

STEAM 201
SOUND ADVICE FROM SUCCESSFUL
STEAM DEVELOPERS



“If you could share one very important tip for an up-and-coming PC game developer, what would it be?”

“If you could make one change to the way you launched your game, knowing what you know now, what would you change?”



Don't assume anyone knows what they are talking about... Including me

- You know your game best
- Your community will be a unique group
- You are a part of your community
Do what is best for them
- There is no “one size fits all”



1. BE HONEST WITH YOUR WORK

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1. Be Honest with Your Work

“Game design is a conversation with players about things you find interesting”

“Passionate developers make a long lasting impact on their community”

“Pick apart the shortcomings of your work, what needs to be worked on and where do you need to grow”

Edmund McMillen – Binding of Isaac Rebirth, Super Meat Boy



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“Make the game for yourself. The biggest mistake I see people make is to target an audience they're not a part of, and don't understand - just because that's where all the popularity is right now.”

Garry Newman – Garry's Mod, Rust

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1. Be Honest with Your Work

“As a small developer you can’t afford to be the best at everything. Figure out what you do better than anyone else and hone in on that”

Jeremy Stieglitz – ARK: Survival Evolved



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All Games > Indie Games > Stardew Valley

Stardew Valley

Community Hub



You've inherited your grandfather's old farm plot in Stardew Valley. Armed with hand-me-down tools and a few coins, you set out to begin your new life. Can you learn to live off the land and turn these overgrown fields into a thriving home?

User reviews:

RECENT: **Overwhelmingly Positive** (1,261 reviews)
OVERALL: **Overwhelmingly Positive** (29,102 reviews)

Release Date: Feb 26, 2016

Popular user-defined tags for this product:

RPG Simulation Agriculture Pixel Graphics +

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“Believe in yourself and have complete faith in your game. Don’t let negative thoughts get in the way of achieving that. It can be a fight especially as a solo developer.”

Eric Barone – Stardew Valley

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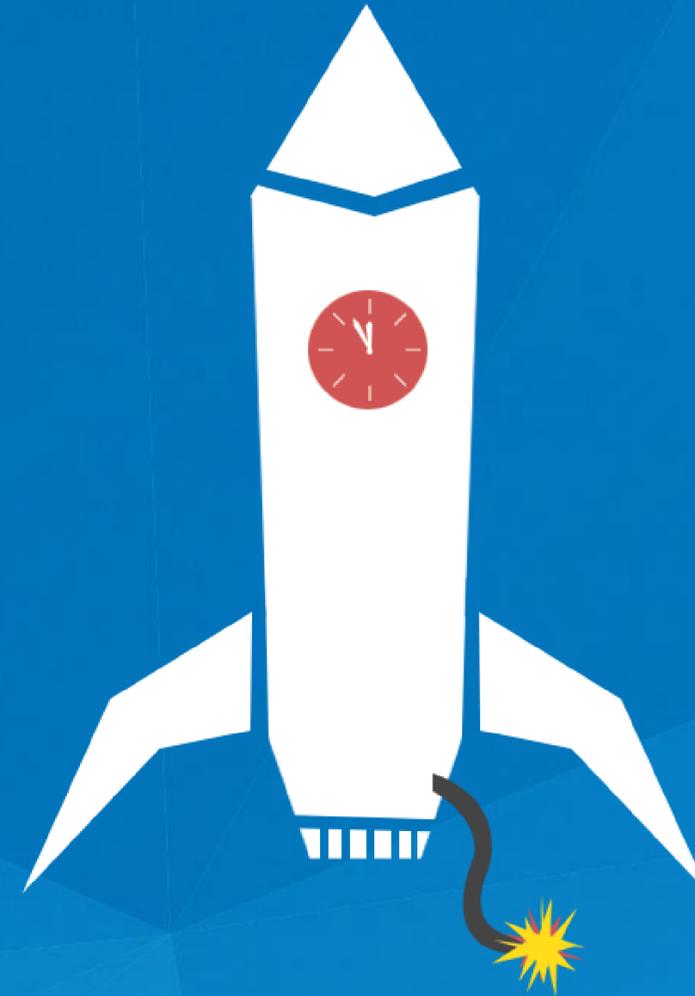
2. PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR RELEASE TIMING



2. Pay Attention to Your Release Timing

“You are not only competing for peoples’ money but also for their time”

Martin Wahlund – Warhammer: End Times – Vermintide

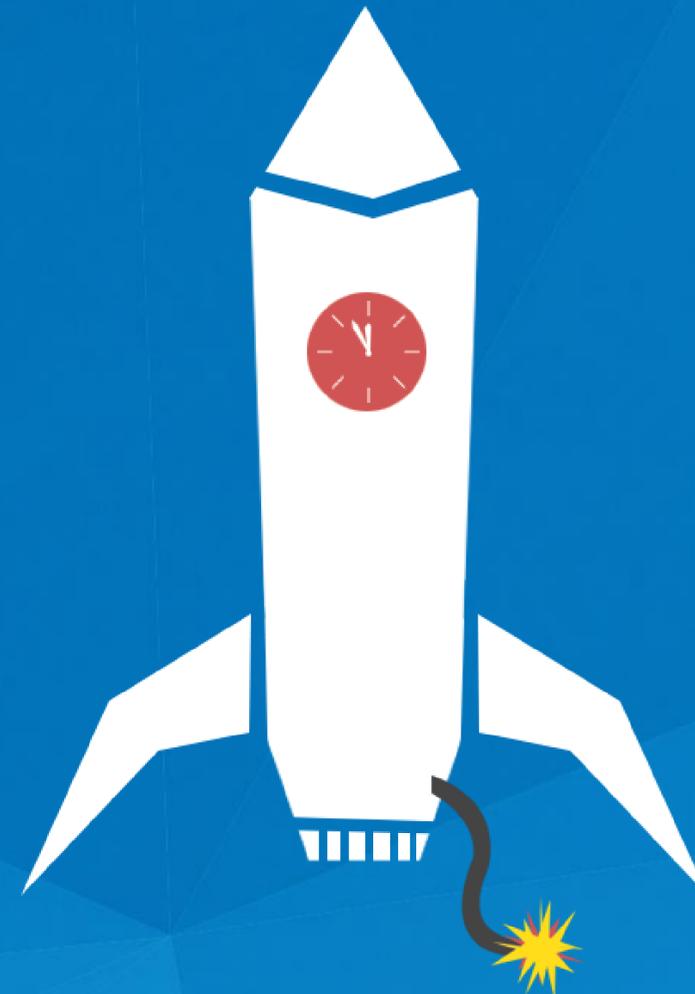


2. Pay Attention to Your Release Timing

“Use the Steam Coming Soon list and other sites to see what is planning to launch around your game”

“A pre-purchase may dilute your week one impact. This is why we are not offering pre-order campaigns for our games”

Tom Kersten – Deponia, Valhalla Hills



“We avoid launching a game near large physical events like GDC, PAX or E3 and we also now schedule releases a minimum of four weeks between large seasonal sales. With the former, you're fighting for coverage and news, which is plus/minus two weeks in each direction and with sales, you're forcing customers to choose between your game at full price or other (discounted) games they've put on their wish list.”

Tyrone Rodriguez – Binding of Isaac Rebirth, Cave Story



3. BE PART OF YOUR COMMUNITY



3. Be Part of Your Community

“Earn trust from your community, be invested in supporting your game long-term”

Brian Fargo – Wasteland 2



3. Be Part of Your Community

“The community is your most valuable guide, however the final word is yours. You’ll never be able to please everyone so don’t kill yourself trying.”

Adrian Goya – Kerbal Space Program



3. Be Part of Your Community

“The best feedback we get from our customers is from the things they say to each other when they think we are not there”

Robin Walker, Valve

Check out the Steam Dev Days 2014 Video [Community and Communication in Games-As-Services](#)



“Build a community that makes sense for your game. Your fans are your biggest champions and good word of mouth is probably the most valuable thing you can have. The stronger your community the more they will fight for your game and defend it.

How do you build that kind of community? Be as transparent as you can be to build a genuine relationship between you and your player-base. And also be in as many places as you can afford to be online – Social media, Reddit, Official Forums, Livestreaming, in-person events.”

Meridith Braun– Warframe



3. Be Part of Your Community

“Update your game often it will show the community you are listening.”

Nelson Sexton - Unturned



Unturned

Update 2.2.0

JULY 26, 2014 - NELSON SEXTON

Hello!

Today's big update is that Mac support is now out! Hopefully everything works right out of the box, but if you're experiencing issues with this please let me know on the forums!

Also due to popular request you can now rotate your ramps when focusing at the side of an existing platform. (every placeable can be rotated with right click)

The Steamworks multiplayer is now close to being 1:1 with the Unity networking, but I'll still have to do a bit more work today/tomorrow to create systems for owning objects like the player.

No update tomorrow however, as I'm turning 17! :D

Today's community feature by LCBradley3k:



YouTube™ Video: **FLYING CARS! - Unturned Car J**

Views: 30,914

Like and Subscribe for more Unturned content! Our Steam group: <http://steamcommunity.com/groups/LCBradley3k> I was on the Unturned Reddit the other day, and I saw an interesting Unturned myth busters...

Thanks for reading!

The screenshot shows the Steam Workshop page for the game Unturned. At the top, there are navigation tabs for All, Discussions, Screenshots, Artwork, Broadcasts, Videos, Workshop, and News. The main header features the game title 'Unturned' and 'Free to Play' next to a character icon. Below this is a sub-header with 'Home', 'Browse', 'Discussions', and 'About'. The main content area is titled 'Browsing: Ready-To-Use' and includes filters for 'Asset Type: Vehicle' and 'Vehicle Type: Helicopter'. It shows a grid of 7 items, each with a thumbnail, a star rating, a title, and the creator's name. The items are: 'UFO (Fix)' by Walter White Jackson (5 stars), 'SMD's FW Test' by SMD (5 stars), 'WZ-19 "The black whirlwind"' by [TH]Zhao Yi (4 stars), 'UH-1 HUEY' by Rain (5 stars), 'BioHazard - Huey' by Sathan (4 stars), 'UFO Mothership' by gnik1 (4 stars), and a partially visible item 'UFO' by gnik1 (4 stars).



Unturned

- YouTube series GangZ
<https://www.youtube.com/user/paulsoaresjr>
- Nelson follows the series and adds updates to the game to support them
- NPC update he added one of the GangZ characters, P.Riso, in the game



4. TRY NOT TO BE A SLAVE TO A TIMELINE

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4. Try Not to be a Slave to a Timeline

“Never launch a game that is “Good Enough”

“Quality and polish pay back exponentially”

“Game design is an endurance race and you need to push product quality as far as you can before launch”

Steve Piggott – Chivalry: Medieval Warfare



4. Try Not to be a Slave to a Timeline

Take the time to playtest your game and marketing

- Get the game in front of people who will give you honest feedback.
- Test your marketing.
- You can use Steamstats to follow wish list data.
- Playtest your trailer to a wide variety of people.



“You don’t get a second chance to make a first impression about the entertainment value of your game, so you have to get it right immediately, even in early access. While people understand there are things like bugs in an early version of the game, they want to have fun, so if your game isn’t providing it, don’t launch, even in early access. Continue to iterate.

I realize financing is rough, especially if you are just starting, but you’re not going to get anywhere near break-even if you launch a game that’s not fundamentally fun.”

Swen Vincke – Divinity Original Sin



5. BUILD THE GAME YOU CAN AFFORD

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5. Build the Game You Can Afford

“Limit the initial scope. Plan for a small game and then add padding”

Mans Olson – Minecraft, Scrolls



5. Build the Game You Can Afford

“Adding an additional feature is like adding 10 meters to a marathon”

Henrick Pettersson – Minecraft, Scrolls



5. Build the Game You Can Afford

“Focus on your target platform and language. Limiting your scope will help you focus on making the game fun.”

Swen Vincke – Divinity Original Sin



The Long Dark

- Launched the game in English only
- Added Russian and German based on the sales data a few weeks after launch
- Used the Steam Workshop to localize the game in 30 languages

The screenshot shows the Steam Workshop page for 'The Long Dark'. At the top, there are navigation tabs: All, Discussions, Screenshots, Artwork, Broadcasts, Videos, Workshop (selected), News, Guides, and Reviews. A 'Store Page' button is in the top right. Below the navigation is a banner for 'Community Translation' with a 'Learn More' link. A search bar is located below the banner. The main content area is titled 'Most Popular Items in the past week' and displays a grid of workshop items. On the right side, there are filters for 'Browse Items' (Most Popular, Top Rated All Time, Most Recent) and 'Browse By Tag' (Version_2 (0)).

Items shown in the 'Most Popular' list include:

- ภาษาไทย (Thai Language) 1.0.24
- Latviešu valodas spēle (Latvian)
- 한국어 (Korean)
- Traducere în limba Română
- The Long Dark Ukrainian translation for v.365
- (v.364) Русский (из мастерской) / Russian Translation v.2
- FINALIZADO - Tradução: Português-Brasil
- Не_Правильный_Перевод (совместим с версией 332)
- Spolszczenie [The Long Dark]
- v.302 にほんご (Japanese) ひらがな Hiragana-Translation
- [.364] Russian Adapted Translation



Action Henk

- Started small in Early Access with essential features
- Added features over time based on community feedback
- End result: tons of features, and people can play where they choose



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2014

Win / Mac / Linux

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
|  | Single-player |
|  | Steam Leaderboards |
|  | Full controller support |

2016

Win / Mac / Linux

PS3 / PS4 / PS Vita

Xbox One / Wii U

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
|  | Single-player |
|  | Multi-player |
|  | Cross-Platform Multiplayer |
|  | Local Co-op |
|  | Steam Achievements |
|  | Full controller support |
|  | Steam Trading Cards |
|  | Steam Workshop |
|  | Steam Cloud |
|  | Stats |
|  | Steam Leaderboards |
|  | Steam Turn Notifications |
|  | Includes level editor |

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6. MAKE YOUR GAME OBVIOUSLY FUN

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6. Make Your Game Obviously Fun

“Drill down into the core of why you are making the game you are making”

“Focus on the core, unique aspects of your game and promote them”

“Describe your game in one short phrase”

Steve Piggott – Chivalry: Medieval Warfare





“Jump your way through insane levels in a game of "the floor is lava" on top of speeding trucks driven by terrible drivers.”

– Clustertruck - tinyBuild

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“Descend into the depths of an alien underwater world filled with wonder and peril. Craft equipment, pilot submarines and out-smart wildlife to explore lush coral reefs, volcanoes, cave systems, and more - All while trying to survive..

- Subnautica - Unknown Worlds Entertainment

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“Gang Beasts is a silly local multiplayer party game with surly gelatinous characters, brutal mêlée fight sequences, and absurdly hazardous environments.”

– Gang Beasts – Double Fine

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**7. THE WHOLE EQUALS THE SUM
OF ITS PARTS**

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7. The Whole Equals the Sum of its Parts

“Treat every part of your business as the most important part of the process: programming, design, audio, marketing, customers support”

Tyrone Rodriguez – Binding of Isaac Rebirth, Cave Story



7. The Whole Equals the Sum of its Parts

“Solicit feedback internally, no one person can consider everything”

Brian Fargo – Wasteland 2



7. The Whole Equals the Sum of its Parts

“Too many (developers) think they can ignore the sales and marketing roles which are a given in other industries”

Henrick Petterson – Minecraft, Scrolls



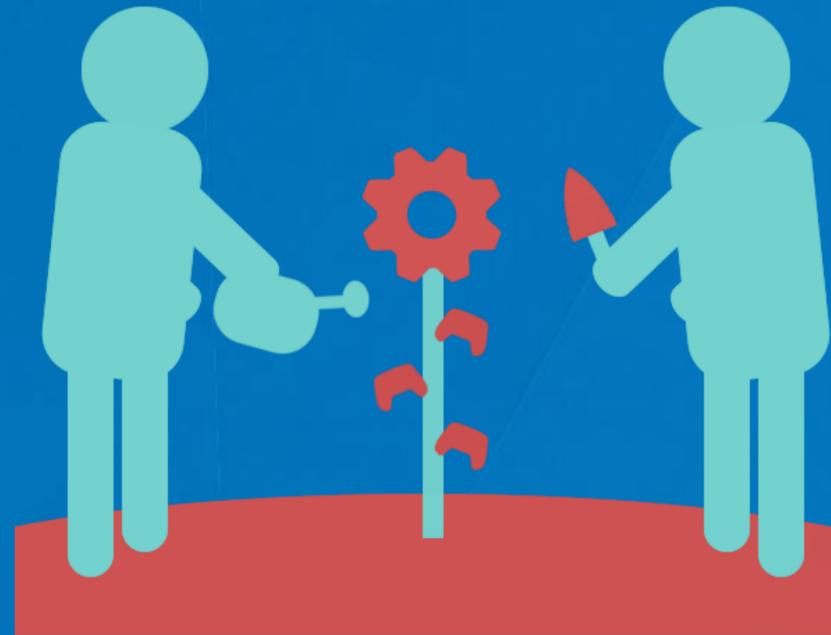
“Successful game developers have three core competencies; Creative, Technical, and Business. Regardless of size, make sure that your team is equipped with the expertise and ability to push on all three areas with a constant sense of urgency. If even one is lacking, you will never reach your full potential.”

Jesse Rapczak – ARK: Survival Evolved



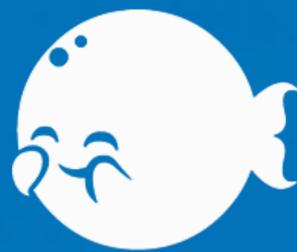
Conclusion

- Be honest with your work
- Build the experience you love
- Create the community you want
- Be the creators



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NICALIS



HINTERLAND



“Be honest with yourself and build a fun game you want to play with a team and timeline that fits you.”

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Thank You

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