

The background image is a close-up of a hand holding a sword hilt. The hand is wearing a black leather glove with silver studs. In the background, a horned helmet is visible, and the scene is lit with warm, golden light, creating a bokeh effect with small, bright spots.


VIKINGS!

How We Tapped a Non-Game Community to Build Support for Our Release on Steam (and Gave Away a Sword)

Emmy Jonassen

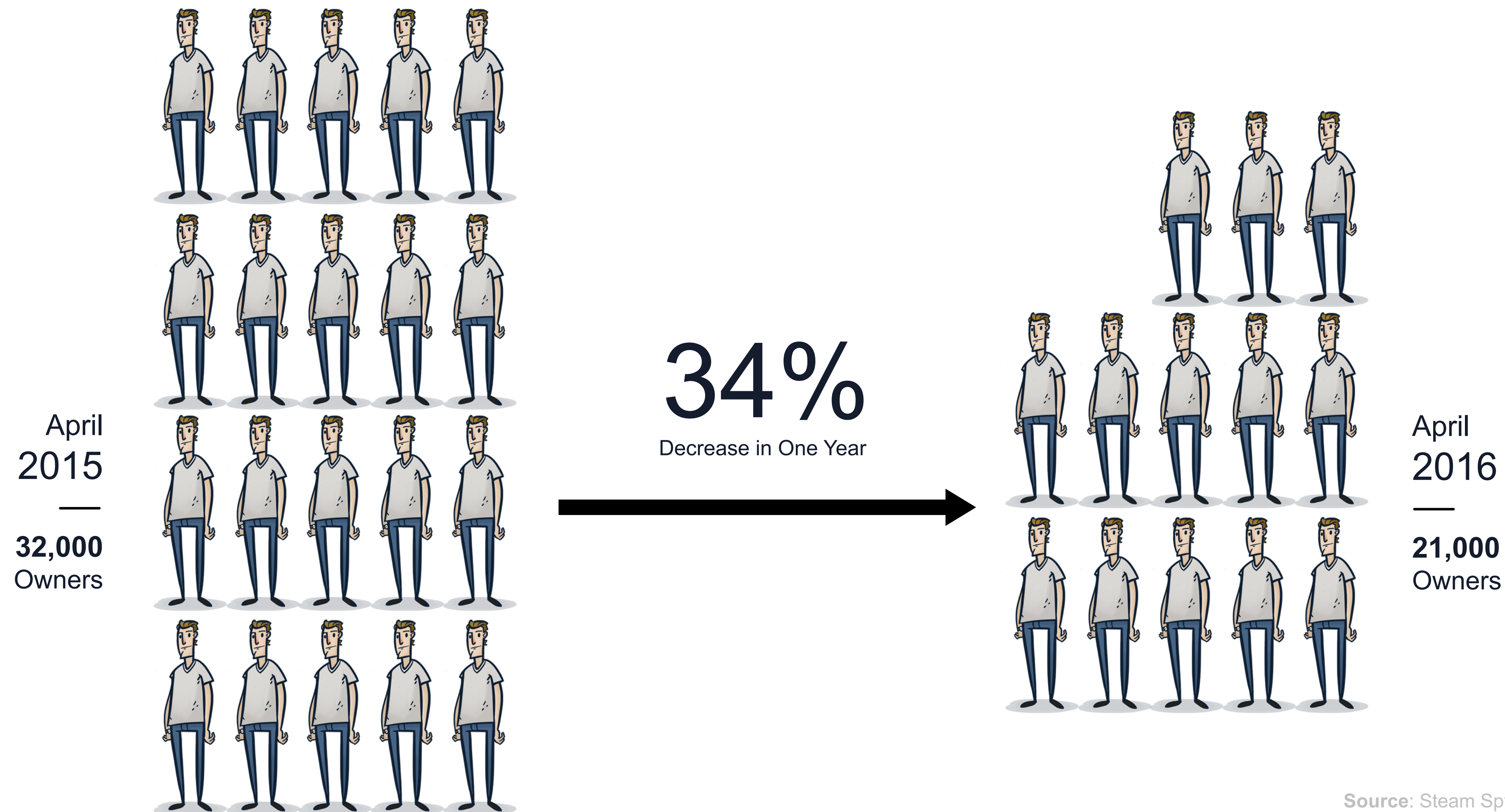
Co-founder & CMO, Snow Cannon Games
Founder, IndieGameGirl.com

Emmy[at]snowcannongames[dot]com
@indiegamegirl

A man with dark, curly hair is shown from the chest up, holding his head in both hands. He is looking directly at the camera with a stressed expression. In front of him is a white sign with a grey background that contains text. The background is a plain, light grey wall.

Releasing a ***successful***
Steam game is hard and
gets harder every year.

Median Steam Game Ownership

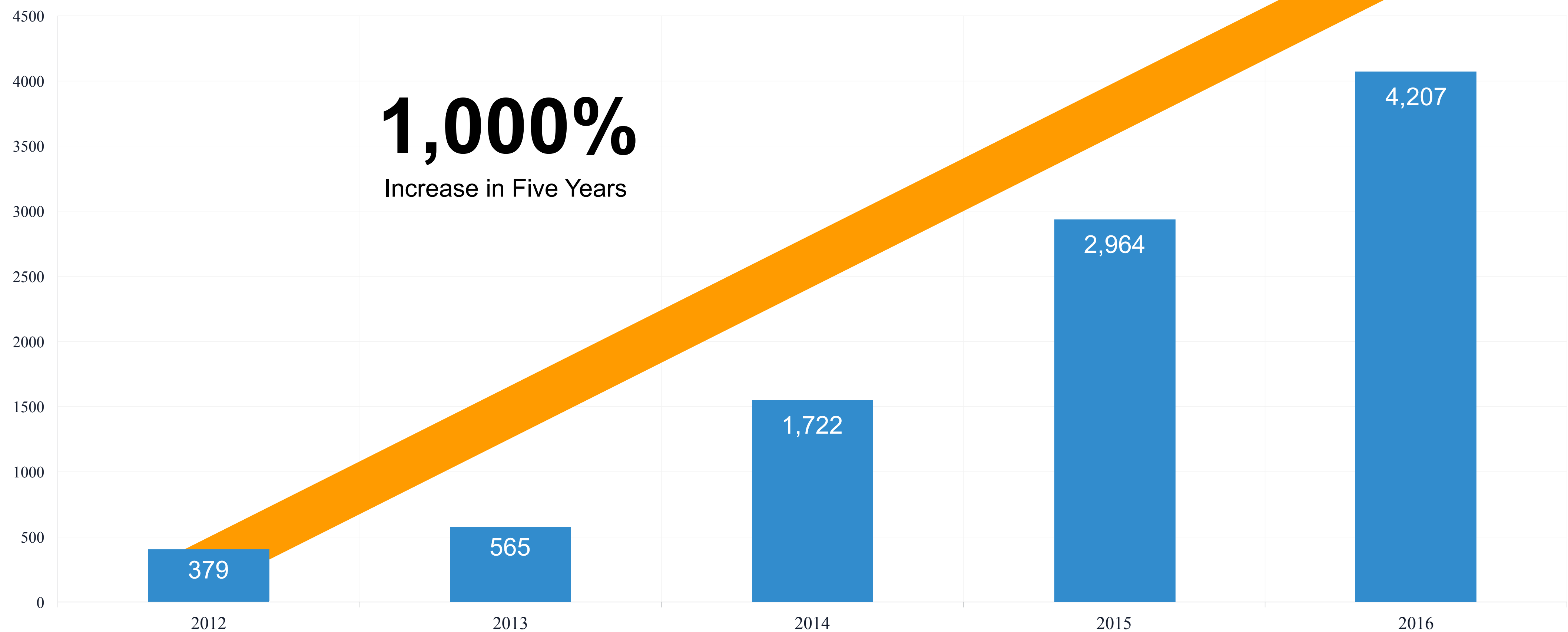


Source: Steam Spy



The reason it's
so hard is because
competition is fierce!

Steam Releases Over the Past 5 Years



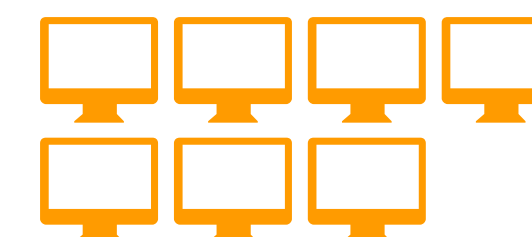
Source: Steam Spy

How This Affects Release Window Competition

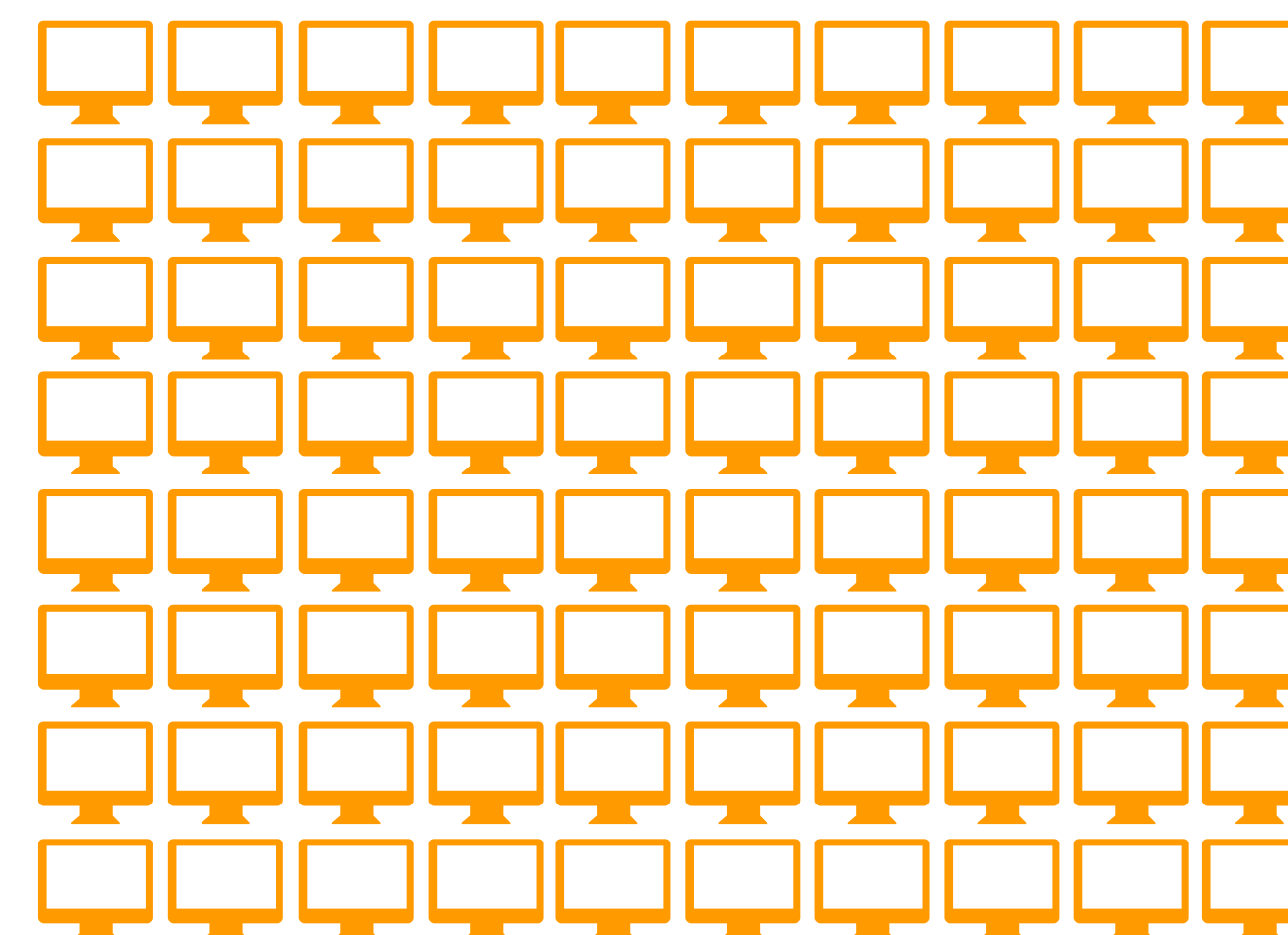
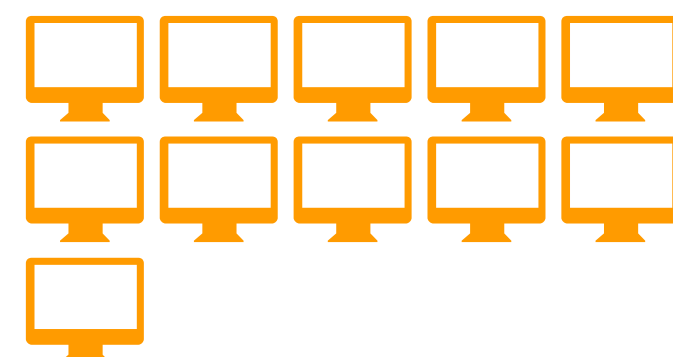
**Avg. # of New Releases
on Launch Day**

**Avg. # of New Releases
During Launch Week**

2012



2016



A close-up photograph of two brown bears in a body of water, engaged in a physical struggle. The bear on the left is dark brown with its mouth open, showing its tongue. The bear on the right is a lighter shade of brown and is using its paws to reach towards the first bear's face. Water splashes are visible around their heads. The background is a blurred green forest.

You are fighting for
the *same* eyeballs
and wallets.

There's *too much competition*
to solely rely on Steam
to drive interest to
your game.



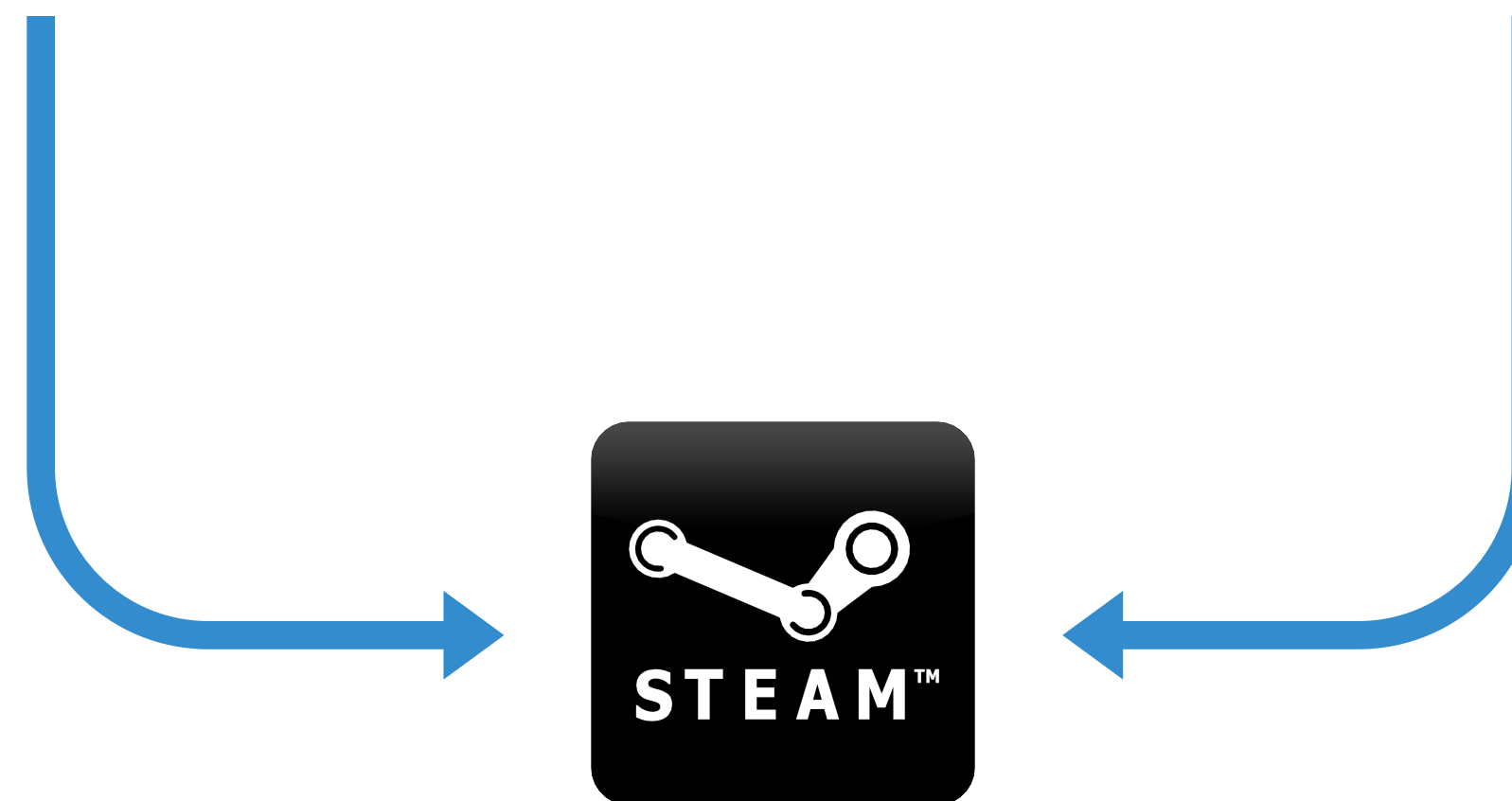
2 Ways to Drive Interest Yourself

Traditional Steam Gamers

Promote to “Traditional Steam Gamers” outside of Steam’s platform, where there can be less competition for attention.

Nontraditional Steam Gamers

Identify a group of “Nontraditional Steam Gamers” that finds your game compelling and generate awareness among them.





For our game, *The Frostrune*, our ***Nontraditional Steam Gamers*** were Viking Enthusiasts.

First, Here's Some Context



About *The Frostrune*

A classic point-and-click adventure, based on Norse history, culture and myth. The development team is comprised of three Viking Age history buffs who met at a Viking battle reenactment.

How to Find Your Target Market

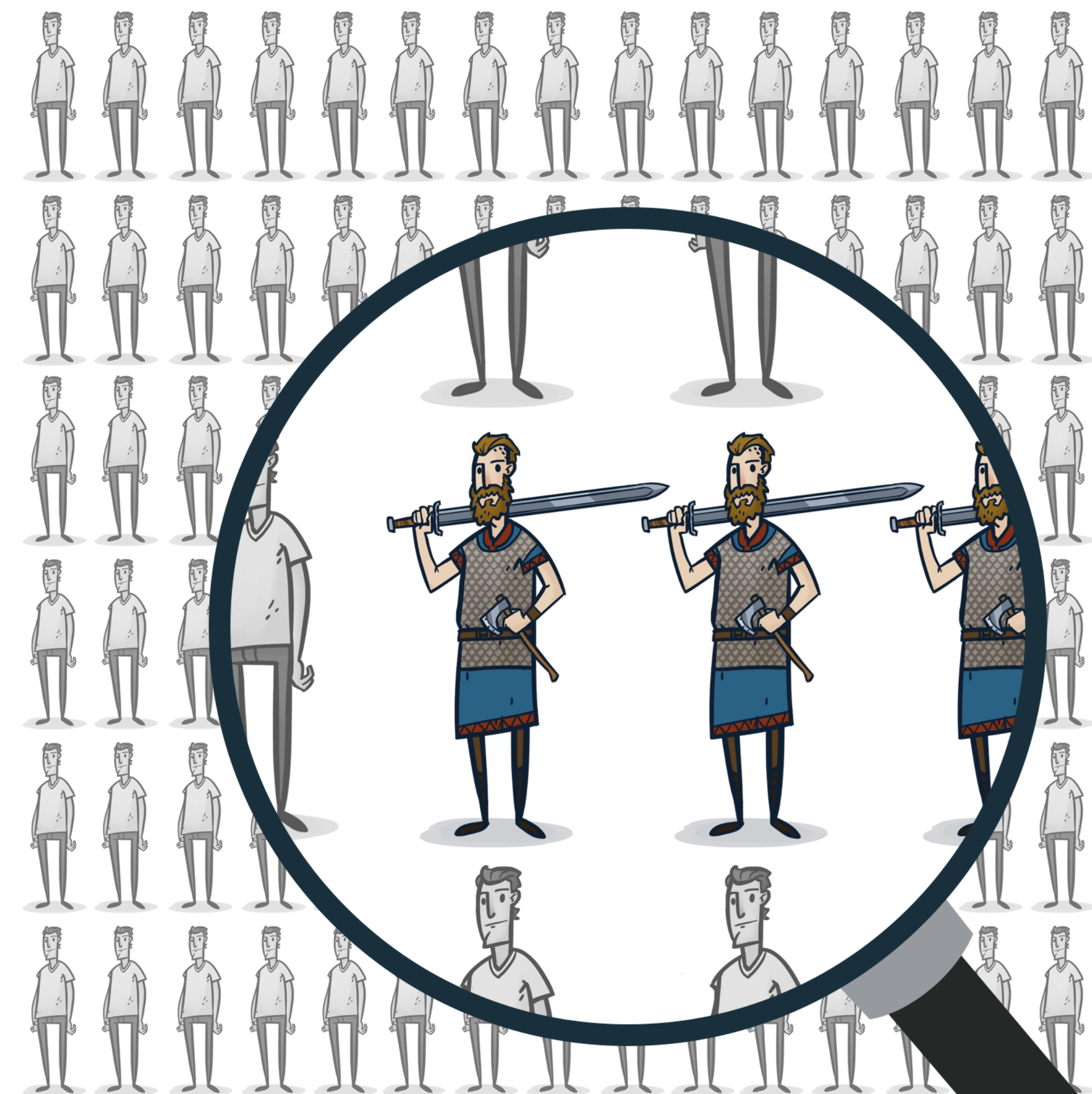
What is a Target Market Analysis?

A research-backed analysis that tries to answer three main questions:

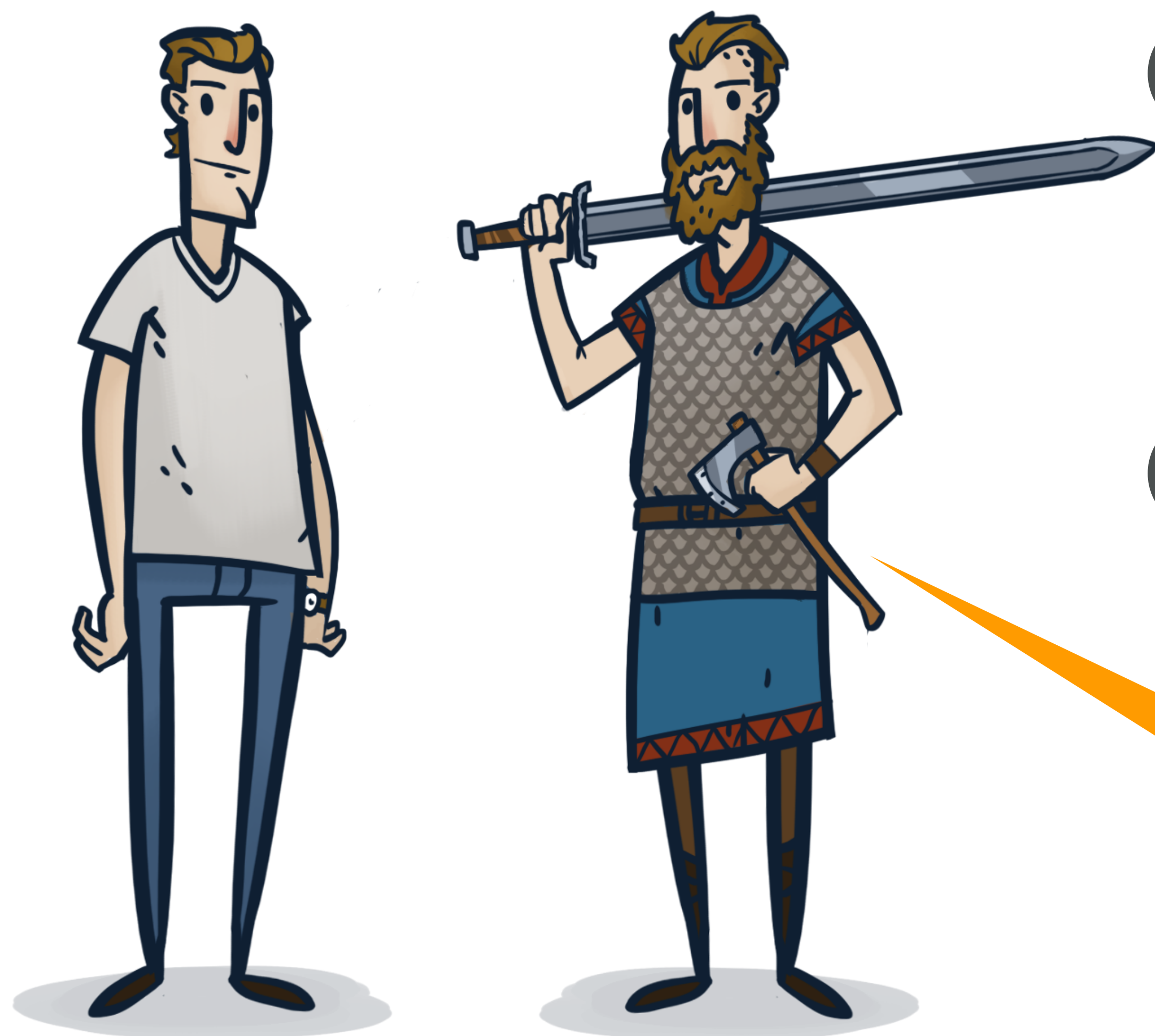
1. Who is your game's target market?
2. Where can you reach this target market?
3. What about your game would this target market find most compelling?

The Real Purpose for a Target Market Analysis

To help you craft and deliver a compelling message for your target market that generates your desired results.



The Frostrune's Main Target Markets



1

Point-and-Click Adventure Enthusiasts

- “Traditional Steam Gamer” target market.
- Big fans of the point-and-click genre dating back to *Myst*. In more recent years, games like *The Room*, *The Silent Age* and *The Walking Dead*.

2

Viking Enthusiasts

- “Nontraditional Steam Gamer” target audience.
- Defined by interest in Norse culture and history, including anything from being fans of the show, *Vikings*, to participating in Viking battle reenactments.

Today, we're talking
about these guys!

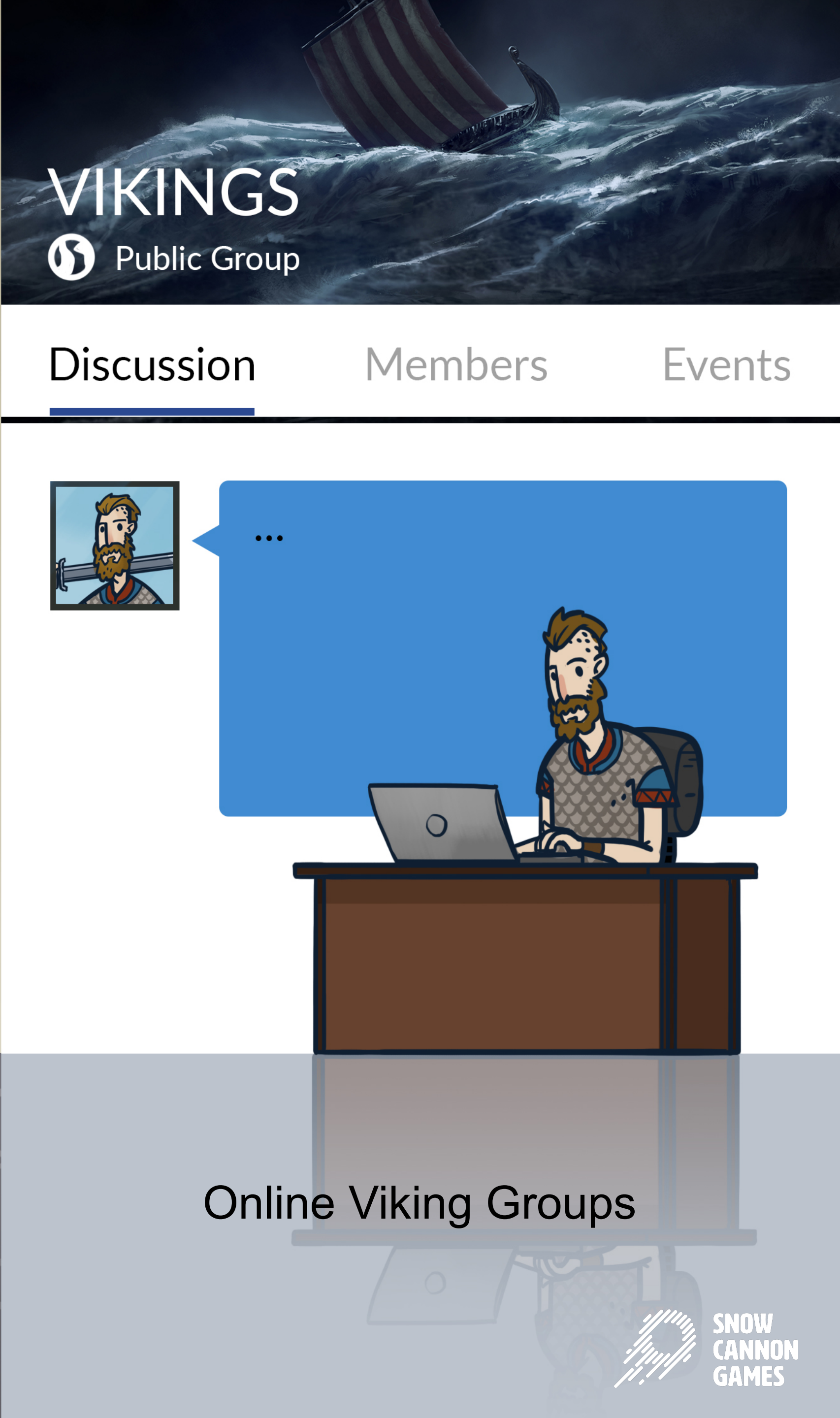
Where Can You Reach Viking Enthusiasts?



Viking Festivals



Museums



Online Viking Groups

Where Can You Reach Viking Enthusiasts?



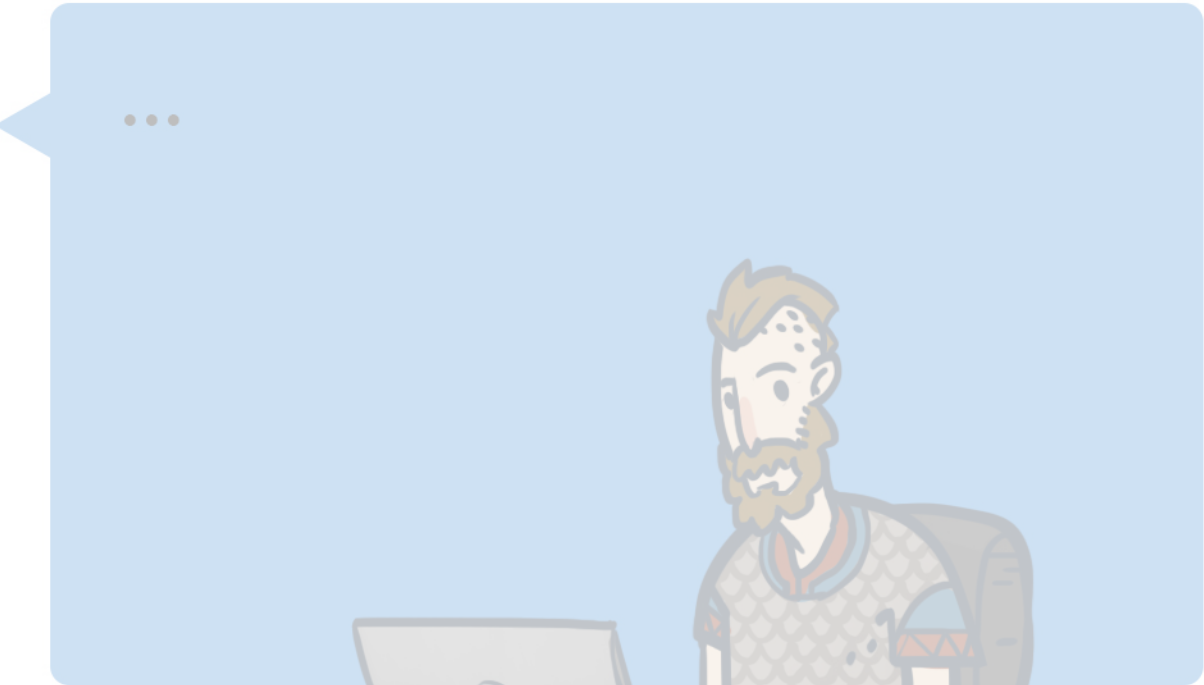
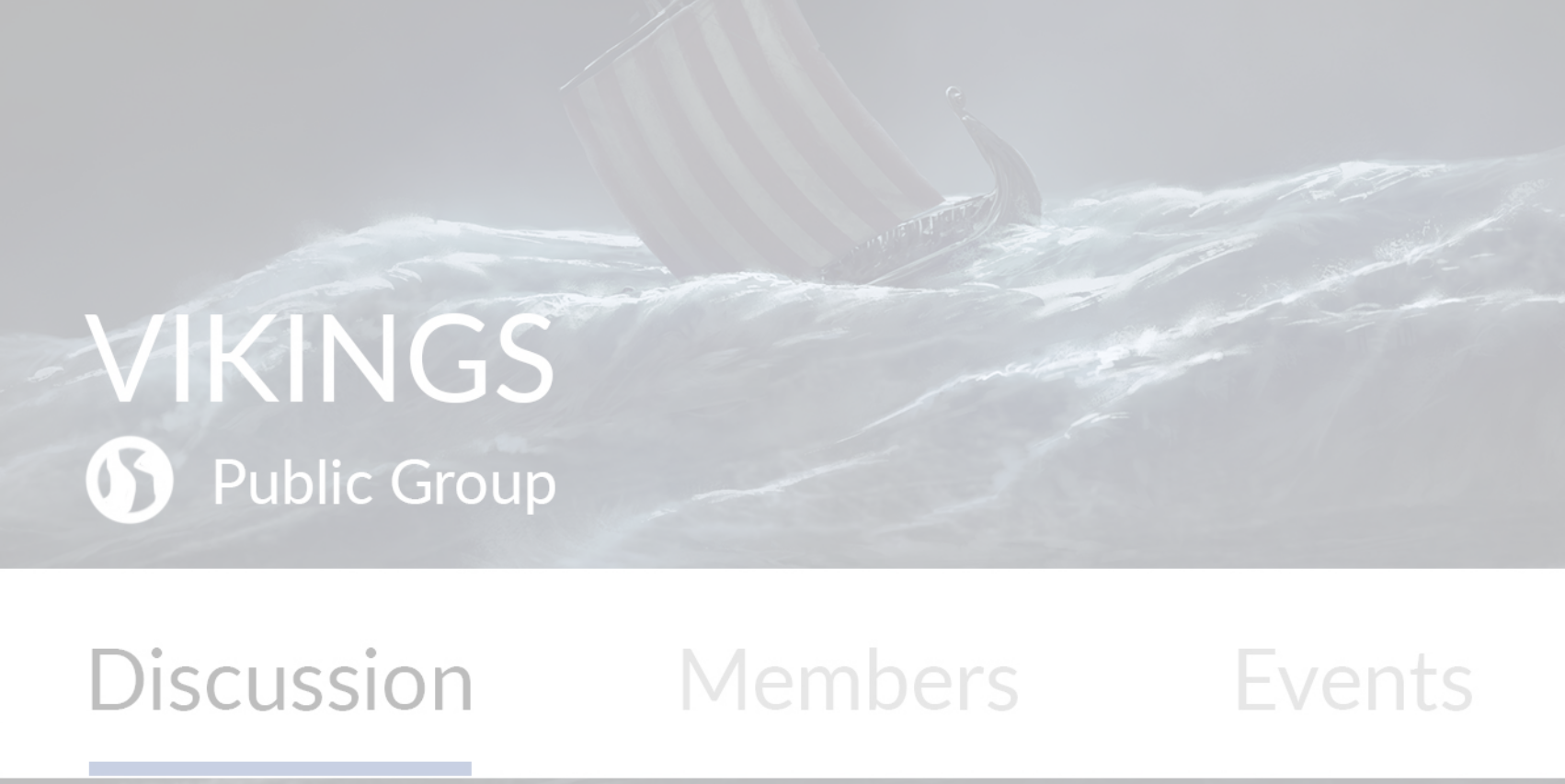
Viking Festivals



Museums

Pro Tip

Immersing yourself in your target market's activities is a great way to learn. Here's our CEO at a Viking festival. He learned a lot about our target market...and swords/mead.



Online Viking Groups

What Viking Enthusiasts Find Compelling About *The Frostrune*



1

Historical and Cultural Accuracy

- All environments and objects are modeled after real places and artifacts found in the Viking Age.
- Even the language spoken in *The Frostrune* is representative of the Viking Age, i.e., a dead Norse language that was recreated with the help of academics.

2

Deep Story Rooted in Viking Myth

- *The Frostrune*'s story is deep. It's also strongly supported by authentic Viking lore.

Our Big Marketing Challenges



1

Not All Viking Enthusiasts Have Steam Accounts

Through our research we came to realize that not all Viking Enthusiasts had Steam accounts, or even knew what Steam was.

Our Strategy



Google play

1

Expand Distribution to More Common Platforms

Offer *The Frostrune* on the App Store, Google Play and Windows Store to make it more accessible to Viking Enthusiasts.

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2

Viking Enthusiasts Want to Stay in the Moment

Viking Enthusiasts are not in the frame of mind to be pitched on a game when attending a festival, visiting a museum or reading a forum. We needed to reach them in another way.

Our Strategy

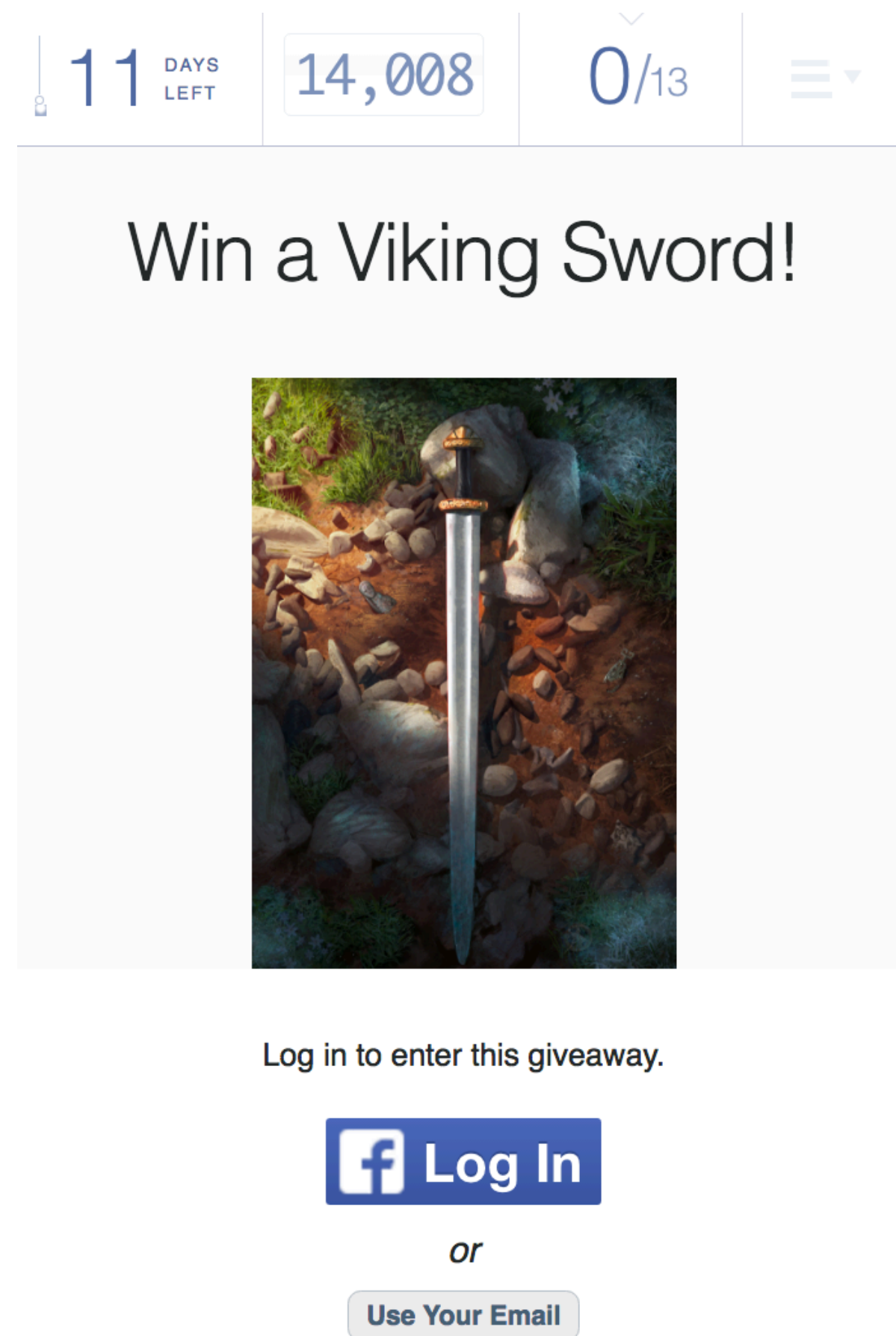


1

Capture Initial Interest

To increase chances of resonating with Viking Enthusiasts, promote something (1) relevant, (2) won't take away from their experience, but (3) is related to *The Frostrune*...like a museum-quality replica of the Viking sword featured in the game made by the dev!

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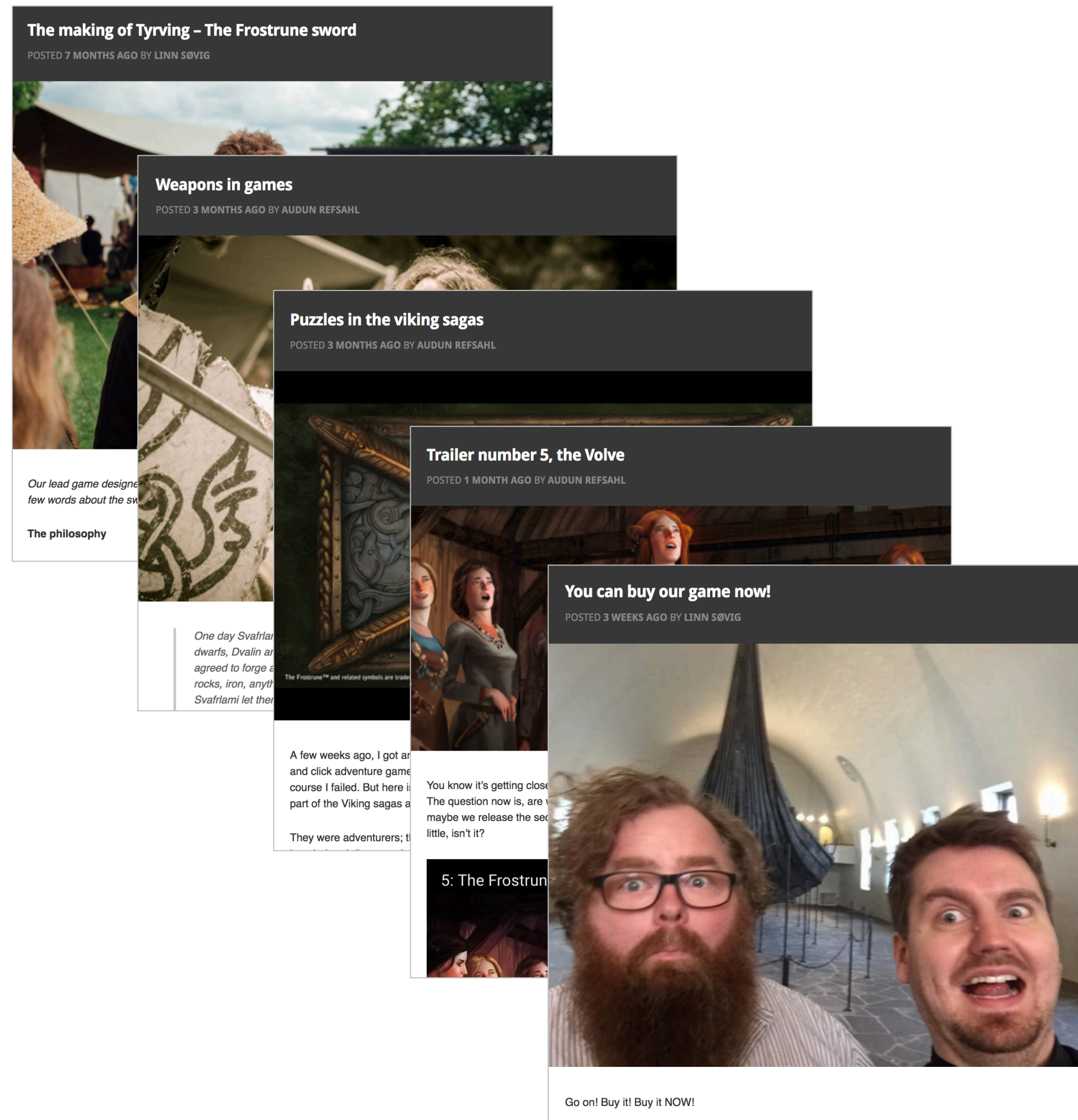
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Generate Leads

Make the sword a giveaway prize and require signing up to *The Frostrune's* newsletter to enter.

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3

Convert Leads into Fans

Through a series of emails/blog posts, shift Viking Enthusiasts' focus from the sword to *The Frostrune* by speaking to what they find compelling about both: Authenticity. Finally, begin to incorporate call-to-actions, like: "Vote for us on Greenlight."

Raising Awareness About the Sword



1

At Viking Festivals

- Worked with organizers to pass out flyers.
- Developer worked on sword in person at festival.

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- Held launch event at Viking Ship Museum in Oslo.

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Online

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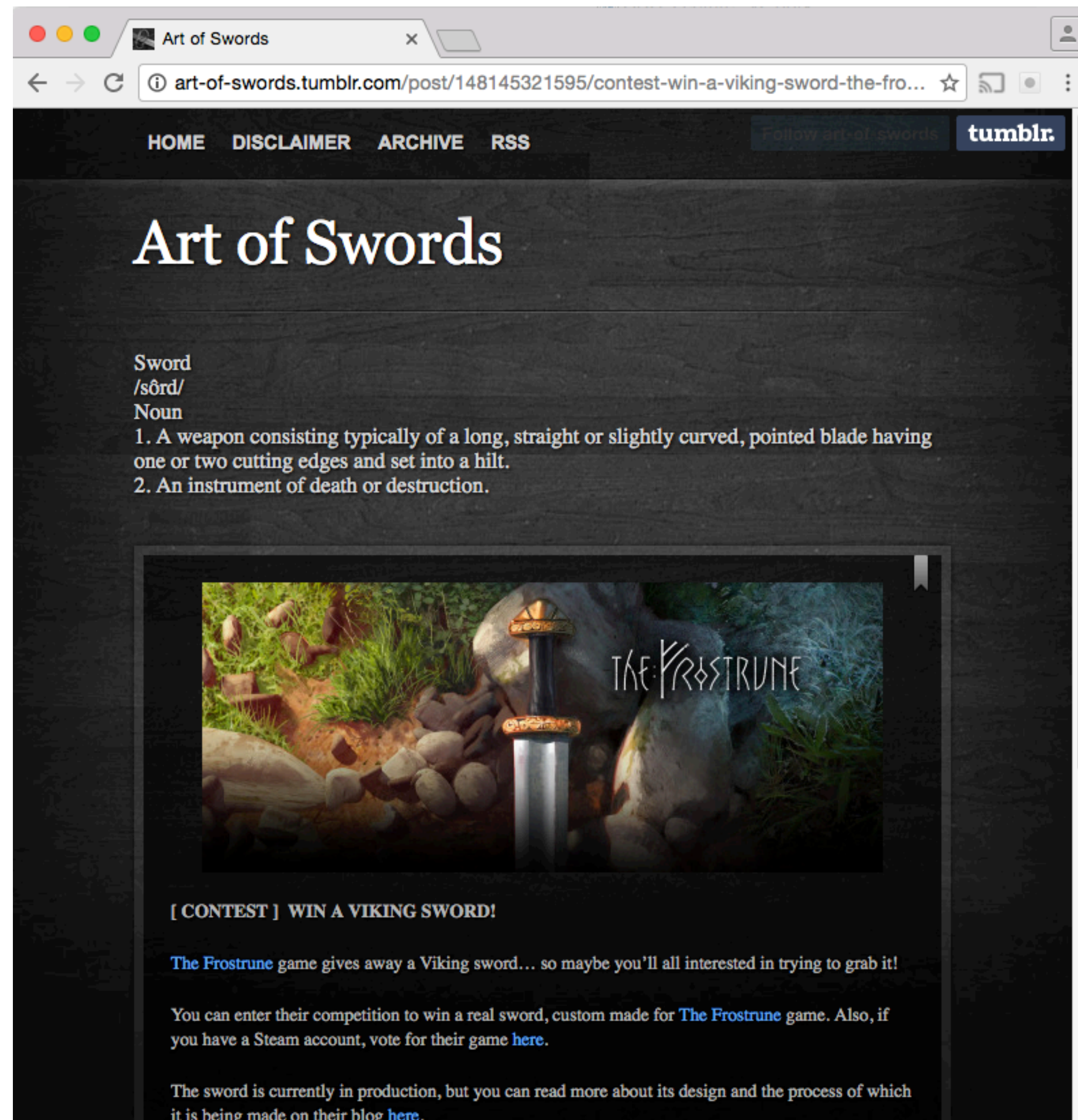
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4

Press Outreach

- Reached out to small group of relevant publications (e.g., sword blogs, Viking Enthusiast groups, etc.)

Results




1

Press


Secured several pieces of coverage, including:

- A feature in *Art of Swords*, a popular sword blog.
- Spotlight about the sword/game on NRK, the Norwegian national broadcasting channel.





Results

 **Snow Cannon Games**
September 29, 2016 · 🌐

The third trailer for [#TheFrostrune](#) by [Grimnir](#) is launched! The game is looking so good now and these trailers complement the story behind it so well! Audun has written a detailed description about the inspiration for this part of the story here: <http://www.grimnirmedia.no/soooo-trailer-number-3/> We're fascinated!



70K Views

 Like  Comment  Share 

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- A feature in *Art of Swords*, a popular sword blog.
- Spotlight about the sword/game on NRK, the Norwegian national broadcasting channel.

2

Social Media Engagement

- 150,000+ views of the video series on Facebook and YouTube combined.

Results



Hi Friend!

Thank you for entering *The Frostrune's* Viking sword competition and subscribing to our newsletter! We look forward to sharing our enthusiasm for Norse mythology and history, as well as *The Frostrune*-related news with you here.

In the meantime, we invite you to learn more about [the sword's construction](#) with *The Frostrune's* lead game designer and sword maker, Nils Anderssen.



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Newsletter Subscriptions

- 5,000 newsletter subscribers
- Average 47% open rate

But, the Real Test...

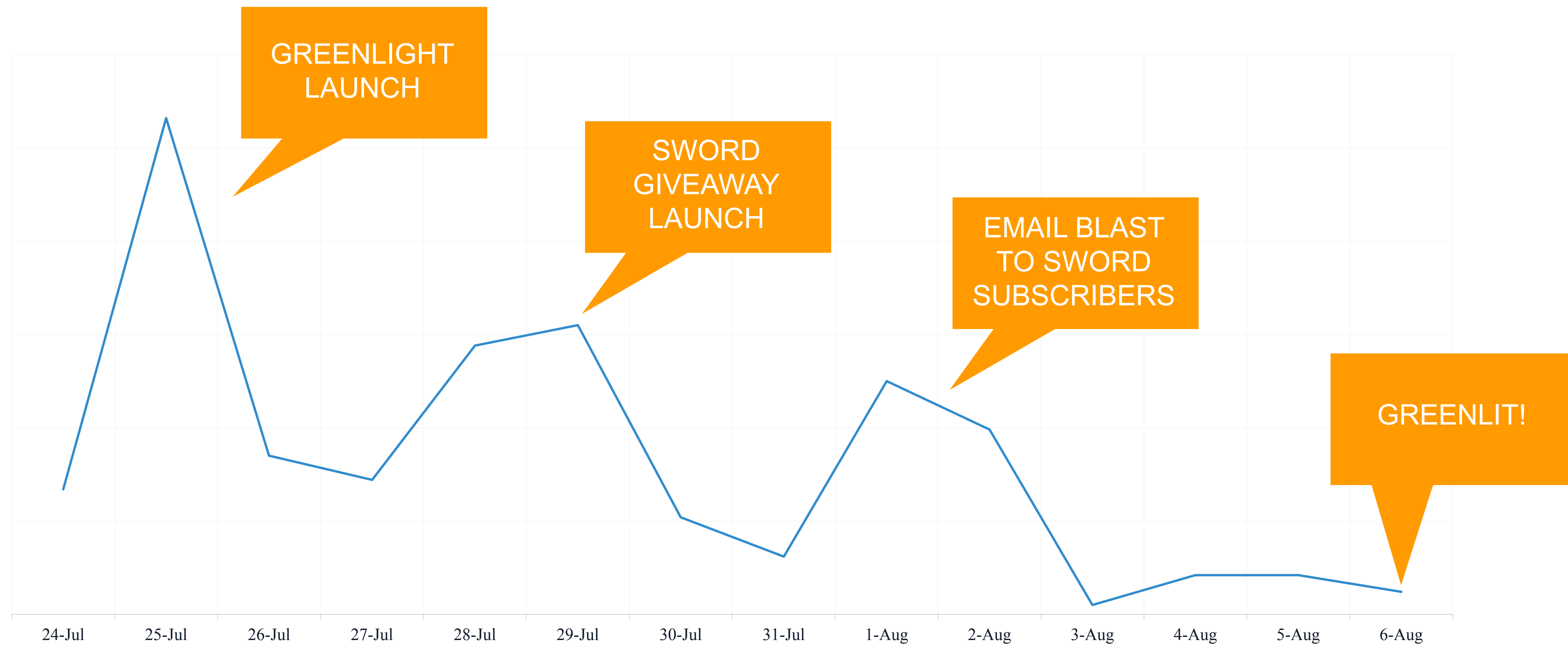
When asked, would
Viking Enthusiasts
take action?



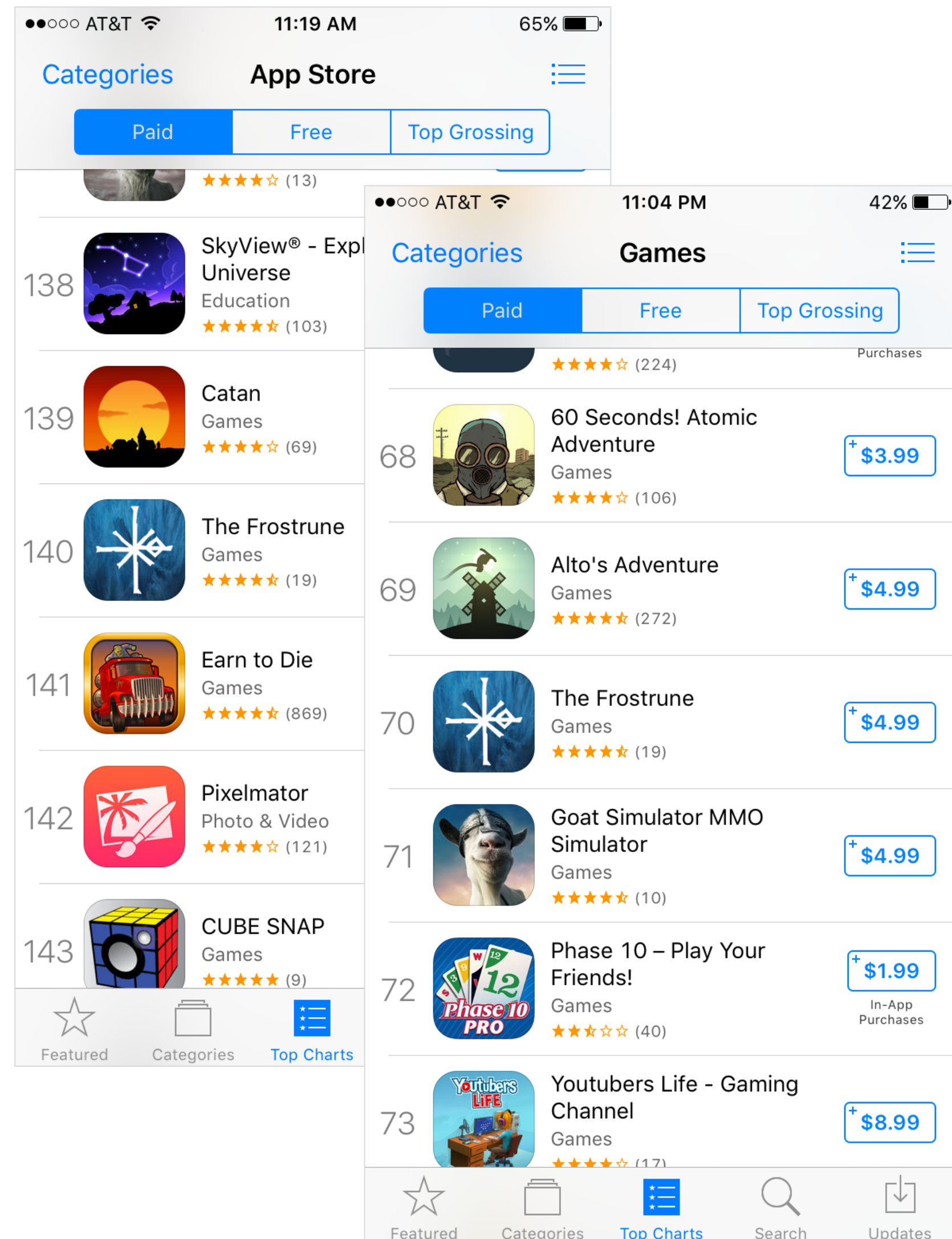
A group of people dressed in Viking-themed costumes are gathered outdoors. In the foreground, a man with a long red beard and a straw hat is smiling and holding a large wooden shield. Behind him, a woman in a red tunic is also smiling. To the left, another person in a tan tunic is visible. The background shows more people in similar costumes, suggesting a festival or event.

Yes! 60% of our
Greenlight votes came
from Viking Enthusiasts.

Greenlight Votes



What About Sales...



Viking Enthusiasts
converted much
better *on mobile*.

Final Thoughts



1

Steam is Competitive. Don't Rely on It Alone.

Stats prove it's unwise to solely rely on Steam to generate interest for your game. YOU must take matters into your own hands.

2

Nontraditional Steam Gamers Are Hard Work

Finding, understanding and reaching the right Nontraditional Steam Gamers is a lot of work, but can expand your game's target market.

3

Measure Everything

The only way to tell if a strategy is working is measuring its results. Be sure to track and analyze all your efforts.

4

Don't Forget Traditional Steam Gamers

Nontraditional Steam Gamers can expand your target market, but Traditional Steam Gamers will still make up a large portion—don't forget them!

Thank you!

May Odin give you knowledge on your path,
May Thor grant you strength and courage on your way,
And may Loki give you laughter as you go.

Emmy Jonassen

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Founder, IndieGameGirl.com

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