

THE RISE OF PUBG AND THE MARKETING STRATEGIES BEHIND ITS SUCCESS

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ABSTRACT

PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) is a video game which was released in late December 2017 and is a very recent phenomenon, yet has attained massive commercial success in a very short time. PUBG is the 5th highest selling video game of all time and is considered to be the defining experience of the Battle Royale video game genre. One of the main contributors to the success is the marketing strategies implemented by the developers of PUBG, a young Korean firm called 'Bluehole'. Being a young and small company, Bluehole overcame a very limited marketing budget and instead utilized recent and relevant mediums in the form of social media and streaming media and made the most of their limited available capabilities.

The main purpose of this research paper is to answer the research questions put forward and the research objectives presented in order to understand the process which led to PUBG attaining unparalleled commercial success in limited time. Also, to examine the marketing strategies implemented by the video game industry in the past and why they were not equally effective, as well as if the newer strategies used by PUBG can be implemented by the rest of the industry in the future to reach the same heights.

Keywords: *Battle Royale, Live Streaming, Online Marketing, Shooter Video Games, Social Media*

1. INTRODUCTION

PUBG (PlayerUnknown's Battle Grounds) is a video game which is classified under the 'Battle Royale' sub-genre of shooter video games. The game was released in late December 2017 and witnessed an unparalleled rise to the top of the video game market, going on to become the fifth highest selling game of all time within six months of release. This research aims to examine the unique rise of PUBG within a remarkably short amount of time and determine what exactly resulted in the game attaining the level of commercial success in the shortest of timespans, something which even established video game franchises of the past had not been able to match. The research also aims to identify and take a deeper look into the factors such as marketing and analysis of target audience and market which the parent organisation 'Bluehole' executed exemplarily and in all likelihood will be replicated and followed by major players in the video game industry in the future in an attempt to replicate the remarkable commercial success of PUBG.

PUBG is first and foremost a shooter game, which is a broad genre of games in which a character battles against opponents using weapons and ammunition and aims to complete certain objectives (Molina, 2017). Shooter video games are also commonly referred to as shooting games. There are various sub genres under shooter games but the recurring common theme is weapons being used to shoot at opponents. PUBG is classified under First Person Shooting (FPS) games consist of products which involve the user experiencing the

game in first person view. With the advent of CGI, FPS games have gained popularity as the first person view allows for an extremely realistic experience. Traditional popular FPS games such as Call of Duty allow the character to infiltrate an Iraqi battle site and wowed the world with realistic sequences in which the first person view allowed the user to experience all the action and chaos first hand. Users could witness the mushroom clouds from an atomic explosion while sitting in a rapidly disintegrating helicopter while despairing locals shot rockets from the ground (Elias, 2009).

Shooter games have embraced the First Person view back since the earliest days of video game production. FPS games revolve around the user viewing the game through the eyes of the protagonist and depend heavily on reflexes, speed of thought and hand eye coordination of the player. The genre began to develop in the early 1980's but came to mainstream light thanks to 'Doom' a FPS game which introduced the cinematic, adventurous style that FPS games. Soon, FPS games were loosely divided into 'adventure' and 'tactical' (Klevjer, 2006) as the genre began to develop at a rapid rate. The main criticism of shooter games over decades is that the experience tends to become stale rather quickly. Till the turn of the millennium, shooter games followed the basic, tried and tested formula of sticking to characters killing each other with an assortment of weapons. There was precious little scope to make major and noticeable changes in the basic concept of the game. This changed in 2000 after a movie was released in Japan before releasing worldwide in 2001.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Streaming over the past decade has become synonymous with video gaming. E-sports such as Counter Strike and League of Legends have brought about the rise of the professional gamer (Edge, 2017). The best example being Ninja, an American teenager who is the most well-known streamer on Twitch and broadcasts his gaming sessions where he challenges celebrities ranging from famous athletes, musicians, actors etc. PUBG Cooperation identified this link and by utilizing streamers and broadcasters, not only marketed their game for non-existent charges but also managed to obtain feedback, reviews, suggestions and ideas from the best of their target audience as streamers are widely accepted to be the most engaged as well as the most skilled video game players. It is clear that the results of the innovative steps taken by the developers yielded unexpected results. PUBG generated eleven million USD within three days of release and sold a million copies in a month! But the Bluehole team, led by Community Manager Sammie Kang continue to innovate and push the boundaries of marketing and audience research. Ms. Kang streamed gaming sessions of herself for almost three months to glean a better understanding of the process and model involved and continues to invite fans and players to join her by sending invites through Twitter.

While the marketing process for PUBG has in all likelihood opened up a whole new window of opportunities for streamers and video game developers alike, a great deal of credit goes to the research, analysis and understanding of the target audience and the market displayed by Bluehole. In mid-2017, E- sports and Battle Royale games were stuck in a seemingly irreversible decline. E-sports viewership numbers were down nearly forty five percent from 2016, steeply falling from a peak of half a million viewers to barely two hundred and twenty thousand (Quantifi Digital, 2017). The Battle Royale genre was facing an extinction of sorts simply because no one was making them well anymore. Users and players were migrating to established, high budget games such as CounterStrike and Call of Duty, which were not exactly Battle Royale games but were produced

and developed by large organisations with considerable financial backing. In comparison, Battle Royale games were produced either at home by small time game developers or were being made by companies and firms with no prior experience in shooting games of any sort such as Bluehole. PUBG was something of a fairytale scenario. The creator of the Battle Royale genre Brendan Greene was roped in and given a significant development budget which allowed a polished and visually engaging video game to be made. Most importantly, barriers restricting entry into the market which would have been a major obstacle a few years ago were now missing and the market was ripe to be taken over by a quality product. After targeting the lower level streamers and live broadcasters through a unique marketing and roll out process, the game caught the attention of Shroud and Summit1g, the primary industry influencers and the biggest names and most popular streamers on twitch.tv. This marked the revival for users who had been migrating, the genre itself which had been failing and e-sport streaming which was in free fall. As mentioned earlier, the timing was essential and the market was yearning for a new high-quality entry.

Multiple strategies are required to survive: stealth and isolation, cooperation and sacrifice, confrontation and aggression. Like many soldiers in the first world war, PUBG players can “die” from exposure to poison gas, in hand-to-hand combat, or through being shot by snipers and enemies they never even see, all of which are exceedingly modern and newer war methods. Every ditch, bush and rock in the PUBG landscape can be lifesaving cover. Common weapons include historic revolvers, single-shot rifles and Tommy guns. At the same time, PUBG paints a picture of a disturbing future war that mixes high-tech weaponry (bots, automated weapons drop, remote location and health tracking) with scarcity and desperation. Players in PUBG aren’t in an organised army but a hastily assembled militia that must loot clothes, weapons and medicine. In this war anything is possible, you might find an automatic weapon and body armour or be forced to defend yourself with a frying pan (Macdowall, 2018).

Finally, moving onto PUBG as a game. The premise is simple enough. Up to one hundred players are simultaneously parachuted onto an eight by eight kilometre (Hall, 2017) island which is filled with an assortment of weapons, vehicles, armour, equipment and different terrain ranging from bushes to trees to abandoned caves to ghost towns. The game is literally all against all, because while there is an option to play solo or in squads of two, three or four as well as a temporary ridiculous fifty against fifty team, there are no limits to what can be done.

Few of the ideas in Battlegrounds are completely new. A handful of survival games and mods have explored similar concepts: The Culling, Hungercraft, H1Z1: King of the Kill, and of course, the Arma 2 mod DayZ: Battle Royale, developed by PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds creator Brendan Greene, aka PlayerUnknown. The core gameplay isn’t new or stunningly innovative, but when condensed down into something more polished than what’s on a market in dire need of innovation, real quality and easily consumable for new players, you do end up with something great. So much of PlayerUnknown’s Battlegrounds’ success is owed to its refusal to waste the player’s time. Barring a brief free-for-all period as all one hundred participants load in, players are afforded very little room to mess around. Failing to find a weapon in the opening minutes is often a death sentence. A deadly shrinking force field consistently compels players into the center of the play arena. Frequent airstrikes, marked with red on the map, encourage even more player movement. It’s a brisk pace

that forces a steady stream of increasingly thrilling encounters with other players without totally sacrificing the moments of terrifying solitude that make games like this great. In a way, PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds feels like it's taken a very specific part of a moderately good Battle Royale game, for example DayZ and condensed it down into its purest form, which makes perfect sense (Duggan, 2018).

A quick comparison with slightly older Battle Royale games (in this case DayZ) highlights how PUBG has successfully made significant adjusts that are not necessarily major but contribute greatly to an improved overall experience. Another online, open-world survival game, the zombie-themed DayZ was made popular thanks to its focus on unpredictable and intense emergent experiences. DayZ lacks an ultimate goal, so encounters with other players in its Soviet-inspired setting can end a multitude of ways: mutual fear and awkward fleeing, nerve-racking long-distance stand-offs, extended games of apocalyptic cat-and-mouse chases, the game has all the choices and varieties that make the Battle Royale genre stand apart from other shooting games. But because of its aimless nature, DayZ can also be slow, boring, and empty. A single session is often filled with long, weighty periods of absolutely nothing. For someone who enjoys the tension that can come with this approach of lying prone on a hill overlooking a town for ten minutes, waiting for any sign of movement, slowly starving to death, lot of customers do not think its pacing is a bad thing. Some of the all-time favourite gaming experiences are deeply rooted in and originate from the terror created by DayZ's dreadfully sluggish pace and potentially traitorous social interactions (Wei, Marsden, & Gain, 2008).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Questions

The researcher aims to successfully answer the following research questions.

3.1.1 What features and factors does PUBG contain which were missing in alternative video games which did not match its commercial success?

3.1.2 Are the older, more traditional marketing methods commonly used across the video game industry outdated?

3.1.3 Is it time for the video game industry to follow PUBG's example and shift to more relevant and recent methods and strategies?

3.1.4 Is it possible for the unorthodox approach and risks utilized by the game developers to be implemented by larger and bigger players in the industry?

3.2 Research Objectives

The researcher aims to fulfil the following objectives through the research paper

3.2.1 Identify the features and factors which set PUBG apart from similar video games of the same genre. Examine what makes PUBG a superior experience for users.

3.2.2 Analyze and identify the marketing strategy, techniques and methods implemented by Bluehole and PUBG and how these differ from the traditional marketing seen across the industry.

3.2.3 Observe and examine the rapidness of PUBG's unique rise and development. Identify the factors which can be replicated and applied by upcoming products to attain similarly high growth rates.

3.2.4 Aim to accurately predict and foresee the future direction of the video game industry, especially with respect to how marketing techniques, methods and strategies will progress.

3.3 Instrument of Data Collection

The researcher is implementing a qualitative data collection method in the form of personal interviews with two industry insiders as well as two ground-level sales persons. The reason for this is to obtain data from the perspective of the video game developers, who are in this case the producers and the sales persons, who know customer preferences the best.

3.4 Theoretical Framework

The Diffusion of Innovation Theory was proposed by Everett M. Rogers back in 1962. It is one of the oldest primary theories which integrates social behaviour and communication. The theory aims to explain how a new idea, product or innovation diffuses (spreads) across a particular social system over the course of time. The result of this diffusion is that the population as a whole begins to adopt the new product, idea or behaviour. Diffusion can only take place when the social structure accepts and adopts the particular idea. This adoption is only possible when each individual in the population views the idea or product in a positive light, as something new and innovative which can make a positive difference in their lives.

Diffusion does not happen instantaneously; rather it is a gradual process which takes different time for different parts of the population. Individuals in a society who identify and adopt an innovation quickly have different characteristics from those who become aware and adopt the innovation later and more slowly. Researchers down the years have divided the population based on the time taken to become aware of and adopt a new idea into five categories- Innovators, Early Adopters, Early Majority, Late Majority and Laggards.

Side by side, five factors which influence the adoption of an innovation have been identified as well- Relative Advantage, Compatibility, Complexity, Testing and Observability. The reason behind choosing this particular theory is that the research papers deals exclusively with the marketing of PUBG and video games in general as well as the rapid success and popularity of PUBG in particular. The Diffusion of Innovation Theory aids and supports the research of how the subject went viral and spread across the world. The subject is the innovation and the research deals in-depth with how the diffusion took place in remarkably short duration of time as well as the mediums and methods through which this diffusion happened.

The primary aim of marketing is to spread awareness and publicity across a particular social structure, which in turn goes hand in hand with the theory, channels of communication and how the information reached maximum people in minimum time.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative Analysis of Interview Data

4.1.1 Quality of Concept:

The respondent, who is an industry insider emphasizes that from a professional perspective as well as from the view of a consumer, the concept of a video game is crucial to the overall experience one derives from the game. A video game concept can be defined as primary idea around which the game is created. The concept forms the base foundation on which factors such as visuals, sound and graphics are added to elevate the

experience. If the base (in this case the concept) is not strong enough to appeal to the interests of the public, additions such as cutting edge visuals and catchy sound effects and music are rendered inefficient and do not have the positive impact they are supposed to. Conversely, a unique concept which appeals to the main interests of the customers can make up for substandard additional components and make the video game enjoyable to play. As visual and audio technology continues to upgrade and improve at a rapid pace, it is of paramount importance to remind ourselves that the concept is the most important component of a video game, one which requires far more thought and attention than superficial aspects.

4.1.2 Creative Ideas

The video game industry is one of the fastest expanding fields with an increasing number of games being released in short time spans. The average video game consumer is spoiled for choice with numerous options and it is increasingly difficult to stand out amongst the rest and attain a degree of commercial success. A creative and unique idea is the first requirement according to the respondent as there is a great deal of borrowing and mimicking ideas happening, making video games with completely new concepts and features rarer. Repetition is a flaw that various industries are struggling with right now, most notably in the movie industry where Hollywood continues to remake Disney movies from decades ago. As per industry insiders, it is imperative that the video game industry maintain high levels of creativity and a steady influx of new ideas, especially at this stage when video gaming is turning into a mainstream staple in the entertainment business.

4.1.3 Social Media Friendly

Despite catering to people of all ages, the overwhelming majority of the customer base for video games consists of young children in their early teens and youth (16-25 years of age). Of the various components in internet technology, social media is arguably the most prevalent development across the world. Social media has revolutionized the concept of a global society and has brought the world closer than anyone imagined being possible. Social media and video gaming are a perfect fit because a large number of users are common and overlap. Social media is dominated by the youth, who are the most prevalent users. A factor which unites both fields further is mobile phones, which are quickly becoming the preferred medium for both social media usage as well as video gaming. Social media is a powerful tool in today's world and as the respondent stated, literally everyone uses it. It is particularly useful to video game developers, publishers and producers as it gives them a platform through which they can access, communicate with, observe, analyze, gain feedback from and influence the majority of their customer base. Social media as a media channel offers unparalleled speed of communication and can transfer data from one end of the world to another in practically an instant. Over the last decade, video game producers specifically attempt to make their games social media friendly through various innovative methods such as marketing them exclusively over social media, producing games to include moments and visuals which are humorous, including controversial components which can give rise to debates and discussions etc. These components often catch people's eye and become popular on social media and people all over the world talk about them. There is no cheaper, faster and far reaching channel which serves so many purposes such as marketing, generating publicity, creating hype and excitement and ultimately creating a bond with the customers for the product (in this case, video games).

4.1.4 Target Audience

The target audience for a product can be defined as a particular segment of the population which the product targets primarily as a potential customer base. Individuals who fall under the target audience for a particular product have certain characteristics, choices, tastes and preferences because of which they find the product or service especially useful, as it matches their preferences. Different products have different target audiences, in the video game industry for example, the target audience for racing video games will consist of young kids and teenagers. This is significantly different from the target audience for a shooter game, which will consist of people in their late teens and young adults. In any industry, it is essential to know what the target audience is and then design the product accordingly to suit the tastes of the audience. Identifying a target audience and adjusting the quality and features of the product accordingly, gives the company and the product the best chance of commercial success.

4.1.5 Digital Marketing

Marketing is the process of identifying the benefits, advantages and unique features of a product or service and generating publicity and awareness in the market and public about these particular benefits and advantages. Marketing is responsible for the news of a product's existence and positives spreading through the population and reaching as many people, as soon as possible. In the past, marketing was not as big a deal for video game producers as it is today as the demand and audience was considerably smaller as well as specific, in the sense that video games had a particular, constant segment of society which formed the customer base. Today, video games are a global trend and a product which appeals to the mainstream population. Hence, there is a considerably larger population through which the information has to spread. At the same time, there are more potential customers so video game firms have had to adapt and increase focus on marketing. The respondent tells the researcher that in today's field, digital marketing is the best channel and is uniformly useful to every producer in the industry, irrespective of size and financial position. Digital marketing uses the internet sphere (social media in particular) and electronic devices as a platform to spread information amongst users. The logic behind using digital marketing as opposed to traditional physical marketing is that it is much cheaper, easier to implement and faster while still reaching a considerably large number of people, thanks to the popularity of social media and the internet. The wide reach and ease of access and availability makes digital marketing an attractive proposition for small scale developers as well.

4.1.6 Developers

People or organizations that develop, produce and publish video games are known as developers. In the video game industry, developers play the role of producers who create the service or product. The term developer is a broad one; it could refer to a teenager producing basic video games in his basement or could lead to the largest video game developing firm in the world. As the industry insider tells the researcher, different developers have different technical and financial capabilities, different customer base, different styles and ultimately different goals. In the video game industry over the years, it has become difficult to attain consistent success in the market against the products released by large scale production companies who operate on a global scale. There are various reasons for the inequality, such as the fact that older and established developers already

have a pre-existing reputation, following and customer base which is difficult to erode into for a new, smaller entry with no prior releases. Another is that updating the basic technology required to produce and importantly, upgrade video games is not cheap and only the top tier companies can afford the latest, cutting edge technology unlike individual freelance producers who manage with what they have, which in turn leads to gap in quality of product. In the context of the research study, earlier the marketing strategies implemented by large scale developers and companies were greatly different from those of the small scale producers because of the difference in financial power. While social media can be used commonly by all developers, the number of followers for each firm/individual is different; therefore even though social media closes the large gap, developers still need to come up with innovative marketing strategies and methods using social media, which suit the target audience and the product.

4.1.7 Viral Trends

The concept of something going ‘viral’ is directly linked to the development of social media, which is responsible for bringing the world closer and making near instant communication possible. To go viral means for something to blow up and reach a huge number of people in a very short period of time. The term originates from the viral illness with infamously spreads easily and quickly. Naturally, when something goes viral, it gains a great deal of popularity, publicity and traction meaning, everyone is talking about it. This publicity more often than not translates to commercial success, seen in the cases of the song Gangnam Style, dances such as the dab etc. Viral trends are completely random and almost impossible to control and predict, yet inspired by past success stories, producers across industries aim to add features and small instances, usually humorous and entertaining in nature in order to give the product a chance to go viral and explode. Mostly, they are unsuccessful as viral trends are instances which randomly catch the eye of users and are unintentional and accidental. However, as the responder emphasizes, games such as PUBG and Fortnite achieved success because they went viral and as a result, the whole video game industry is trying to predict the next trend, driven by the fact that if a product is lucky enough to go viral, the level of success is unmatched.

4.1.8 Customer Categories

No two customers are the same. The statement holds true for any business or industry, but is especially accurate in the video game industry. There are so many options, outnumbered only by the preferences and requirements of the customers. Segregation of customers into categories is necessary for the producers to tailor their products to match the varied tastes and choices of each group. Segmentation not only increases quality of products but also makes the entire process, from audience research to marketing easier. There is no single way to divide the population into categories, though the most common division used in on the basis of age. Segregation of customers into different categories most importantly allows the developers to give each segment a product which gives them the best possible experience by implementing the features, choices and requirements that define the particular segment. It is the equivalent of customizing and tailor making a product especially for the group. The other advantage is that, considering the fact that video games cater to a huge number of children, kids and school going youth, segregating into customer categories based on age prevents children from being exposed to explicit content, bloodshed, violence, graphic content etc. For example, PUBG is rated PG16, and is

not available for individuals below the age of 16 as it is not suitable for the same. However, the most effective divisions are based on tastes, choices and preferences which allow the developers to identify exactly what the customers in a segment want, even the most minute details and follow the same to provide the best experience possible.

4.1.9 Realistic Experience

Video games, like books and movies act as a temporary escape from an individual's reality, into a different world, at a different time or in the shoes of someone else. For example, racing games aim to put the player in the position of a race driver, FIFA tries to give the player the experience of stepping into a stadium filled with tens of thousands. When attempting to transport a person into another world, the single most crucial element is a realistic experience. If a game is not realistic, users are not satisfied, the experience does not come across as authentic or fulfilling. One of the main reasons PUBG is frequently preferred to its primary competitor Fortnite is because PUBG is much more realistic than Fortnite and carries the players back into the desperate trenches of the Second World War. The respondent emphasizes that, today's video game users want much more than basic actions to repeat. They want depth, a storyline, a plot, a back story to the characters, all of which make the experience all the more realistic. Most global video game developers who have released game series- FIFA, Assassin's Creed, Call of Duty to name a few, the overall idea and concept does not change beyond a point. Rather, each sequel aims to provide a more realistic experience than the previous one, whether it is through sharper and clearer graphics, visuals or through a storyline which adds depth.

4.1.10 Smart Phone Platform

Smart phones are a variety of mobile phone devices which can carry out numerous functions beyond the basic making and receiving phone calls and text messages, which was the ceiling of traditional mobile devices. Smart phones are also more powerful gadgets, with faster speeds, more storage space and better overall performance. Most importantly, smart phones can connect to and use the internet, which opens up numerous opportunities and ideas. Smart phones and developments in broadband technology such as 3G and 4G have coincided and are directly linked. The two factors- internet connections and improved performance have enabled smart phone devices to support and run video games, over the last decade or so. Since 2011, smart phone technology has transformed the product into a hybrid between a mobile and a computer, which has made the smart phone the primary platform for playing video games. This is a remarkable turnaround as mobile phone gaming was non-existent and firmly behind computer and console platforms. Smart phones unlike computers and PlayStations are portable and allow video gaming on the go. The internet technology also eliminates the need for physical DVD's, screens, controllers and physical purchases as everything from download to playing is done through an online system. PUBG, which is the bestselling video game of the last decade, is so successful mainly because it can function on even the most basic smart phones. India is a very smart phone driven society, as it has the cheapest data rates in the world and the second largest number of smart phone users in the world and availability on mobile platform is one of the first factors taken into consideration by majority of the Indian video game users when purchasing or choosing a game to play. Smart phones are also more often than not linked to social media applications and accounts, which in turn opens up possibilities of marketing and

advertising by video game developers in the form of pop up ads, push notifications and social media posts. It is no exaggeration to say that the future of video games is directly linked to the developments, advances and upgrades in smart phone technology.

4.1.11 Streaming Media

Streaming media refers to audio or visual data and information which is transmitted over the internet continuously, without any interruptions and can be viewed by the receiver while the process of downloading is ongoing. Streaming is an alternative to traditional video downloading and has various advantages over the same. Traditional video downloading requires the receiver to download and save the complete file onto the device storage before watching or listening to it. Streaming does not require the file to save on permanent storage and can be opened while the download is processing, thus making it a much faster and convenient method of accessing data as it saves storage save also. Streaming has been around in different forms over the last two years but has truly come to prominence and developed to a viable level only around 2010. Streaming technology has developed to the stage where there are multiple streaming applications which allow users to live broadcast themselves or whatever they want to really. The keyword which separates streaming media from other video providers such as YouTube is 'live'. Today, there are not only exclusive streaming applications such as Twitch or Periscope, but traditional video apps and sites such have their own segments devoted entirely to live streaming- IGTV (Instagram), Facebook Live (Facebook), YouTube Gaming (YouTube) etc. Streaming media has quickly integrated itself into our daily lives and is used for a variety of innovative activities such as live broadcasting sports matches, music concerts or anything particularly interesting. However, the video game field has received the biggest boost from the rise of live streaming. The entire concept of esports, which is the term used when two or more people play a video game and broadcast the live match or round to spectators and a watching audience, is based on streaming media. Streaming is directly linked to social media, which shares a large part of its customer base with video games and is credited with contributing to the massive success of PUBG, by capitalizing on its 'fun to watch' nature. Live streaming of video games has made the entire video game community closer, as well as added numerous new users and is a vital factor in the rise of video gaming as a mainstream medium of entertainment across the world.

4.1.12 Internet

No development in technology over the past twenty years has revolutionized and changed quality of life as well as human social interaction as much as the internet. The World Wide Web as it was known is a global wide network on digital platforms and electronic devices on which data, information and news is loaded and viewed in the form of websites and web pages. The internet has single handedly made communication of news and information from one corner of the world to another instantaneously possible. The internet has very quickly become a staple in the average human's daily life, at par with vitals such as electricity and running water. For a large part of the global urban human population, an entire day's work is done through the internet-online banking, booking cabs, ordering food, settling bills and payments, contacting family and friends, checking news, watching entertainment content, using the GPS to move around and find new places, the internet has found its way into every field and industry imaginable. The video game industry is no different, where the

lack of stable and fast internet connections was one of the major barriers hindering further and faster growth and development, in fact it is one of the best examples used to demonstrate another one of the internet's major advantages- elimination of physical copies (DVD's and consoles). As the industry insider reveals, the video game industry has migrated of sorts, from a physical driven platform into the online sphere. The ease of access, portability and availability offered by the online platform is unmatched and unparalleled. This is directly linked to the rise of smart phone devices as the preferred choice for video gaming, as smart phones and internet connections have become synonymous with one another and together have upgraded every aspect of gaming. The internet made multiplayer gaming possible as people could connect with one another and play rounds together. Since the development of mobile gaming, which is driven by the internet platform, physical copies of CD's and consoles such as Xbox have become outdated and rare as the online platform offers instant access without any hindrance. It is safe to say that any future improvements and advances made by the video game industry, or any industry will revolve around the internet and online platforms.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the reason behind PUBG's rapid rise and success was various factors coming together at the right time, however the main driving force was the marketing strategy implemented by the developers which revolved around the modern and relevant trends – social media and live streaming. The strategy not only allowed the developers to overcome their limited financial resources but also earned them viral fame and success. This was directly reflected in the developer Bluehole's decision to focus on the mobile phone platform and in smart phone rich markets- China, India, South Korea, USA and Japan. PUBG dominated the video game market in these regions and it was a result of Bluehole's accurate analysis of shifting preferences. PUBG is clearly more than just a smart phone friendly game, respondents spoke about the game in glowing terms, especially the realistic visuals and graphics, the unique concept and that PUBG was a game anybody could play, because it does not require high skill levels, it was free of cost and it could be played anywhere.

PUBG's success was a direct indicator of the changes taking place in the video game industry. The mobile phone medium has taken over the console and computer devices, while the online platform has nearly eliminated physical copies and transactions. More importantly, video games are in the mainstream spotlight and have greater demand and prospects than ever before. Social media gives a video game developer further reach, faster and cheaper than any physical advertisement. The video game industry is predicted to continue growing at increasingly quick rates and it is essential for the producers and developers to stay with the more frequently changing trends, consumer preferences, mediums and channels. While the success of the game can never be exactly replicated at will, expect the innovations and ideas out forward by PUBG and Bluehole in the spheres of video game development, market analysis and marketing to influence the entire industry now and in the future.

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