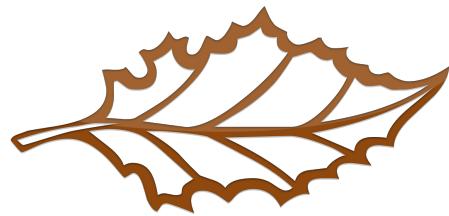


10 Mistakes to Avoid as an Indie Game Developer

A Free Guide from
Autumn App Marketing





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Thank you for reading this free guide from **Autumn App Marketing**.

We provide **marketing** and **advertising** solutions specifically for smartphone apps, games, and developers like you. Our passion for new and interesting software drives us to serve the industry with our unique skills and strategies.

Enjoy this guide, and **good luck!**

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Part 1: Business

Monetizing the Wrong Elements

Even though making games is your passion, you probably want to make money off it, too. But in the search for game-making success, some developers monetize the wrong elements of their game, which can drive away customers.

One thing most people **hate** is pay-to-play (or pay-to-win) games. Your game should either be free or have a single, one-time price.

People don't mind supporting you as a developer. In fact, many will be more than happy to send you some extra cash. Just make it easy for them to do it.

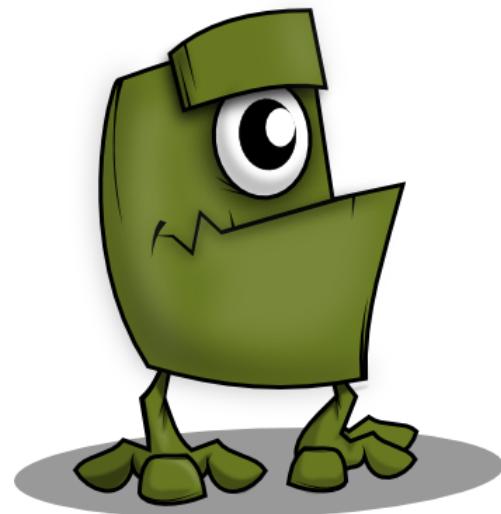
Some of the best ways to monetize your game are:

- Ads that don't interfere with your gameplay.
- Asking for donations from your users.
- Exclusive additions (which don't change the gameplay).

It's important that you don't try to sell things that help players win the game. The **main point** of a game is to have fun and get better at playing, not to send you money and pretend it's called "winning."

Remember:

Don't be a **monetization monster**. Be a developer who also makes money from a well made game.



Cutting the Wrong Corners

As an indie developer with a full-time job and family obligations, you'll probably look for ways to save some cash while pursuing your dreams.

Cutting corners is fine, but make sure you aren't cutting the wrong ones. Here are some corners you should **never** cut:

- The quality of your game (graphics, gameplay, music, etc).
- The branding of your game.
- Your social media and public relations.

Making an amazing game isn't enough. There are millions upon millions of games out there, and plenty of them are amazing.

You have to be sure that enough people are seeing your game – and seeing it in the right light.

If you can't afford social media management from a professional, invest some time in reading about the art. We have a [free guide](#) on the subject, and we hope it helps you out.

Pricing Your Game Poorly

The way you price your game is both a matter of business and of marketing.

Let's address the business part first.

Suppose you spend ten hours of free time every week on your game for one year. When it's finally finished, you share it through Facebook and Twitter and end up with about 200 downloads for \$1.

For some people, that might seem like success, but you've invested 520 hours into this game. Assuming your time is worth at least \$20 an hour, you need to make \$10,400 before your game pays you back.

Many games are worth \$5. Some should be free.



But you want to make sure that your time spent developing is worthwhile.

Now, let's address the marketing part.

Suppose you see a game with 8-bit graphics and cute animations. It seems interesting, but it costs \$10. How likely are you to buy it?

The price of your game sends a message. If that message doesn't match up with the other signs your game sends to users, people will be less likely to buy it.

This also goes for prices that are too low. With a higher price, people assume there is more value. If your game has taken you and a few friends over two years to complete, it's probably worth more than a few bucks.

Remember:

Most of your customers probably grew up in a world, once upon a time, where you paid for a game once and got to play it forever afterward, free of downloadable extras that cost more money.

Be good to your customers. Give them a good value. They'll be more satisfied and happier to spread the word about your game.



Part 2: Marketing

Branding Your Game Poorly

One thing marketing pros do best is **branding**, or creating the best possible image for a product or service.

If you decide to handle your branding on your own, just be sure to avoid these mistakes:

- Presenting your game as a large-company release.
- Focusing on your genre instead of what makes your game unique.
- Using buzzwords to get temporary and ill-fitted attention.

The most important thing to keep in mind when branding your game is that you need to stand out. Different people want different things. Make sure your game is presented in a way that will appeal to the right customers.

Sending Out Mediocre Press Releases

A press release is a great way to get the media's attention about your game, and as long as your game already has a good following, you might not have too hard of a time getting coverage.

Unfortunately, sending out poor press releases can permanently damage your chances of getting in the media.

That's because editors pay attention to the sender. If they recognize you as the guy who wasted their time last month, they probably won't even open your next email.

Take the time to write a clean, professional press release that works well and is easy to read. If you make the editor's job difficult, you won't get anywhere.



Mismanaging Your Social Media

Social media is a great and easy way to connect to fans.

But if your social media is mismanaged, you'll only attract the wrong people, limit your potential, and create a bad image for your game.

Make sure that your social media is in line with your branding, and that you only post interesting, relevant, and helpful information.

You should also be sure not to sell your game too hard. This is a topic we covered in greater detail in our [guide to social media marketing](#).

Failing to Network Socially

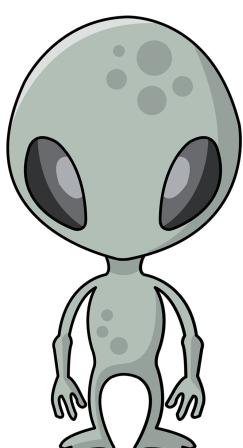
Social networking has become a misnomer. As more developers use it as a channel for pushing their games, the social aspect has disappeared.

But connecting with friends, fans, and fellow developers can be a huge help in your mission to get more downloads.

Talk to other developers. Offer cross-marketing deals. Ask for advice from seasoned indie developers. Show your fellow gamemakers that you come in peace.

In the end, the developers you connect with will benefit from you as well. As your game becomes more popular, they'll gain some of your new fans.

Finding a mutually beneficial relationship is the essence of good networking.



Part 3: Resources

Ignoring Your Research and Statistics

As an indie developer, you probably don't have access to all the research that a marketing firm does.

Yet you do have a lot of information available to you, and it's absolutely free. But most people simply ignore that info, and doing so can cost you.

For example, if you have a page on Facebook, you can see where your fans are, when they're online, and what types of posts resonate with them the most. You can also go back and look at which tweets of yours have gotten the best responses.

Small details like that can add a ton of value to your marketing campaign, even if you're handling it yourself.

Relying on Social Media

Perhaps the single most common mistake of indie game developers is relying solely on social media to get their game out there.

Here are just a few of the strategies you should be implementing to get your game the greatest number of fans possible:

- Press releases.
- Blog and video reviews.
- Targeted advertising.
- Trade group associations.

You don't want to limit yourself when it comes to your marketing. Every developer on the planet has Facebook and Twitter. If you want to do something that not every developer has done, you'll need to go beyond these generic platforms.



Working Outside of Your Core Competency

Finally, you need to make the most of your time.

Your core competency is the area in which you specialize and excel. As a game developer, that means making games. It does **not** include graphic design, music composition, or marketing. You may very well be good at those things, but it's most likely that you have a small set of well refined skills.

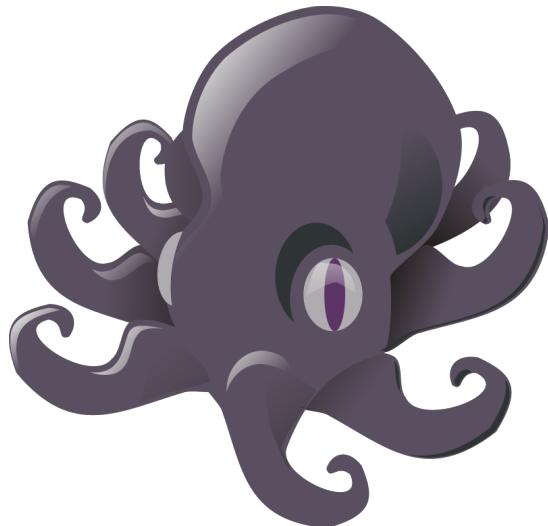
Getting by with your limited ability in certain areas can work to some extent, but why limit your game to your own limitations?

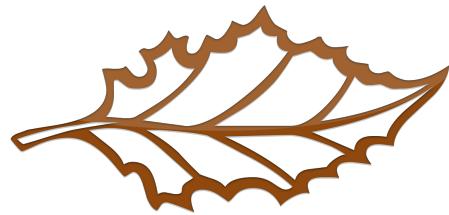
If you're interested in getting graphics or music for your next game, consider checking out [GameDev Market](#). There, you can find tons of great characters, animations, backgrounds, sound effects, and music for your next game.

If you would like to get professional marketing services for your game, we can help.

We know that most developers have tight budgets, so we have packages starting at **\$50** that will help you get more fans and downloads right away.

Unless you have eight arms, you probably can't do it all on your own. Know when to reach out. You'll have a better game – and more customers – because of it.





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Thanks for reading!

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