

Overview

I AM PLAYR is the work of We R Interactive and Big Balls Production (who have previously worked on Who Killed Summer and Kate Modern). It's an interactive game that lets you live the life of a professional footballer, playing out a season in the championship. The game is free to play and users can play it on Facebook, a dedicated website and mobile phone. The game itself is a mix of first person perspective, interactive video and storytelling that simulates the highs and lows of becoming a championship footballer.

Details

I am Playr represents an un-trodden ground in the world of gaming. After taking on the role of PLAYR you are responsible for your own actions. When playing and training for Riverpark FC, if you work hard on the pitch and train well you will be rewarded within the game, for example better boots that will improve your accuracy, touch and speed. However just like in the real world there are many distractions off pitch so if you party too hard then this can waylay your progress on pitch. As you play through each week you will be given narrative through different media; texts on your mobile phone to say you have signed your contract, or video messages from your team mates. One of the key features of the game is the interactive clips, you can watch these clips through and then be given the option of what route you want to take for example, do you talk to the reporter or don't you? Making these choices will affect how your game plays out. What one person experiences in the game is very different to what another person may experience, and to give the game that extra edge of reality they have employed talent such as Teddy Sheringham, Andy Townsend and Lee Dixon.

Implications

The game opens up big opportunities for brands to get involved, Nike for example has already signed up to be involved in the gameplay. Playrs can get Nike football boots which improve their performance and the further Playrs progress in the game the better the boots they can acquire; alternatively Playrs can pay to get the better boots if they can't wait those extra few stages in the game.

Where it starts getting interesting though is when brands can create their own storylines. While this ability is very limited in the current market, we have seen the likes of Quickies design their own scavenger hunt within an Xbox game. *I am Playr* takes this to a new level. Whereas the Quickies campaign was designed to have a game within a game, *I am Player* allows brands to fully integrate within the game. This can involve brands shooting their own storylines for users to be part of.

If a brand does get involved in *I am Playr* their competitor brand won't be able to promote their product within the game. For example Addidas cannot pay to have a storyline because Nike is already involved. This is not only good for brands but ensures that users are not bombarded with product placement.

Summary

There are 3 areas we need to consider; brands, consumers and the social gaming market:



Brands: *I am Playr* is merging the lines between social gaming and real life, the multi-platform aspect allows users to pick up where they left off. It then integrates with the Playrs real world, with Facebook updates and SMS', which drives more earned value from the brands involved and making the whole experience more life-like for the Playr.

Consumers: 18-34 men are on average spending 5-10 hours a week gaming. However the majority of this is console based. We are seeing a rise in social gaming, which is still skewed towards female gamers. There is massive opportunity here for *I am Playr* to stake a claim in the male social gaming market but they need to be clever about recruitment; what are they going to do to encourage our users to move from console based games to social games? They need to have accounted for their target audiences' internet capabilities and type of computer in order for them to have a smooth gaming experience.

The market: With social games being the fastest growing segment of the media market, (Cityville has over 90 million active players a month) I AM PLAYR is bringing a new dimension to social gaming and social influence. We have seen users pay money for virtual items, in games such as *Sorority Life* sold \$100,000 worth of virtual VW cars, so there seems no reason as to why users won't pay to get a better pair of Nike football boots especially when there is a risk to how well you will perform in the game.

In conclusion, there is a massive opportunity for social games to expand on what *I am Playr* has produced. There seems to be further opportunity for augmented reality. Can gaming companies merge the lines between gaming and real life further? What if Playr got sent a real pair of Nike football boots from great game play? The industry is currently the healthiest it has been in years, with the ability to adapt to social and the mobile world and constant innovations the social gaming industry is set to be a further success.

This game is currently in beta.

<http://apps.facebook.com/iamplayr/?ref=ts>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCLmkC4h6tY>