

THE GAMING MARKETING DICTIONARY



**GAMING MARKETING
INSTITUTE**
GAMING MARKETING MADE SIMPLE





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INTRODUCTION

Marketing is about communication.

Where changing one word in a sentence can impact how well a message inspires action.

However, marketers also use certain words to communicate with stakeholders and clients. That language is just as critical to effective communication.

The same holds when it comes to gaming marketing.

So, this guide outlines **over 50 vocabulary terms** integral to effective gaming marketing practice.

Where the definitions, organized into five chronologically ordered sections, are core to **developing and executing effective gaming strategies**

If you are a visual learner, [please check out the video version](#) of this guide on our YouTube channel.

GETTING STARTED

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Game system

All video, or digital, games are systems consisting of:

- Objects
- Attributes, also known as features
- Relationships

All of which exist **within a virtual environment**.

Where everything in a video game, no matter how simple or complex, is expressed through these properties.

That means all gaming marketing activities which tap into a video game's virtual world will do so through the same properties.

Example

Immersive ads on the Roblox platform are visual objects in a game system. The advertising objects are defined by features which determine whether they appear as an image, a video, or a portal.

Where ad units appear in certain locations based on their relationship to other objects in the virtual environment.



Gameplay

Digital gameplay is the human experience of a video game's rules, objectives and goals - within the boundaries of a game system.

As a marketer, it is important to understand that video games are not toys, people play with, or products people use.

Instead, they are systems specifically designed to **provide a playable experience**.

Example

Louis Vuitton partnered with Riot Games in 2019. A resulting in-game integration weaved the iconic fashion brand into League of Legends gameplay - via a branded in-game skin.

The Louis Vuitton Prestige skin became an object defined by unique features and relationships to other in-game objects within the game environment.



Gaming

Gaming, when used as a verb, refers to the act of engaging in digital gameplay, also called a playable experience.

When used as a noun, gaming is something relevant to gameplay.

Example

An example of the verb usage is the sentence, "The target audience spends at least 10 hours a week gaming."

An example of the noun usage is the sentence, "The product innovation team just finished the co-branded gaming mouse."

Game feel

A playable experience is defined by game feel, which according to the book "**Game Feel: A Game Designer's Guide to Virtual Sensation**" by Steve Swink, is, "the tactile, kinesthetic sense of manipulating a virtual object the sensation of control in a game."

The sensory experience of controlling virtual objects is central to what makes digital gameplay enjoyable.

Example

To promote its controversial Cybertruck, Tesla linked with Epic Games' Rocket League game title. The collaboration allowed players to drive a virtual version of the all-electric pickup truck.

The sensation of controlling the Cybertruck in-game is what gives the virtual version its juice as a means of promoting the actual truck to players.



Emotions and moments

The moments and emotions experienced through interaction with video games are **part of, not separate from, the game itself**.

Where the emotional highs and lows experienced through gameplay are as much a part of a game as its virtual features.

As a result, effective gaming marketing can tap into these intangible elements to effectively inspire action.

Example

In celebration of Halo's 20th anniversary, Microsoft's Xbox and SWAROVSKI released two collectible crystal figurines.

The collectibles were more than just nice-looking replicas of recognizable Halo intellectual property. They also effectively tapped into the deep well of moments and emotions associated with the franchise's nostalgia.



Game experience

Video games exist to provide an enjoyable playable experience. So, they are known as game experiences.

That is because video games are defined by the moments, emotions and sensations experienced through interaction with their systems.

So, even though video games are a legitimate form of technology, they are judged by whether they can incite emotions, like fun and enjoyment, as opposed to functional features, like how well they accomplish a task.

Example

In his book titled, **"Get in the Game: How to Level Up Your Business with Gaming, Esports, and Emerging Technologies,"** Jonathan Stringfield wrote,

"It is often the case that game players speak about experiences in games from a first-person perspective, highlighting their sense of self (and therefore, values and social connections) within the game world as personal and salient."

This speaks to the fact that a video game is defined by its effect on human experience.

In-game experience

The in-game experience is immersion in the goals, objectives, and rules characteristic of digital gameplay.

As a result, the terms gameplay, playable experience, and in-game experience are synonyms.

Along those lines, in-game marketing activities are those which **integrate brand presence into playable experiences**.

Example

In 2021, Nike created a virtual world on Roblox, called Nikeland. In it, players could participate in mini games like tag, dodgeball and "floor is lava." Where Nike's activation took shape as an in-game experience that racked up over 34 million visits before being discontinued in May 2024.



Around game experience

A video game livestream is the broadcast of gameplay to a live audience online.

This category includes a variety of gameplay related behaviors beyond a game's virtual world.

Example

A video game livestreaming is the broadcast of gameplay to a live audience online. The actions – e.g., capturing, sharing, and viewing – associated with livestream content occur around a video game's virtual boundaries.

So, it qualifies as a type of around game experience. Likewise, sponsorship of live streamers is one way to reach around game audiences.

Away from game experience

The away from game experience consists of behaviors associated with physical events, media, products, and so forth derived from gameplay or gameplay elements.

Example

Watching Amazon Prime's Fallout series, a show based on the video game title from Bethesda Softworks, is an away from game experience. Since the media product is derived from, but consumed away from, a video game.



Gaming behavior

Gaming behaviors encompass the underlying actions and motivations which define human interaction with a game system, or some of its parts.

Where all game experiences consist of **one or more gaming behaviors**.

Example

The action of spectating competitive gameplay, driven by the motivation to improve one's own gameplay by spectating, is an esports behavior.

Gaming audience

A gaming audience is the population of people who experience similar gaming behaviors.

Where all gaming audiences are defined by at least **one shared gaming behavior**.

Example

A gaming audience can take shape as a video game's player base - consisting of those who engage with its playable experience. Or it could be the viewing audience of competitive gameplay, also known as esports fans.

Game community

A game community is the conceptual home for gaming audiences. Where all gaming audiences **exist within a game community**.

As a result, game communities come in many different shapes and sizes.

To be clear, a game community is not a target audience.

Example

The PC gaming community is home to audiences who experience gaming behaviors on PC platforms. Meanwhile, the esports community is home to audiences defined by competitive gameplay behaviors - regardless of the underlying platform.

However, these game communities overlap. Since, some populations both play games on PC's and consume esports content.

Gaming community

The global gaming community consists of all individual game communities. The term gaming community exists because individual game community populations fluidly overlap.

It is important to remember that the gaming community is purely conceptual. Along those lines, gaming campaigns do not target the gaming community or any individual game community. Instead, they **target gaming audiences**.

Example

For instance, brand sponsors for the 2024 Esports World Cup (EWC, for short) reached that event's audience - not the entire esports community. Nonetheless, EWC was an event within the esports and wider gaming communities by relation.



Gaming platform

A gaming platform is any **system that facilitates a game experience**. This is a broad category that includes any hardware and software combination that allows users to play video games, as well as third-party online services that amplify game experiences.

Example

A personal computer (PC) system designed for video gameplay is a gaming system. A digital service like Twitch, which allows users to share livestreamed gameplay, is also a gaming platform.

Video game genre

A video game's genre is determined by what it **allows players to do within its virtual environment**. In other words, video game genres are foremost characterized by the player's experience – as opposed to its storyline, setting, etc.

Example

The storyline for Riot Games' League of Legends game title is set in a fictional universe called Runterra, one deep enough to inspire a full-length show, Arcane.

However, the game is classified under the multi-player battle arena genre (MOBA). Since that best describes the experience of two teams of five players battling on a map to destroy the other team's base.



Mercedes-Benz Esports Worlds 2024

Brand presence within the League of Legends community also taps into the same competitive, team-based themes that define the game genre.

Where brands like Mercedes Benz sponsor tournaments like the League of Legends Worlds championship – in which top professional teams compete to be crowned the best in the world – to reach esports audiences.

Virtual world

A virtual world is an immersive environment in which people experience the **sense of presence and interactivity** that defines digital gameplay. In it, players can interact with each other and the game world in real-time. These worlds are home to behaviors characteristic of the game genre.

A virtual world is also a **rich emotional landscape** which includes things like the many identities expressed through gameplay.

Example

Electronic Arts' (EA) The Sims is a popular social simulation game title.

The game allows players to create and control virtual avatars, called "Sims", in a simulated suburban setting. The experience is centered on open-ended gameplay, where players can customize their Sims' appearance, personality, relationships, etc.

The Sims' virtual world also encompasses the cultural context for its players' in-game identity expression.



So, for The Sims 4 game title, Dark & Lovely, a 52-year-old brand owned by L'Oréal Group, created in-game modifications that players can use to customize their avatars.

The modifications, called mods, consist of six hairstyles, such as protective braids and natural textures. Each has multiple color variations inspired by Dark & Lovely's mission as, Noah Yung-Hing, VP of marketing, described in a Glossy.co article, "a brand built for Black women to express themselves."

GAMING MEDIA



Gaming media

Gaming media is any content that exists within a video game space or is relevant to behaviors experienced within a game space. This category spans **content within and beyond virtual worlds**.

All effective gaming strategies entail a plan for employing gaming media to support campaign goals and objectives.

That is because target gaming audiences are defined by the time they spend in certain game spaces. So, it is imperative to tap into content relevant to those spaces.

Media is especially critical to effective gaming marketing because target gaming audiences are defined by gaming behaviors, which are **often media behaviors themselves**.

Example

Nestlé's Hot Pockets leaned into around-game media, as part of its award-winning Pockets for Bits campaign in 2020. Where their strategy employed paid media plus influencer created content on Twitch. Since those formats allowed advertising messages to show up where Twitch viewers spend their time.



In-game media

The in-game media category includes any content within a **video game's virtual environment**.

This category includes the various elements and features within a video game that players can interact with or experience, such as virtual items, in-game music and even a game's storyline.

Gaming marketing practice includes tapping into existing in-game content, as well as adding content. To clarify, that includes anything from:

- Buying media space through programmatic ad platforms.
- In-game product and brand placement.
- Promotions which leverage in-game items

Example



As part of a September 2024 collaboration with miHoYo's Genshin Impact, McDonald's released exclusive in-game items. Where players can earn the items by ordering food items from the McDonald's digital app.

This is an example of leveraging in-game media, in the form of virtual items, to promote positive customer actions.

Beyond game media

Gaming media also exists beyond virtual environments. This includes content, which is relevant to gaming behaviors, in any of the following categories:

- Broadcast media
- Digital media
- Out-of-home (OOH) media

Example

The Trolli candy brand dropped into the 2023 PAX West gaming convention to promote a partnership with Krafton's PUBG: Battlegrounds game title.

The activation, an in-real-life scavenger hunt, featured life-sized, brand-themed versions of the crates that appear in PUBG.

Where elements across the gaming-themed scavenger hunt **served as OOH media**.



Gaming space

A gaming space, also known as a video game space, is a non-physical or physical environment in which audiences experience gaming behaviors.

The same orientation to gameplay used for game experiences also **applies to gaming spaces**.

For example, a video game's virtual environment is an in-game space. A video game livestreaming channel is an around game space. An in-person esports tournament is an away from game space.

Example

Financial company Mastercard sponsored a VIP event at the 2022 League of Legends Worlds Championship Group stage. The activation, called The Priceless Table at Worlds 2022, produced by AYS Sports Marketing, was an away from game space that fused food, gaming, and popular culture together.



Downloadable content (DLC)

Downloadable content (**DLC**) is additional digital content, free or paid, made available for video games after the initial release. This category includes in-game artifacts like new storylines, challenges, or cosmetic items.

Example

In March 2024, Mountain Dew, a US-based soft drink beverage, partnered with Final Fantasy 14 to celebrate the arrival of Dawntrail with new epic rewards. Dawntrail is the fifth expansion pack to Final Fantasy 14, a massively multiplayer online role-playing game published by Square Enix.

Expansion packs are DLC that amplify the core game experience. Along those lines, Mountain Dew also offered a brand-inspired virtual item, called a Mountain Zu, as part of the DLC. Consumers could obtain the item by purchasing specially marked Mountain Dew soft drinks and redeeming the included code.



User generated content (UGC)

User-generated content (UGC) is any gaming content created by **users instead of the original video game's developers**. This category spans both in-game and beyond-game content such as

- Modifications (mods) to existing game assets
- Gaming-inspired digital media
- Entirely new playable experiences

Example

Roblox is a social gaming platform that allows you to play user-created games, a form of UGC, created through Roblox Studio.

Where, in 2023, nonprofit Comic Relief US leveraged Roblox UGC, by launching a virtual world called “Solarpunk Simulator.” The experience was designed to encourage giving and community building. It also served as a fundraiser for Comic Relief’s real-life programs battling poverty in America.”

The experience racked up **over 32 billion minutes** (about 61,000 years) of playtime according to Comic Relief US CEO Alison Moore.



Video game live streaming

Video game live streaming, also called game streaming, is the practice of broadcasting gameplay in real-time over the internet, allowing viewers to **watch as someone plays a video game**.

This behavior has become hugely popular. Where platforms like Twitch, YouTube Gaming, and Facebook Gaming have become primary video game streaming venues.

Example

In 2022, AT&T, a global telecommunications brand, partnered with Twitch to provide rising streamers with an opportunity to level up their careers. Each member of the AT&T Class of 2021 received:

- Mentorship
- AT&T equipment
- Sponsored stream support

Speaking about the Class of 2022, Sabina Ahmed, assistant vice president of sponsorships and experiential marketing at AT&T, said, "It's an honor for us to help connect them with new audiences, build a community, and provide the right resources to grow their careers."

Where the program sought to promote AT&T as the go-to network for next-gen gaming at home and on the go.



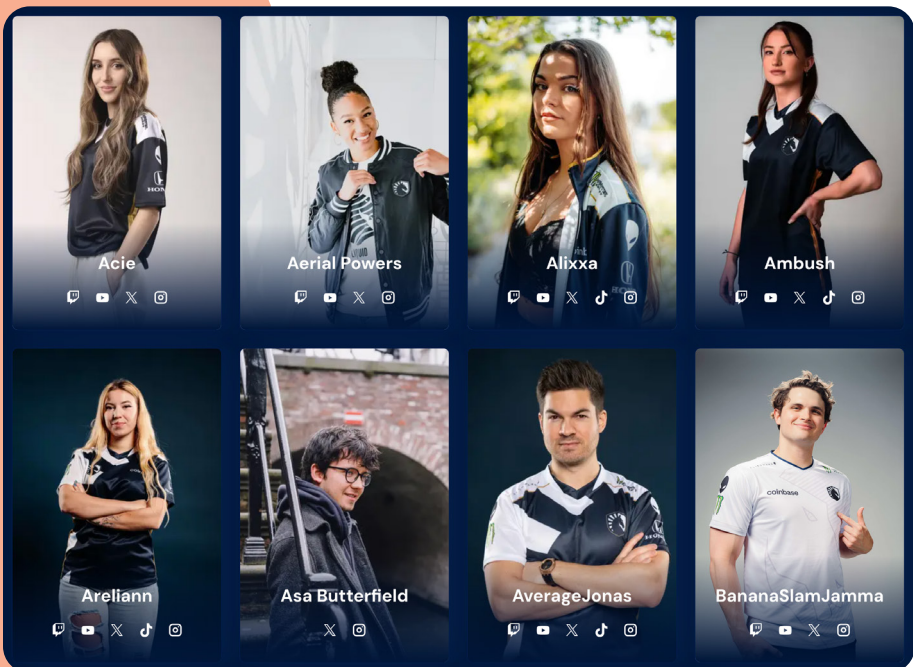
Gaming creator

A gaming creator is someone who **produces UGC related to video games**. Gaming creators can take shape as those who produce:

- Video game livestreams
- Gaming videos
- Social media content relevant to gaming

Example

Team Liquid is a global gaming organization. In addition to running esports teams that compete in 15+ video game titles, Team Liquid also fields 30+ individual gaming creators. Where creators' UGC helps boost Team Liquid's brand engagement and offers additional avenues for sponsors to gain visibility.



GAMING MARKETING FUNDAMENTALS



Target gaming audience

A target gaming audience is the population meant to **perform an intended, or target, action**.

Since all gaming audiences are synonymous with their experience of some gaming behavior or behaviors. Intended actions should be relevant to those behaviors.

Example

A digital game environment is marked by the experience of gameplay behaviors. Where those who venture into that virtual world to experience play (its players) are the target audience for in-game advertising placements.

Gaming marketing

Gaming marketing is the practice of inspiring action by way of **relevance to game experiences**.

Gaming marketing focuses on actions because the entire marketing funnel - consisting of awareness, consideration, conversion, loyalty, and advocacy - is itself composed of actions.

Gaming marketing is distinct from video game marketing, which is solely about encouraging the action of digital gameplay. Said, differently, video game marketing is only concerned with the action of playing video games. Meanwhile, gaming marketing covers all other actions - whether they are naturally relevant to gameplay or not.

Example

An example of video game marketing was when Electronic Arts (reportedly) paid popular Twitch streamer Ninja \$1 million to promote their Apex

Legends game title in 2019. That's because the intended action was for target audiences to play the game.

An example of gaming marketing was when athletic apparel brand Adidas released a shoe with Ninja. This time the intended action was for target audiences to buy the shoe based on its relevance to Ninja's influence as a gaming creator.



Endemic gaming marketing

Endemic gaming marketing applies to intended actions which are **dependent on digital gameplay**.

This category includes marketing and advertising for all offerings that could not exist without video games.

Example

The ESL Pro League is a professional esports league for Counterstrike, a long-running first-person shooter video game franchise. It features some of the world's best Counterstrike teams.

The promotion of ESL Pro League events is endemic gaming marketing. Since those events could not exist without Counterstrike game titles.



Non-endemic gaming marketing

Non-endemic gaming marketing covers intended actions which are **independent of digital gameplay**.

All non-gaming offerings leverage non-endemic gaming marketing to inspire action from gaming audiences.

Example

Monster Energy's sponsorship of ESL Pro League was a non-endemic gaming marketing exercise. Since Monster Energy drinks exist independently of video games and competitive gameplay. Even though the brand sought to inspire action from esports fans.



Gaming marketing campaign

A gaming campaign is a coordinated set of marketing activities which include the following elements:

- An intended action
- Clear relevance to a game experience
- Media and channels used to reach a gaming audience

The flexibility to tap into any type of game experience and or channel means gaming campaigns can involve presence within or beyond a virtual world.

Example

For example, Nike's branded Roblox world is a gaming campaign execution. While Monster Energy's activations associated with the ESL Pro League also qualify as the same.

Touch point

A touchpoint is an **intangible or tangible part of a game experience**. Touch points are integral to the actions and motivations which define gaming behaviors.

As a result, touch points exist both within and beyond gameplay.

Touch points are central to gaming marketing practice. Since they are the source of relevance to a game experience.

That relevance is key because it weaves an intended action into the related gaming behaviors characteristic of the target gaming audience.

As a result, the audience is encouraged to perform the action as an **organic part of the game experience**.

Example

Global fashion brand Louis Vuitton created a carrying case for the 2019 League of Legends World's championship trophy. The carrying case was an around game touch point. Since, like the championship trophy, it was a tangible part of the League of Legends esports (around-game) experience.

Likewise, the touch point's relevance to League of Legends esports encourages fans to perceive the Louis Vuitton brand as an organic part of the game's competitive experience.



Gaming event

A gaming event is an organized gathering that brings together members of the worldwide gaming community. These events can take many forms, including:

- Conventions and expos, which are large gatherings where companies promote new game titles and gaming products.
- Tournaments, which give players or teams the opportunity to compete for prizes or recognition.
- Online events that allow audiences to participate from anywhere.

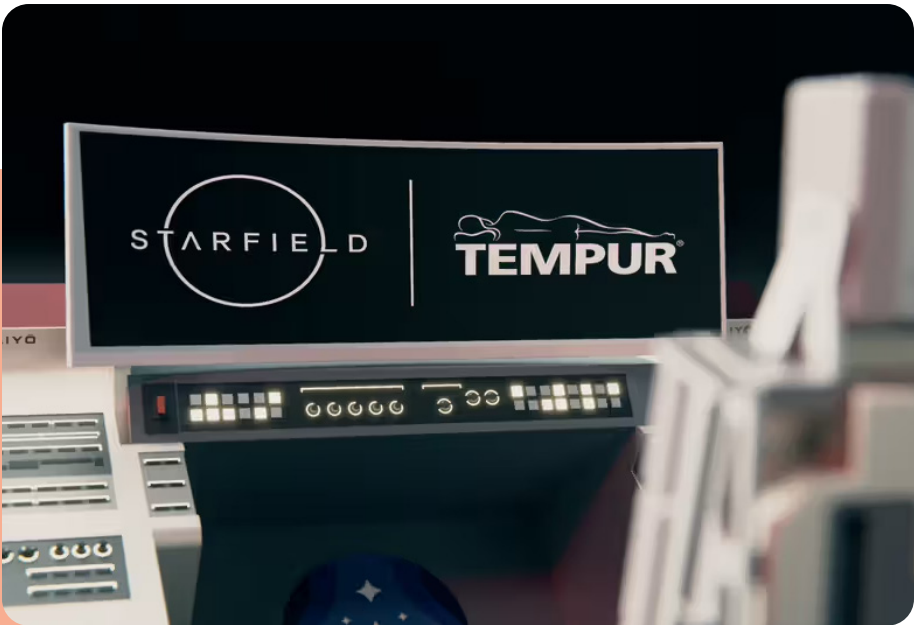
Along those lines, brands and marketers can tap into gaming events using traditional techniques like on-site activations.

Example

Gamescom is one of the mainstay gaming events each calendar year. The 2023 edition, hosted in Cologne, Germany, involved reveals of long-awaited game titles such as Starfield.

TEMPUR, a global mattress and bedding product company, executed a brand activation at Gamescom 2023 by joining forces with Microsoft Xbox. The activation took shape as a one-of-a-kind gaming chair inspired by Starfield. The chair, called the Dream Chair, was available for Gamescom attendees to check out at the Xbox booth.

It utilized TEMPUR's signature material originally developed by NASA scientists in the early 1960's to support astronauts. The aesthetic was a "NASA Punk" art style with thematic details from Starfield's virtual world.



Gaming partnership

A gaming partnership is a collaborative relationship aimed at achieving mutual benefits through the **sharing of technology, media, or commerce opportunities**. Partnerships include sponsorships but are a broader category spanning activities such as sales, technical integrations, and more.

Example

In September 2024, Roblox announced that Shopify would be the gaming platform's first commerce integration partner.

The partnership will bring Shopify's world-class checkout into immersive spaces on Roblox. So, developers, creators, and brands who are on Shopify can sell physical items directly without ever leaving the Roblox platform.

Gaming sponsorship

A gaming sponsorship is a partnership between a brand or company and an endemic part of the gaming community – such as an influencer, an esports team, or gaming event.

The sponsor typically provides financial support, products, or services in exchange for promotion and visibility. In gaming, this includes key placement in relevant video game spaces. That can take shape as logos on apparel, branding during live streams or broadcast events, social media shoutouts, and more.

Gaming sponsorships provide revenue for parties integral to game experiences. They also allow brands to **reach gaming audiences through non-interruptive advertising**.

Example

Red Bull, a global energy drink brand, has an impressive gaming marketing portfolio. It features sponsorships of several prominent competitive gaming teams and professional gamers.

Gaming media mix

The gaming media mix refers to the selection of media relevant to a target gaming audience. Where it combines the channels and platforms necessary to show up in **spaces relevant to that audience**.

Example

The media mix for a gaming campaign targeting esports fans would differ from a campaign seeking to connect with mobile gamers. Since each audience frequents different game spaces.

Gaming marketing mix

The gaming marketing mix describes the strategic elements used to bring an offering to market for target gaming audiences.

The marketing mix takes shape as gaming-specific tactics across the **traditional 4 P's - product, price, place, and promotion**.

This includes all aspects of bringing a product intended for gaming audiences to the market, not just communication. The mix takes shape as:

- Product – Features and qualities which distinguish an offering from alternatives.
- Price – The cost of acquiring an offering.

- Place – Where the product is available and how it will be displayed.
- Promotion – The overall media strategy for introducing an offering.

Example

Sanrio celebrated the 50th anniversary of Hello Kitty by partnering with Razer for an exclusive gaming gear collection. The collaboration demonstrated how non-endemic brands like Hello Kitty can utilize all four elements of the gaming marketing mix.

There is Hello Kitty branding on all products (Razer Enki X gaming chair, Razer Kraken V2 BT wireless gaming headset, and Razer Ornata V3 TKL mechanical keyboard).

All Hello Kitty hardware is also priced higher than non-branded counterparts. Even though it is functionally identical. For instance, the standard Kraken Kitty V2 is currently \$79.99, whereas the Hello Kitty model is \$139.99.

The peripherals can be purchased directly from Razer or through third party merchants like Amazon and Best Buy.

Meanwhile, promotions leveraged paid digital media, social media, and PR channels.



Gaming strategy

An effective gaming strategy answers two key questions:

Where to play?

How to win there?

The where to play direction outlines the gaming spaces in which **advertising messages will show up**. Since, by definition, all target gaming audiences experience gaming behaviors within at least one video game space.

So, advertising must show up there to inspire those audiences.

The how to win direction specifies the media, products, etc. associated with inspiring intended actions. Where this designation involves **defining a media and marketing mix**.

Example

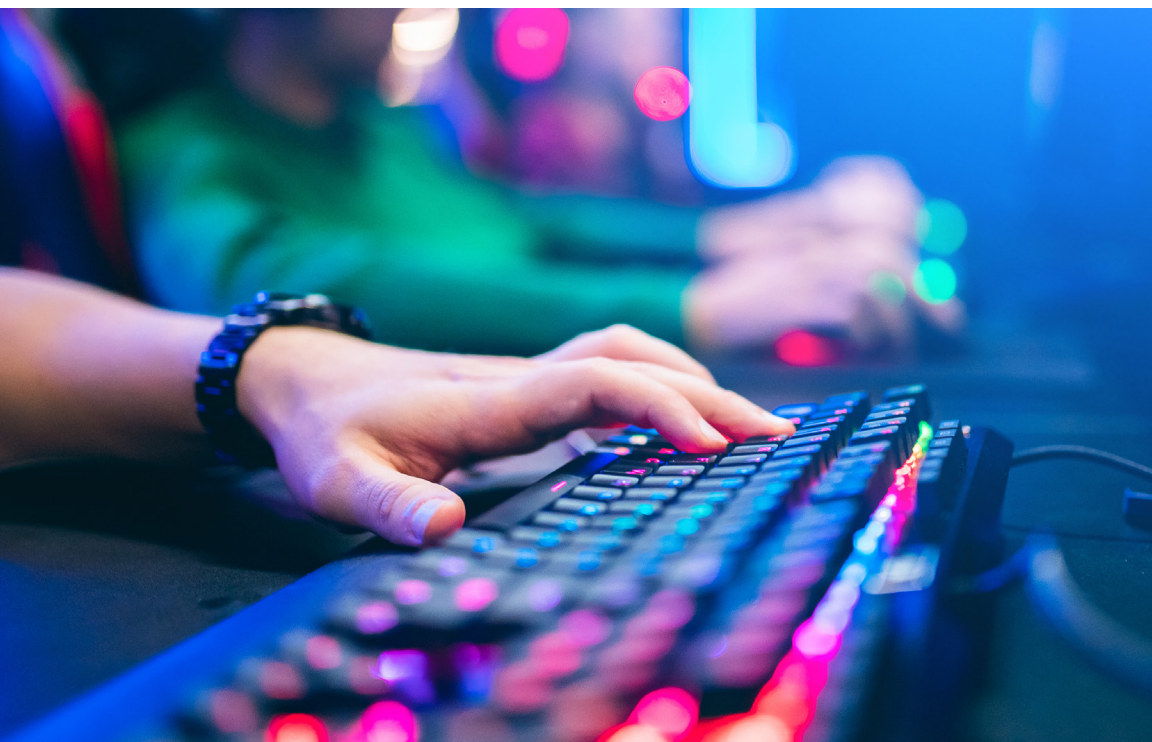
Starting in 2020, Kellogg's, a multi-national food production company, partnered with the Minecraft game title to promote interest in its portfolio of food brands. Kellogg's gaming strategy sought to encourage families to play Minecraft together and purchase Kellogg products, through:

- In-game item promotions
- Paid social media on platforms popular with Minecraft's gaming audience
- A Minecraft-inspired marketing mix which included special packaging and promotions.

In other words, Kellogg's decided to play in Minecraft spaces within and beyond gameplay. Where winning purchase actions were encouraged by an omni-channel media mix and an omni-commerce marketing mix.



KEY CONCEPTS



Mini game

A mini game refers to a self-contained game or challenge **within a larger playable experience**. Mini games can provide a break from the larger primary objectives. They can also serve as side quests which are part of a game's goals.

Example

The Roblox experience "Outfit Shopping Mall," is a purposefully built virtual mall that emulates the layout of shopping malls in the physical world.

Mango, a Barcelona, Spain-based fashion group, activated in the experience in January 2024. Mango's virtual store served as a playable mini-game within the larger experience – albeit one in which players could try on and buy fashion.



Lore

Lore refers to the backstory, mythology, and world-building elements that give life to the in-game universe. It includes the history, characters and events that shape a playable experience. Lore is expressed through various forms, such as **in-game texts, dialogues, and storytelling.**

Example

To reignite hype around the PlayStation 5 (PS5) console, Sony teamed up with Amplify and Adam&EveDDB.

The resulting campaign, called 'Live from PS5' won multiple honors at The Drum Marketing Awards in 2023. It was designed to mimic a real news network, featuring journalists from around the globe reporting on fictional happenings within various PS5 worlds.

One of the campaign's out-of-home activations depicted the Leviathan Axe, an iconic in-game weapon used in the hit game title God of War, smashed down beside the River Thames in London.

The Leviathan Axe is a two-handed battle axe central to God of War lore. In that, it was forged by the Huldra Brothers, who also forged Thor's hammer. After which, it was passed to the game's protagonist and main character, Kratos.

Where the use of a touch point derived from in-game lore was designed to inspire target audiences to purchase a PS5, so they can access exclusive experiences like God of War.



In-game storytelling

In-game storytelling is the means of communicating narrative, characters, and world to players. Unlike storytelling in books or movies, in-game storytelling is an interactive medium that allows the player to **actively shape and experience the story**.

Example

Consumer electronics brand Polaroid partnered with Square Enix in August 2024. The partnership brought the iconic Polaroid camera into the *Life is Strange: Double Exposure* video game title. In the game's storyline Max Caulfield is a professional photographer and investigator of supernatural mysteries.

The brand integration features Max, the game's protagonist, using a Polaroid Now Generation-2 iType camera to create beautifully imperfect in-game images in the iconic Polaroid style. Where the seamless match between

Polaroid and the storytelling creates an effective product placement e.g., one that does not disrupt the playable experience.



Beyond-game storytelling

Beyond game storytelling refers to the narrative and characters beyond a game's virtual world. Gaming-inspired documentaries, biographies and other non-fiction media typify this form of communication.

Example

In April 2023, leading global healthcare company Novo Nordisk teamed up with global esports tournament organizer and media platform BLAST to inspire gamers worldwide to spend time away from the keyboard or screen, taking care of their body and mind.

The "Away from Keyboard" campaign featured a documentary series, where the biggest names in esports share their personal journeys to obtaining a more balanced lifestyle away from the bright lights and pressure of competitive gaming.

The first episode starred former professional gamer and Paris Major broadcast analyst Jacob "Pimp" Winneche. In it, Winneche shared his story of how pursuing a healthier lifestyle away from the keyboard improved his wellbeing and quality of life.

The sponsored content and associated storytelling allow Novo Nordisk to speak to esports fans in a relevant and meaningful way.

Phygital

Phygital brings together physical, real-world aspects (like toys, merchandise, or other physical objects) with the virtual, digital side (anything in a virtual world). In gaming, it is often centered on bridging the gap **between real-world outcomes and virtual actions**.

Example

Socialite and businessperson Paris Hilton launched Slivingland, a playable experience on Roblox, in August 2023. Slivingland invites players to experience Paris' favorite activities including shopping, collecting, and partying.

Then in January 2024, hospitality brand Hilton Hotels activated in Slivingland to launch a loyalty program on Roblox.

The program allowed Slivingland players to earn Hilton Honors Points through in-game challenges. Where those points enhance real-life Hilton Honors status, allowing them to enjoy the amenities of Hilton's hotels.



Hilton
FOR THE STAY™

slivingland
BY PARIS HILTON

In-game advertising

In-game advertising is the practice of integrating advertisements into a gameplay environment. This form of advertising reaches a game's player base, which is the **audience immersed in gameplay**.

There are different formats of in-game advertising, including:

Static ads built into the game's design, which means they are not changeable once the game is developed and released.

Dynamic ads which can be updated in real-time, allowing advertisers to change or modify the content during gameplay sessions.

Advergames, also known as branded games, are experiences in which things like the narrative, mechanics, and characters are often tied to a brand.

Reward-based ads give players the opportunity to interact with ad content in exchange for in-game rewards, such as extra lives, in-game currency, or power-ups.

Interstitial ads are full-screen ads that appear during natural breaks in the game, such as between levels, loading screens, or when the player pauses the game.

Example

Spotify, a global media and audio streaming company, leveraged iion, a gaming-focused AdTech platform, to connect with gamers ages 7 to 70. Their diverse in-game ads across different titles boosted the brand's awareness and achieved an above-industry-benchmark viewability rate of 93.8%.

Beyond-game advertising

The practice of integrating advertising units into video game spaces beyond gameplay. This is a broad category, including:

Paid media for video game livestreams and on-demand gaming video content on platforms like Twitch and YouTube.

The Out-of-home (**OOH**) advertising at gaming events.

Advertising integrated into beyond gameplay behaviors by way of **Third-party technology**.

Example

Converse, an American lifestyle brand that sells footwear, apparel, and accessories, used inStreamly to display immersive skatepark artwork highlighting its shoes during video game livestreams. inStreamly is a technology platform that automatically displays art-based advertisements on a livestream broadcast during a specified period.

The ads appeared as if they were a part of the in-game action. However, they were, in fact, integrated into the beyond game media environment.

In-game activation

A marketing strategy where a brand or product is integrated into gameplay through a **specific event, challenge, or unlockable content**. In-game activations are more interactive and designed to create direct, as opposed to passive, interaction with the brand or product.

Example

In July 2023, Altitude, a UK independent distributor, brought its horror movie Talk to Me to Fortnite – a massively popular video game with approximately 30 million daily active players.

The in-game activation was designed to promote the film – in response to heightened competition from blockbuster studios like Warner Bros. Discovery, Fox, and Disney. It took shape as a limited-time experience executed within a popular Fortnite experience called Deadpines: Zombie Survival.

The activation transported players into parts of the movie recreated in meticulous detail within Deadpines. Live from July 17th through August 13th, 2023, Talk to Me's activation racked up over 1.4 million gameplay sessions and achieved a remarkable 55-minute average play session.

The campaign also won a silver honor for Immersive and was a finalist in Interactive Content at the 16th annual Shorty Awards.

Most importantly, the film premiered to become one of the highest-grossing films of the year and secured a sequel by the time the campaign was completed.



Beyond-game activation

A marketing strategy that leverages events or media behaviors to integrate a brand or product into a **video game space beyond gameplay**. Beyond-game are defined by the presence of beyond game media.

Example

As part of its Evo 2023 activation, restaurant brand Chipotle built an onsite community lounge at one of the biggest esports events of the year. The space offered hourly brackets where players could compete for custom branded Chipotle prizes. One prize was a gift card redeemable for a Chipotle entree.

Chipotle's activation in Evo's beyond game event space led to the gift card emerging as one of the hottest status symbols among Evo attendees. Where the card itself became part of fighting game culture.



ADVANCED



Esports marketing

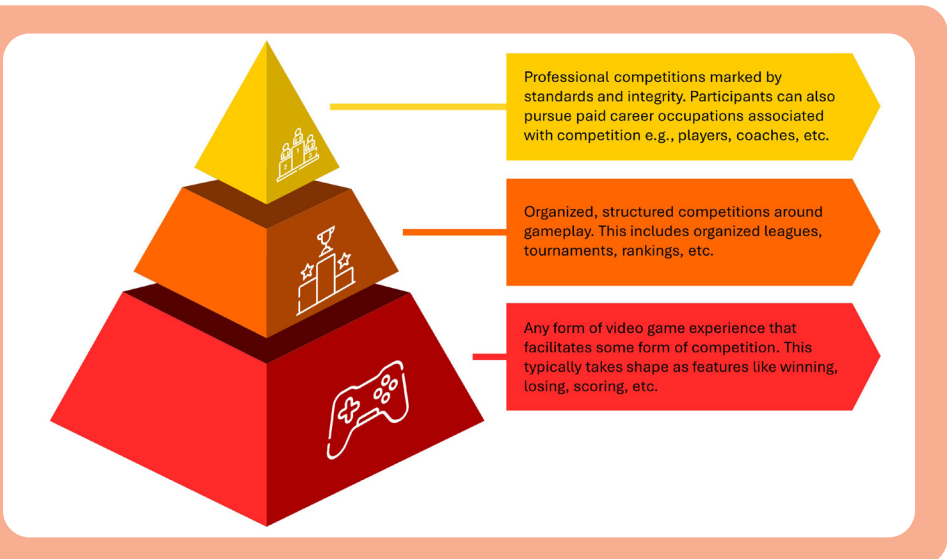
Electronic sports, esports for short, is organized, competitive video gaming where individuals or teams compete in various video games. In other words, **multiple competitive gaming behaviors** sit under the esports umbrella.

To illustrate, let's introduce the esports pyramid model. The bottom layer, illustrated in red, represents any video game experience that facilitates some form of competition. This typically takes shape as in-game features like winning, losing, scoring, and so forth.

The middle layer stands for organized, structured competition around gameplay. This includes organized leagues, tournaments, rankings, etc.

The top layer, shown in yellow, represents professional competition marked by standards and integrity. This is typically called professional gaming since it is where participants can pursue paid occupations associated with competition.

Where esports marketing is any form of gaming marketing that creates or taps into touch points associated with **either of those three pyramid layers**.



Example

In April 2024, Chipotle announced a series of activations, executed by rEv/XP. The activations were tied to Chipotle's official partnership with Tekken 8, a fighting game published by Bandai Namco Entertainment.

One activation allowed players to earn Tekken Coins, the game's virtual currency, when they order through the Chipotle app or website using a promo code inspired by the game's "Electric Wind God Fist" move.

In addition to gaining in-game currency by ordering food, the promotion also empowered players to earn branded items by defeating an AI-controlled character in competitive gameplay.

The activation qualifies as esports marketing because Tekken is itself a competitive video game title.



Gaming organization

A gaming organization is a company or group involved in the video game industry. These organizations come in different varieties and sizes. However, they tend to all include esports teams consisting of professional players who compete in video game tournaments. They typically provide resources, coaching, and support to players while representing their brand in competitions.

Organizations can also include content creators who are active on channels like YouTube, Twitch, and/or social media.

Where brands and companies can work together with gaming organizations through partnerships.

Example

Korean esports organization Gen.G revealed a limited-edition uniform to commemorate the team's appearance in the 2024 League of Legends World Championship.

Japanese sports clothing brand Descente collaborated on the kit – its first foray into esports. The outfit features a jersey and a jacket, with gold trims borrowed from Gen.G's logo. The pieces also display a scratch from the team's mascot, the tiger, meant to express "the fight needed to achieve victory."



Professional gamer

A professional gamer is someone who competes in video games, as a career. Gaming organizations sign pro gamers to participate in tournaments, leagues, or other competitive events. Individuals who create content for a living are also considered pro gamers, however.

Companies often sponsor professional gamers in exchange for promotion and brand exposure.

Example

Professional gamer Lee Sang-hyeok, known by his in-game moniker “Faker,” partnered with South Korean eyewear brand Stealer in August 2024. Stealer is an eyewear brand specializing in stainless steel prescription glasses and sunglasses.

The partnership included an eyewear collection co-created with Faker – including a mouse pad with an eyewear holder and a special edition box set.

Faker was also named the brand’s Global Ambassador for its ‘Steel by Stealer’ line of eyewear.



Gaming lifestyle

The gaming lifestyle is the collection of behaviors across the worldwide gaming community. That means when a population experiences gaming behaviors, they are, by relation, **participating in the gaming lifestyle**.

It also means, from a marketing and advertising perspective, there is no relevance to the gaming lifestyle without game experience touch points. Since those parts are integral to gaming behaviors.

Example

Athletic apparel brand Under Armour partnered with Nick 'Nickmercs' Kolcheff, a popular gaming creator, in 2021. The collaboration revolves around MFAM, which is an acronym for Mercs family.

MFAM is a touch point for Nickmercs' fans and followers, who share a similar passion for gaming and outlook on fitness. In other words, MFAM is representative of one form of the gaming lifestyle.

Lifestyle touch points

Touch points are integral to the same gaming behaviors which define both game experiences and the gaming lifestyle. So, we refer to touch points as lifestyle touch points.

That is also why effective gaming marketing, the practice of tapping into and/or creating touch points, weaves **intended actions into the gaming lifestyle**.

Example

Nickmercs' MFAM community is central to lifestyle behaviors that define his personal fandom and support.

Likewise, Under Armour's co-branded MFAM athletic apparel is a gaming lifestyle touch point. As a result, the action of purchasing co-branded merchandise is itself a lifestyle behavior.



Endemic gaming products

Offerings created specifically for use as a **part of gaming behaviors are endemic** to those behaviors. So, they are referred to as endemic gaming products. In other words, endemic products would not exist without video games.

Whereas non-endemic products do not need video games to exist. Since they are not specifically designed and created for gaming behaviors.

Example

HyperX, an HP Inc. gaming peripheral brand, released a Naruto: Shippuden collection in September 2022. The limited-edition collection features design elements inspired by Itachi Uchiha and Naruto Uzumaki – two characters from the iconic anime series.

The gaming collection includes the HyperX Alloy Origins mechanical gaming keyboard, HyperX Cloud Alpha gaming headset, HyperX Pulsefire Haste gaming mouse, and HyperX Pulsefire Mat gaming mouse pad.

All these products are endemic to PC gameplay. Where the Naruto media franchise, which is itself non-endemic, is utilizing this product category to connect with PC gamers.



Gaming-inspired products

Offerings derived from a game experience, or parts of a game experience are gaming-inspired products. This is a broad product category that covers anything from borrowing intellectual property to tapping into relevant emotions and moments.

Example

In summer 2023, Fenty Beauty launched its first campaign on gaming platform Roblox. In the Fenty Beauty Experience virtual world, available between June 30th and July 30th, 2023, players could create their own virtual Gloss Bomb lip gloss in a lab section of the game.

In it, they could customize their own gloss by selecting the ingredients, effects, bottle design, lid, applicator and shade name.

At the end of the campaign, Fenty Beauty founder Rihanna reviewed creations from 400 finalists and selected one winner. That creation served as inspiration for the Major Flex Gloss Bomb Universal Lip Luminizer, released in 2024.

Plus, as a nod to its gaming-inspired origins, the lip gloss comes with a limited edition Fenty branded key cap.



Gaming lifestyle products

Gaming plays a unique role in the lifestyles of the billions who experience video games across the world.

As a result, offerings that **blend into those gaming-inspired lifestyles** are termed gaming lifestyle products.

Example

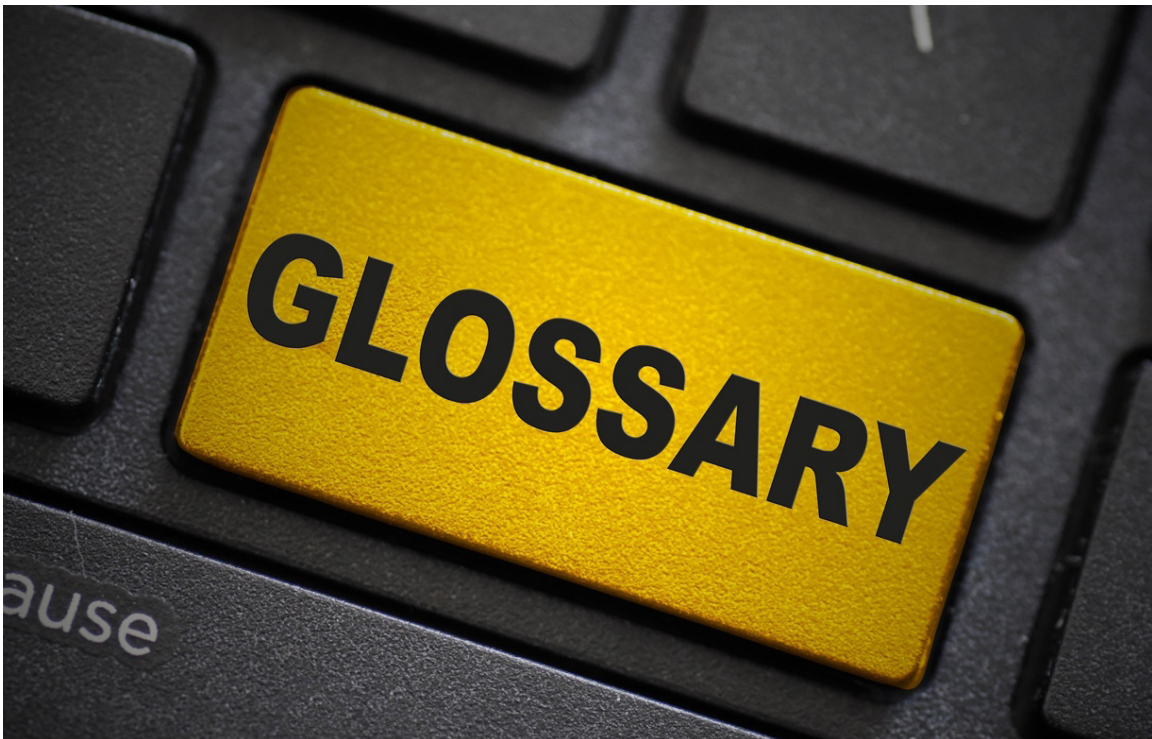
Gaming organization Team Liquid partnered with Marvel Entertainment in 2019.

Then, in September 2024, Team Liquid launched the X-Men'97 Collection - consisting of 10 apparel items - in celebration of the "X-Men'97" release on Disney+.

The co-branded apparel tapped into Team Liquid's role as a lifestyle touch point for millions of esports fans and gamers across the world. As a result, the clothing items doubled as gaming lifestyle products.



GLOSSARY



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GAMING MARKETING INSTITUTE

GAMING MARKETING MADE SIMPLE

Gaming is no longer a niche activity. It is a mass medium commanding the attention of billions each year.

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