

GETTING THE PRESS YOU DESERVE

**Game Developers Conference
March 2004**

COVER ALL THE MEDIA BASES

Developer Media

- Game Developer
- Gamasutra

Game Print, Online

- EGM, Gamespot
- PC Gamer

TV and Radio

- G4, Tech TV
- Local and Network TV

Consumer Mags

- Wired
- Time
- Playboy

Daily Newspapers

- New York Times
- San Francisco Chronicle

Business Pubs

- Fortune
- Forbes
- Business Week

DEVELOPER MEDIA

Print



- Value:
 - Gets your name out in the community
 - Gets you seen as an innovator
 - Might help you to get partnerships
 - Helpful if you want to be acquired



ENTHUSIAST MEDIA

Console



PC



Online



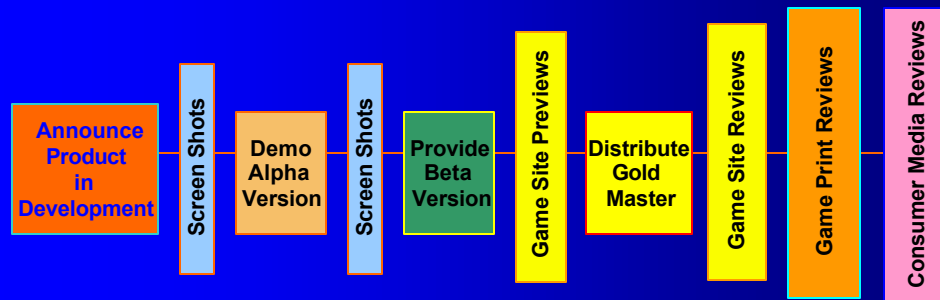
- Value

- Perhaps the best exposure for your game in creating early sales
- Strong endorsement for your game with fans

TIPS ON WORKING WITH THE ENTHUSIAST MEDIA

- You can get coverage -- from alpha to beta to final for all your titles: two rounds of previews as well as coverage of screens, for instance
 - Coverage runs from 1/8th of a page to 4 pages, depending on what you can offer
 - Assets are key: screens or original art, given on an exclusive basis
- The next slide is also a handout in The Bohle Company folder

MAXIMIZING PRESS COVERAGE FOR A GAME TITLE



PHONE AND EMAIL VERSUS FACE-TO-FACE

- How you get your title covered:
 - 2/3rds of the reason is around the quality of game
 - 1/3 on PR person's push and persistence
- Use a pro – either a person with some experience working inside the company, or a game specialty agency
- Once your game is pretty far along, a face-to-face meeting with editors, where you first give them a demo and then let them try it out, is best
 - That means you travel to editor offices
 - Most are in the Bay Area; Los Angeles, New York, Minneapolis and Richmond, Vermont would also be stops for the thorough approach

STORY IDEAS TO GET CONTINUOUS COVERAGE ON THE SITES

- Game in development
- Publisher named
- Early screens
- Previews
- Final review
- Developer Q and A
- Tips & tricks
- Awards the game has won
- Promotions

PITCH IDEAS FOR COVERS, EARS AND TOP LINES

- Covers are tough; you have to be working on a big license or blockbuster
- Ears are a better bet
- Try pack-ins: Posters/stickers
- Or demo disks: an AVI or playable level



FAN SITES

Title Specific
Communities



Type of Game
(i.e. FPS or
MMORPG)



Professional
Gamers Sites
(i.e. eSports)



FAN SITES EVEN GIVE YOU MORE COVERAGE

- The most dedicated “fan sites” will post stories about minor changes to the game the most media wouldn’t consider “news worthy”
 - Patch changes, online servers status, competitions, etc...
- They can help you spread the buzz, but you will also have to give them something as payback
 - They will want free copies/subscriptions
 - Sometimes we can negotiate banners or other promotion in return
- Games with particularly dedicated fans need a dedicated in-house employee to deal with fan questions
 - FPS and MMORPG games have fanatical communities

MOVING ON TO THE CONSUMER MEDIA

CONSUMER MEDIA



- Value:
 - Prestigious
 - Broadens the audience seeing reviews of your title hit to casual gamers
 - More visible to retailers

EMPHASIZE WHAT DIFFERENTIATES YOUR TITLE

- First title to...
- Unusual story line
- Great original character
- New engine/technical breakthroughs
- Hot franchise
- Celebrity tie-ins: Author, actor

GREAT ART MAKES A HUGE DIFFERENCE

CONSUMER MAGAZINE COVERAGE



CHARACTERS: TRY TO BRING THEM TO LIFE

LARA CROFT HAD COSTUMES, PERSONALITY, SEX APPEAL



Lara's pillow talk



Lara's leather suit



Karate Lara

THE RESULT



WHAT IF YOU'RE A DEVELOPER, WITH A PUBLISHING PARTNER?

OFFER TO HAVE YOUR AGENCY SUPPLEMENT PUBLISHER EFFORTS

- Let's face it: publishers usually have a "template" program designed to generate reviews for a title they've contracted out to a developer
- That doesn't usually get the developer much press credit
- And, the publisher's PR team does not have the budget for more than straight up reviews
- We've worked with several developers to supplement publisher efforts



Event at Jim Russell Race Way

MEDIA TOUR APPOINTMENTS THE NEXT DAY

- Some writers have less time for off site events
- We booked them for interviews with Vicarious Vision executives the next day



BEYOND PRODUCT REVIEWS: PITCHING FEATURE STORIES

- This advanced PR technique offers a way for the developer to get more coverage
- Features must be offered on an exclusive basis
- They have to give the writer a new angle

**Tweens Hot Category
In Games, Movies**

StarTribune
Minneapolis-St. Paul







**DEVELOPERS HAVE JUST
AS MUCH CHANCE AS
PUBLISHERS**





SPEAKING OPPS CAN BUILD COMPANY REPUTATION

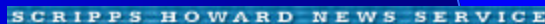
- Another way for developers to get visibility is through speaking opportunities
- Instead of going for a solo placement, suggest a panel, where your spokesperson would be one of the participants
- A great abstract is the key



GameDevelopers
Conference

TIPS ON PITCHING YOUR GAME TO CONSUMER MEDIA

- Start an editor data base
 - Make notes; you have to know who reviews your type of title
 - Learn the wire reporters and syndicated freelancers, guys that can have their reviews picked up by 10 – 100 other papers
- Make your pitches personal
 - Reference other reviews the editor has done
- Keep email pitches short
- Get immediately to the points that differentiate your title
- Call three or four days later to check, but don't over promote your title, beg or nag the writer



GENERATING TV PLACEMENTS



- Value:
 - Opportunity for mass exposure
 - Visual media; brings your game to life
 - Can start a consumer buzz that pumps product sales

TIPS ON GETTING TV EXPOSURE

- Think visual; talking heads are boring; suggest a prop:
 - A peripheral such as a driving wheel
 - A flight jacket representing the military branch in an aviation title
- Provide high quality running footage of the game
- Get the reporter involved in the demo
 - Pre-brief him on game features
 - Arrive early enough to engage in conversation
 - Find out his own interests and game knowledge

B-ROLL FOOTAGE : ESSENTIAL FOR TV COVERAGE



- Offer B-roll of your studio, showing people at work and the game in development
- Film a few practiced sound bites with the developer
- Make an articulate spokesperson available for in-studio interviews

NYKO TV PLACEMENTS



EVENTS: A WAY TO GENERATE MIXED MEDIA COVERAGE, BUZZ



TBC's BROADCAST RESULTS FOR ATARI



**PUBLISHERS MAY
WELCOME THE SUPPORT
OF DEVELOPERS**

TIPS ON DOING EVENTS

- Events can be pretty expensive; pick and choose the titles you want to promote, carefully
 - Our event helped Infogrames win the PC license for Warner Bros. titles
- Pick a media capital, if you want lots of attendees
 - Sometimes generating a buzz is more important than press coverage
 - For the launch of 3DO, Trip Hawkins had us invite developers as well as press
- Alternately, do your event in a small city and send b-roll to the other markets



MAKING YOUR MARK AT TRADE SHOWS

- One of the advantages of E3 is that hundreds of editors attend
- The disadvantage is that participation is costly, so you need to make every dollar spent effective
- The best way to see a lot of editors is to have a booth – or be part of someone else's
 - Last year, we managed 125 interviews for an unknown MMORPG company
- Location is key



GENERATING BUSINESS PRESS



- Value:
 - Prestige
 - Recognition
 - Positions your company as a real business; great if you're planning to be acquired or go public



TIPS ON PITCHING THE BUSINESS PRESS

- Story must have a business/economic angle
 - Different business model, revenue strategy
- Explain what is different about how your company operates
- Money talks; expect to give revenue numbers
 - Note: company must be profitable, growing; CEO must be visionary
- Story MUST be offered exclusively; these magazines are highly competitive
- See The Bohle Company hand out on "Pitching the Business Media"

A FINAL TIP: DO A COMPANY POSITIONING UP FRONT

- If your company is considering a bigger PR effort, here's a final tip:
- Before you invest money in a PR effort, you want to get your company positioning down
 - What differentiates your title, your company from every other developer?
 - What are the key messages you want to get across, so other publishers know your specialty?
- The Bohle Company offers a one-day positioning meeting that gets everybody thinking – and all spokespersons on the same page

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