



How to Run a Studio Without a Surprise Hit

Christopher Langmuir
Creative Director, Anemone Hug Interactive

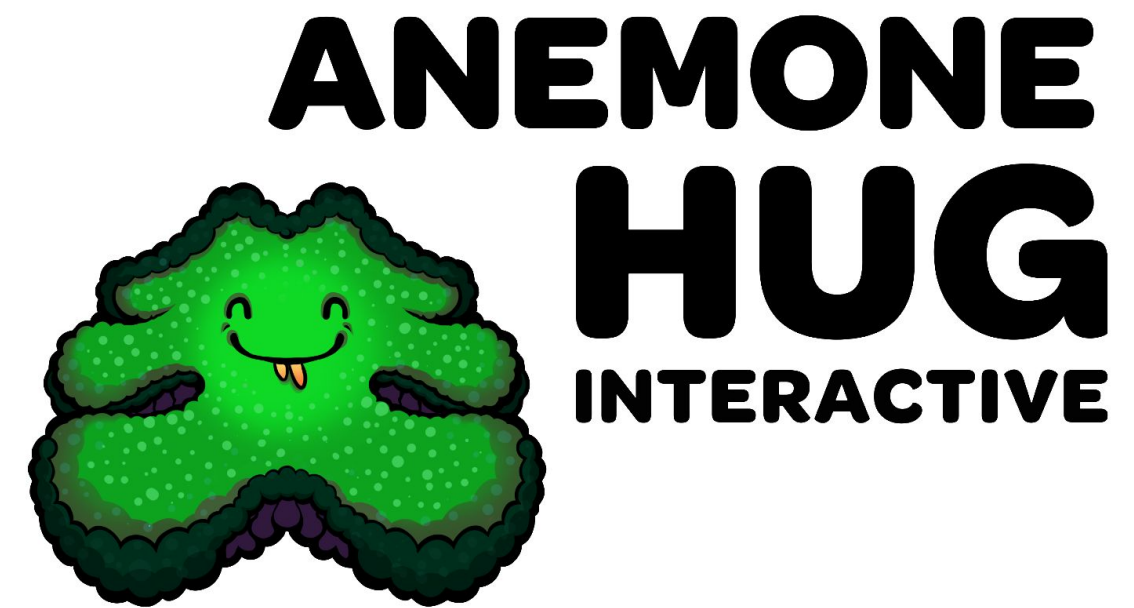
Theresa Duringer
CEO, Temple Gates Games

Tanya X. Short
Captain, Kitfox Games

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE

MARCH 18–22, 2019 | #GDC19

Our Three Studios



Our Three Studios



- In business 4-5 years
- 5-10 permanent employees each
- No surprise runaway hits yet



How To Get Client Work

And balance it against original IP development

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Caveat

Caveat



I don't have the answers

Anemone Hug Interactive

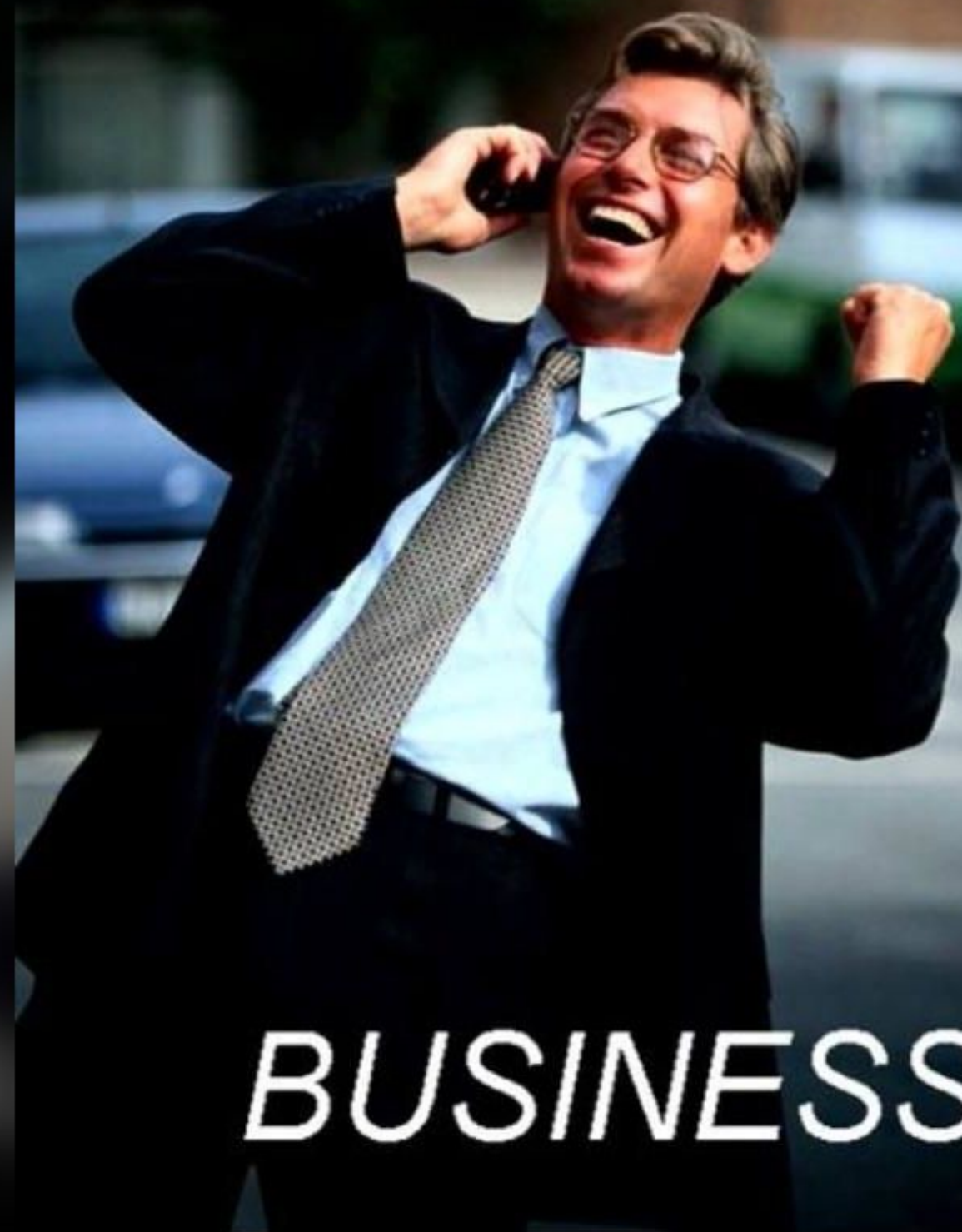


Anemone Hug Interactive

- About us:
 - Founded in January 2015
 - 4x revenue growth every year
 - 10 employees
 - 50% of all hours company-wide on internal IP development



HA HA!



BUSINESS



GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE

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Before you start your studio

Before you start your studio

- Have at least a year of runway. You will need it.
- Get credit now while employed. You will need it.

GET A MENTOR

Getting Client Work









Getting Client Work

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Getting Client Work

- Always Be Networking (go wide)
- Grow your team! Provide solutions not labour!
- Climb the ladder (go narrow)
- Get games adjacent and non-games clients
- Attribution! Get it! For the studio too!
- Deliver on time and on budget

Balancing Against Internal IP Dev

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- Find people that can wear multiple hats.

Balancing Against Internal IP Dev

- Be wary of business burning you out creatively
- Do not assume that 50% work means you'll get it done in half the time, it's more like 3x or more.
 - “3 Steps for Founding a Successful Indie Studio” by Gwen Frey
- Find people that can wear multiple hats.
- Protect your team from sales thrash



How To Get Client Work

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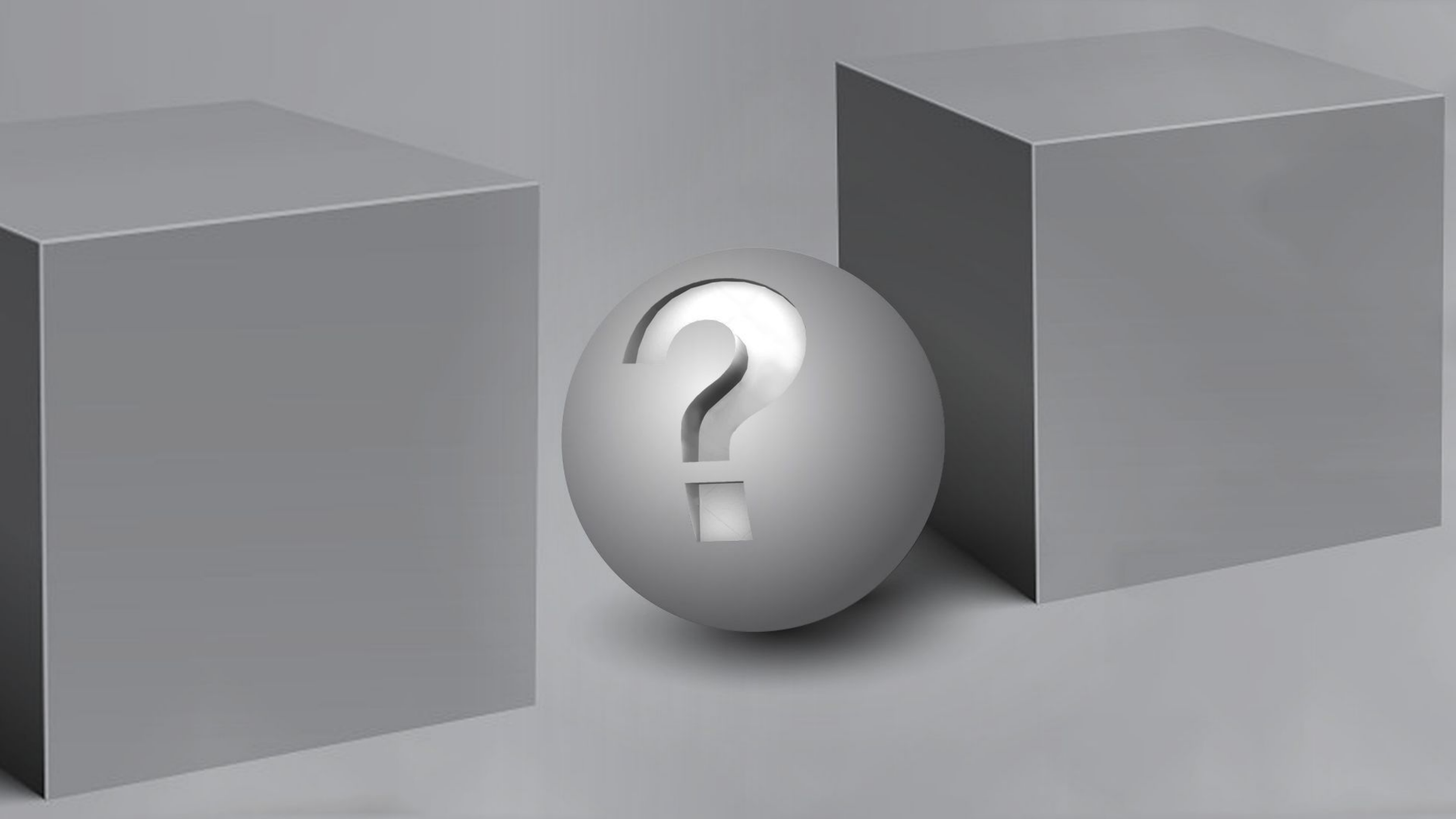
how to

RUN A STUDIO WITHOUT A SURPRISE HIT

HARDWARE & IP

**TEMPLE
GATES**
@TDURINGER





Game: Cannon Brawl

Lifetime Steam revenue
(gross)

\$362,216 (gross revenue, includes VAT, DLC and any bundles)

Lifetime Steam units

33,681

Lifetime Steam revenue (gross)

\$8,720

Lifetime Steam units

1,133









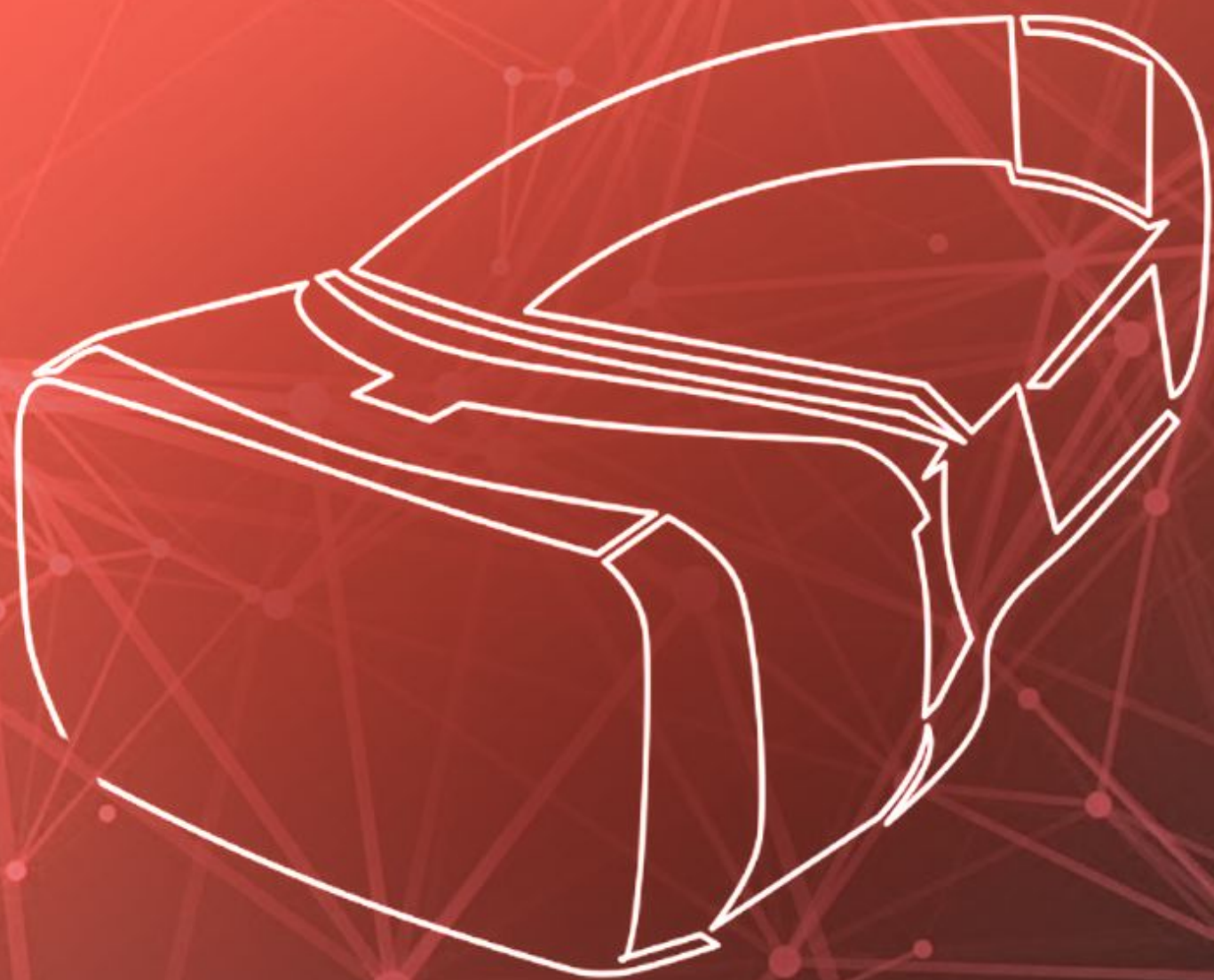
Who has:
TOO MUCH MONEY

&

**NOT ENOUGH
VIDEO GAMES**

?

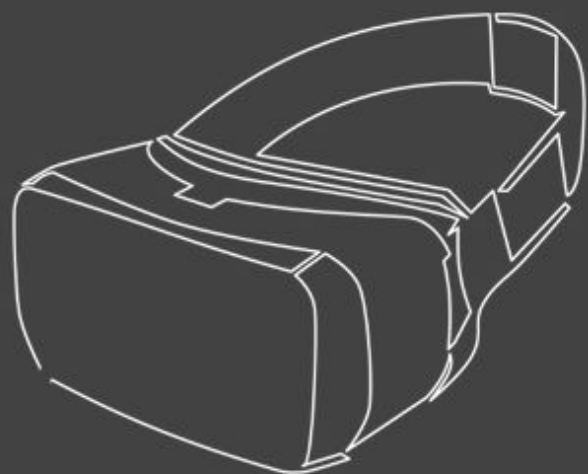






Run

AWAY!



Game: Bazaar

Lifetime Steam revenue
(gross)



\$6,196 (gross revenue, includes VAT, DLC and any bundles)

Lifetime Steam units

1,293

NEVER DEVELOP

for a

SPECULATIVE PLATFORM

***Except if there's money**





KEEP PROJECTS

under

6 MONTHS

NEVER DEVELOP

for a

SPECULATIVE PLATFORM

***Except if there's money**

***Except if there's IP**



Use
**UNCONTESTED
PLATFORMS**

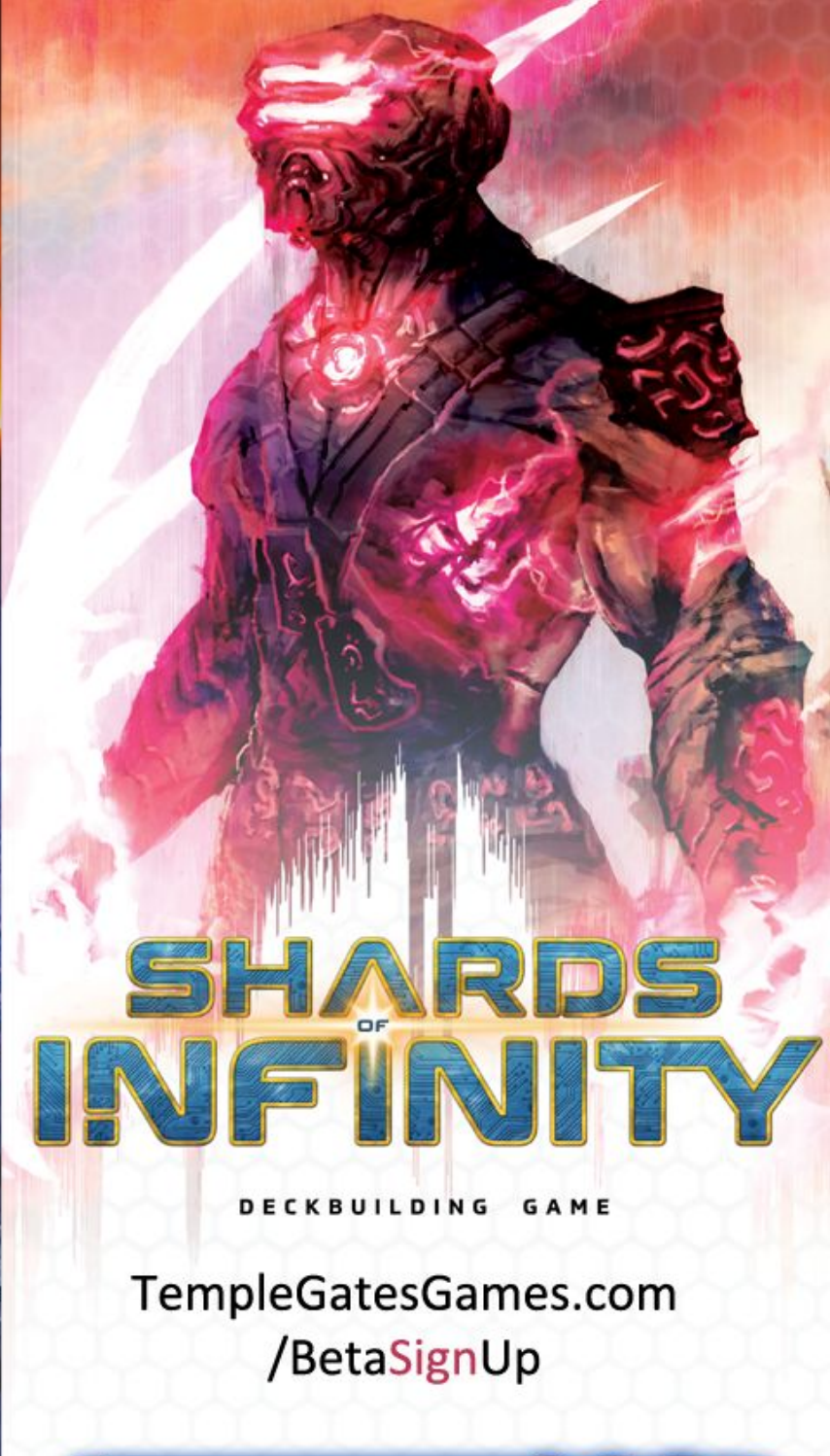
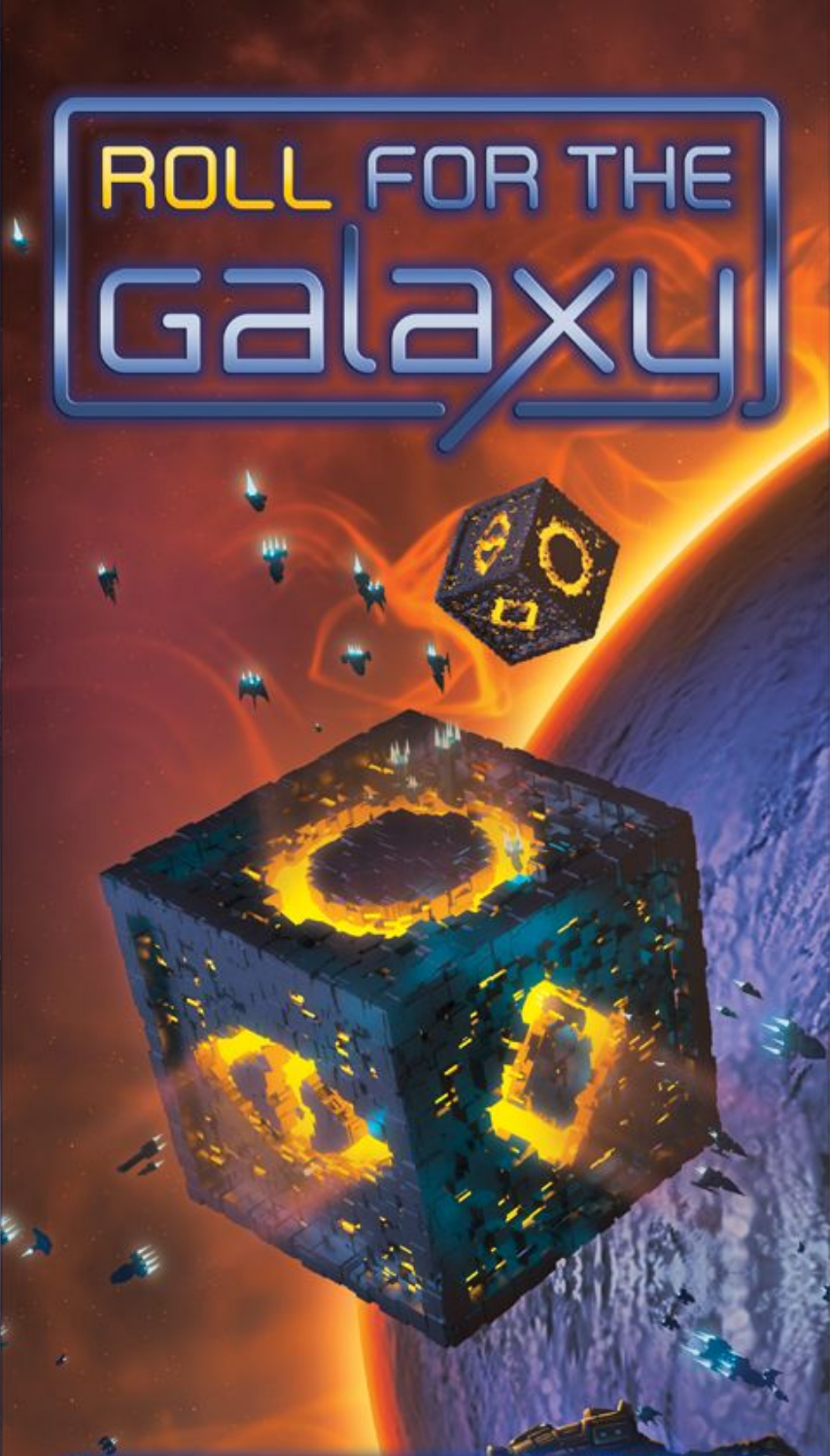
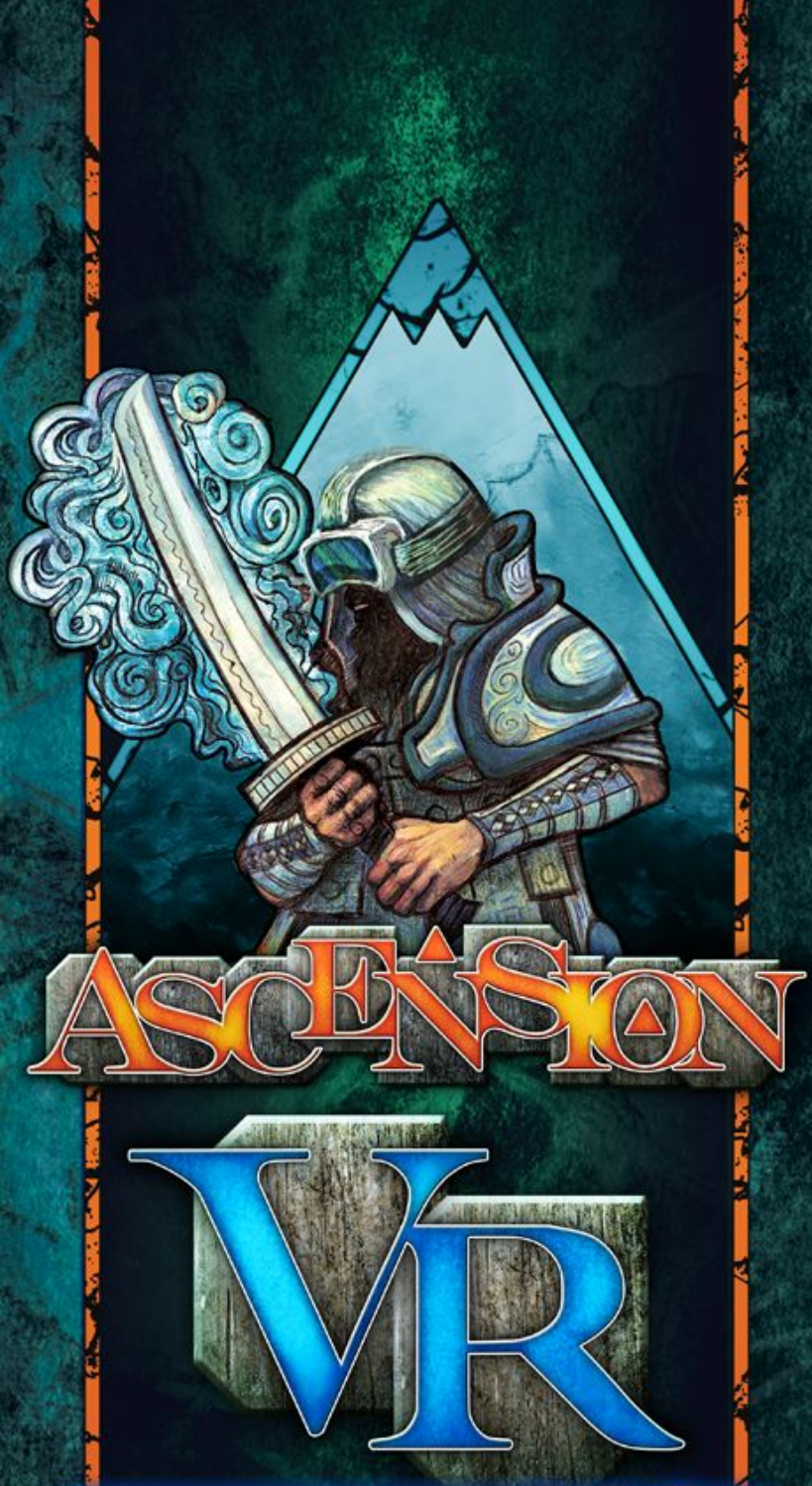
to get
GOOD IP

SWING

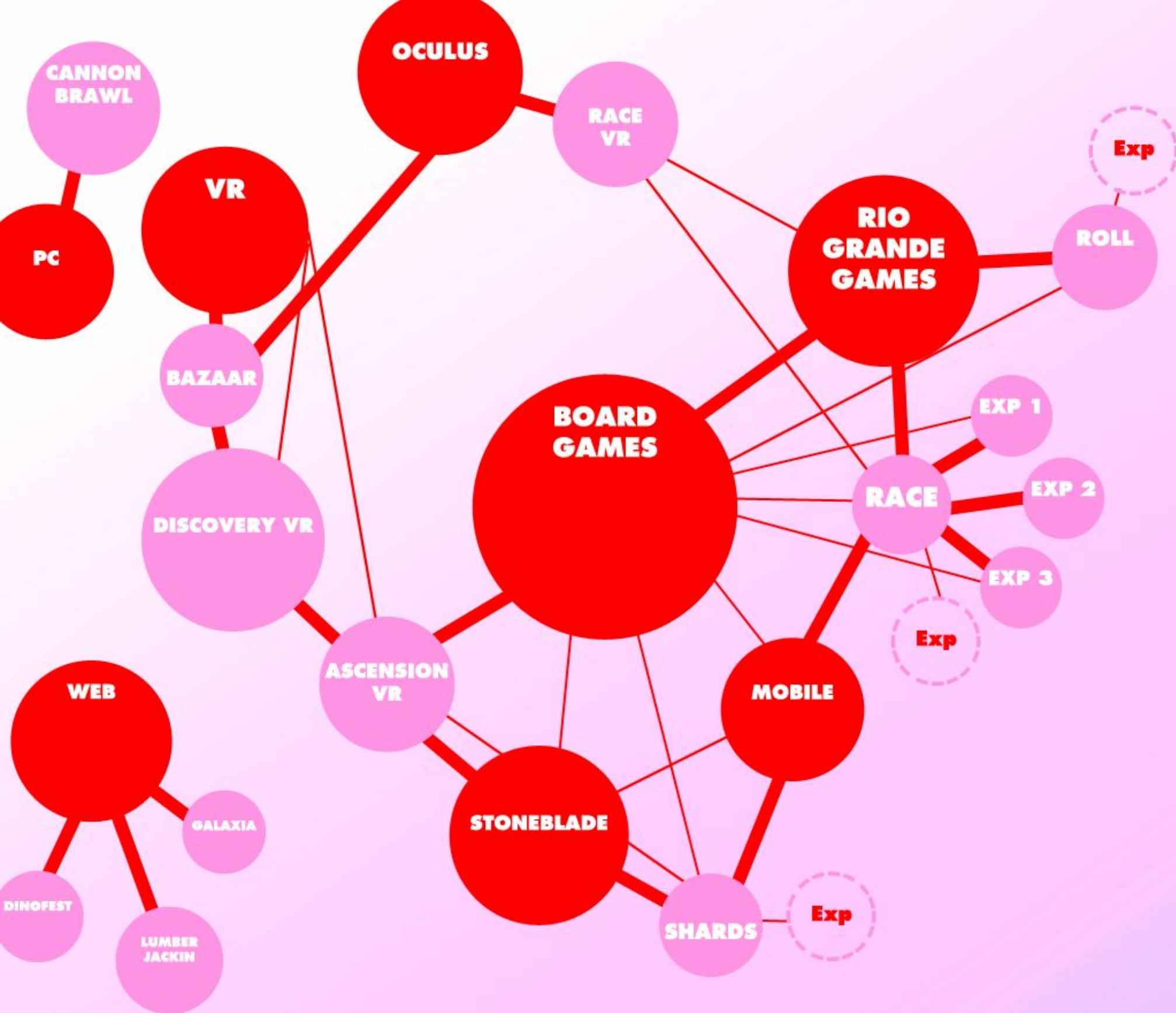
to get from

IP TO IP





TempleGatesGames.com
/BetaSignUp



STICK

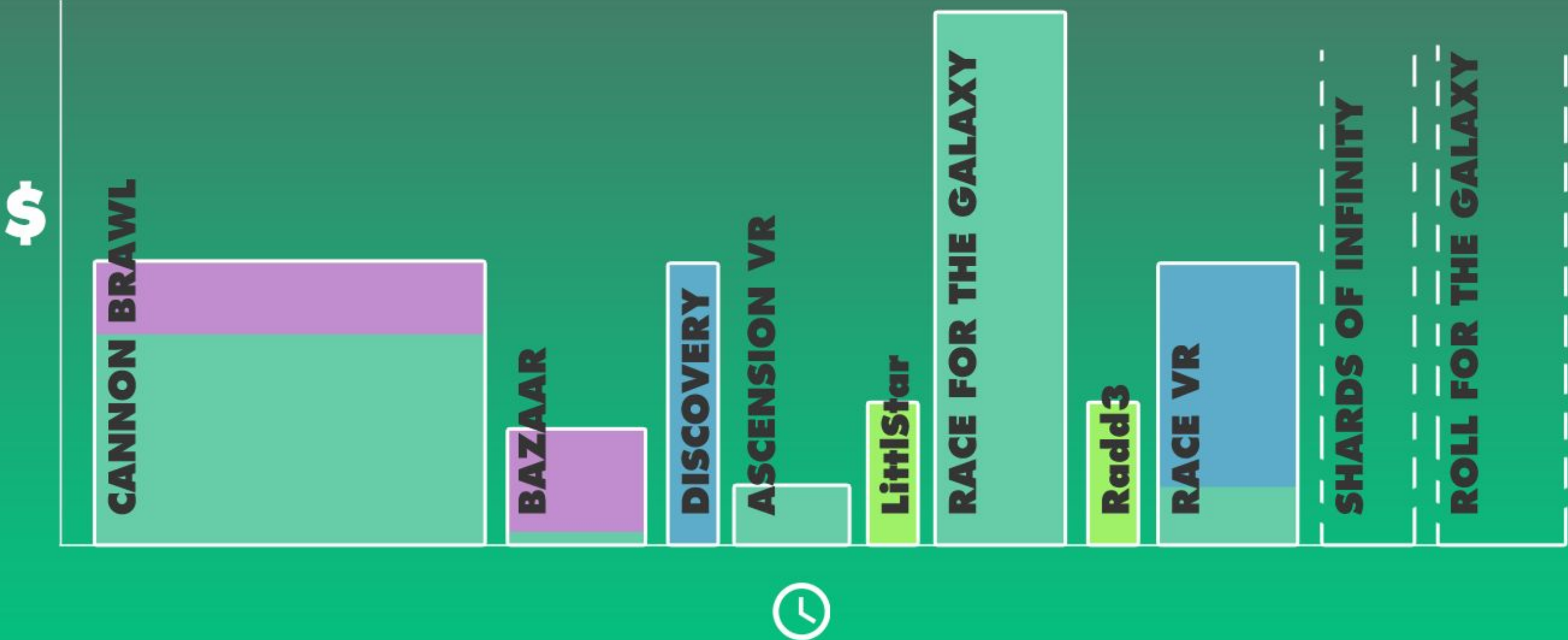
to a

GENRE



REVENUE SOURCES

- Sales
- Prizes
- Work4Hire
- Partnership



how to

RUN A STUDIO WITHOUT A SURPRISE HIT

Cockroach Art by **FELIPE ECKHARDT**

**TEMPLE
GATES**
@TDURINGER



Kitfox: Scrappy Success Without a Hit

Tanya X. Short
Captain, Kitfox Games

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Kitfox: Scrappy Success Without a Hit

...

Kickstarter and More

Tanya X. Short, @tanyaxshort

Introductions



Kitfox Games

Tanya X. Short: Captain



Introductions



Kitfox Games

Started work: 2013

Revenue: \$2 million+

Full-time staff: 8



**Studio Goal:
Craftsmanship**



Studio Goal: Quality of Life



Studio Goal: Sustainability

Boyfriend Dungeon: Date Your Weapons!



Romance your swords! Capture the hearts of weapons (m, f, nb) to level them up in this shack-and-slash dungeon-crawling video game.

Follow along!

Created by

Kitfox Games

6,991 backers pledged CA\$ 272,280 to help bring this project to life.

Campaign

FAQ ²

Updates ¹⁸

Comments ²⁰⁷

Community

 71/80

 72  181

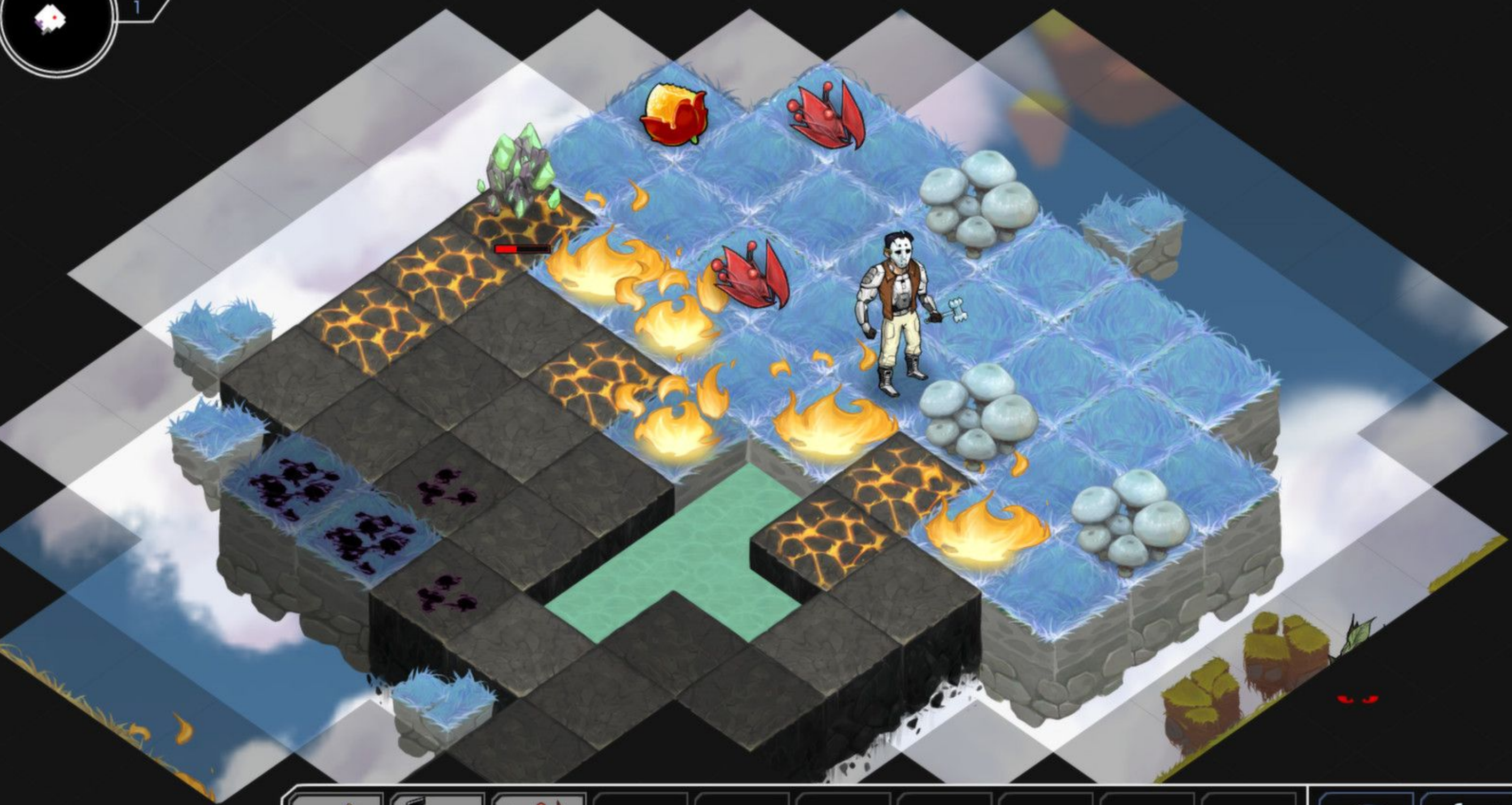
25 / Curious

Explorer Mode




1





Kitfox Games



 3/3  1/1  2

 40  42 

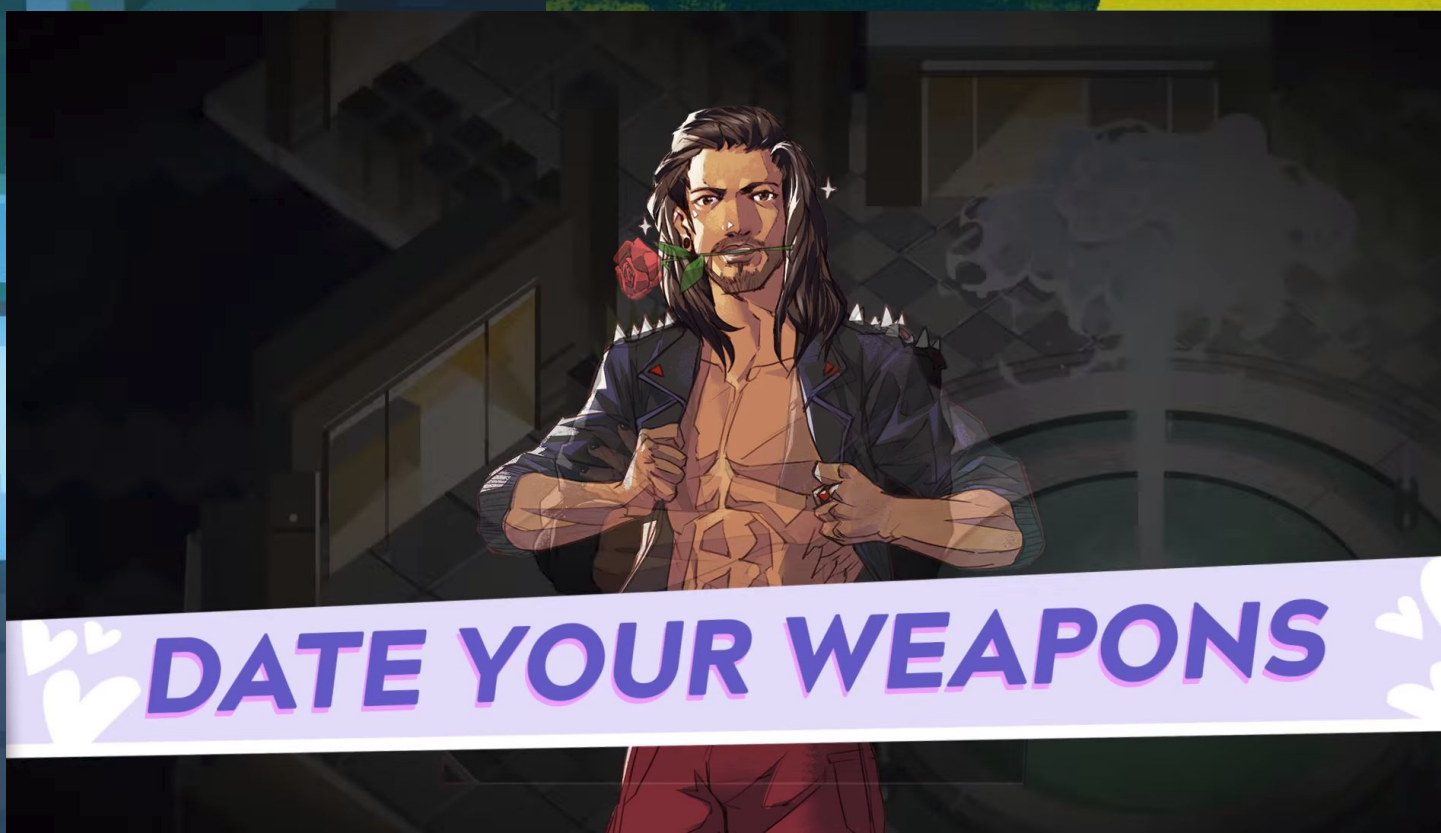
Audience-building

Diversification as risk management (“take more shots”)

MOON HUNTERS



Kitfox Games



DATE YOUR WEAPONS

SHATTERED
PLANET



Audience-building

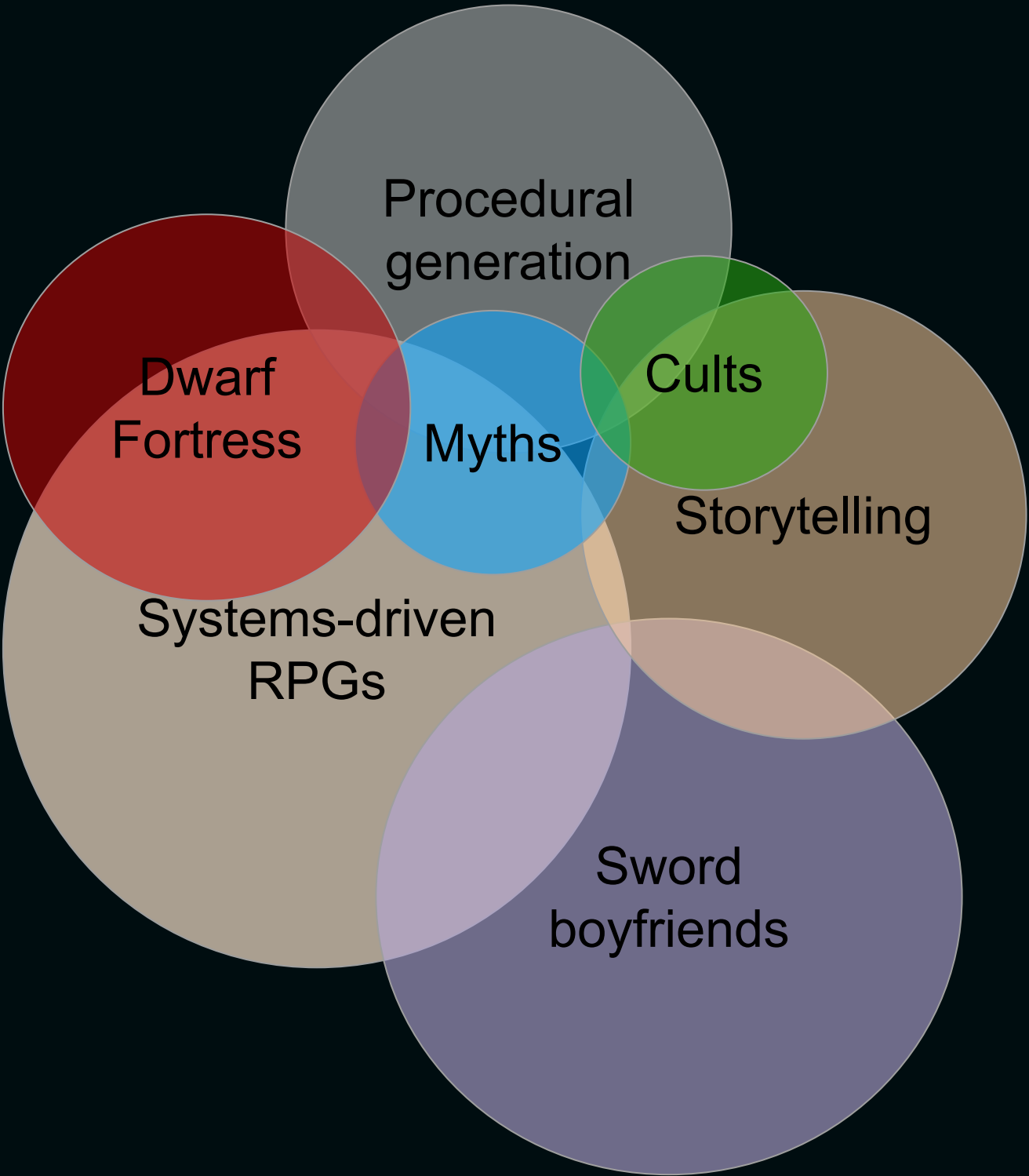
Diversification as risk management (“take more shots”)

Start with a core, build outwards

Audience-building



Audience-building



Audience-building

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Multiplier: central community hub

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Multiplier: self-publishing

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Start with a core, build outwards

Multiplier: central community hub

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Like/Follow → Newsletter → Purchase → Fanart → Cosplay

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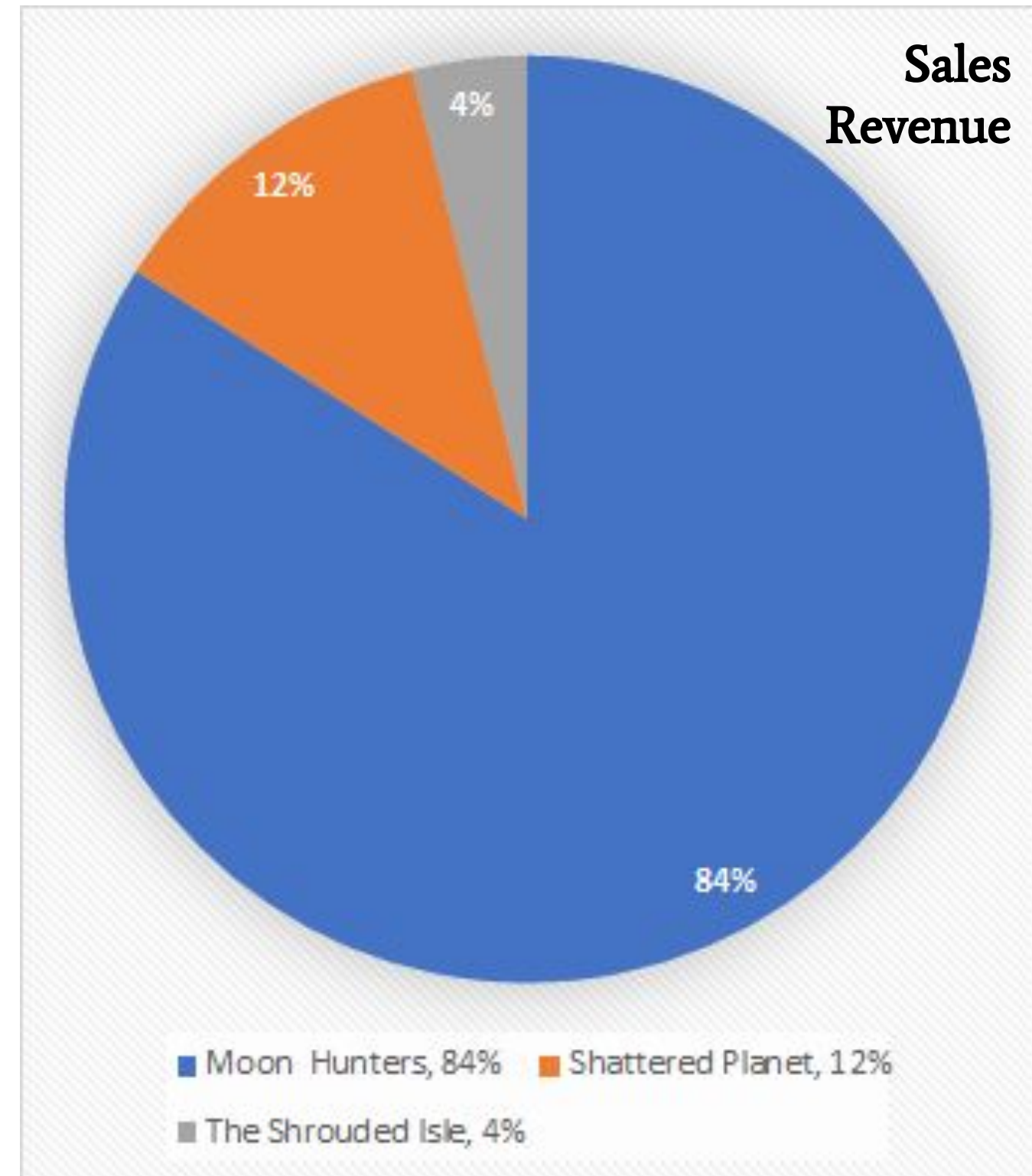
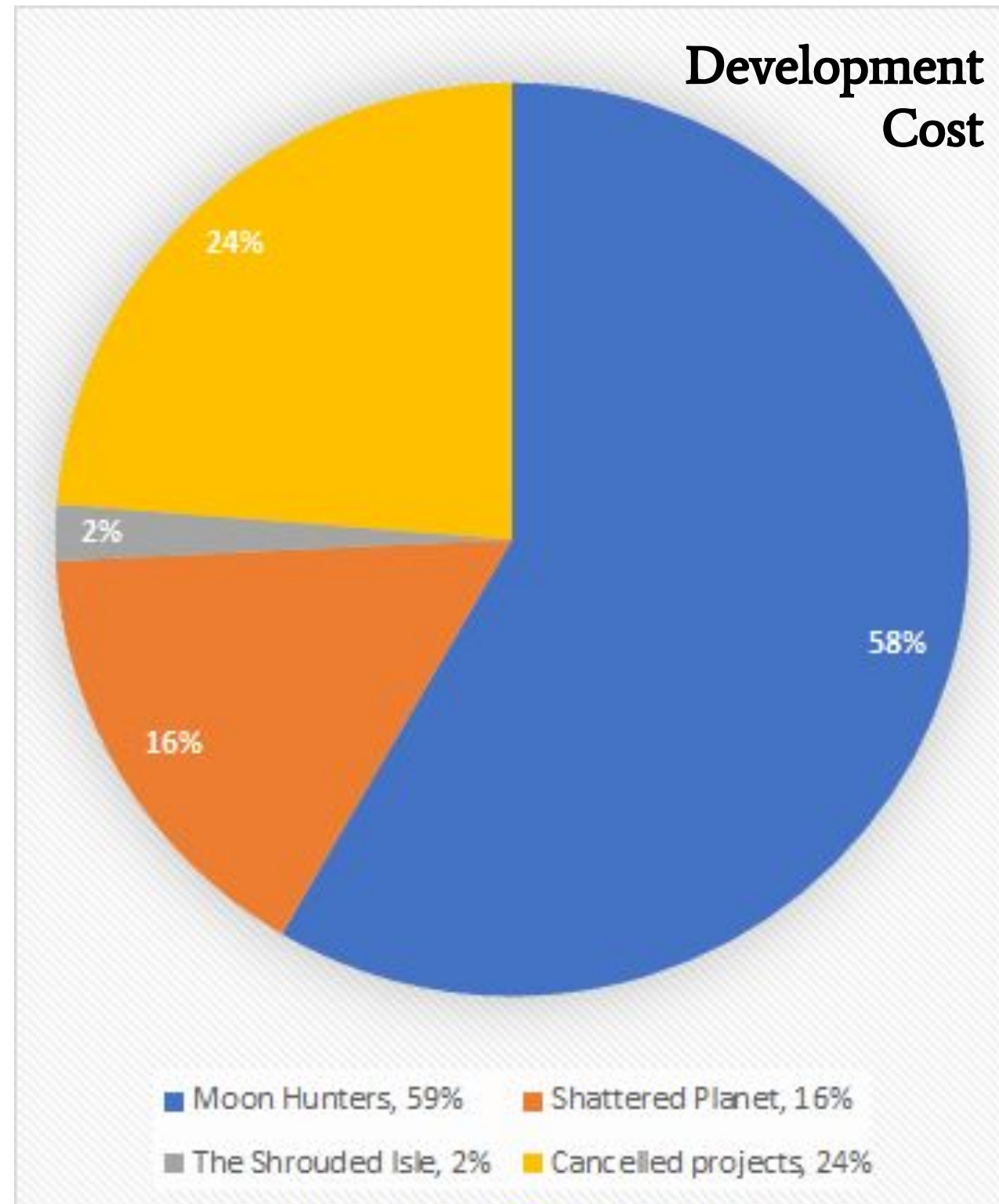
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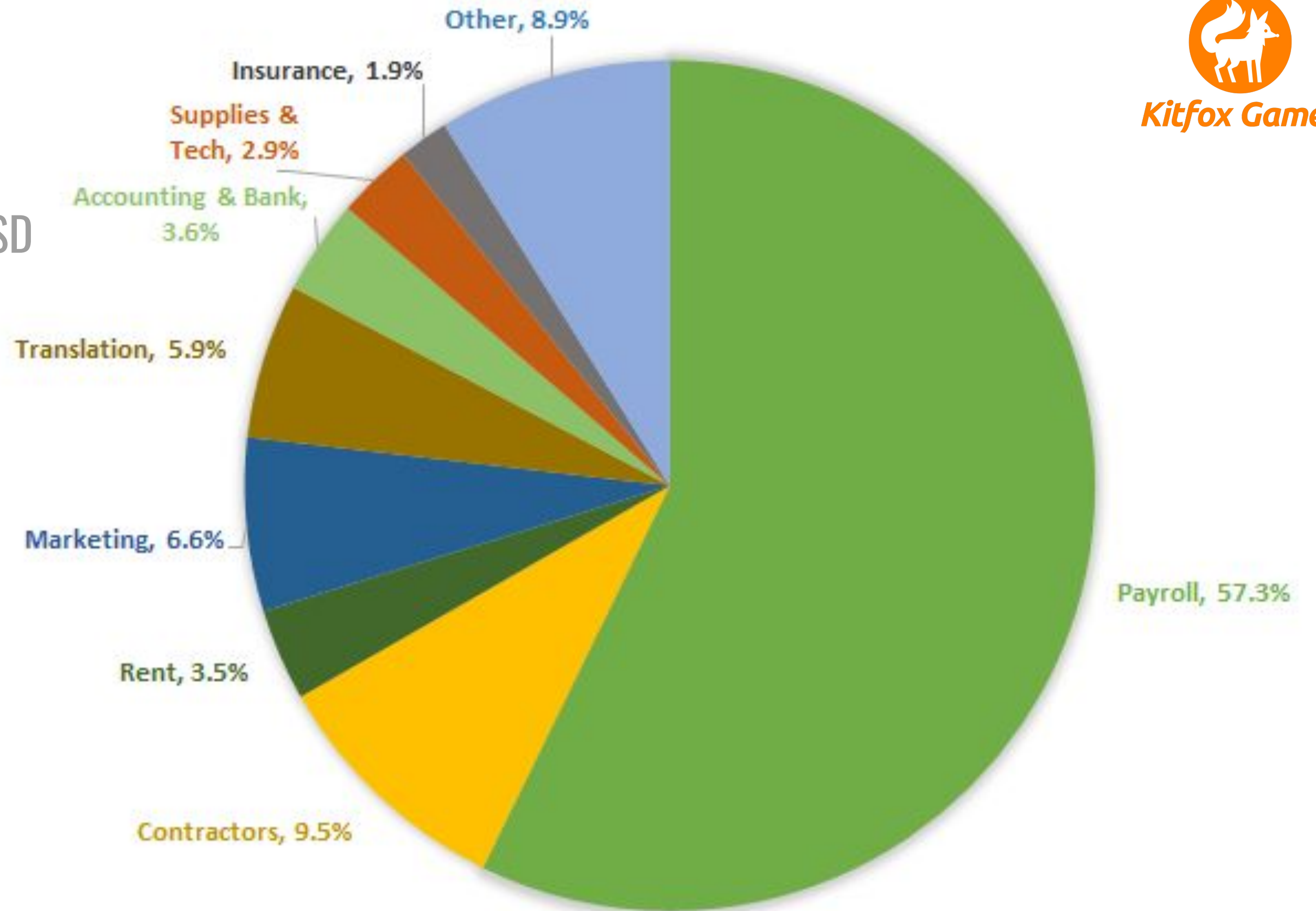
Community

Diversification case study 2013-2017



Burn Rates

2015-2016 Fiscal Year
Total spend: ~\$300k USD

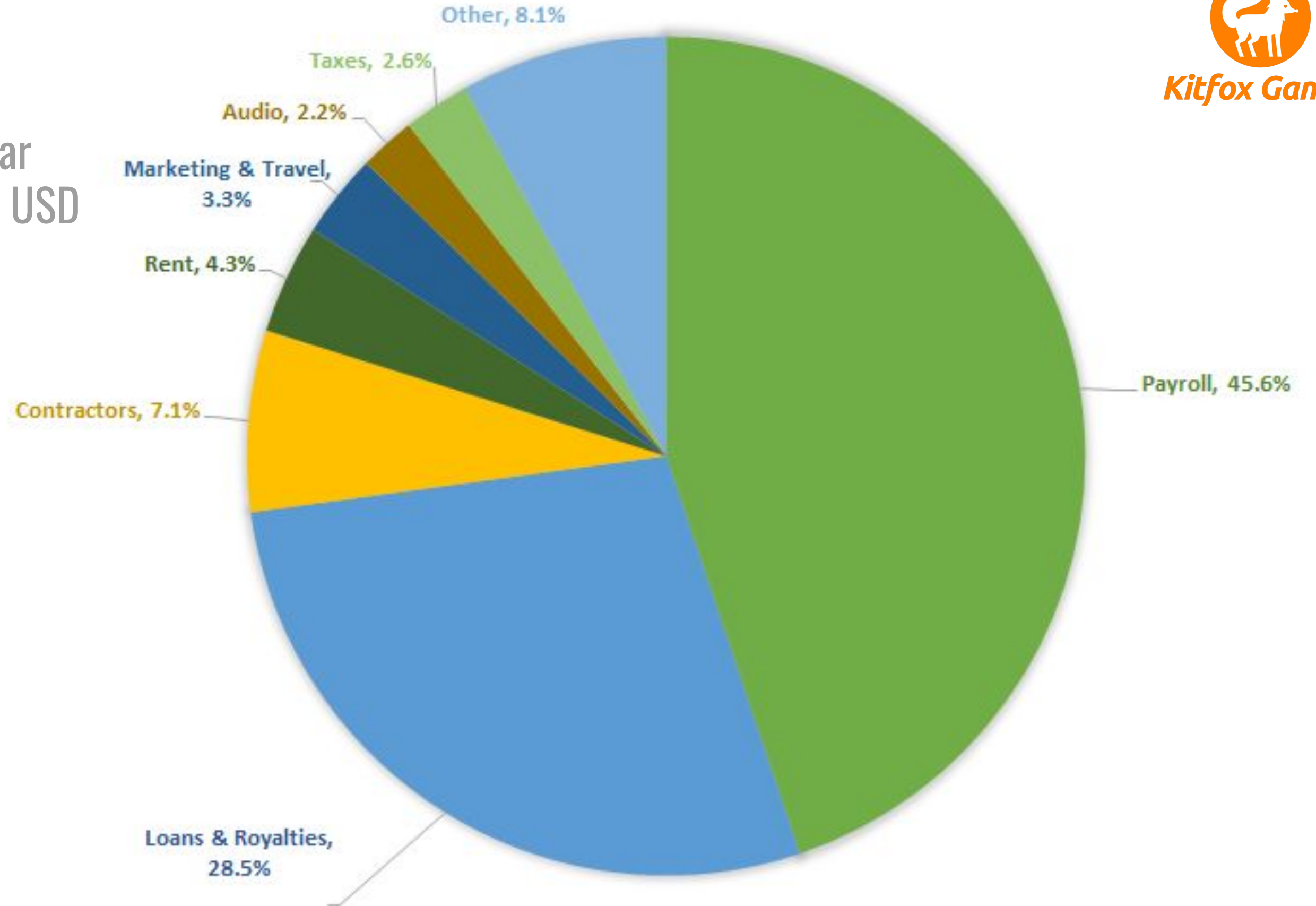


Burn Rates

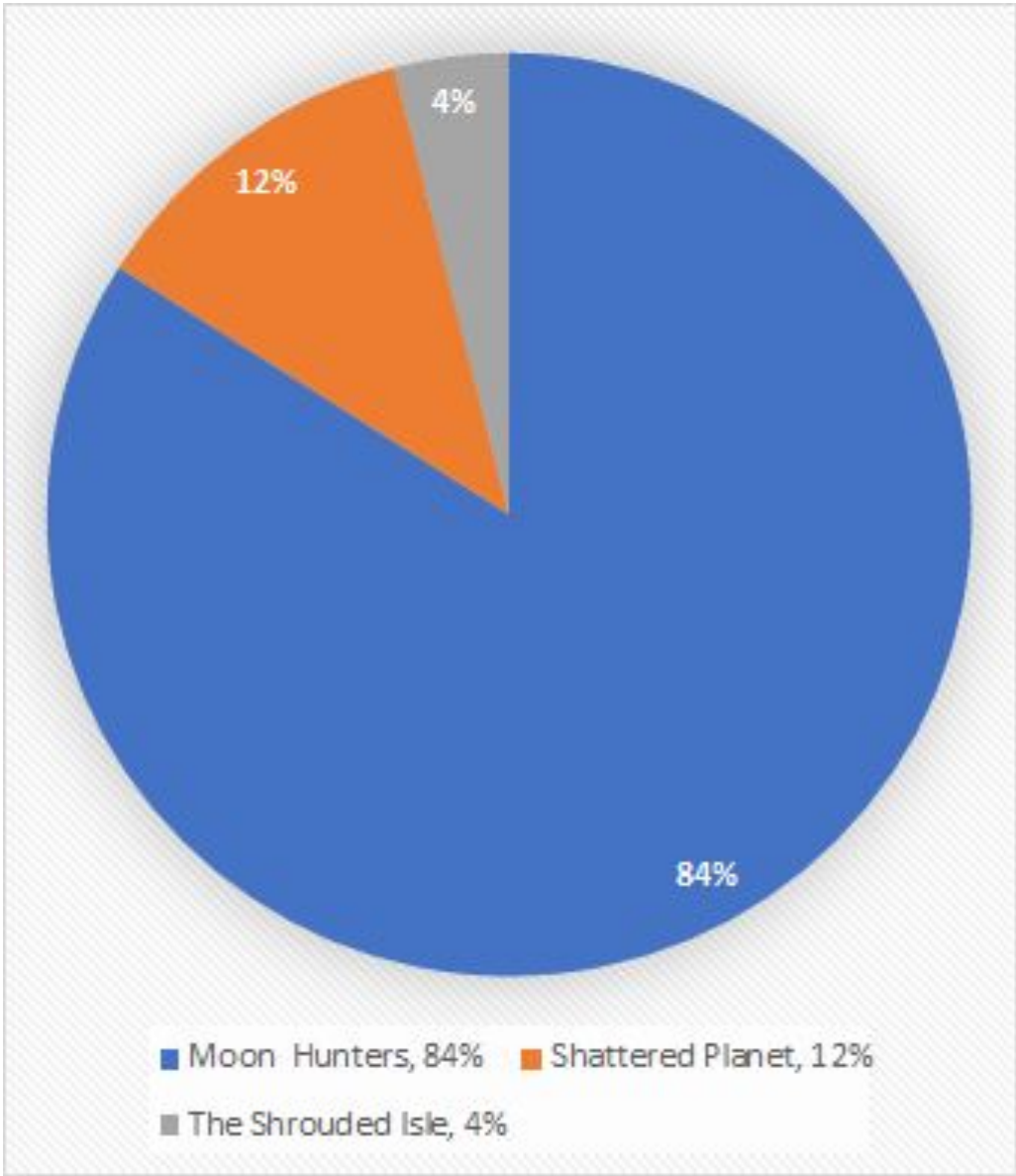
2016-2017 Fiscal Year
Total spend: ~\$500k USD



Kitfox Games



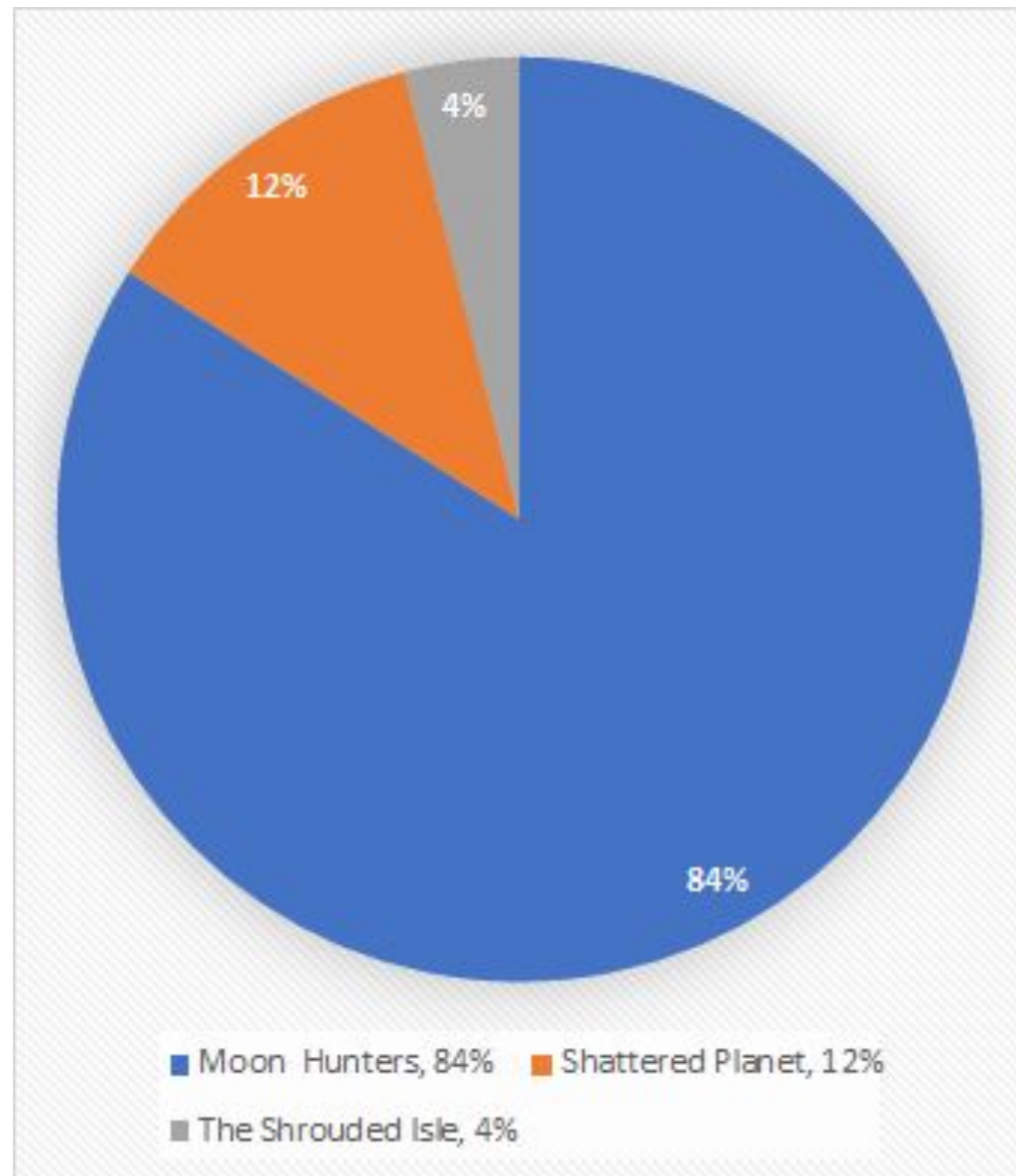
Sales Revenue



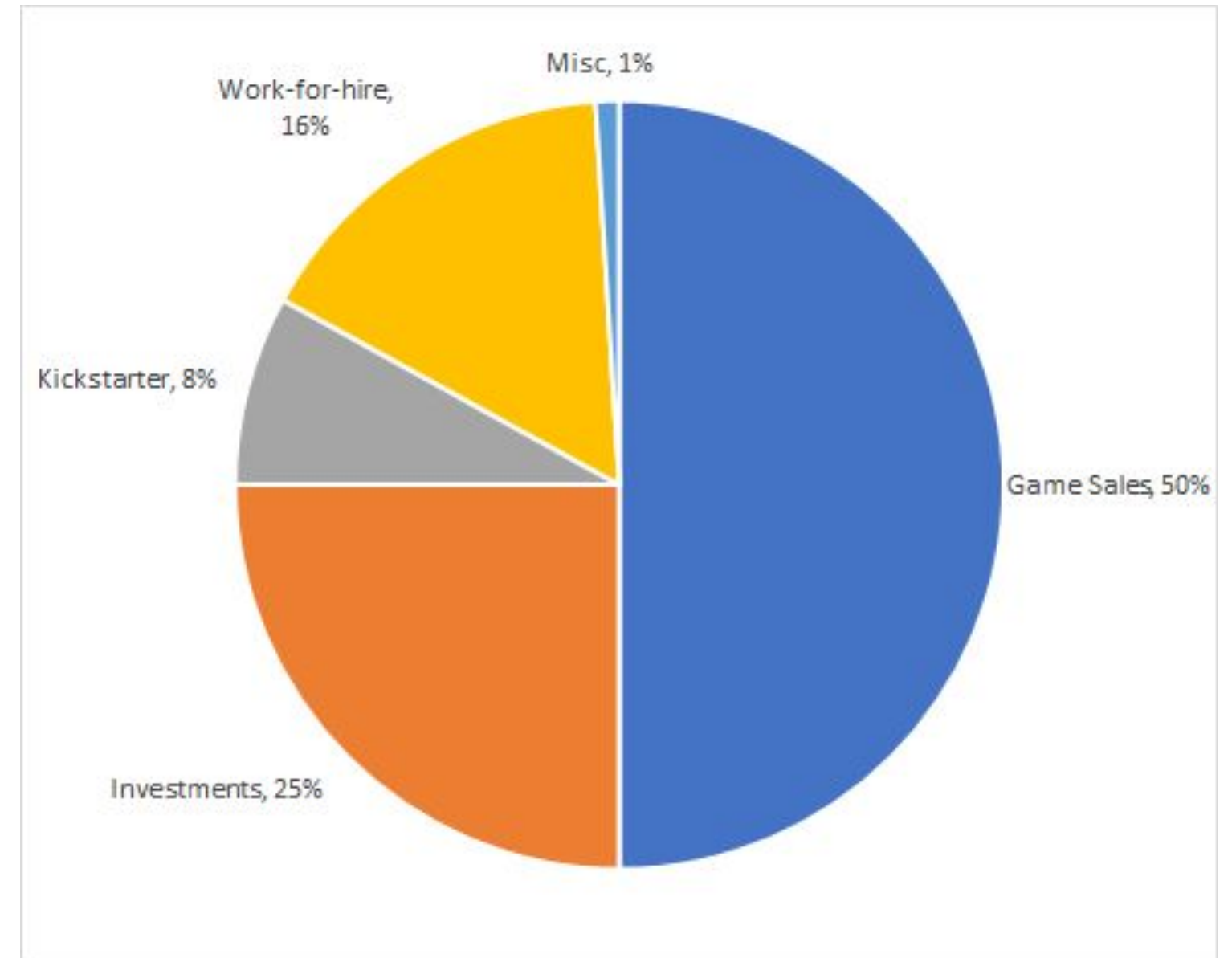
Revenue Sources



Sales Revenue



All Revenue

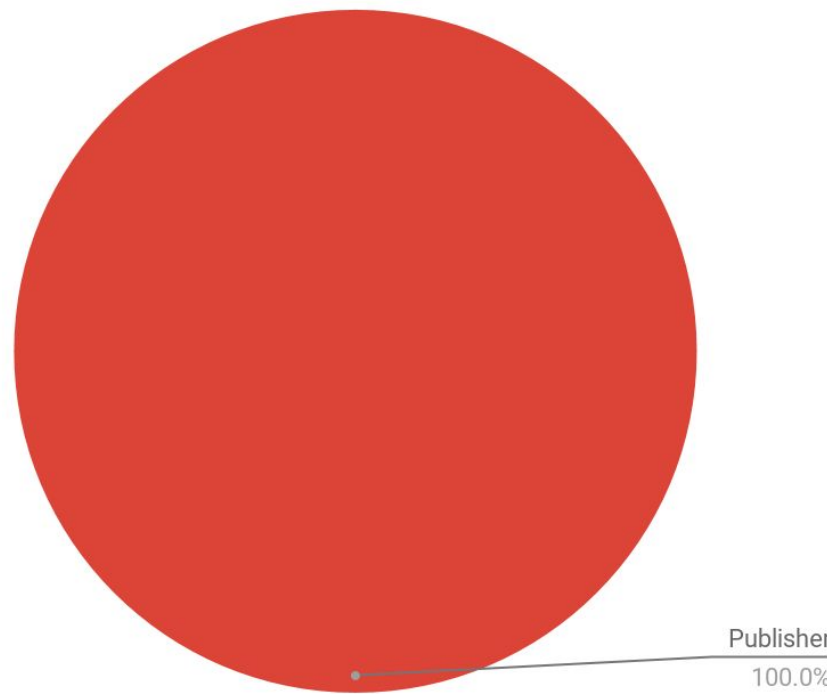
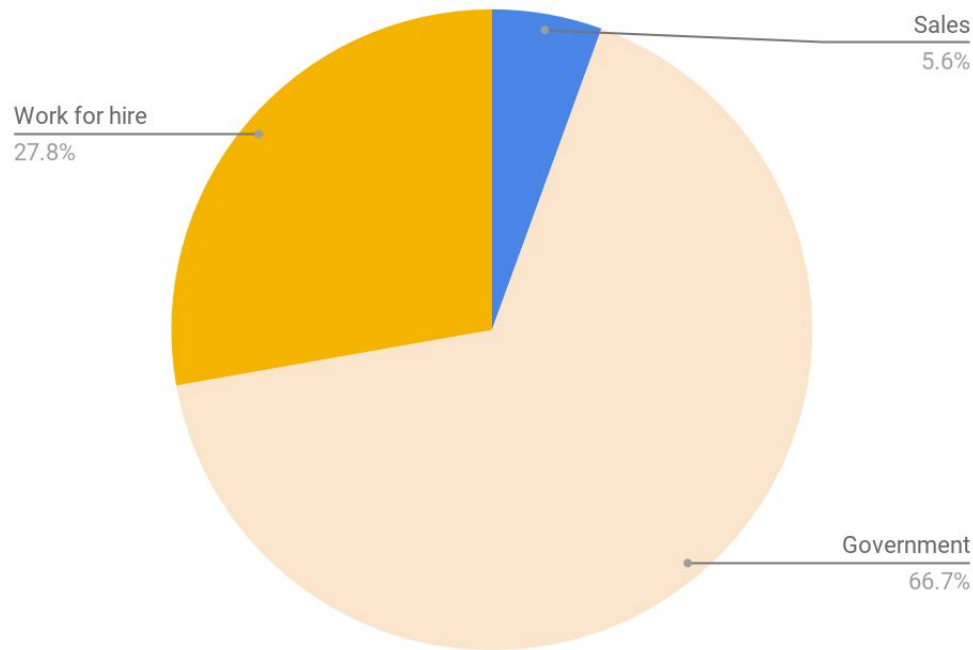
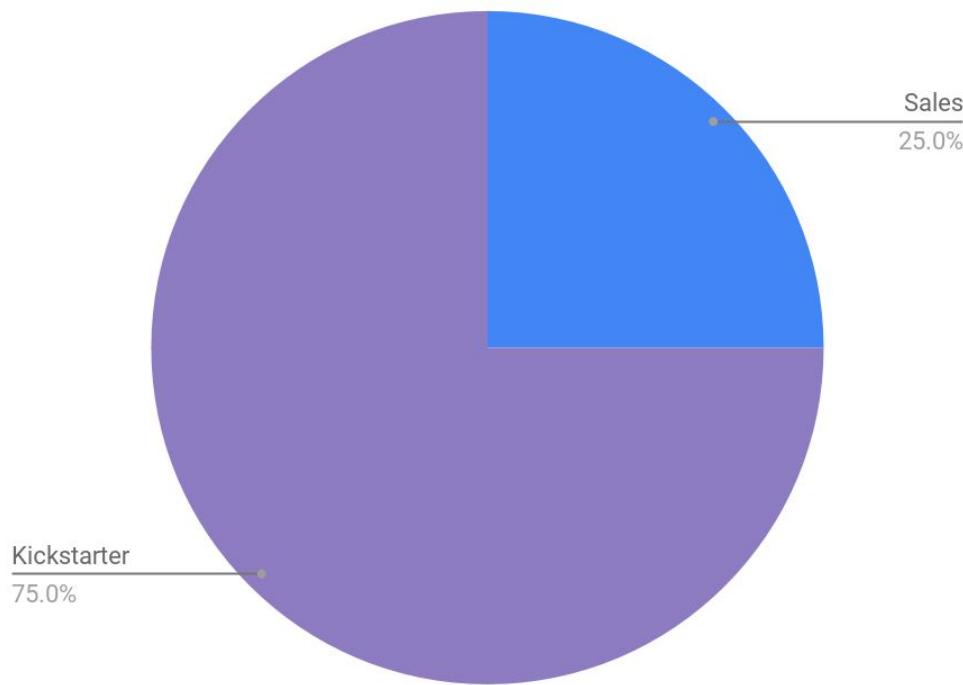
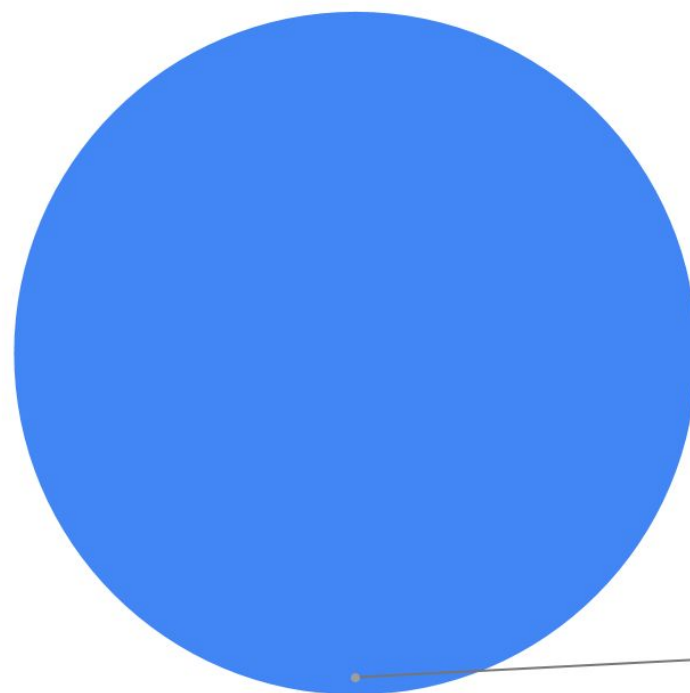
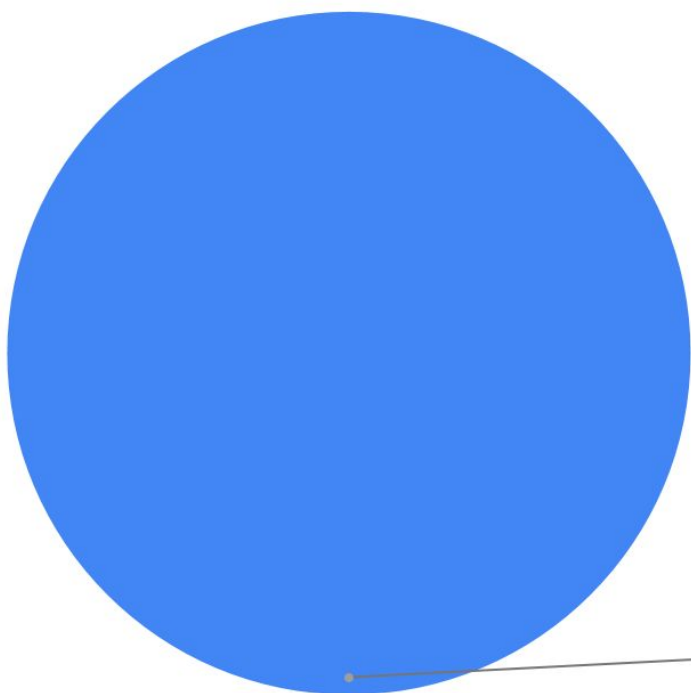
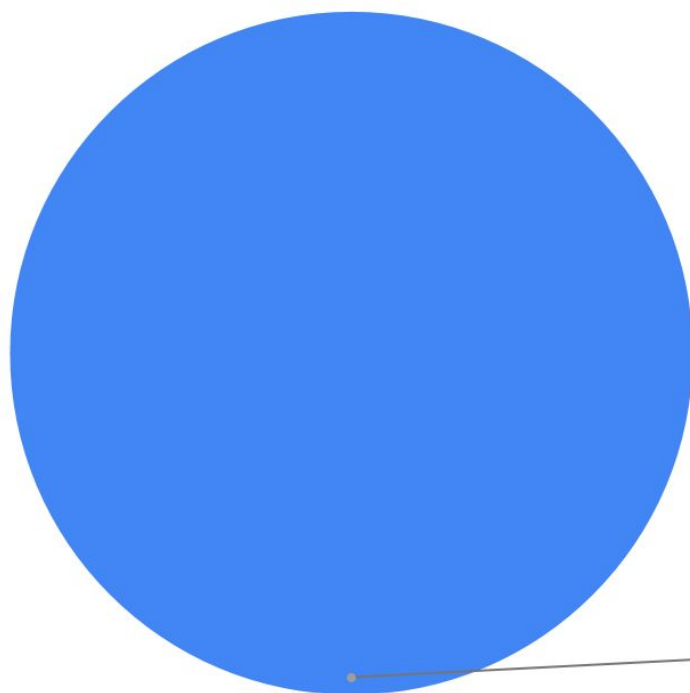


Revenue Sources

- Steam sales
- Other PC store sales
- Console game sales
- Contract work
- Investments
- Loans
- Merchandise
- Crowdfunding
- Bundles
- IP licensing
- Regional publishing
- Royalties
- Tax credits
- Grants
- AND MORE?



Revenue Sources - Other Montreal Studios (First \$1M only)



Projections



Kitfox Games

Craftsmanship

Quality of life





Kitfox: Scrappy Success Without a Hit

...

Kickstarter and More

Tanya X. Short, @tanyaxshort