Integrating Core Mechanics into Casual Gaming

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About Me

My favorite games have always been core RPGs...

because they provide a sense of:

1. Agency
2. Progression

About Me

But I've worked for 10 years on casual games…

to introduce everyone to the exhilaration of RPGs

About Me

Current RPGs have similar themes and systems…

Can we make it approachable for a casual audience?

About Kiwi

More than 40 Million Installs across our
network of games

15 Million Players have played
two or more Kiwi games

5 Titles in the Top 25 Grossing on Google
Play since May 2012

Case Study - Shipwrecked

Shipwrecked is one of Kiwi's most successful Games

8.5M+ downloads with peaks at:

- #8 Games – all categories (US)
- #1 Games – Casual (US)
- #1 Games – Simulation (US)

Top grossing app with peaks at:

- #8 All apps (US)
- #8 Games – all categories (US)
- #1 Games – Casual (US)
- #3 Games – Simulation (US)

Consistently in
Google Play's Top 100
Grossing

Have you played Shipwrecked?

Core Loop

Short Term
Engagement Loop

Long Term
Engagement Loop

Buildings

Silver

Crops/Trees

XP/Levels

Swords

Exploration

Rare Buildings
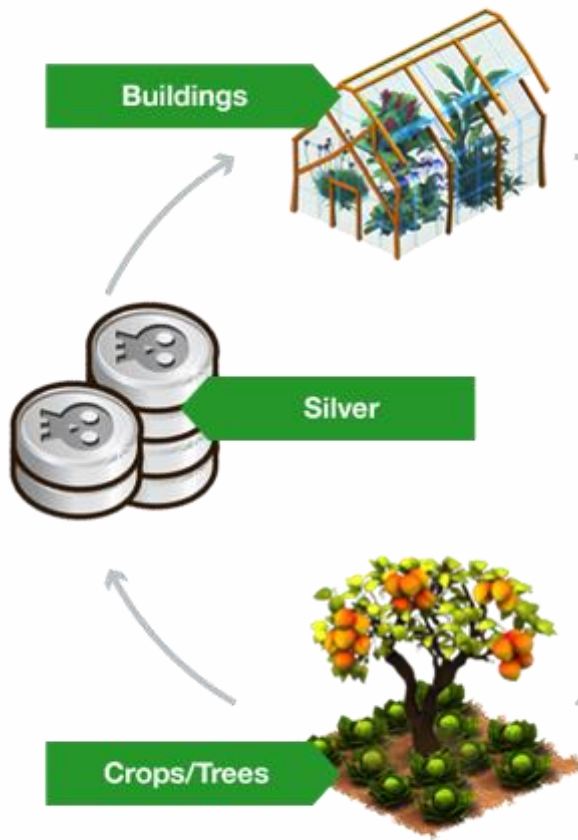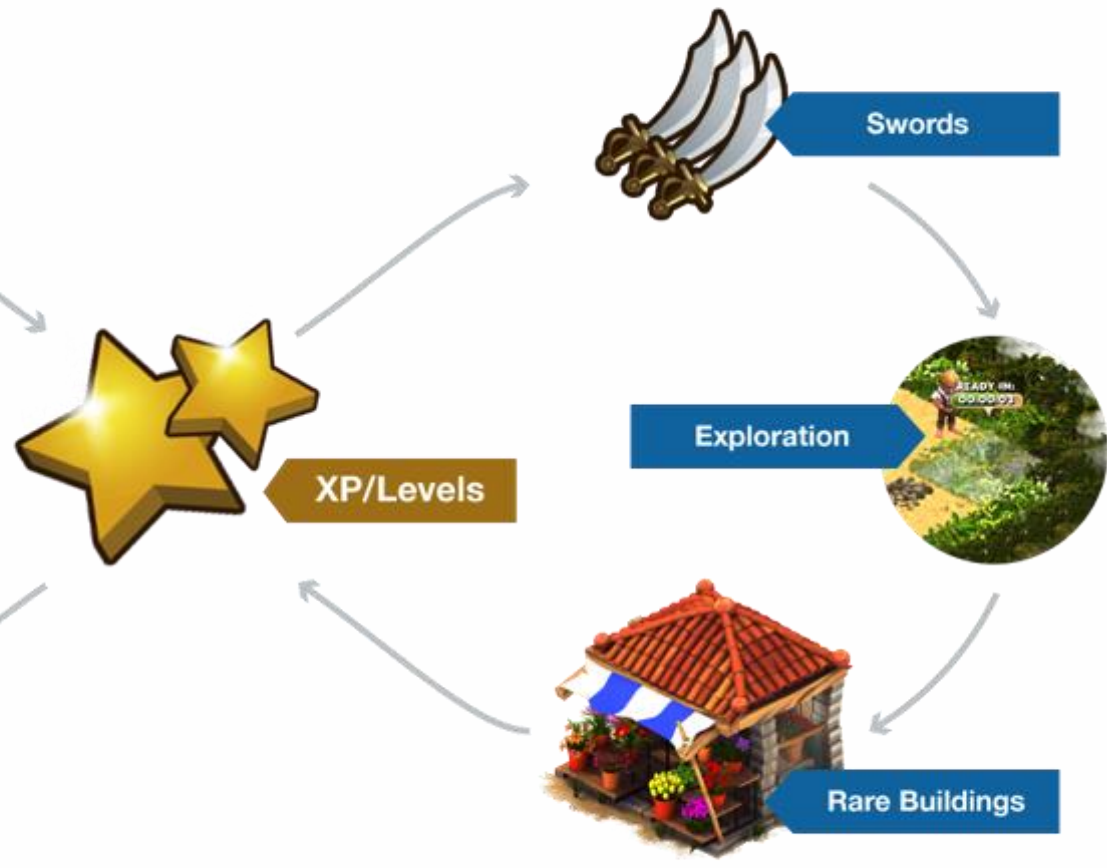
New Content for Elder Players

Over time, we need to add gameplay
to extend the life of the game.

We looked for inspiration in Mobile RPGs…

1. Understand why a mechanic works.
2. Make it our own.
3. Gather data and repeat.

Time-Limited Events in RPGs

1. **Time-Limited**
   - Increases desire for engagement

2. **Competition**
   - Compete for position on global leaderboard

3. **Rewards**
   - Rewards help players in core content

Time-Limited Events in Shipwrecked

Frequency: Challenges occur once per week and run for three days at a time

Activity based on gathering collectables

Time-Limited Events in Shipwrecked

PvP: Players form teams with friends, neighbors or random players and challenge each other in a race.

Casual players enjoy collaboration, and have spent time to build up a network – let them build teams then compete

Time-Limited Events in Shipwrecked

Rankings and Rewards: Organized by tiers for each Challenge
- ⅔ of participating players receive some kind of reward

Rewards from Events help the user with Long Term Engagement mechanics in the core loop

How did Time-Limited Events do?

1. ## User Engagement increased 3x
   - Increased social interactions

2. ## Retention for Elder Players increase 20%
   - Compelling end game content as additional activity

3. ## Monetization Dipped
   - Say What?!
   - Players were engaging in the event at the cost of the core loop

Core Loop

Event Energy in RPGs

1. Event Energy
- Some games use Event Energy to help create variety in gameplay

2. Events Reinforce Core Loop
- Others don't need event energy because their events reinforce the core loop

Event Energy in Shipwrecked

Event Energy in Shipwrecked

Advanced Team Challenges incorporate core **Energy mechanics...**

Created new gameplay for the event to avoid conflation of mechanics

Event Energy in Shipwrecked

Created a differential economy that players could engage with independent of the core loop.

How did Event Energy do?

1. **Increased monetization by 20% from base**
   - Players monetized on energy in addition to core

2. **Maintained retention and engagement**
   - But metrics started to slide
   - No persistence on progress

Core Loop

Short Term Engagement Loop

Team Challenges

Long Term Engagement Loop

Buildings

Swords

Silver

XP/Levels

Exploration

Crops/Trees

Rare Buildings

Stats Race in RPGs

1. ## Provide Persistent Progression
   - Allows players to feel meta progression, not just within an event

2. ## Different Levels of Competition
   - Different tiers of competition so new players can enjoy as well

Stats Race in Shipwrecked

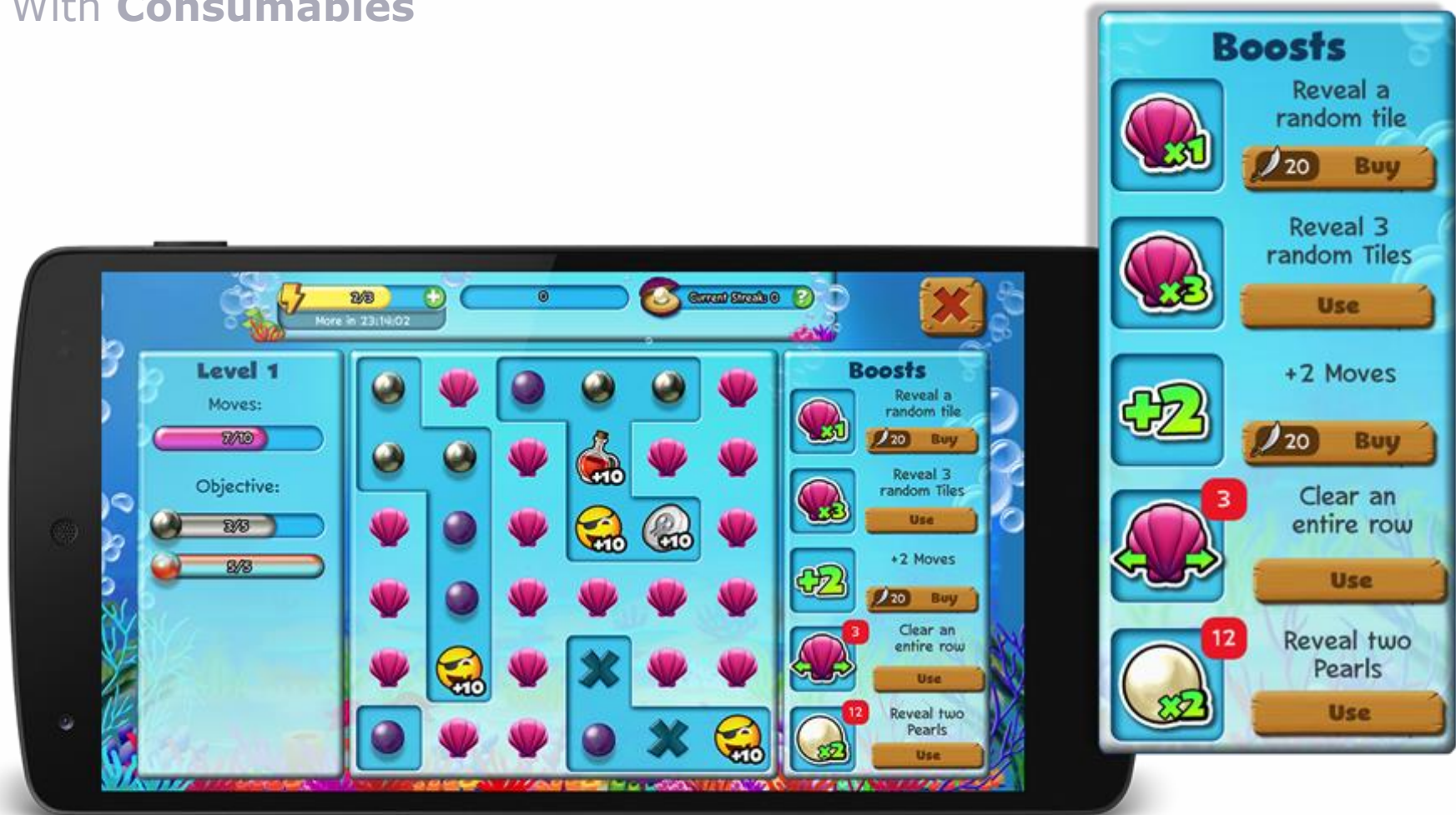Create **Different Levels of Competition** based on the player's progression

Stats Race in Shipwrecked

Added non-combat statistics to the game via probabilistic events
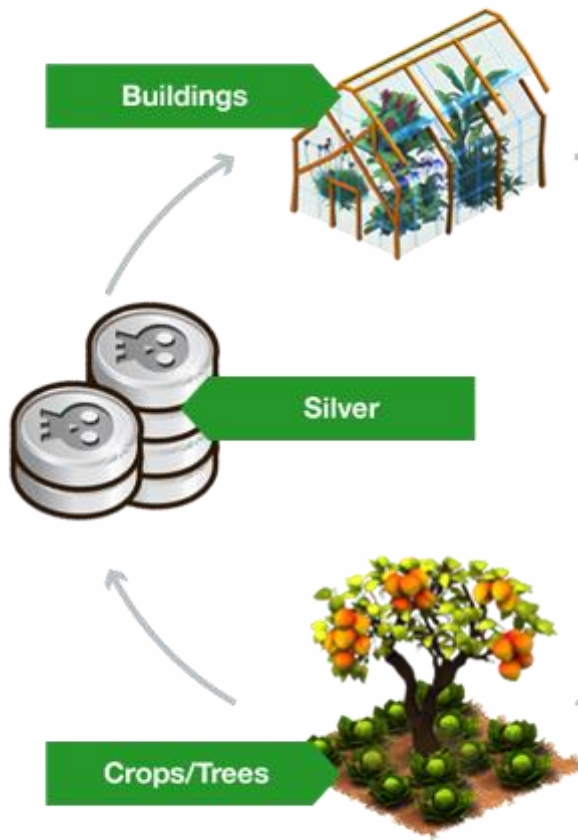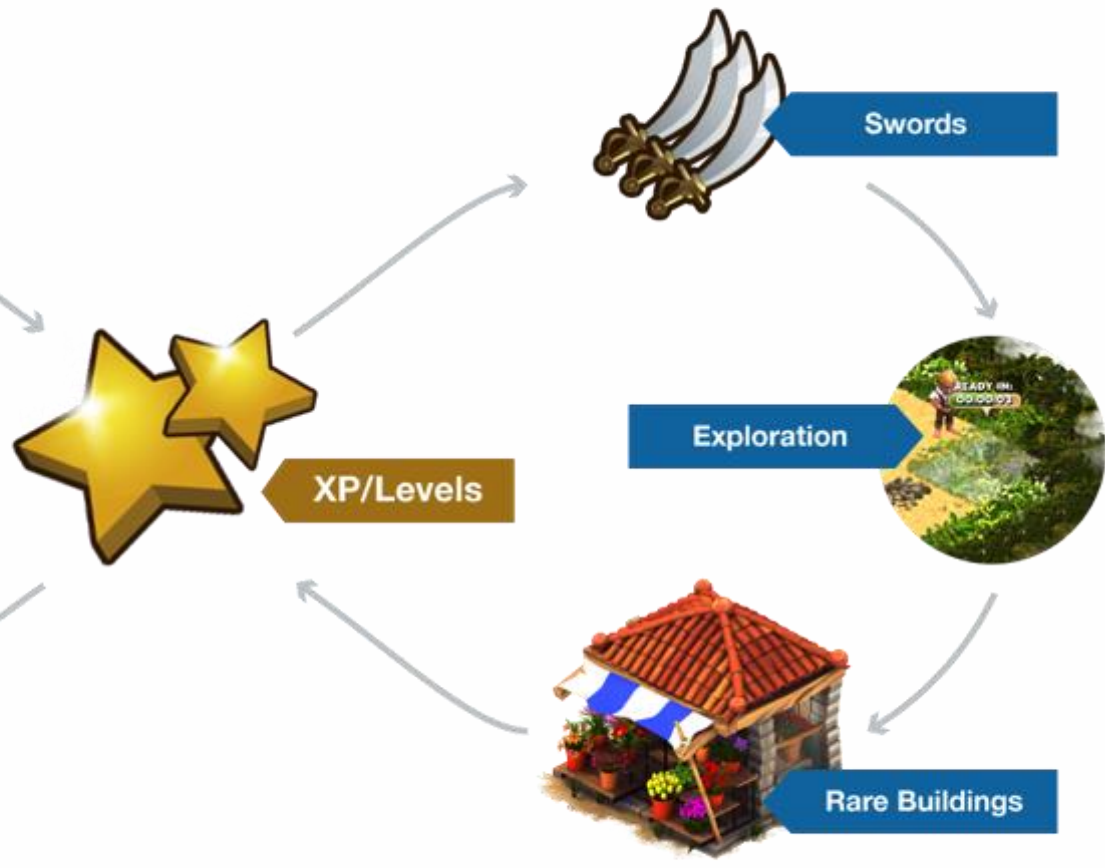
Stats Race in Shipwrecked

With **Consumables**

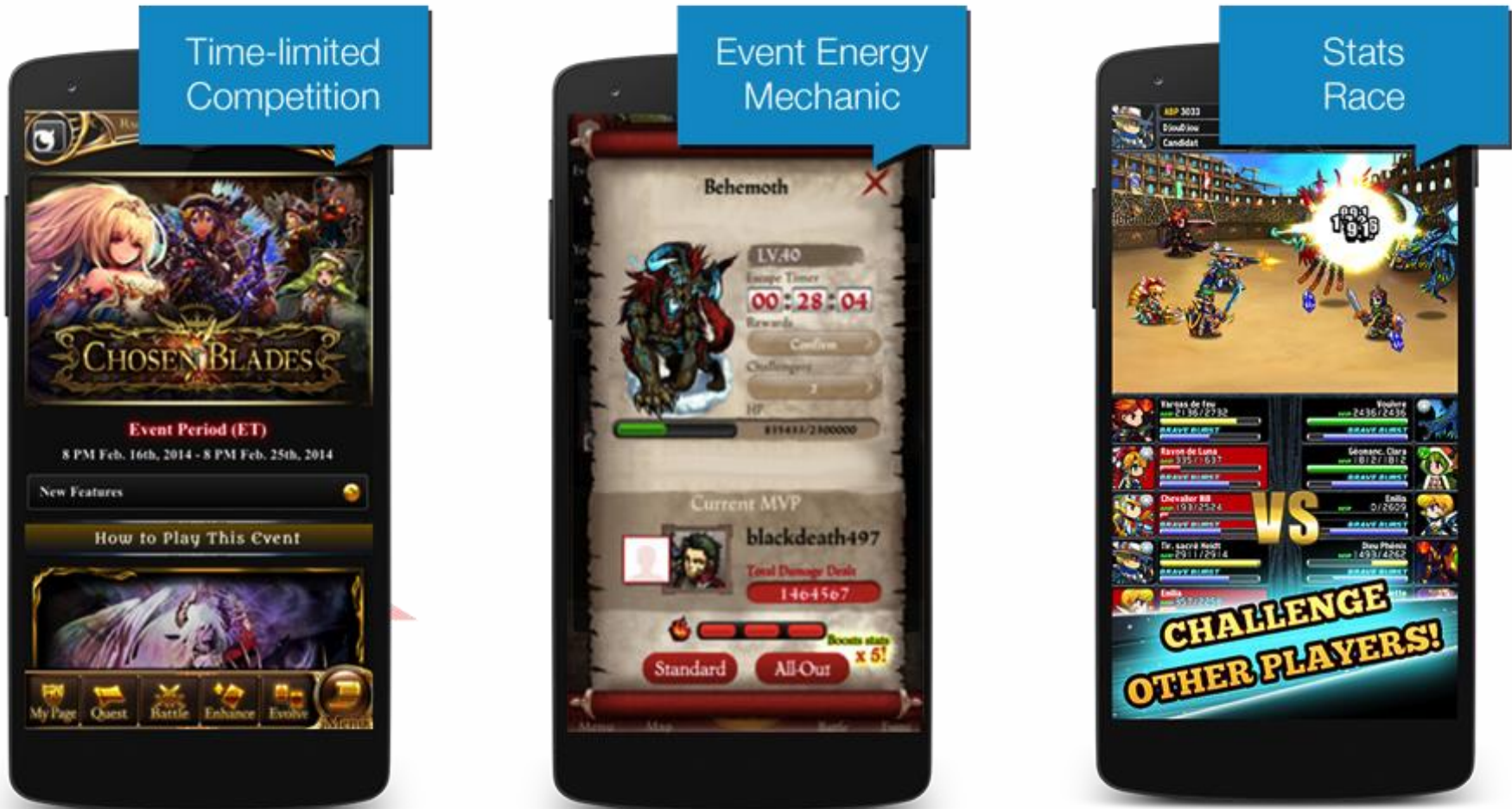# Conclusion?

Core Loop

Short Term Engagement Loop

Buildings

Silver

Crops/Trees

XP/Levels

Long Term Engagement Loop

Swords

Exploration

Rare Buildings

Core Loop + Team Challenges

Short Term Engagement Loop

Team Challenges

Long Term Engagement Loop

Buildings

Silver

Crops/Trees

Swords

XP/Levels

Exploration

Rare Buildings

We looked for inspiration in Mobile RPGs…

Time-limited Competition

Event Energy Mechanic

Stats Race

And made it our own.

Questions?