

Acquisition and
Engagement Tips from

MOBILE GAMING NINJAS



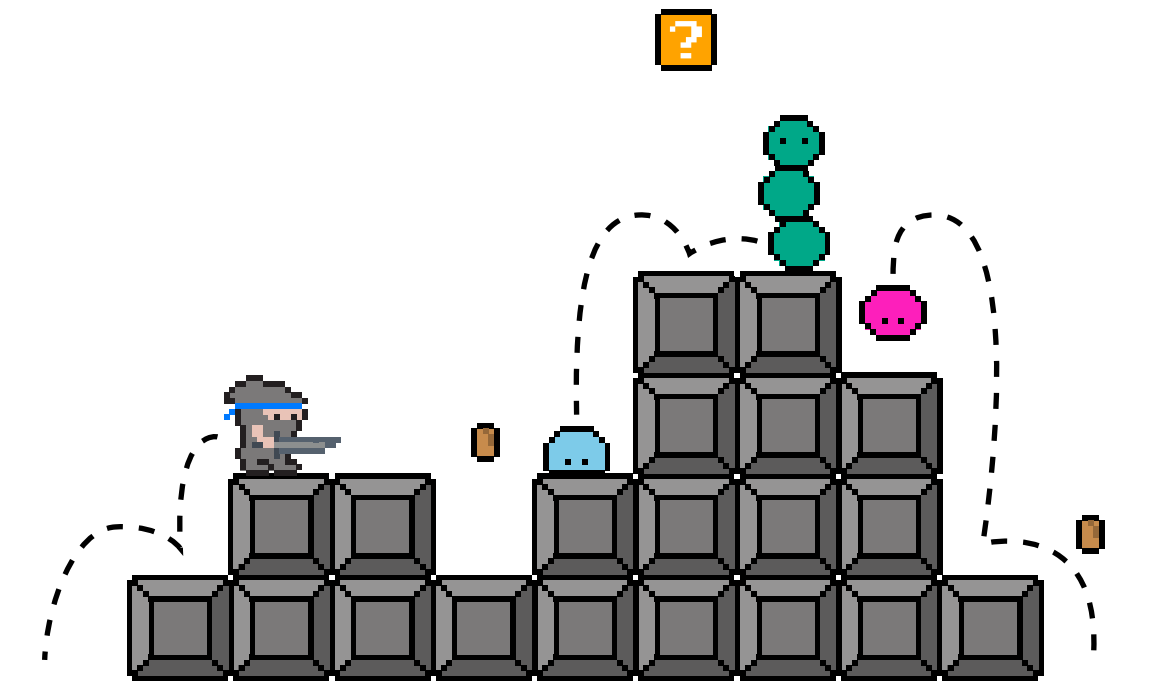
TUNE

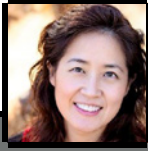


THE MOBILE GAMING INDUSTRY

PC and console games have long ruled the gaming industry, but in the last few years, mobile games have made major gains. The global mobile gaming industry earned nearly \$37 billion in revenue in 2016—the first year that the mobile games category has surpassed PC games in market share. In the U.S., 62% of smartphone owners install games within a week of getting a new phone and U.S. consumers spend an average of 24 minutes per day on mobile games.

It's clear that this is the time to take advantage of such rapid growth, but the challenge is to find a way to succeed among fierce competition. We asked four mobile gaming experts to share their insight and advice on the complexities of standing out in the marketplace. Here's what they had to say.





ELISA PARK

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL MARKETING

Elisa Park has been working in marketing for over 13 years at various international game developers and publishers. For the last five years, her focus has been on new user acquisition, retention, and monetization campaigns for PC, Console (XBOX and PS4), and mobile games starting from big branding to performance-focused campaigns.



Based in San Francisco, [Wargaming America](#) promotes all of Wargaming's titles, including [World of Tanks](#), a free multi-platform massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) and the 2013 Golden Joystick Award Winner for Best Online Game.

How do you market your mobile game to new users?

We find that users who enjoy playing our game [World of Tanks] across devices find us on mobile. Our biggest focus is on player happiness. We provide 24/7 player support and strive to grow our community through social media—we believe that keeping our players happy will naturally grow a larger community.

We also try to utilize all possible marketing channels including owned, earned, and paid media. For paid media, we have been acquiring users through typical channels such as mobile ad networks (Google AdWords and AdMob) and social media channels (Facebook and Instagram). To reach larger audiences and generate brand awareness, we oftentimes have ongoing larger brand campaigns through TV, desktop online media, and creative influencer campaigns.

What's your advantage on app stores?

Our company has built strong relationships with Apple and Google, and we are often featured on their respective stores. Outside of that, we constantly test our app store pages to maximize ASO (app store optimization).





0x15

0005999

PAGE
3

What have you found to be the most effective approach for user acquisition?

Video performs very well for us. Since mobile ad units are limited by banner size, video incorporates details about the game that small units do not.

TRAIN LIKE A GAMING NINJA:

Lower user acquisition costs without sacrificing the quality of your campaigns with the e-book, "[Five Ways to Drive Down User Acquisition Costs.](#)"



What tactics do you use to provide a great gaming experience, and how do you track user engagement?

We work to stay true to our main philosophy of free-to-win—as opposed to pay-to-win—so that players can enjoy the game without feeling any monetary pressure.

Our developers are dedicated to regularly updating our game with fresh and exciting content taken directly from community feedback and to also showcase current trends. During the May the 4th (Force) season, we created an exclusive, special in-game tank and skin to look like a spaceship—the Starchaser!

Every year, we attend gaming events such as E3 and PAX to hold large player gatherings and throw events for our community. We want to meet our players in person and make sure they know we are listening to them, and that they have the most positive in-game and out-of-game experience with us. To ensure this, we monitor the user's in-game progress, retention rate, and lifetime.

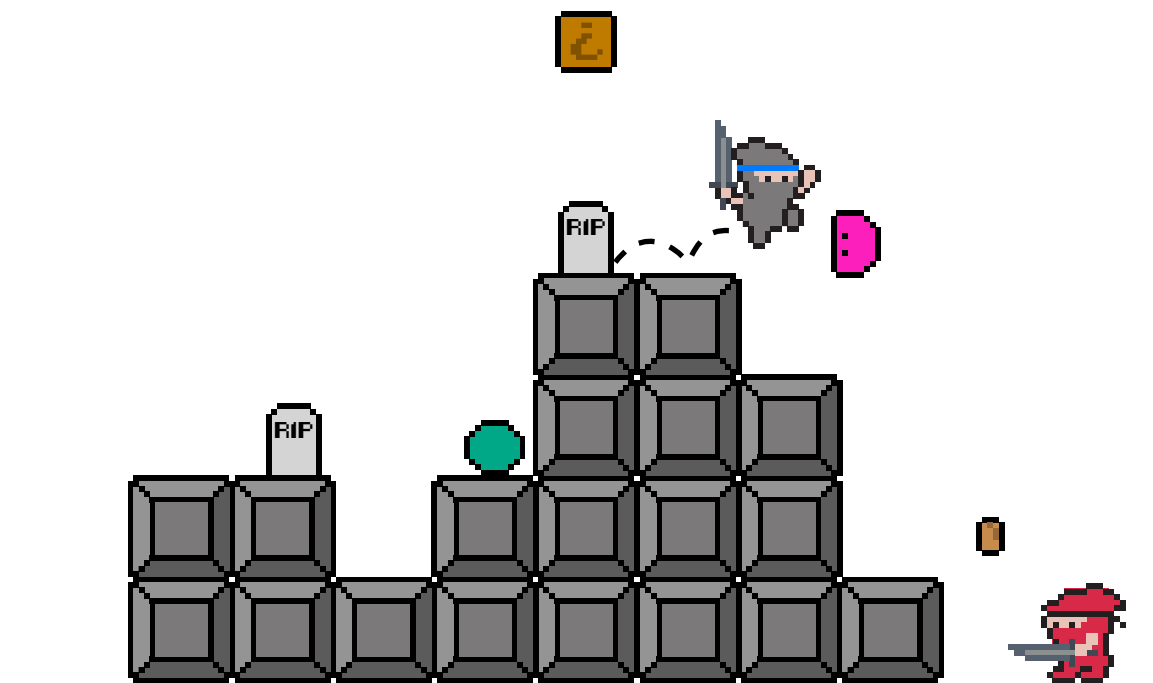


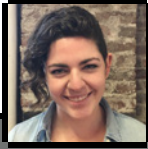
Where do mobile game marketers often fall short when trying to acquire new users? How can they improve this?

I find that some game marketers only measure installs rather than checking in-app conversions. Marketers should always track and optimize in-app conversions to bring in more quality users.

When marketers set the CPI threshold, they should check LTV by each channel instead of setting one CPI threshold for all channels. It is important to pay respective CPI based on the value from each channel.

It is easy for mobile marketers to focus on user acquisition solely through mobile platforms as it makes sense for direct response campaigns, but traditional media (TV, print) and desktop ads could help in reaching larger audiences and building better brand awareness. This will ultimately help not only user acquisition, but also long-term success.





HALEY PATOSKI

ASSOCIATE PERFORMANCE MARKETING MANAGER

Haley Patoski is currently on the Episode Performance Marketing Team at Pocket Gems, working with a wide variety of channels to acquire users. She has been doing user acquisition in the mobile game space for two years on both casual and hardcore titles. Her favorite part of the job is to break down data sets to find patterns (or outliers!) and then identify the likely causes.



Pocket Gems delivers mobile entertainment products such as [Episode](#), the world's largest author platform for interactive mobile stories.

How do you build your mobile gaming audience?

We have a young female audience for Episode so we look for users in places that are popular with that demographic. This includes social media sites like Instagram and Snapchat. We do advertise across multiple channels but we see the highest install rates and value from places where our audience spends a lot of their time.

How have you made your mobile game unique?

We let users dive deep into their entertainment experience in an active, rather than passive, way. Users can choose from thousands of stories, and they can also create their own stories, leading to an ever expanding library. We really try to emphasize the ability to join the story in both our ads and our App Store landing pages. And of course, our partnerships with celebrities and media properties definitely help.

What tactics do you apply to your advertising?

We try to tell a mini-story in each ad. The ads that perform the best are visually interesting and have funny or emotional dialogue to grab the viewers' attention.

How do you keep users engaged with your game, and how do you measure their response?

We release new content all the time so each time a user finishes one story, they have something else to immediately jump into. We also want to make sure we send users to our best stories so we will do big pushes around the launch of IP content. For example, we launched a whole new set of creatives around the launch of Mean Girls Season 2. By emphasizing recognizable characters we are able to draw the fans of the Mean Girls movie into the game and then hopefully get them interested in the thousands of other stories within Episode once they finish Mean Girls.

For Episode, it is really important to get readers hooked on a story. Both retention over time and engagement with our top content give us a good idea of how captivated our users are. If a user keeps coming back to read more we know that our stories have caught their attention!



TRAIN LIKE A GAMING NINJA:

Don't let hard-earned users go to waste. Get actionable strategies in the guide, "[Using Re-Engagement to Keep Your Users Coming Back for More.](#)"

What do mobile game marketers overlook when targeting new users?

A lot of marketers don't focus enough on creative. This is the area where we see the biggest shift in performance. A new creative can make or break our campaigns, especially for networks where we are paying out on CPI. These networks back everything out to an eCPM so our click-through and install rates can have a huge effect on how competitive we are. When we launch a strong creative we see an immediate uplift in installs.



CHRISTOPHER LEE

HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

At Gamevil USA, Chris focuses on sourcing and funding AAA mobile games as well as Gamevil's global business operations. He has executed on Gamevil's brand and marketing initiatives for MLB Perfect Inning, Dragon Blaze, Afterpulse, and Dungeon Link.



Located in Los Angeles, [Gamevil USA](#) produces free award-winning mobile games for a variety of genres including sports, action, and adventure.

What channels do you use for user acquisition?

We focus more than half of our resources on Facebook and Google—we tend to get the strongest quality from them, but have difficulties obtaining scale. Once we exhaust those resources, we work with third-party ad networks to scale and optimize with the KPIs generated from previous campaigns.

What is the one thing that distinguishes one mobile game from its competitors?

Everything comes down to the game itself. We understand that even with the greatest marketing creative, copy, and placement, if the game doesn't deliver what our users want, it will be a failed campaign.

We differentiate ourselves from the competition by committing to gaming standards that rival console and PC markets. By putting out a high-quality product, we show users that the game is worth their time.

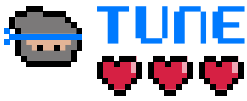


TRAIN LIKE A GAMING NINJA:

Measure ROAS across all your channels in real time with [Multiverse](#).

Which marketing assets have worked well for you?

Video assets perform the strongest out of all our creatives. While the initial costs are much more than that of static banners, the quality is unrivaled in terms of ROAS and retention. We have the occasional luck with carousel banners and static interstitials, but video remains king.



0x48

0018231

PAGE
8

How can you maintain user engagement, and how can you track your success?

Engagement relies on three key aspects: community, product, and live operations. We need to reach scale so users can interact with one another and create user generated content (UGC). UGC can range from building bases to discussing strategy. As touched on before, we strive to create the best gaming experience for our users. The game must be fun and engaging to make sure our users keep wanting to come back. Lastly, live operations play a key role in our user retention. Creating daily/weekly/monthly events, responding to the community, and improving the game each month helps build an engaging experience for our players.

Each game has a different set of standards when it comes to user engagement quality. Session length, app opens, and purchases all play an important role when determining a game's engagement factor.

TRAIN LIKE A GAMING NINJA!

Get tips and tactics for every stage of the mobile marketing funnel in the e-book, "[Deconstructing the Mobile Marketing Funnel](#)."



What can mobile game marketers do to improve user acquisition?

Optimization is everything. At times we can get caught up in running a campaign with the same parameters as a previous campaign. We hope the KPIs eventually catch up to our standards, but may become complacent when it comes to optimization. We have to make sure creatives, targeting, copy, and placement are consistently optimized in order to get the most out of our campaigns.

With more tools and dashboards offering a more streamlined optimization process, we will be able to continue to improve optimization strategies by working closely with our tracking partners and being open about our pain points as well as successes.





TIM O'NEIL

GLOBAL HEAD OF MOBILE GAMING

Tim drives new customer acquisition for the TUNE Marketing Console. Before bringing his talents to TUNE, Tim was Director of Advertising Sales at Pocket Change. He also spent time in Business Development at InMobi, and as the Director of Publisher Sales at SuperRewards (acquired by Adknowledge).



A performance marketing software company, TUNE provides two leading digital marketing platforms, the [TUNE Marketing Console](#) and [HasOffers](#), for mobile gaming and other app developers.

What advice do you have for mobile marketers looking to find new users?

Cast a wide net as early as possible by testing out various partners, geographies, and devices to see where the most stickiness is in terms of install volume and engagement. But pay attention to the early trends you're seeing to zero in on those acquisition sources that are netting you the best results.

For new games, the best source of new users isn't always known at the outset, and it may take time (and money!) to uncover, but a lot of this has to do with the game itself and the intended audience. It's important to know what kind of users you're looking for, and then optimize for them through the media partners that you work with.

How can mobile gaming companies distinguish their product in a crowded marketplace?

Focus on creating awesome content—this is always the core of the app, and is what will keep players engaged and coming back. Get descriptive on your app store landing pages, and A/B test your copy and screenshots to find which combination yields the most users. When it comes to paid media, test everything, and give ad format options a try in order to keep your marketing mix up-to-date and fresh.

What marketing assets do you recommend for acquiring new users?

Social channels like Facebook and Snapchat as well as video and playable ads.

What's the best way to keep players engaged with a mobile game? What KPIs help determine user engagement?

Know your goals—what are you trying to achieve? Are you simply trying to run ROI-positive campaigns, or are you trying to break into the Top 10 apps within a specific app category? How you define success will determine how you need to get there.

Whether it's revenue/IAP, time spent in-game, or number of sessions played, there are a number of strategies that can be utilized to get to where you are aiming to be. It's important to speak with your analytics and media partners about this and make sure they know what you're hoping to achieve, so they can align themselves with your goals.

What are mobile game marketers' biggest oversight for acquiring new users? What can they do to solve this problem?

Not focusing on the whole funnel. Paid UA is only one part of the funnel, and there needs to be a multi-faceted approach. I've seen over and over again where marketers focus entirely on the top of their marketing funnel and don't give the rest of the process the attention it requires.

There are channels these days that require a bit more work, like App Store Optimization for organic traffic or in-app marketing tactics for retaining users. Too often these methods for optimizing organic conversions and engaging existing users are viewed as an afterthought, when they need to be treated as separate pillars to the marketing strategy from the get-go.

TRAIN LIKE A GAMING NINJA:



Check out the webinar "[Metrics that Matter: Mastering Mobile Marketing KPIs](#)" for pro tips on what to measure to reach your goals.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

While each gaming expert works in a different genre, each of which requires a nuanced strategic approach, there are several key takeaways that all mobile marketers should bear in mind:

1. Video is a prime marketing asset for mobile games.
2. Every stage of the marketing funnel requires attention, not just installs.
3. Consistent updates of fresh new content help keep users engaged with games.
4. Taking part in community events allows gaming companies to receive feedback and develop a meaningful relationship with their audience.
5. Quality content is what ultimately drives user retention.

With mobile gaming making up a larger portion of overall gaming revenue, marketers can capitalize on this growth with smart, creative campaigns to capture consumer interest. In the long run, these campaigns will best succeed when they're supporting a strong, entertaining product that surpasses audience expectations.

