

A **BRAND**[®] NEW PLAY GROUND



→ **FREE
SUMMARY**

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**HOW GAMES
CAN BE USED
AS A
MARKETING
TOOL**



INTRODUCTION

When I started writing the Dutch version of my book 'A Brand New Playground' and thought about how games could be used to achieve marketing objectives, the last thing I thought I would come across is the development of a game to support change management issues. Ironically this example was one of the first projects I was involved in when I founded my company Brand-NewGame. Air Cargo Netherlands, Schiphol airport and the Dutch Customs approached IJsfon-tein (a Dutch gamedeveloper) to develop a game that would help them to improve cooperation between the parties in the logistic chain. I was personally involved as an advisor. Together with the client (Air Cargo Netherlands) we defined the overall goal for this project and game-specific goals.

The overall goal was for Schiphol airport to keep its international competitive position as a freightway to Europe.

To maintain this competitive position, Schiphol (and all parties in the logistic chain) needed to speed up the logistics process from intake to delivery. The overall workflow concept to increase efficiency, reliability and security was called SmartGate and involves e-freight, a series of licences and one Information System for all parties in the chain.

The three goals for the game where:

- Increase awareness for SmartGate
- Give insight in the logistic process
- Internalize the new working method

After thorough analyses we came up with three game concepts that should gradually grow from easy and fun towards a more serious and intense gameplay. IJsfon-tein embraced this concept and successfully developed the games.

I don't want to give away too much of how the game looks, but basically you see an airport which you have to manage from a 'helicopter-view perspective' with all parties involved in the logistic chain. In the first game you can only ship goods (red and green) from shipper to handler to – eventually – load airplanes and increase your score. Red cargo (and red trucks) means that something is wrong. Either the information about this shipment has not been delivered in time, information on the airway bill might be illegible, information might be missing etc. The variables that influence the red or green status of cargo will be more detailed in the next games. The goal in the first game is to fly out as many planes as you can, (loaded from top to bottom to increase efficiency) and to keep your warehouses as empty as possible (Just In Time management).

We started this project early 2010 and the first game is almost finished now. Starting the 6th of January 2011 the game will be playable through www.smartgatethegame.nl and I'm really looking forward to the response.

This is just an example to illustrate how games can help to achieve marketing objectives, in this case even support change management issues within a branch.

'A Brand New Playground' will show you how games can be used as a marketing tool and how to build brands in the digital era. We are talking about the era in which people have transformed from passive consumers to participating players.

Screenshot
"SmartGate
the Game"



Young and old, alone and together, everyone plays games. Playing is the most basic form of learning and experiencing. The Games Industry with a worldwide turn over of more than 80 billion dollars is now larger than the Music Industry with their CD and DVD sales. Who play games? What are the platforms and game genres? And, how can games be used to achieve marketing goals? You will find the answers to these questions in the book "A Brand New Playground". This book will take you on a journey through the past, advise you on the present and give you insight into the future. This document is meant to give you just a short summary of what you can expect of the book.

LEVEL 1

IT'S ALL IN THE GAME



Playing games is a natural behaviour we exhibit shortly after we are born. Starting with agility exercises from when we are born (hand – eye coordination and learning to walk) to learning how the world around us works (learning by playing) and finally, starting around puberty, learning how to bend rules set by, for instance, parents (imagine the struggles teens have in discussing on what time they need to be home).

Playing computer games to fulfill our social and competitive needs has fortunately become more and more socially acceptable. The following paragraphs describe the different platforms, subsequently the different game genres, what makes games fun, and why games are so suitable as marketing tool.

Gaming platforms can be divided into the following groups:

1. Play at home

- 1 PC (client based / server based / browser based)
- 2 Mobile (Nintendo Wii, PlayStation, Microsoft Xbox)
- 3 Interactive TV

2. Play anywhere

- 1 Console (Nintendo DS, PlayStation Portable)
- 2 Mobile (iPhone, iPod, Symbian, Android, Windows Mobile)
- 3 Laptop and iPad

The situation in which the player finds himself, playing a game at home, with a friend at a LAN-Party or while travelling on the train may differ. This context needs to be taken into consideration if a brand wants to communicate within that context. Someone playing en route has a different experience than the person playing at home alone with the curtains closed.

The different platforms are described in short:

1 'Play at home'

A) On PC:

Client based	games that require a DVD to be played. In general these are single player games. Predominant genres are adventure, role playing games and real time strategy games
Server based	these are usually multiplayer games that require a DVD to install the game. Predominant genres are shooters and role-playing games.

Browser based these games can be played within a web browser. Normally no installation is required and play can be instant. Predominant genres are puzzles, adventures, sports and action games.

B) Console (Nintendo Wii, PlayStation, Microsoft Xbox)

These are single and multiple player platforms (either players playing next to each other or playing online). 'Operation through movement' has soared since the Wii introduction and, using alternative operational methods, PlayStation as well as Microsoft have followed suite, which will certainly extend the lifetime and the possibilities of these games considerably. On these platforms almost all game genres are popular except for, at least to a lesser extent, simulations, puzzles and digital table games.

C) Interactive TV

At the time of writing this book little is known about games distributed through cable, the ether or Internet. However, through the arrival of TVs with Internet connection the number of available TV games will expand at the same rate as the number of games being offered through web browsers.

2. Play anywhere

A) Console (Nintendo DS, PlayStation Portable)

Handheld games have always been popular but became even more so since the launch of the Gameboy which, at that time, made it possible to play more than one game on the same machine. The PlayStation portable is not only suited for playing games but can also be used to listen to music or to watch a film. Compatibility with other equipment such as cameras expands the functionality of the equipment.

B) Mobile (iPhone, iPod, Symbian, Android, Windows Mobile)

Mobile gaming has exploded with the arrivals of the iPod and iPhone. More than 25,000 games are available for the Apple platform, which, of course, are also playable on the iPad. A disadvantage of the mobile games market is these games need to be programmed per individual Operating System, which means they often need to be developed for up to five different Operating Systems.

On an international scale (for instance with Symbian) this is still largely being realized but it is not an ideal situation. The game genres not really suitable for the mobiles are the strategy, adventure, role-playing and action games, the reason being these media are more suited to short play games.

C) Laptop and iPad

PC, client, server and browser-based games can, of course, be played on a laptop anywhere. The iPad, on the other hand, offers interesting multiplayer possibilities for tabletop games and many other games suited for the iPod and iPhone. However, the iPad is still not really suitable for strategy and action games, especially shooters.

Now it has become clear which platform to use for what game I will shortly describe the different game genres. The popularity of the game genre depends on the platform, the type of player, and where and when the games are being played. This in itself actually forms the context that will be further detailed in the Cocha-model in a later Chapter.

'A Brand New Playground' distinguishes between the following game genres:

1. Platform (usually in a two dimensional environment where a player needs to go from A to B.)
2. Sport (all imaginable sports that are played professionally or in a team)
3. Puzzle/Quiz (players need to answer questions or resolve problems)
4. Adventure (the player experiences a story driven adventure)
5. Role playing (as in adventure but a character is developed)
6. Strategy (real-time as well as turn based games usually having a God perspective)
7. Action (action adventures as well as driving, shooters and fighting)
8. Simulation (gameplay is geared to closely mimic reality)
9. Digital table games (parlor or tabletop games such as Monopoly and Colonists)
10. Special interest (music games, physical dexterity, etc.)

It would carry too far to extensively describe all game genres. Also, different media use different classifications. The above classification is therefore not the one and only classification but does give a relatively complete and correct overview of the total scope.

Why gaming is fun can be explained by putting a number of things together.

First of all there are multiple stages of immersion the player is subject to. A game is subsequently assessed on outward appearance (do I like the style), then on the set of rules and the objective (do I understand what I need to do), the story line (am I sucked into the adventure), the tactical possibilities (how many possibilities are there to achieve my goal), the reward structure (how can I best achieve my goal) and finally the social aspect (the interaction with in-game characters or other players).

If the above items are well balanced the gamer will enter into the so-called 'flow' comparable to being absorbed by book or film. This is illustrated in the following graphics.



Figure 1.0
Playtime versus difficulty – skill development

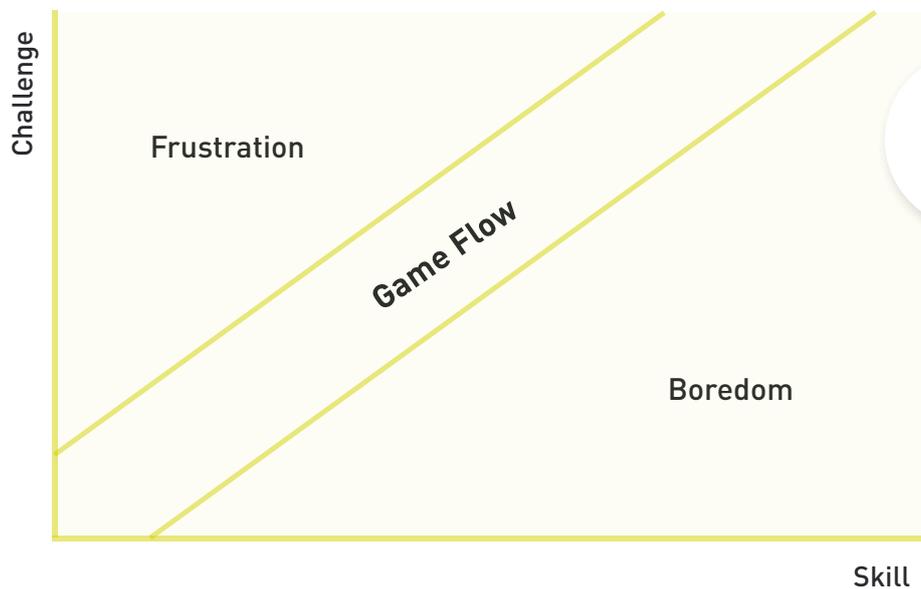


Figure 2.0
Skill versus challenge and 'flow'

The first model illustrates the 'flow' someone needs to be in while performing a continuous balancing act between challenges and required skills (see Figure 1). The learning curve must be on the increase in which case more and more demands are made on the skill level of the player while 'learning' at the same time.

The second model illustrates a correct balance is required between frustration levels and boredom. A too difficult game will lead to frustration; a too easy game will lead to boredom making the game no longer interesting. When the player achieves an optimum balance he will get into the right flow. The player will continuously balance between the peaks and lows within the flow (Figure 2).

The third model combines the first two and shows that someone will reflect on how to cope with problems that need to be resolved. If the problem is resolved this gives the euphoric feeling leading to an elated feeling (comparable to the feeling one gets winning a game of cards or winning a track race). This elation is actually what makes games so addictive and why people can play a game for hours continuously trying to achieve a higher level (Figure 3).

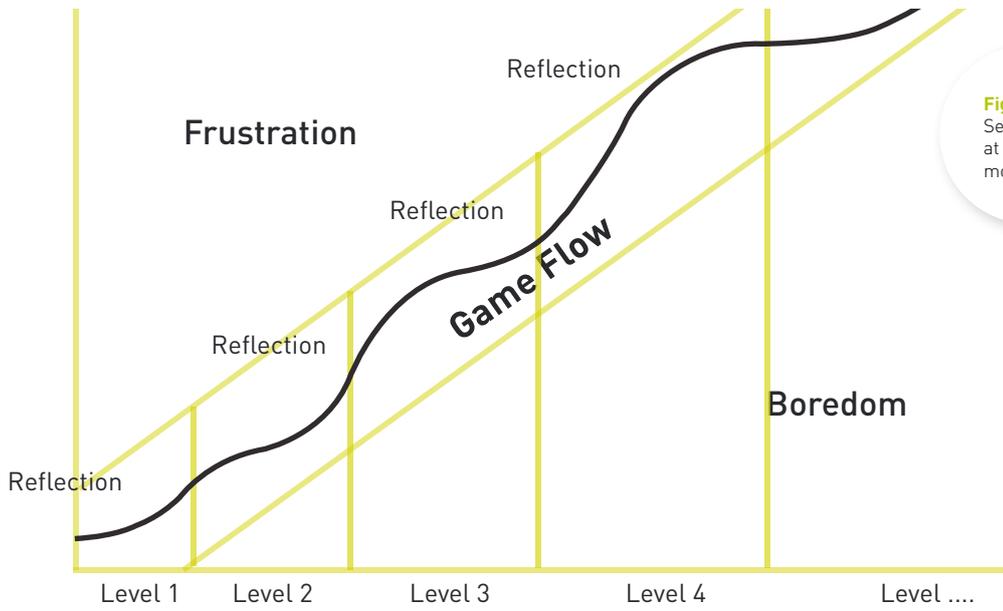
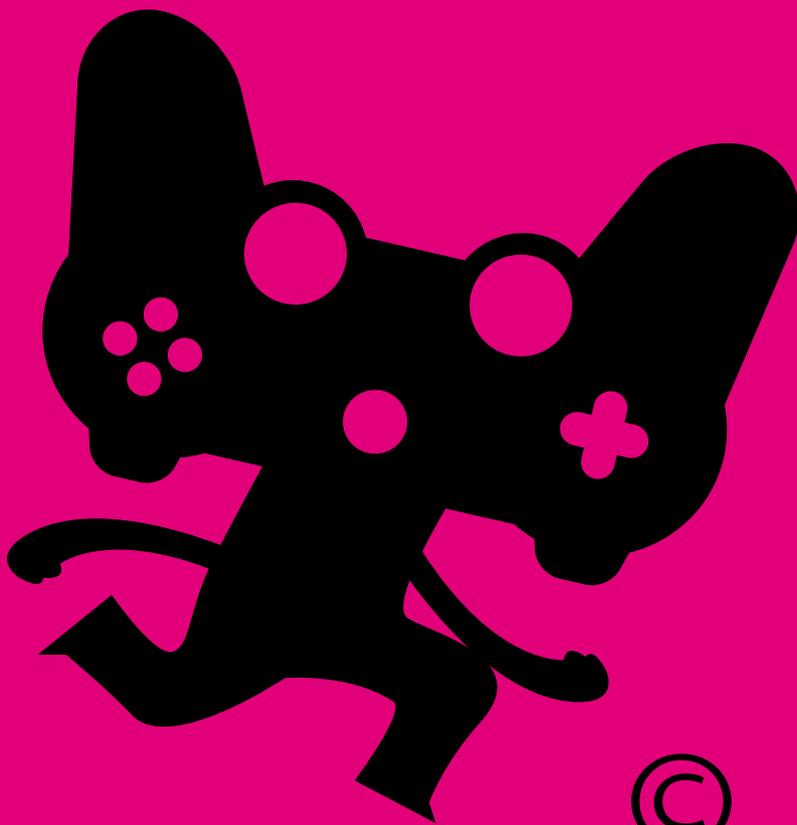


Figure 3.0
Self-reflection
at frustration
moments

LEVEL 2

WE ALL PLAY GAMES

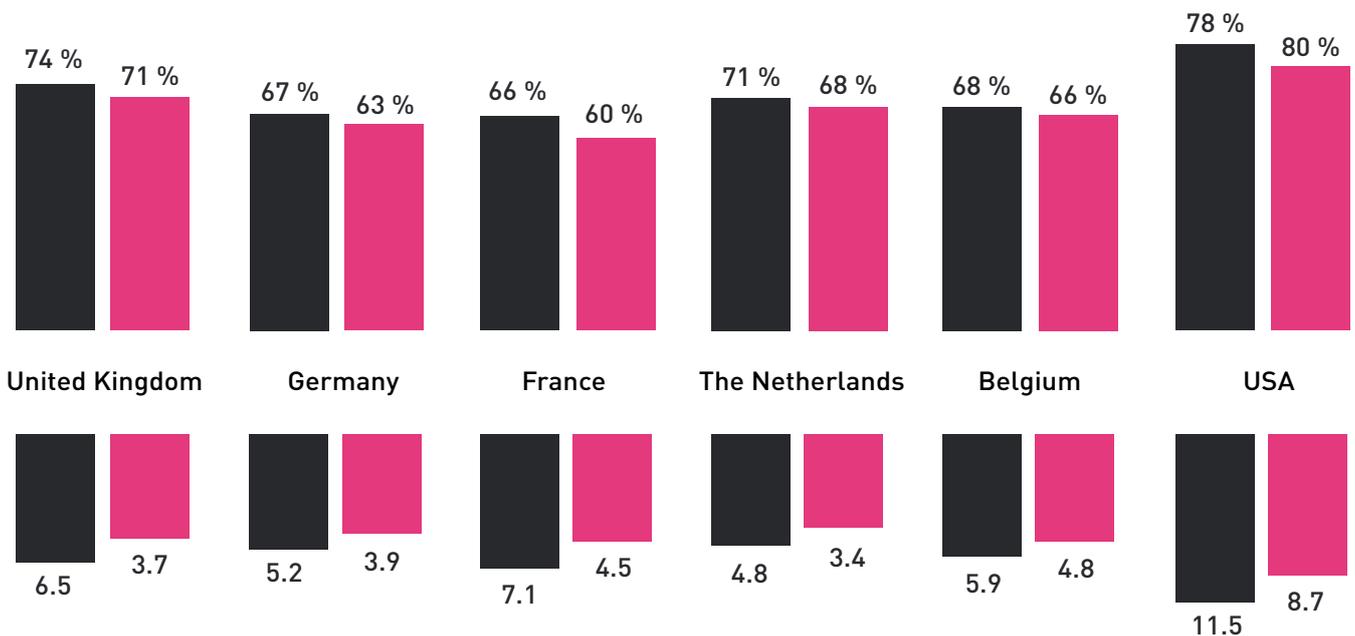


Several current research studies show how many people play games, what age they are, how often they play and how long. TNS NIPO (International Marketing research institute based in the Netherlands) and Newzoo yearly publish 'Today's Games' which shows the results of their international research. The following graphic shows the percentage of people in some European countries and the USA that play games and how long they play on average per week.

Figure 4.0
Gaming behavior
of the Dutch
according to age
and time spent

What percentage of the population plays games & how much time do they spend?

A. Percentage of the population that plays games (%) *



B. Average hours spent per week playing games (hours/week) **

■ Male ■ Female

* BASE: total population of 8 years and older (with access to internet).

** BASE: all respondents who confirmed they play "computer games"

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The largest increase in gamers is found with women between the ages 20 and 34 and men and women above 50. In the last year the last group has doubled its playing time and it looks like this trend is going to continue since people over 50 are embracing the Internet as a means to meet their needs such as booking a holiday, the buying of products and the playing of simple games. For this group of people the Internet has become important for social contacts. Especially single seniors will be able to connect with others because of the social networks and game portals (often also supplying forums and chat screens) by playing 'simple' games such as Bingo, Bridge and other card games. This group is so interesting for organizations and brands because they have loads of time and – often – money to spend.

To develop a game that meets the needs of the target group it must be clear what these consumer's needs are. Designer Marc LeBlanc devised the following division in consumer game needs (note a game may satisfy more than one need at the same time).

- **Sensation** (the pleasure of touch, nice graphics and sound (action))
- **Fantasy** (escapism from reality)
- **Story** (happenings that have a dramatic development during the game)
- **Company** (the social aspect of games: being together and undertaking things together)
- **Challenge** (resolve problems and surmount difficulties)
- **Discovery** (the pleasure of discovering new things: adventure)
- **Expression** (creating or building and being able to share with others)
- **Submission** (complete immersion in a strange – virtual – world)

The different pleasures experienced from gaming may be more or less intent depending on the type of game.

The category 'special interest' has been left out of this summary because results will differ per specific game.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|--|
| 1. | Platform | : Challenge |
| 2. | Sport | : Challenge (competition) |
| 3. | Puzzle/Quiz | : Challenge and Expression |
| 4. | Adventure | : Discovery |
| 5. | Role-playing | : Story, Fantasy and Subordination (immersion) |
| 6. | Strategy | : Expression |
| 7. | Action | : Story and Sensation |
| 8. | Simulation | : Realism |
| 9. | Board games | : Company |

When using games as marketing tool it is smart keep this division in mind when matching the game concept to the target group. If the target group's priority is to be challenged the genres Platform (agility) or Puzzle (intellectual challenge) are probably better suited than the Role-playing games. Including a Leader board (for instance an overview of the top ten scores) always works well and is especially interesting for people who play games because of the challenge (competition).

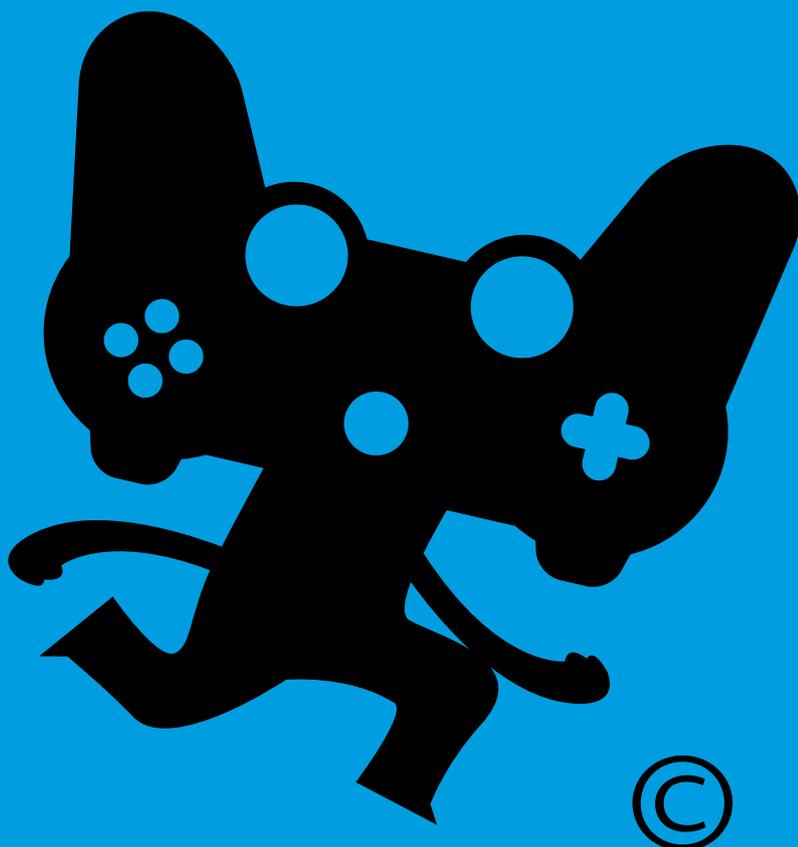
To illustrate the above the following examples show which pleasures are experienced with different games. With some games more than one pleasure may be experienced

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Sensation | : Battlefield 2, Gran Theft Auto |
| Fantasy | : Baldur's Gate 2, Runescape, World of Warcraft |
| Story | : Max Payne, Splinter Cell, Fahrenheit |
| Company | : Buzz Lightyear (Quiz), Poker |
| Challenge | : Brain training, Fifa 2010, Lost – Via Domus, Mario Kart |
| Discovery | : Jagged Alliance 2, Fallout 3, Zelda |

Expression : Command & Conquer 3, The Sims
Submission : Fallout 3, Max Payne (submersion)

LEVEL 3

WHAT GAMES DO FOR BRANDS



3.0 Introduction

Illustrated by a number of case studies the following paragraphs show how gaming can play a role within the marketing mix (Product, Price, Personnel, Place and Promotion). The items discussed are: gaming in relation to product objectives, how gaming can be used as a way to influence the price or how pricing can influence the consumer, games as a way to recruit, to motivate or to train personnel, new distribution channels and innovative business models and finally the use of games as a promotional tool (gamevertising).

For each case the following items will be discussed if not considered company confidential (such as budget and related results achieved).

1. Objective
2. Target group
3. Concept
4. Timing
5. Results
6. Budget

Some of the analyzed cases can be grouped under several different categories, for example under product testing as well as under product placement (promotion). In this case the categories are based on the main potential of the concept and the prime objective.

3.1 Product

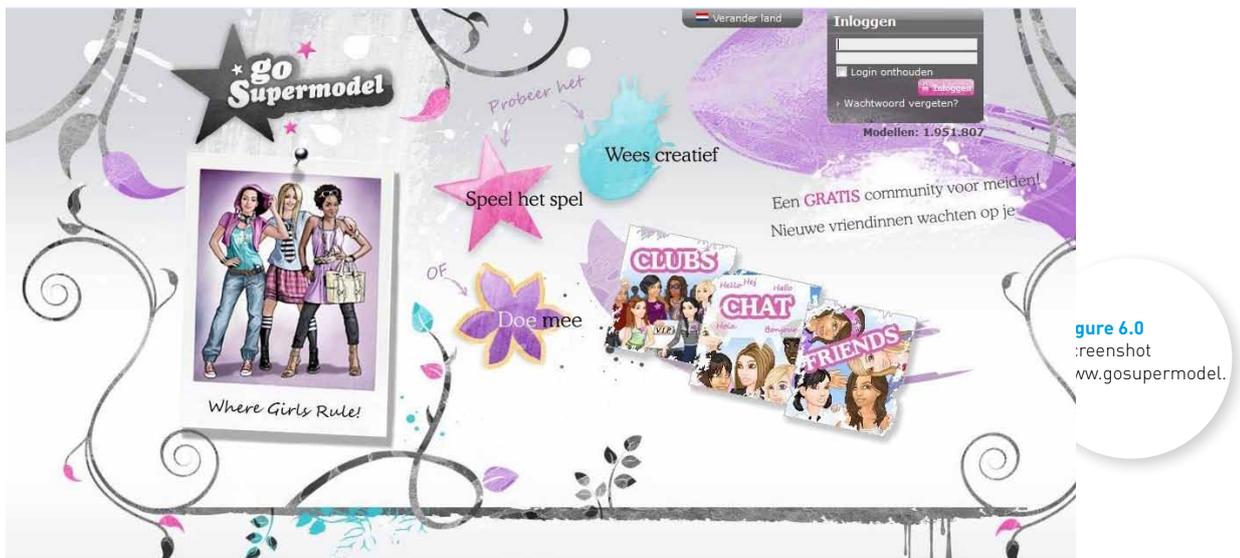
Besides the case being discussed in the following paragraphs, games in this category can be used to:

- Co-create new products in virtual worlds or games
- Pretest products in games and acquiring feedback on products and use
- In-game sampling and trial
- Virtual use of existing products



Figure 5.0
Go Supermodel

The example shown is a combination of product placement, branded content and sampling, which led to the virtual use of the product. To bring the new NIVEA acne product Visage Young (official name: Bye-bye Spot SOS Stick) to the attention of teenage girls a cooperative effort was set up with the gameportal 'Go Supermodel' (<http://nl.gosupermodel.com/>). Consumers can subscribe to the gameportal and start off by creating an avatar with its own specific looks. The objective of the gameportal is to develop your avatar from a catalogue model into a catwalk model by playing various games with which 'respect' points can be earned. New games are unlocked and eventually can also result in earning additional rights on the website such as the posting of messages, participation in discussions and starting up new subjects. The gameportal's forum has a strong social function thanks to the extensive communication options and the various possibilities to make friends.



1. Objective

The envisioned objectives:

Objective 1: Bringing the product to the attention of the target group

Objective 2: Gaining insight into the target group's imagination, in other words generate consumer insight.

2. Target group

Girls aged between 12 and 16.

3. Concept

The concept was to, from one day to the next, give 70,000 Avatars a pimple that could only be removed with the Bye-Bye Spot SOS Stick from the gameportal's beauty center called 'Glitz'.

4. Timing

The in-game campaign started at the same time the product became available in the shops. The campaign ran from June 2009 through August 2009.

5. Result

The results were astonishing. Immediately after the introduction of the pimple on the Avatar a racket and a lot of discussion ensued on the forum of the gameportal. Discussion started on the pimple itself but very soon the question was how it could be removed which in turn stimulated the virtual use of the Spot remover. After this the girls started discussing pimples in general and their own pimples and were asking each other for advice on how to deal with the pimples. Then some girls started buying the actual product to test it's effectiveness (trial). Also these results were again discussed all ending in an eight weeks discussion on the NIVEA Visage Young product thus more than achieving the objectives.

6. Budget

The estimated budget for development, guidance, implementation, monitoring and researching the results are around \$ 130,000. Note, this budget has not been confirmed by Beiersdorf

3.2 Price

The different dimensions of the marketing instrument Price are:

- Play for free
- Play for a discount
- Play for prizes
- Play for points

The example given here looks at 'discount'.

SPORT 2000 is a European sports chain with more than three thousand shops in nineteen countries. The SPORT 2000 shops in the Netherlands sell a broad assortment of sporting goods. They also have a large collection of fashionable sporting clothes (especially the more fashion sensitive articles such as Sporting jackets and coats).



Figure.7
Screenshots of
Sport 2000 – discount
Shooter

1. Objective

Sport 2000 wanted to promote the European Cup (Soccer) and generate traffic to their shops.

2. Target group

Current Sport 2000 consumers and friends of current buyers.

3. Concept

At the time of the 2008 European Cup (Soccer) 2008, Sport 2000 launched an international game portal. Players from six different countries could compete in four online games and a Championship pool.

Discount Shooter was one of these games. With the 'Discount Shooter' one could take penalties to earn discounts that could be used in the Sport 2000 shops. Players aimed the ball by using the mouse. By aiming at stationary and moving targets players could win discounts of five to fifteen percent. The game could also be forwarded to friends (to stimulate a viral effect) with the objective to enlarge the influence of Sport 2000 and to reach customers that normally would not consider buying at Sport 2000.

4. Timing

The game was released around the start of the Championships to piggyback on a positive national feeling. Players could win discounts during a period of four months.

5. Result

50 % more vouchers were received than expected. More detailed results have not been disclosed because of company confidentiality reasons.

6. Budget

To develop five games that could also be played in Microsoft Messenger the total investment is approximately \$ 200,000 including the amount to 'seed' the games. These amounts are based on a comparable project.

3.3 Personnel

Games are also very suitable to achieve personnel related objectives specifically when a change in behaviour of the employees is desirable.

Games can contribute to:

- Hiring, appraising and selecting employees
- Personnel training
- Influencing or keeping up the organization's culture (internal branding)
- Improving vitality of employees

The case studied is a game that was used during the merger of the Dutch Postbank and ING. The objective was to introduce the new culture and new way of working to the daily operation of client advisors at ING's branch offices.

Figure 8.

Banner on the internet to promote the game



Translation:

Now play the ING branch game through the ILC. The effective learning method while also having fun.

This paragraph describes three examples of games that accomplished the merging of two different company cultures and through, amongst other things, digital means ensured a novel way of working.

ING and the Postbank were merged in 2009 and continued their operation under the ING name. Before the merger Postbank branch offices would normally receive around six hundred clients per day and ING branch offices around thirty clients per day. The difference between these companies obviously required a totally different customer approach; specifically ING employees needed training.

A new method of working was developed, communicated and frequently trained to ensure a single image would come across to the customer. The new way of working was focused on quality assurance and customer satisfaction.

The games were part of a wider education plan that included, amongst other things, skill development, acquiring knowledge and e-learning (training through Intranet and interactive applications).

The first game, an interactive quiz, was related to the new working methods and was geared to gathering knowledge and securing this knowledge.

In the second game the working method is practiced in a 3D virtual office environment and in the third game the working method is practiced within a team setting (with colleagues). Here the mutual cooperation and work division were important to ensure quality and customer satisfaction.



Figure 9.

Example of a virtual ING branch office

1. Objective

To familiarize new ING branch office employees with the new working method based on quality and customer satisfaction.

2. Target group

ING and (former) Postbank employees

3. Concept

The first game, an interactive quiz, ensures employees gain and secure knowledge of the new working method. Through a set of simple questions employees from different branch offices are informed on how to best run a branch office to achieve the quality and customer satisfaction goals.

In the second game the acquired knowledge is practiced in the virtual environment. The player is working in a virtual branch office with different clients entering. The player must help the client using the knowledge acquired in the first game. Issues being addressed are: profiling of a client (why is the client here and what are the client's possible areas of interest), correct disclosure of information (answering questions adequately), possible cross selling (realize revenue targets).

The clients are animated figures (with voice) who actually talk to the player and, depending on how they are serviced will become satisfied or angry. Being the player one can, for instance, sell products, give explanations, or just clear up the mess the colleague or client left behind. The more you get into the game the busier the branch office gets, and the questions become more complicated.

The objective is to correctly help as many customers as possible thus scoring on customer satisfaction, revenue and quality. In a playful manner the player learns to apply the new working methods.

Within ING this game has resulted in a lively competition also due to the fact that a monthly prize is issued to the player with the highest score.

The third game builds on the second game with the addition of the possibility to play the game with a colleague (real-time). During play time one can, for instance, discuss amongst colleagues who is going would which customer.

4. Timing

The game was played during all of 2009

5. Result

95% of all Postbank and ING personnel have voluntarily played the game in their own time and 86% of employees has played the game more than once. At the time of publication no other results were known yet. Visit the ING branch office on TIMES SQUARE, New York to check for yourself.



Translation: "The winner of the cook workshop is: Bob Maassen! With 516070 points you have April's highest score."

Illustrative is this reaction of one of ING's employees:

"I remained stuck at a certain level until I offered the client (in the game) some bottled water. I ended up with a higher score for customer satisfaction. We have now adopted this method in our actual office and successfully, customers react enthusiastically!"

This illustrates how virtual learning can lead to real-life change and improvement of – in this case – client satisfaction.

6. Budget

The concept development and implementation budget for the three games promoting the integration of two different working methods and company cultures was approximately \$ 500,000 (including the internal promotion campaign). With 800 branch offices this comes down to an investment of a mere \$ 625 per branch office. Having 2,000 key personnel in the branch offices this means an investment of \$250 per employee.

3.4 Place (Distribution)

We currently find several virtual economies in which in-game goods are traded and sold. The most striking example is FarmVille on Facebook (a browser based game). Consumers can play for points, which can be used to buy different upgrades but they can also buy points that then can be used to buy their coveted upgrades to their farms. It leads too far to explain the game in its entirety but the essence is that by growing crops and harvesting them in time you can score points with which you can buy interesting seeds (such as strawberries and roses) or cattle which in turn yield more points with which you can eventually buy a nice pond, farm or other items. In 2010 more than 60 million consumers were playing this game on Facebook.



At the end of 2009 an investment fund invested 180 million dollars in the makers of the game (Zynga). This type of investment illustrates the confidence that these in-game selling points can be really lucrative. The use of the so called 'freemium model' enables developers to recover the 'free game' development effort because just short of ten percent of players do actually buy points or in-game items. The condition, of course, is that there are a large number of players (usually not less than one million).

Other examples of virtual distribution and new business models are shown on my weblog www.gamingandbranding.com under the tag 'place'. For example: Selling virtual versions of real goods by Diesel (a clothing brand) within PlayStation Home, PlayStation's virtual world.

3.5 Promotion

The last marketing instrument where games can make a contribution is 'promotion'. Since the birth of the gaming industry, games have often been used as means of promoting brands. This may be to increase the realism in games or to highlight product features or just to promote the brand. This category has been subdivided into the following subcategories ranging from minimal brand involvement to a hundred percent signature game:

- Product placement (presence of a product in the game world)
- Ingame advertising (logos and messages on billboards, in train stations, and such)
- Branded content (scripted events or power-ups sponsored by brands)
- Visually adapted games (existing games visually adapted to the style of the brand)
- Advergame (a game that completely matches the brand values of an organization or a brand)

Research shows consumers in general do not object to sponsored elements in games especially if they are free. It is important though not to have a too explicit presence and to be creative in the repetition of the brand message. A continuous display of a logo and pushing commercial content results in irritation and must be avoided.

An excellent example of an advergame, the 'Pritt Knutselwereld' (an arts and crafts brand) will be explained next. This game was devised by the G2 company and developed by the Amsterdam game developer Little Chicken.



Figure 12.
Landing page of the Pritt arts and crafts world

This gameportal gives children the opportunity to become inspired by a virtual world and to play mini games with a clear real-life connection through the printing of blue prints and templates, which can then be used with the Pritt products.

What makes the concept powerful is that it coincides one hundred percent with the brand experience of Pritt's young consumers. Which is the facilitation of the pleasure of creating things. It also helps creativity by linking to the real life of arts and crafts and the world can be filled continuously with new templates and new challenges. The gameportal can be updated with coloring sheets and blue prints for crafts all depending of the season of the year or on special holidays such as Christmas and Easter. Children can also design their own arts and crafts astronaut by using a special design tool. It would even be better if children would be able to upload pictures of their creations and have them voted on. That would certainly create even more buzz amongst the fanatic arts and crafts fans.

Result: Within three months about 10,000 virtual arts and crafts astronauts were created and the site received 100,000 unique visitors.



Figure 13.
Arts and crafts
astronauts

Key learnings:

1. A game needs to be fun otherwise it will not be played and marketing goals will obviously not be met. This sounds easier than done. A beautiful interactive commercial is not a game. In a good game the gameplay needs to remain fascinating. An attractive game is a game that is easy to learn and difficult to master.
2. Thinking up a game concept is a specialized profession. Do not have an advertising agency do this for you and please do not try to design it yourself. You will find excellent national and international companies who are specialized in the making of games and have more than ten years experience.
3. Playing a game is like entering a circle. Within the circle different objectives and rules apply than in the real world. Often game rules are clear and therefore make life less complicated as long as we are playing the game. Gameplay is defined by: the goal, variables to help achieve your goal, rules that restrict you and a reward. Eventually the gameflow (balance between challenge and frustration) will determine whether or not we will play the game for more than sixty seconds. Good games may be played for years and the longer and the more intense a game is played the better the return on investment, of course.
4. Burn your brand book! A game does not become more attractive by adding many logos. A good game also does not necessarily follow the brand style to a tee. So forget about that directive if you decide to do something with games. As the advertiser you need to accept the consumers and, game developers will have a creative interpretation of your brand identity and will translate this to the gaming world. If you are participating in a game development or are developing your own game try to challenge the executing agency to portray your brand as creatively as possible and relevant to the consumer as was done with the 'Pritt Arts and Crafts World game'.

5. A game is not a TV-commercial, not an advertisement, not a radio commercial or Internet banner. So, do not consider it as such and do not rework a TV commercial into a game. The premise for a game is based on the brand identity or history (reputation) of an organization.
6. Ensure there are appropriate and relevant awards.
7. Adapt to the environment and the perception of the person playing the game: step into the playing circle with modesty, do not disturb the game world. This applies also to social networks. Position yourself next to the consumer not above. Instead of pushing the message you want to tell the consumer seduce the consumer (pull) to interact with your brand or product.
8. Include a secure anti cheat factor; a specialist will know this. Ensure there is sufficient bandwidth when the game is launched. Great rewards and prizes also bring out the bad in people and unfortunately cheating still happens.
9. Also a game needs to be promoted. It is not sufficient to just place it on a website. Locate the consumer online where he or she will logically be two clicks away from being immersed in a great gaming experience worth while communicating to friends.
10. Make the game easy to share with friends (to stimulate word of mouth).
11. Link the game to real-life communication or perks. For instance access to an event, discount in the shop or an exclusive favor to the top twenty players.
12. Finally, set up the time schedule and add twenty percent for usability tests and debugging. Games are not commercials that are done in a few takes. Sometimes things will happen that even the best of programmers cannot not foresee.

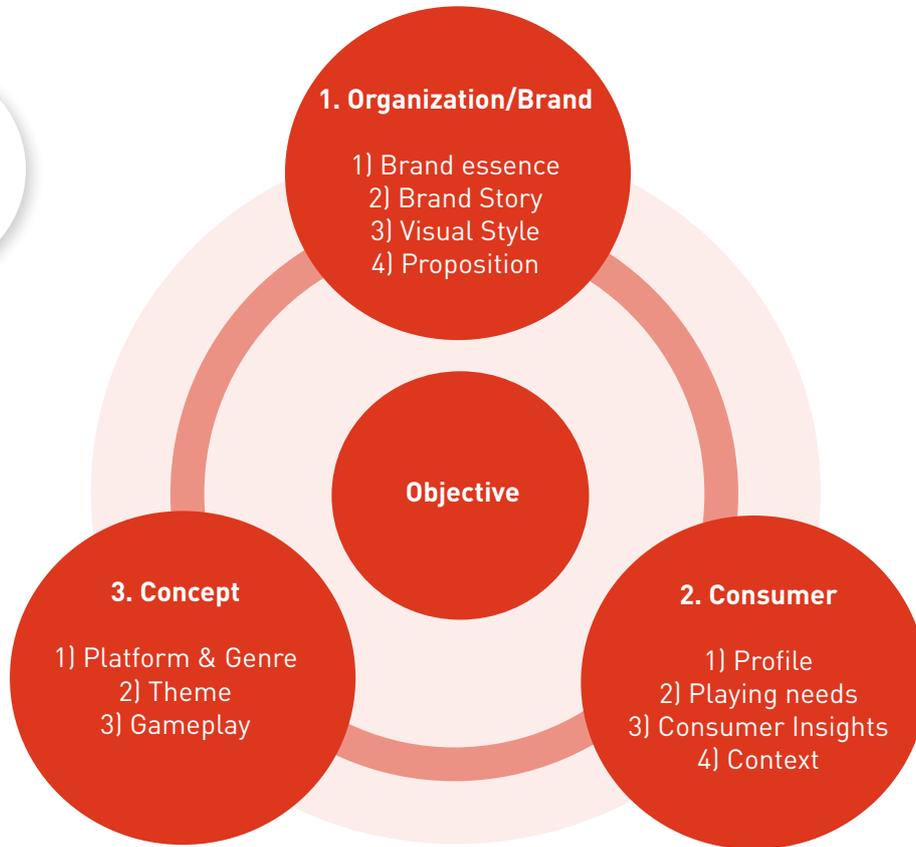
LEVEL 4

**THE PLACE OF GAMES
WITHIN BRAND-
MANAGEMENT**



You must be well prepared to be able to brief the game developer or strategically interactive concepts agency (such as BrandNewGame). A good (game) concept needs be developed according to the following model.

Figure 14.
The Brand Play-
model by
BrandNewGame



The following paragraphs give a short description of the above model:

The main starting point for each concept is the objective. The ideal is to detail the quantitative as well as quality objectives so it is clear from the start what results you want to achieve. In most cases it is advisable to measure the results based on the quantitative norm. As soon as it becomes clear what the organization envisages, you can fill in the influencing factors of the other elements.

First the organization or brand. Influencing elements are Brand identity (using the so called brand cloud), the brand story (history and reputation), the visual style and on the 'lowest' level the proposition. The more related factors can play a role in the interactive concept the better as long as it can still be narrowed down to the essence of the brand. A good example is the original 'serving the planet' pay-off by Heineken. This is a clear illustration of what the brand has set as it's objective.

Besides getting to know the consumer's profile (demographic features) we want to also know his or her gaming needs, which special and distinctive insights are known about the consumer in relation to the Brand or product use. And finally the context in which the consumer will relate to the brand or the interactive concept. The last item will especially determine how the message will come across. This is also called the effective consumer reach or 'touch'.

The last step in the Brand Play-model is filling in the preconditions of the concept regarding the platform (for instance PC, Console or Facebook), game genre, theme (can be a result of brand identity and brand story) and gameplay (objective, variables, gaming rules and rewards).

A professional Interactive Agency, in line with the unique brand characteristics of the organization (and its key competencies), can help define these foundations and can devise an fitting concept based on consumer needs.

4.2 Cocha-Model

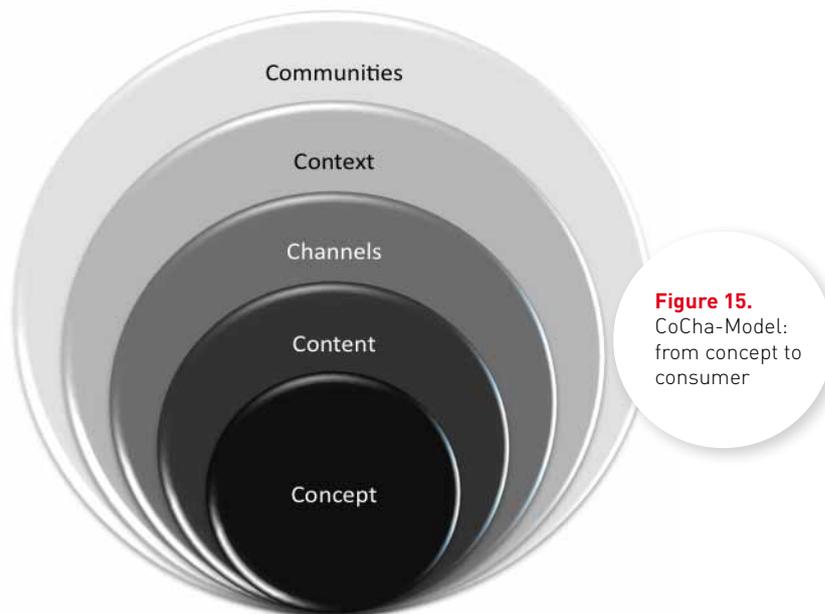
Eventually each concept will need to be shared with the target group and will need to appeal to his or her interests. The steps from concept to consumer are illustrated in the Cocha-model with each phase being equally important and needing to take place simultaneously while developing the concept. The thought process can be inside out and visa versa.

A starting point of the Cocha-model is the concept based on the briefing resulting from the Brand Play-model. In this concept different content can be created (here we are talking about games) which in turn, through specific channels and within a certain context, are shared with consumers (using their communities).

This model shows a brand new classification compared to the traditional media classifications and was developed by BrandNewGame. Content in the form of a commercial can reach the consumer through the 'channels' TV, Youtube, and iTunes or through an email from a friend.

The interfaces a consumer can use to view that specific content are TV, computer and mobile phone or iPod. This requires a different thought process and a different way of distributing content.

Another key difference to the traditional media thought process is that the model specifically takes into consideration the context of what the consumer is doing when he/she comes in contact with the content.



The following is a summary description of the model.

Each concept (product, service, or intellectual property) will produce content, which in turn will find its way to the consumer through selected channels.

In the case of a product concept the content may be: a product, the related accessories, and a service subscription. The channel is usually the shop, which already entails a certain context. Indeed, the consumer visits the shop at a certain time and finds employees who are in a certain mood (which may or may not influence the sales process). The context is further formed through the consumer's senses; she may be excited by the window display, the furnishings, use of light, smell, music and such, but also by her current state of mind. Is she there just to look around, to compare items or to make a purchase?

Has she just quarreled with her boyfriend or is she happy and cheerful? These are all factors to take into consideration when determining the relevant context for the concept you are developing. With intellectual property the content may be the music, a video clip or T-shirts. The channels applied may be i-Tunes, Last-FM, Youtube, a mobile phone application and a concert in a stadium. On the one hand the context is created through choice of channel and on the other hand by the consumer and her state of mind at that point in time. Another example. With a campaign concept the key starting point is an idea, sometimes in the form of a pay-off as with 'serving the planet'. Subsequently all type of content is created (commercials, advertisements, events) and through a variety of channels brought to the consumer. With a game concept the content may be the game itself and all promotional materials such as banners, an e-mail template, the website and the MSM type avatar in the game. Then the appropriate channels are selected matching the target group to the game. The game platform may, for instance, be a browser game for the PC and iPhone and the appropriate promotional channels could be iTunes and the Spilgames portals. For each platform take the context into account. Playing a game on an iPhone is a different experience to playing a game within Facebook behind a PC or laptop. If the consumer comes across the game within a gameportal he/she may already have played several games. A game that has been downloaded to the iPhone through iTunes provides opportunities to offer additional content to the game (for instance a podcast with 'the making of' and a link to a shopping page). Professional interactive agencies know exactly through which channels and with which content the consumer can be sought out within the appropriate context.

4.3 Why use games as a marketing?

Several research studies show that gaming can be a very effective means to realize goals related to branding, communications, generating of trials, and turning prospects into customers. A 2009 TNS-NIPO research study shows the time spent on games is in the top five media activities (following TV, 'Internet' and radio). For the under twenty target groups gaming is even in third place following Internet and TV. The advantage of a game is that playing a game requires one hundred percent concentration, which means there is a maximum span of attention no other media can compete with. Microsoft Xbox has also conducted a number of studies which show how extremely well in-game advertising works, certainly for branding and the creation of brand preference.

The results of the various research studies can be found on my weblog www.gamingandbranding.com

Games are fun

It sounds trivial but this is one of the most popular explanations why consumers play games: it is fun. Even advergames are perceived as being fun as long as the logo or the advertising messages are not too pushy. And, even training games are perceived as fun and exciting and reinforce mutual ties amongst employees because of the competition that ensues. In fact, learning by playing or learning by trying (within a safe environment) is the best of all.

Because, generally speaking, consumers like to play games, brands can exploit this positive feeling by having the consumer experience what they want to offer. This means the brand needs to add something to the gameplay that will add to the game experience and cannot only push the logo or commercial. Pushy times are over; it is all about being invited into the circle of play and entering into creative interactivity.

Interactive experience

In one of my first interviews, which happened to be with Henk Hoogendoorn, managing director of Take Two Interactive Benelux, he used the term 'lean forward entertainment' as a definition of games in comparison to movies. A game makes you feel you are in the driver's seat and you can influence the course of the game. You can do things in a game that you cannot do in real life; you have the leading role in your own film. It feels good to feel you are in control of the things you are doing. Brands can use this positive, active experience to enable a positive brand experience within that specific setting.

Besides the feeling of being in control, gaming is also an interactive experience. The consumer gets feedback from his actions in the form of a dialogue. New content is presented, a next level, rewards in the form of scores, additional possibilities, power-ups, or even discounts on actual physical products, they are all a stimulus for the consumer to continue and therefore to extend the (brand) experience. Moreover the games' multiplayer options offer a rich and directly shared gaming experience with friends or total strangers who may become friends although they may live on the other side of the world and can be twice or half the player's age.

Interactivity and active dialogues are developments that are moving towards a broader perspective. Already many books and articles have been written about the mature and critical consumer and activities as crowd sourcing and co-creation are already actively used by several brands. Now I do not believe every consumer will become a prosumer (producing consumer) but the dialogue has become the new communications standard, forced monologues and pushed messages have become old fashioned.

Senses and focus

One of the tools for effective learning is the use of multiple senses, for instance by reading a text out loud you read it (seeing) you say it (speaking) and you listen to it (hearing). When playing a game you also use multiple senses. You use your fingers, arms or legs and see the results on the screen of what you are doing, you hear the feedback and your brain processes it in your head. This makes gaming a virtual experience because what happens within the game environment is reality to the consumer while playing.

The consumer is trying to realize a goal as best as he can within a set of defined rules. To do this he or she will use as many senses as possible making the experience even more intense at the highest psychological level.

Also, the consumer is completely focused because it is impossible to do anything else while playing a game. While watching a TV program or listening to the radio one can also read a paper or magazine or talk to a friend at the table or on the phone. Therefore I believe media ratings should not be taken too seriously. Of course the radio is on for an average of five hours a day. A consumer is already in a car, on average, two hours a day with the radio on and in many cases also has the radio on at work (as a background sound). Of course here I am not taking away from the fact radio and TV commercials are especially suitable for brand recognition purposes.

All can be measured

Nowadays many marketers and managers demand measured results. We seem to be happy as long as studies and statistics confirm we are on the right track even if we get disappointing results. There seem to be few marketing managers who reflect on what would be fun or relevant to the consumer although we are all consumers ourselves. Think of it, having a continuous dialogue with our consumers gives us the knowledge of what the consumer thinks of our brand, our organization and our service. Unfortunately this continuing dialogue is often lacking.

Actually, since games are essentially ones and zeros (bits), they are completely programmable and therefore also completely measurable. Because almost all gaming platforms are connected to the Internet a dialogue can be set up between transmitter and receiver or rather between the content provider and the active content user. The added advantage is that all kinds of data can be measured without the consumer needing to be aware of this.

When does the user close the browser (what is the last dialogue screen), how long does the user play the game, who does she mail the game to, who does she play with, what score does she achieve but also does she print the voucher and does she then go to the store. We could also actively (on purpose) ask the user what she thinks of the gameplay, what she thinks of our organization or our brand, what she would want to change what she finds missing and when we can offer her another fun game. One can unleash a complete CRM strategy on a consumer who played a game as long as we listen and engage in the dialogue. Meanwhile we can measure like crazy to ensure positive results or to, afterwards, determine what we should have done better.

Of course games can also be put to excellent use for generating traffic to stores and to realize conversion. The Sport 2000 example has clearly illustrated this. Consumers can earn discounts by playing a game. They subsequently print out a voucher and take it to the store (meanwhile the consumer's specifics are known and are linked to the CRM database). The purchase is registered (Nike sneakers for instance) and a week later the same consumer receives an e-mail alerting him or her to a matching sports jacket. As long as sales are registered, an ongoing relevant dialogue with the customer takes place and effort is invested in the customer, the customer will keep on returning and the organization will no longer have a 'bargain hunter' but a 'customer for life'.

Cost effectiveness

An investment can be very effective having a large consumer reach, especially when games are used for promotional purposes. Depending on the game concept a large reach can or cannot be expected.

Participating in an existing franchise, for example Need for Speed, guarantees a reach of fifteen million consumers (based on previous version sales).

If a brand new proprietary game is developed the game first needs to be made know to the target group. This may be an organic process (from the inside out) by using the core target group (the brand fans) or by launching a promotional campaign. The first option usually takes longer but is more credible and in the long run more powerful since communication takes place through logical connections. The second option works well if a short-term reaction is required or in support of a campaign. The lack of guarantees to reach a specific number of consumers withholds many advertisers from freeing up large budgets for the application of games as marketing (communication) method. But what are the guarantees with a newspaper or magazine add, or a radio or TV commercial? Statistics tell us that a certain number of people buy the newspaper or magazine, listens to the radio station or watches TV but what is the effective reach of these media compared to a game requiring one hundred percent attention and possibly providing a ten minute brand experience within a positive environment of performance and reward? When was the last time you saw a consumer watching a TV commercial while screaming and cursing because she was trying to improve her high-score within the provided brand environment?

Everlasting love

A good game can be fun for weeks, months and sometimes even years. The Pac-man concept was so strong that it is still fun to play now. The same applies to game concepts like Donkey Kong, Tetris and so on. The replayability factor, determined by the gameplay, is pivotal in determining whether a game is played more than once. If the path to the result of the game is always the same, the game will probably not be played more than once or twice, but if the path and also the goal are dynamic or variable, games will have an unlimited lifetime. For this reason the scoring mechanism in a game is so important. This already ensures the outcome is variable. If, in addition to this, the player can share her scores with friends the gameplay is enriched by adding the competitive element (challenge, one of the play motivations). Unfortunately we still find advergaming that rather look like interactive commercials or Slide-share presentations instead of having a good gameplay. Honesty dictates to say these concepts are often thought out by advertising agencies and not by game developers or interactive agencies.

Adding new parts to games over a period of time will also work well for many games. Right from the gaming industry start this has been done by, for instance, releasing a new version of the same game (Pac-man, Pac-man Junior, Pac-girl, Pac-man versus Donkey Kong) or by releasing new add-ons. This is done by, for example, selling extra playfields at half price of the original game. This ensures an initially simple game can develop into a particularly rich game giving infinite playing pleasure.

I hope this was inspiring!

You can find more information on:

Book : www.brandnewplayground.com (my book's website)

Blog : www.gamingandbranding.com (my weblog on digital interactive branding)

Bizz : www.brandnewgame.nl (if you are looking for advice or cool concepts)

You will find a group on LinkedIn called BrandNewGame. If you become a member you will automatically receive a weekly update of the postings.



Of course, I am also on Twitter.

So please Tweet your feedback [@BartHufen](#) [#BrandNewPlayground](#)



**Brand
New
Game**

play on!

