



Hey everyone, my name is Qadira and welcome to my presentation Spread the Word! Today, I'll be doing a crash course on leveraging social media to market your game and build your community!

AGENDA

INTRODUCTION



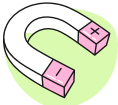
The 411 on this presentation & me

AUDIENCE & AN ACTIVITY



Know thy game, know thy audience (no, it isn't you)

THE 3 T'S & MORE



Covering terrain, timing, and tools. Then ideas for continued growth & outreach etiquette

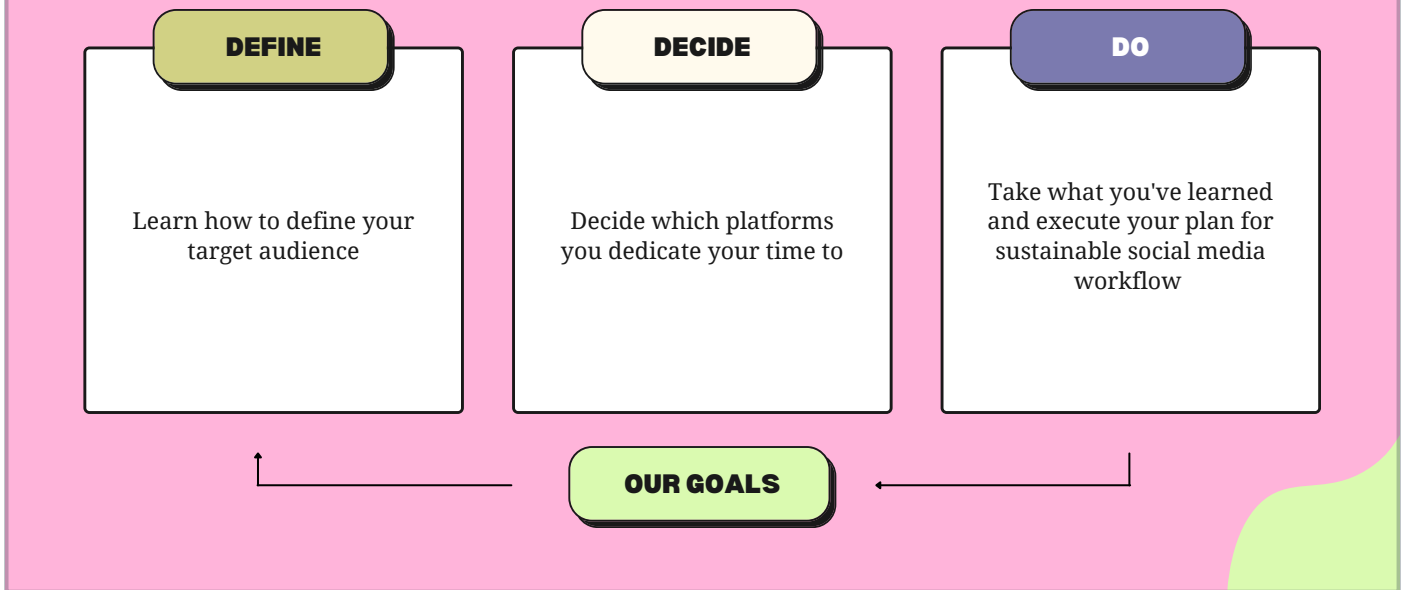
CONCLUSION



Wrap up, Q&A, & where to find me

A brief overview of the agenda. First, I'll introduce myself and the topics. We'll then segue into the section about understanding thy game and finding your 'audience'. This section will include a brief exercise. Next, we'll go over the 3 T's - terrain, timing, and tools, ideas for continued growth, and outreach etiquette explained. And finally we'll wrap up and hopefully have time for Q&A.

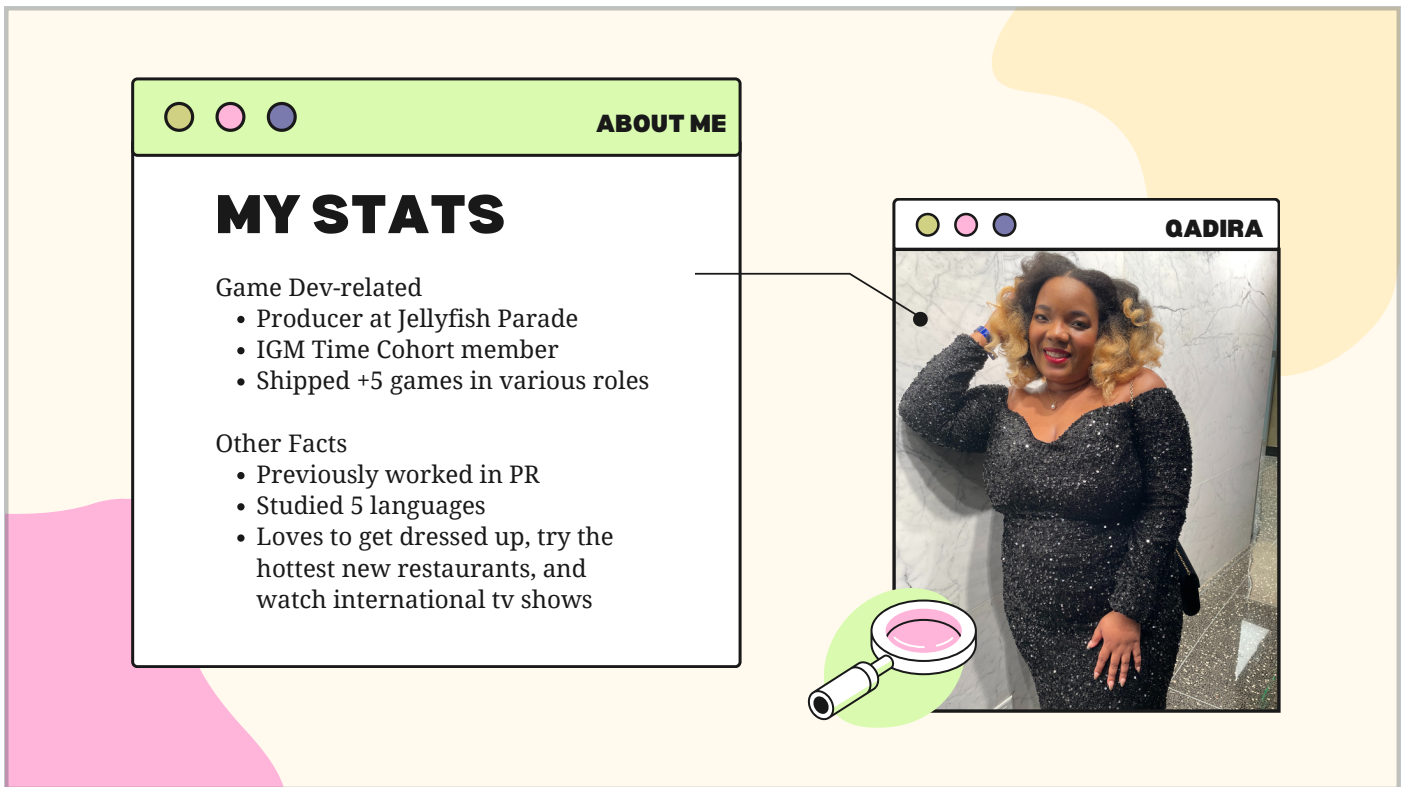
GOALS FOR THE SESSION



Our goals for this session are 3-fold:

- Learn how to define your target audience,
- Decide which platforms you want to dedicate your time to,
- Take what you've learned and execute your plan for sustainable social media workflow.

Now, this is a basic 101, crash course type of presentation for complete beginners or folks who don't know where to start. Thus, some of what I say might not be new to you, but it covers my most frequently asked questions, and I hope it serves as a useful reminder at the very least.



But, first, a bit about me. I'm a Producer, among other things at indie otome game studio, Jellyfish Parade. Last month, we launched a sci-fi visual novel called Belle Automata: Chronicle 1. We're currently campaigning on Kickstarter to finish the remaining Chronicles, so please spread the word and check us out!

I'm an IGM Time cohort member and I've shipped more than 5 indie games in various roles including Production, Narrative Design, QA, and Writing.

Outside of game dev, I love to engage in cultural immersion via education, entertainment, and eating. In fact, to get out of taking high school science classes, I took an extra language course and that led to my interest in them. So far, I've studied 5 and can still hold a conversation in 3 of them. My favorite things to do are get dressed up, try the hottest new restaurants and watch international television and films.

WHY IS SOCIAL MEDIA AN IMPORTANT TOOL?

GREATER REACH

The advent of social networks and their fine-tuned algorithms expand who we can reach

BUILD TRUST & RECOGNITION

A great way to build consumer trust. Consistent visual style, tone, and posting schedules also help your audience distinguish your content in the vast social media sea

ENGAGE

Interacting with fans on social platforms allows you to engage your audience on a more personal level and offer them potential to meet other likeminded people

KEY BENEFITS

So, why is social media such an important tool to us as game developers?

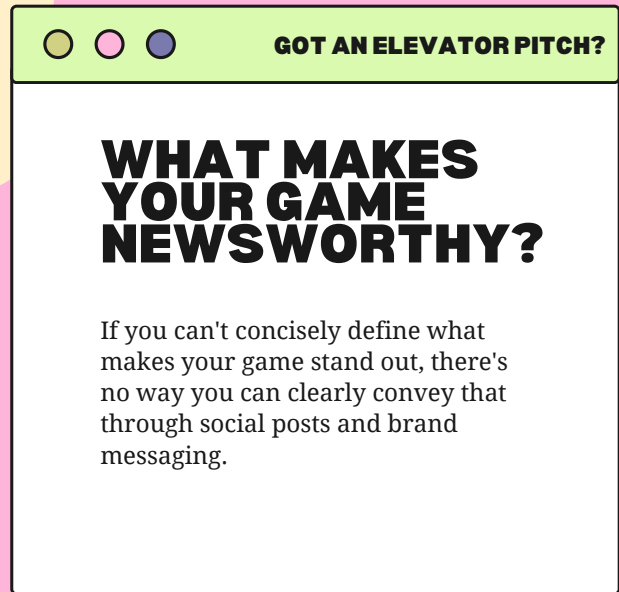
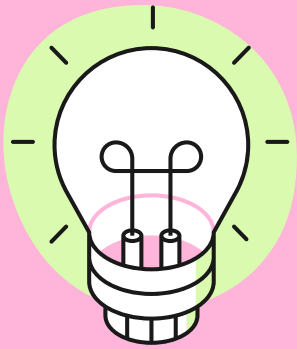
A few key benefits are that it offers the opportunity of greater reach in a way that word of mouth and traditional press and advertisement cannot replicate.

Number 2: it affords us the ability to cultivate consumer trust which is the most important currency in marketing and community building.

And lastly, it give us the opportunity to engage with fans on a more personal level - how personal is dictated by the platform you use, it's tone, and how active your constituents are on it.

A bonus reason is also that it can be a great avenue to chart your progress and growth through the development lifecycle.

BEFORE WE GET INTO FINDING YOUR AUDIENCE...



Before you can define your audience, you absolutely must figure out what is newsworthy about your game.

What are your unique selling propositions?

This step is crucial because if you can't concisely define what makes your game or brand special, there's no way you can clearly convey that in your posts and brand messaging.

Additionally, understanding your edge can help you net other opportunities down the line like showcases, funding, dream collaborations, and publishing deals.

We'll briefly cover outreach etiquette later in the presentation.

QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE YOUR UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION (USP)



<p>What makes your game special? Is it the gameplay? Features?</p> <p>Ex: War of Roses - hybrid game (VN + dress-up) w/ a full POC cast</p>	<p>What makes your company great? Is it your values?</p> <p>Ex: Jellyfish Parade is dedicated to creating ethnically diverse romance games that'll turn your heart to jelly</p>	<p>What makes your team amazing? Do you walk the DEI talk?</p> <p>Ex: Our core team is comprised of two Black women & we prioritize contracting BIPOC talent each project</p>	<p>Why should your audience support you?</p> <p>Ex: We make games with the nuanced representation we felt and still feel is lacking in the otome genre</p>
--	--	--	---

It's okay if your USPs evolve over time, but here are some questions to help you determine your project's baseline:

What makes your game special? Is it the gameplay? The features? For example, one of our games, War of Roses, is a hybrid dress-up/visual novel with a customizable main character and all POC love interests.

What makes your company great? Do you have strong values that dictate design principles? Are you known known for making experimental games?

What makes your team amazing? Do you walk the DEI talk? Is your team comprised of AAA veterans?

Why should your audience support you in your opinion?

...So on, and so forth

ACTIVITY TIME!

~3 MINS~

Think of a project you are developing and create a short profile on your ideal player.

1

WHAT ARE THEIR DEMOGRAPHICS?

The basics like target age range, gender identity, ethnicity, culture, geographic location, etc

2

WHAT KIND OF LIFESTYLE DO THEY LIVE?

Include possible careers, hobbies, values, likes/dislikes, and challenges to get yourself into their mindset.

3

WHAT ARE THEIR PREFERRED PLATFORMS?

What do they play their games on?
Where/how do they find new games?
Where do they hang out on the internet?

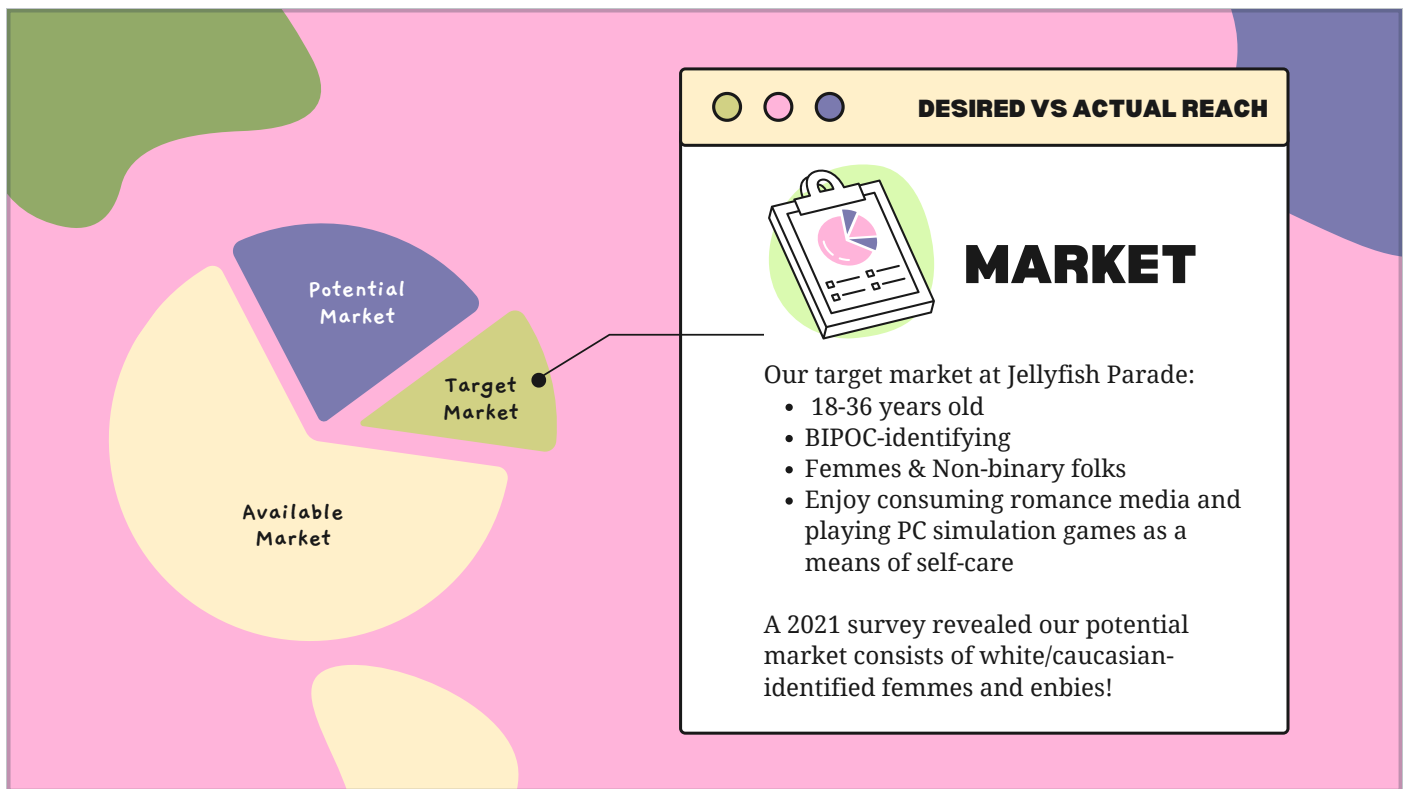
Now that we've gotten an understanding of what makes our project unique, let's segue into a brief activity.

Take 3 mins to create a player persona for your ideal audience. Jot down things like their demographics, what kind of lifestyle they live, and what their preferred platforms are.

Okay, time's up - could we get 1 or 2 folks to share the profile they made? You can unmute your mic and go when you're ready!

Excellent!

Ideally, this is an exercise you should do while you're in the ideation/prototyping phase of game dev, and you'll want to make a profile for your target market and potential market. I'll share my example now.



Our target audience for Jellyfish Parade games is 18–36-year-old, BIPOC-identified femmes and NBs who enjoy consuming romantic media and play PC simulation games as a means of self-care. Usually from stressful jobs or familial responsibilities. These folks could work in an office, be in retail, etc.

To get a sense of the available market, I put out a survey for fans of our genre in 2021, and it garnered nearly 200 responses. While we found we were reaching our target audience in part, we confirmed that fans of the genre largely identify as white/caucasian (about 60%) and that percentage was roughly the same amongst respondents who had played 1 or more of our games before aka our potential market.

If your game falls under a more well-studied genre like RPG, then that demographical information may be more widely available to you. Alternatively, you can study the social hubs of other similar games, take a look at where they get the most engagement, and get a feel for what kind of players they have that might overlap with your title.

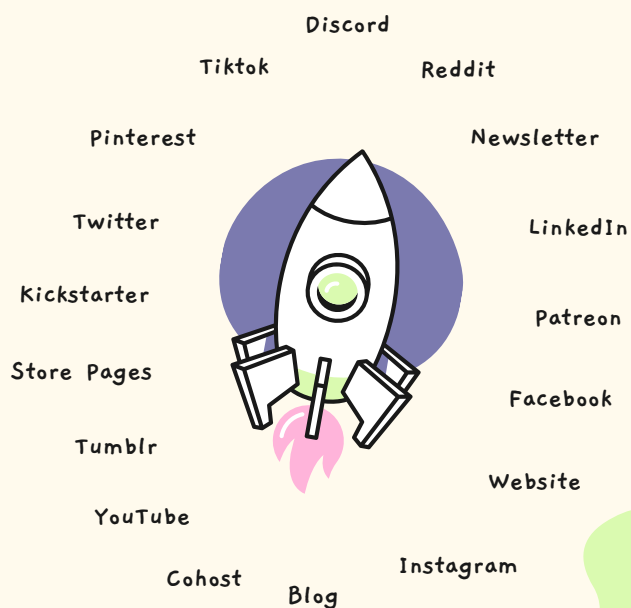
Now, fair warning: Sometimes our identities overlap with the type of players we want to play our games. That's okay but this is what I mean when I say your target audience isn't you: beware of wrapping too much of your identity into projects because your personal biases can lead you to make assumptions about what players want instead of taking the opportunity to field and implement their feedback to co-create a better player experience. Make what you want, of course, but remember there won't be 500 copies of you around to buy and play your game.

WHICH PLATFORMS ARE WORTH MY TIME?

It depends! Where does your audience hang out? What platforms are you comfortable with?

Choose 2-3 options and be consistent with them.

Make sure 1 of those options is an "owned" channel!



Let's talk about the 3 T's, number 1 being terrain. This is the golden question. Which platforms are worth your time? The answer, of course, is that depends! Where does your audience spend time online? What platforms are you comfortable with?

Can I see in the chat the top 2 platforms you use the most? For personal and professional reasons ?

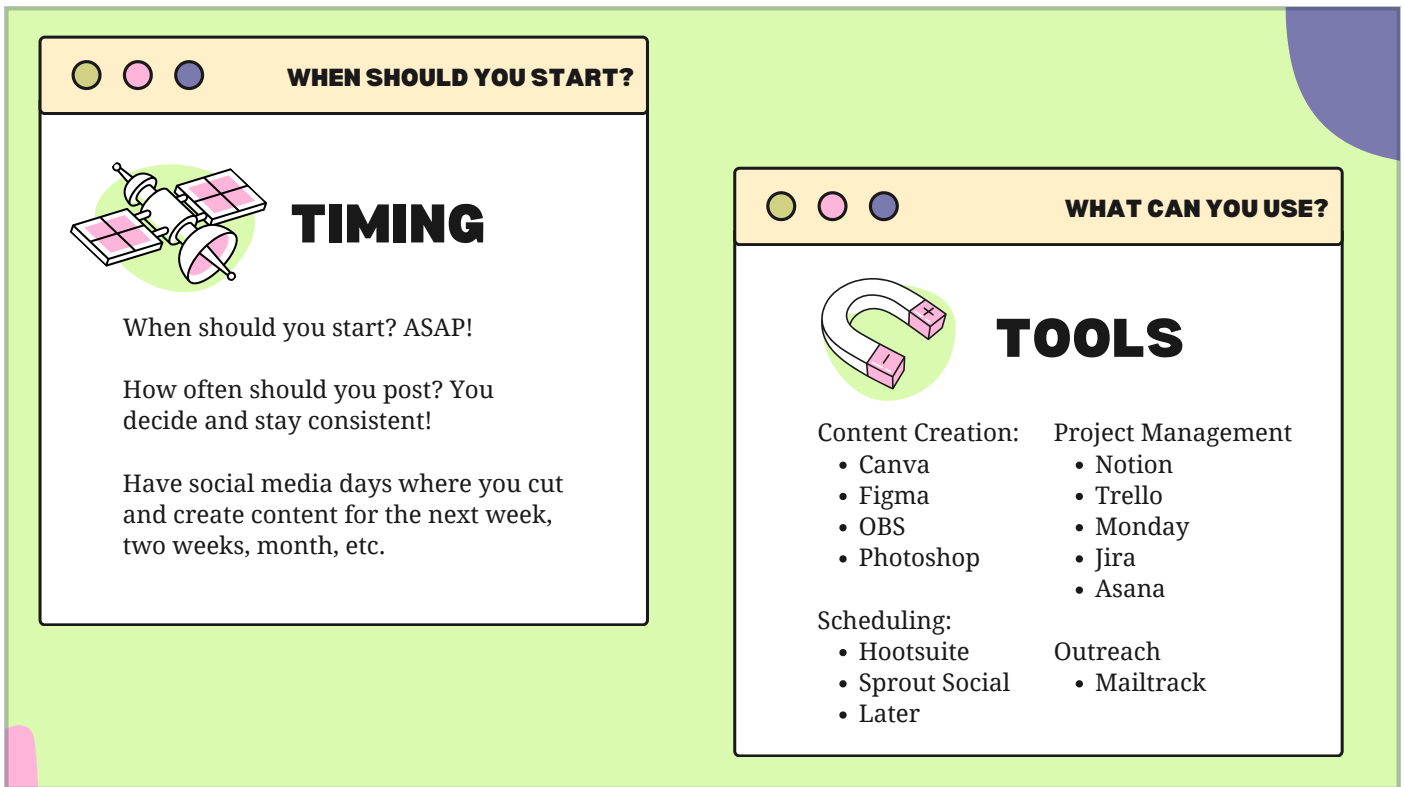
The #1 mistake I see indies and studios alike make is they try to be on too many platforms at once .

Therefore, I recommend choosing 2-3 networks to focus on. That can be in the beginning or through the entire development lifecycle. Even if you only post on them once weekly, stick with that schedule because it builds trust and routine with your audience. It's better to have a focused, consistent presence on a few platforms than to be scattered, inconsistent and burnt out on them all.

Out of those 2-3, I recommend having an "owned" channel like a website, newsletter, blog, or the store pages because no one can spontaneously buy it then render it unusable like a certain bird app overlord.

Additionally, I think it's important to note that the focus should always be on organic growth. Virality is awesome when it occurs, but it's not replicable, measurable, nor is it sustainable unlike what the clock app would have us believe. In my opinion, building a solid, engaged community

should always be at the forefront of your overall strategy.



Onto the other two T's - timing and tools.

When should you start your social media empire? As soon as possible! Consider sitting down with your team to brainstorm what kinds of content you want to share and carve out social media days each month to create content for the following days, weeks, months, etc. During the planning stages, it's helpful to create templates to assist you in setting a consistent, visual style. Easily identifiable posts encourage players to stop scrolling and interact with your content more often.

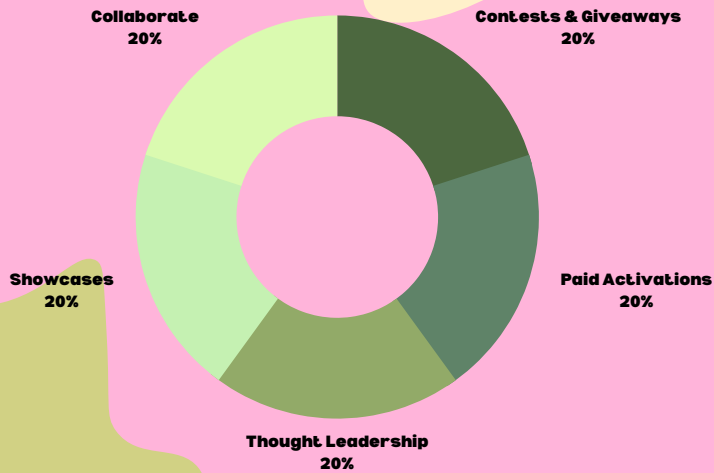
For example, I worked on a game that has 28 characters and counting. When we were deciding what kind of content to put out, I noticed that many new players complained about not knowing or remembering whom was who. So, I came up with the idea to create ID cards to post on social media with a corresponding caption since all the characters lived in this fictional town or were affiliated with the fictional university in-game. I scheduled them to go out every Tuesday when the #amareteabreak hashtag was live, and it not only helped with project recognition, but my captions also encouraged players to deliberate about the news facts they learned about their faves in the captions every week on Discord. I say all this to say, the recognition and repetition of that strategy is a major part of what helped me double the game's Twitter following in 6 months.

Like I said, whatever you decide your posting schedule is - stick to it! Also, it's a good idea to research whether there are certain hashtags or posting windows that can help you promote your game to an even wider audience. For example, accounts like Indie Legion and Devs & Dorks frequently start #TrailerTuesday #WishlistWednesday and #ScreenshotSaturday threads on Twitter. Engagement varies, but it's a low effort way to ensure you're getting eyes on your project

at least once a week!

As for Tools, here's a list of some things I use for content creation, scheduling, and project management.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO KEEP GROWING?



SHORT TERM IDEAS

EXAMPLES:


- Collaborate with aligned content creators
- Collaborate with devs to make a demo disc or mutual aid bundle
- Run contests and giveaways
- Enter virtual showcases (with Steam ft!)
- Do talks like these to share insight on your relevant topics

Now that you've defined your audience and established your presence on particular platforms, besides what we just learned, what more can you do to keep growing?

Here are a few of the things I've done that have worked for me in the past: I've run contests and giveaways, collaborated with content creators, curated a fanzine, entered projects into showcases, tried paid activations, give a talk like this one, etc.

The sky's the limit!


● ● ●
OUTREACH ETIQUETTE PART 1



THE DO'S

- Keep your pitch short & sweet
- Set realistic expectations
- Communicate embargo dates
- Personalize your email/message
 - Spell their name correctly
- Emphasize why the partnership will be mutually beneficial
- Link a press kit or 1-pager
- Follow-up 2-3 days after no response
- 2 no's & a go

● ● ●
OUTREACH ETIQUETTE PART 2



THE DON'TS

- Reach out to outlets that aren't aligned
- Send a mass email & BCC everyone
- Don't repost content without proper permission/credit
- Don't give out keys to randos
- Don't limit yourself!

Speaking of dream collaborations, let's briefly go over outreach etiquette before we wrap up.

Here are the Do's:

- Keep your pitch short (100-150 words max!)

- Set realistic expectations & communicate embargo dates clearly (outreach is a numbers game, so expect there to be few replies. However, the more you put out, the more chances you have of higher return)

- Personalize your email

(Take the extra few minutes to read their About section on their main platform and use some of that language in your email! It makes a difference)

-On a similar note: Everyone's favorite word is their name - so use it and spell it right!

-Emphasize why the partnership will be mutually beneficial

-Link a press kit or a 1-pager

-Follow-up

2-3 days after sending your initial email if there hasn't been a reply. Do not wait more than 7 days to follow up - you're likely no longer top of mind after that. You're not being annoying, I promise!

-In a similar vein, always remember: 2 no's (replies) & a go - move onto the next one. A great way to see if they even opened your email is the Mailtrack extension. It'll tell you when they opened email, how many times they've opened it, whether they've forwarded it to someone, and you can even set a follow-up reminder directly in the email chain, so you never lose track of who hasn't responded to your inquiry.

And for the don'ts:

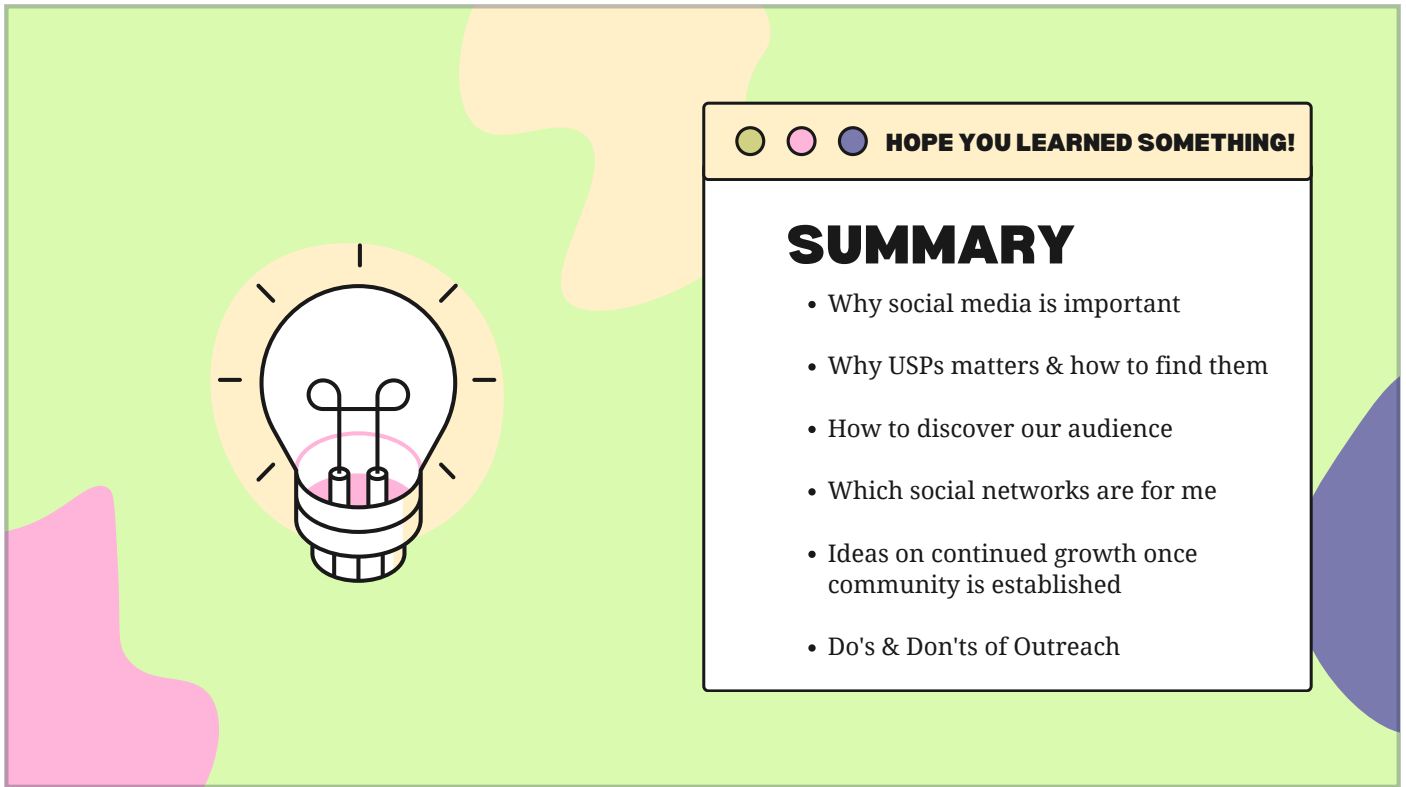
-Reach out to outlets that aren't aligned

-Don't send a mass pitch email & BCC everyone. Someone WILL feel froggy and reply all.

-Don't repost content without proper permission/credit. Enough said.

-This isn't really a don't but also be careful of emails you get from randos requesting keys. Sometimes it is legit, but oftentimes it's just people scamming so they can rip off a key on a discounted platform. Or on a rare occasion, it's a content creator that rips games apart so be vigilant.

-And finally, don't limit yourself! Reach out to that dream publication or collaboration - you never know what they'll say!



HOPE YOU LEARNED SOMETHING!

SUMMARY

- Why social media is important
- Why USPs matters & how to find them
- How to discover our audience
- Which social networks are for me
- Ideas on continued growth once community is established
- Do's & Don'ts of Outreach

We've covered a lot of ground in this crash course. In summary, we learned:

- Why social media is an important tool
- How to discover our USP and why that matters
- How to determine who our audience is
- Which social networks are for me?
- Ideas for continued growth once your community is established
- Do's & don'ts of outreach etiquette

REMEMBER:

You run social media,
don't let it run you.



**IT'S NEVER
THAT SERIOUS**

And remember: You run social media, don't let it run you. It can be frustrating on your road to visibility, but always give yourself grace as you figure things out.

Keep it fun, keep it silly, and if it gets to be too much - take a break or pay someone else take over!