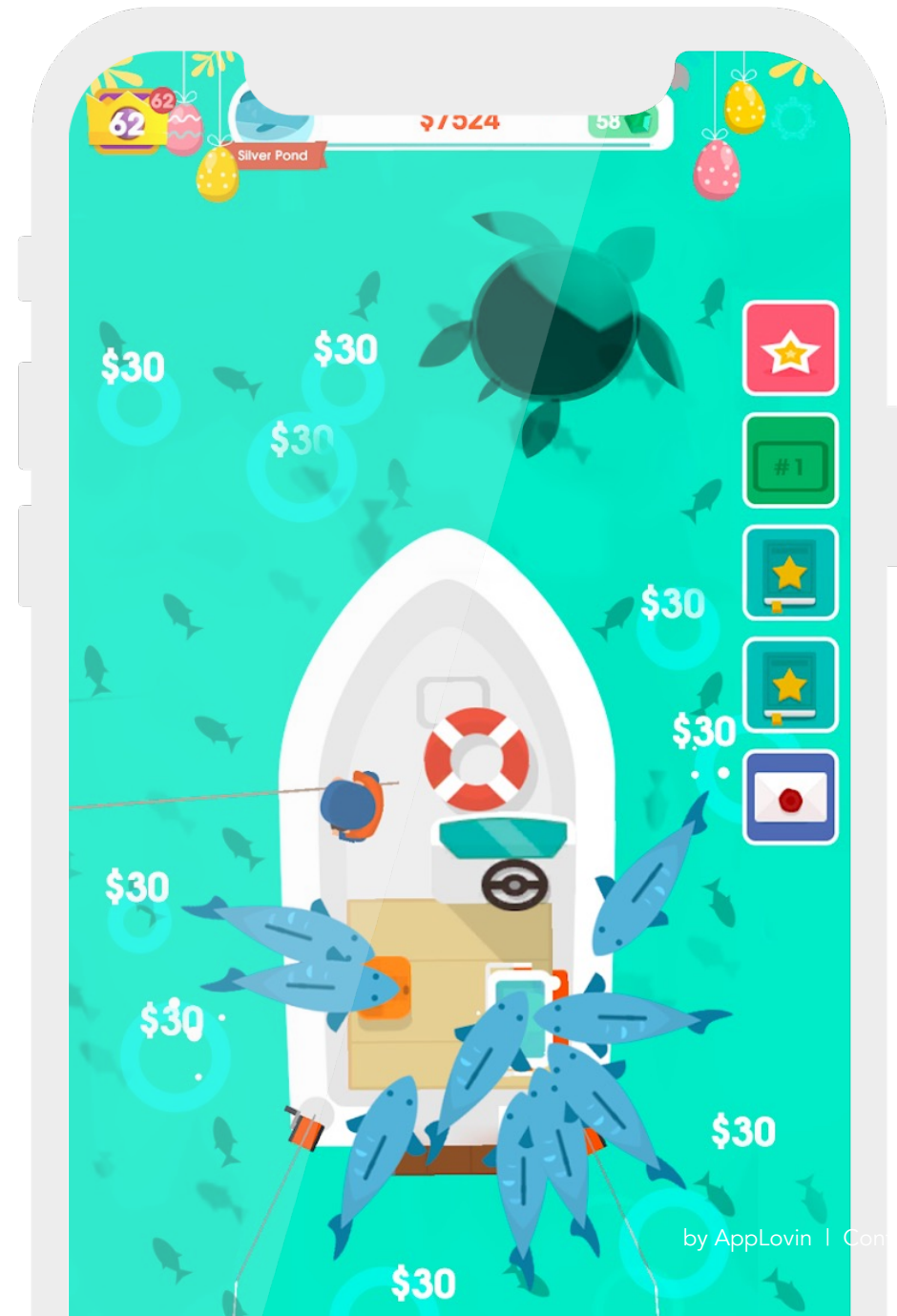
Mechanics-Driven Approach (Rather than CPI)

- Focus on quality, engaging mechanics first, rather than a gimmicky theme
- Theme should be in harmony with mechanics
- When possible, start with more marketable themes



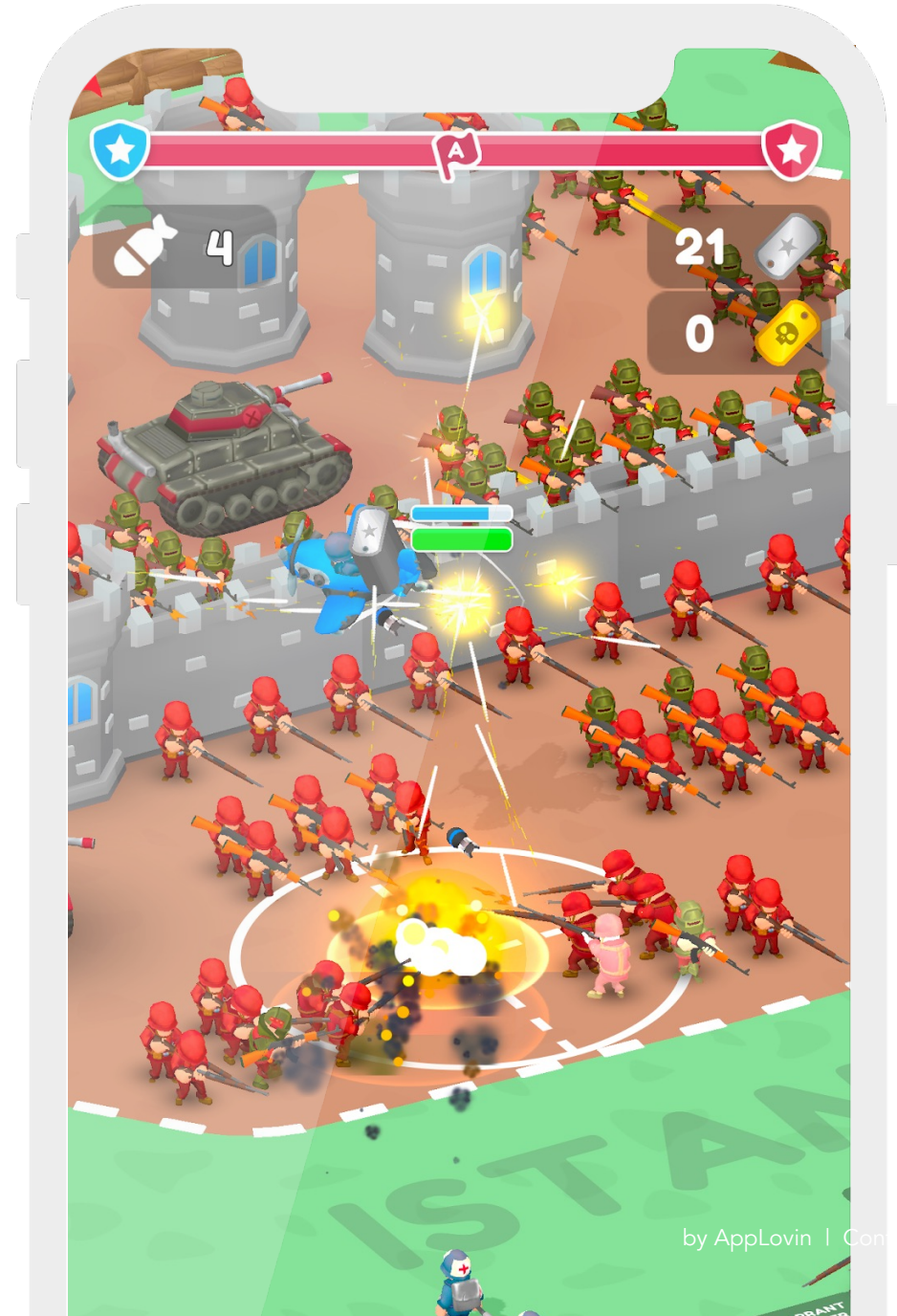
Next Level Data Analysis

- Go beyond level funnels and IAP conversions
- Correlate IAP transactions with in-game user activity
- Not all players are the same – use segmentation to custom tailor user journeys



Finding A+ Partners

- We're not just building a game, we're operating a service
- Don't just evaluate the game, evaluate the team
- Need a shared vision – look beyond a single game





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Experience
+
Extensive Testing
+
Data
+
Good Timing
=
Success!



Thank You!

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**We're
Hiring!**

Questions