

3 Gaps In The Indie Game Market That No Dev Is Taking Advantage Of Yet -- Is Your Game Filling Any Of These Gaps?

What you'll learn in this article is my technique in finding new opportunities, and finding gaps in the market.

Right now, I see THREE big gaps in the market. And I'll share them with you.

But what I want you to discover is HOW you can find these gaps as well.

So, you'll learn a simple formula on how to find gaps in the indie game market.

Also, what you'll learn will help you feel better that you're on the correct track -- and that you shouldn't give up.

Here's what you need to know...

It's Not About Being Better, Faster or Cheaper

If you notice in the business world, it's not often that something "better", "faster" or "cheaper" is the one that out-competes bigger competition.

What I mean is, Google+ tried to make a "better" Facebook, but failed. YouTube Gaming is trying to make a "better" Twitch, but failing.

If you look closely, it's the companies that DO NOT try to make another clone that succeed. It's the companies that fill a GAP in the market that succeed.

While Facebook was letting people share photos, and connect with past friends, Twitter filled the gap and just focused on the "status update" (well, when they first started).

Same with Twitch. They didn't try to make a video streaming service that let you do whatever you wanted like YouTube. They evolved into a smaller niche, video game streaming, and are dominating it.

Of course, Twitch is now adding more features and more types of videos. But when they first started they were just a streaming service (Justin.TV). Then they even went more niche, and just did videogames.

My point is, you'll always see that it isn't about being better, faster, or cheaper. It's the companies or indie games that fill a gap in the market that nobody is taking advantage, that win.

So, here are 3 gaps in the market... then later I'll show you a formula on how you can take advantage of your indie game niche market.

1. Last Man Standing Genre (But Not Military Themed)

It's obvious that the "Last Man Standing" genre is hugely popular. Games like Playerunknown's Battle Grounds and H1Z1: King of the Kill are attracting "me too" games that want to cash in on this pretty new genre.

But if you're thinking of making another indie game that is in the last-man-standing genre, notice a huge gap.

Most of these games are military themed. This theme is already dominated. It's going to be hard to compete in this genre if your indie game is also a military themed last-man-standing game.

Next is the fantasy theme. A last-man-standing fantasy game is going to be the next trend that will fill up very quickly. There's still some room because there is no dominating game that has come out yet. But a fantasy themed last-man-standing indie game is also gaining popularity and will be over-saturated soon.

But there are some gaps, still. Some themes that haven't been explored are:

Heroes theme (imagine a last-man-standing-game with heroes)

Stealth theme (last-man-standing game only focused on stealth)

Space-based (a last-man-standing game where you battle with spaceships)

2. Resource Management / Sim Genre

This genre is filled with popular themes such as colony, farm, truck, football, space, factory.

Games like Football Manager 2017 and 2016 and 2015, Factorio, Kerbal Space Program, Farming Simulator, and Truck Simulator are all the top selling and top played games.

But, there are some gaps that no indie game is taking advantage of.

For example...

Fishtank manager (there's a huge interest in fish keeping, and there's no resource management / sim game that has this theme)

Garden manager (farm management games are popular, but gardens are a gap that nobody is taking advantage of)

3. Custom Gun Genre

This is a weird one because there is no genre like it.

My past examples I've talked about taking a popular genre, and making a NEW theme for it.

For example, last-man-standing but a space based theme. Or resource management game, but for fish keeping.

This "Custom Gun" genre has no popular genre to cling to. So it's a bit harder to understand.

So what do I mean by "Custom Gun" genre?

There are games that let you customize your gun. But now I'm starting to see an evolution of that. Not only can you colorize your gun, or add features to your weapon, but now you can make your gun all your own.

In other words, the gamer has built a gun that is truly unique, and is unlike any other gun in the game.

Games like Mother Gunship are already taking advantage of this new game mechanic.

But most of the games that allow the gamer to uniquely customize their gun mostly fall in the bullet-hell themed type games.

This leaves gaps in the indie game market for the custom-gun genre. The next indie game dev that combines the custom-gun genre with a fantasy theme, or an RPG, or a resource management game, will take over their niche market.

So, what do you do with this new knowledge? How does this help you sell more copies of your indie game?

Let me give you a formula...

How To Take Advantage Of Your Indie Game Niche Market: Simple Formula

The formula goes like this...

Big Popular Genre + Best Feature of That Genre = New Sub Genre

Let me show you what I mean...

The last-man standing genre is a sub-genre of the online battle royale (niche within a niche).

It's like Twitter. It just focussed on the "status update". It took the best part of Facebook, and just focused on one part.

Twitch did the same thing. It took the best part of YouTube (video games), and focused on that.

When Google started, they took the best part of Yahoo!, the "search bar". And just focused on that.

Of course these example added more features later on. But when they first started, they were not better, faster or cheaper. They didn't try to make another "me too" service. They found a gap in the market, and focused on that niche.

Niche Marketing Works When The Market Is Oversaturated

This formula is called “Indie Game Niche Marketing”. It’s where you take one mechanic, or theme, or game system, and just focus on that. Make that your central idea.

This works because the simpler your idea, the better a person understand what you’re doing.

What I mean is, when there are SO many games being published, it’s hard to get noticed. The games that can explain what they do better than any other game will get more attention.

For example, in the business world: Back in the 1990s and 2000s, there were a lot of search engines competing: Yahoo!, Altavista, Webcrawler, HotBot, Ask, Cuil.

All of these tried to out-compete each other by adding MORE features. But when the market gets so saturated, it’s the ones that go simpler that get all the attention. But, Google found a gap in the market, and focused on their niche.

Another example... When social media became huge, Google+ tried to compete by adding MORE features. But more features just adds to the confusion. The reason Twitter became huge is because their features were simple.

And that’s my point here... when a video game genre becomes huge, game devs tend to add MORE features in hopes to gain more attention.

But when the market gets so saturated like this, it’s the ones that go simpler who get the attention.

So, here’s the formula again...

Big Popular Genre + Best Part of That Genre = New Sub Genre

So, ask yourself if maybe you’re adding way too many features? What if you focused on one feature that no other game dev is doing yet?

This isn’t easy, I know. But it’s important to find out because it’ll help you gain attention.

While everybody is developing “me too” games, the indie game devs who succeed are the ones who will now how to stand out.

And by doing the counter-intuitive thing, by simplifying your message when the market is so saturated, will help you gain popularity and help you sell more copies of your indie game.

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-- Konrad