You Were Told to Lose Money By Making Games, and You Actually Did It?

Chapter 24: The Guiding Star of the Industry?

Inside the NGI branch office.

The editor-in-chief looked at the article drafts submitted by Ma Tao and Zhang Ye, his face full of frustration.

"This... while it's true that someone at headquarters asked us to do them a favor, isn't this laying it on a bit too thick? And it could easily offend people in the industry!"

The editor rubbed his aching forehead and adjusted his sitting posture.

"There may be some minor embellishments, but overall it's not far from the truth," Ma Tao said with a serious expression.

"That's right! Everything here is what we personally saw and heard. Even though we still don't know the actual quality of the game itself, from President Chen's words and the behavior of his employees, it's obvious they're a group of people who genuinely want to make games." Zhang Ye, who had been skeptical before the interview, now spoke with conviction.

His mind drifted back to the employee meal President Chen had handed him the previous evening.

It had been a steak rice bowl.

Two palm-sized steaks topped with a generous layer of cheese, rich and aromatic.

What impressed him even more was what he had secretly learned from the company's employees: Morning Star Games provided three meals a day, and even late-night snacks whenever overtime was required.

And the quality was always at that level.

Even when the topic of overtime came up, there wasn't a trace of suffering in the employees' eyes.

Instead, their faces were filled with anticipation.

It completely exceeded his expectations.

What kind of company was this?

As a gaming journalist, he couldn't remember the last time he had seen a team like this in the domestic gaming industry.

"Fine then... let's publish it. Strike while there's still some buzz around them and get it out as soon as possible!"

After listening to Ma Tao and Zhang Ye and considering their usual professionalism, the editor gritted his teeth and made his decision.

Even if things weren't exactly as they described, the worst that could happen was getting criticized online.

It wasn't as though NGI had never been criticized before.

And so, that very afternoon, an interview feature appeared on NGI's official website and across its accounts on major video platforms.

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Morning Star Games: Can It Become the Gaming Industry's Guiding Star?

"Morning Star Games. What kind of company is it? Many players will probably ask that question when they first hear the name."

"For most people, their introduction to the company likely didn't come through its games, but rather through information previously revealed by Hyakukin Studio."

"Today, through NGI's lens, let's take a closer look at this little-known developer—a company unlike most others."

"Their upcoming title is a Japanese Sengoku-era action-adventure game."

"For the game's combat system, they sought assistance from the renowned Hyakukin Studio."

"But just as Hyakukin Studio has stated, Morning Star Games isn't merely looking for an outsourcing partner to handle development while they sit back. Nor are they interested in creating another conventional action game that follows established formulas."

"What they want to create is a game that challenges players' existing perceptions—a game with a style that is anything but traditional."

"It's an incredibly bold ambition."

"As everyone knows, innovation is essential for video games. Yet innovation also carries risks. That's why so many games on the market seem nearly identical, differing only in art style while offering little meaningful distinction."

"So when we asked why they were willing to take such a bold step, President Chen gave us an answer."

"He told us that he is not only the company's boss, but also a game designer."

"President Chen said that if no other domestic game company is willing to try, then they will become the pioneers who clear the path."

"Sincere? Or merely boastful? When we first heard those words, we were skeptical. We didn't dare believe them."

"After all, we've seen too many so-called visionaries over the years—people who spoke endlessly about improving the domestic gaming industry while repeatedly cashing in on players' passion and trust."

"Yet after interviewing Morning Star Games' employees, observing their daily work environment, and hearing their evaluations of President Chen, we're willing to believe once again."

"To believe that there really is a company capable of creating something unique—a company that might bring meaningful change to the domestic gaming industry."

"Now, let's take a look at some heartfelt comments from Morning Star Games employees."

[Anonymous Employee]:

"Although President Chen often makes decisions from the top down, he always listens to our opinions. He has an exceptional sensitivity to visuals,

storytelling, and game systems. In other companies, it's common to see people who know nothing about game development interfering and creating chaos. But at Morning Star Games, that never happens."

[Another Anonymous Employee]:

"President Chen possesses profound expertise in game design. Anyone who has worked with him can feel the strength of his convictions. He has a very precise vision in his mind and often asks us to make specific adjustments to models. He's extremely detail-oriented, even when it comes to designing enemies."

"He'll create storylines and backstories for enemies, explain countless concepts to us, and go into detail about the kind of impression he wants players to have. He'll explain how to bring a unique world setting to life in a tangible way. It makes our work feel incredibly meaningful, as though we're contributing to a greater mission."

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After NGI published the interview article, it was immediately shared by countless gaming media outlets and gaming-related content creators.

From a gaming perspective, the article revealed almost nothing beyond the fact that the game was a Japanese Sengoku-era action-adventure title being developed with assistance from Hyakukin Studio.

There wasn't even the slightest additional information about the game itself.

But the problem was that the article was simply too explosive.

The content stopped just short of declaring the little-known Morning Star Games a saint among developers.

Especially in the sections discussing the gaming industry, there was a subtle implication of elevating Morning Star Games by comparing it favorably against other game studios.

If such an article had come from some third-rate media outlet, only a few attention-seeking clickbait accounts would have made a fuss over it.

Most players with even a basic ability to think critically would have ignored it entirely.

But this wasn't a third-rate outlet.

It was NGI.

Even if it was only the domestic branch, it still carried the NGI name.

Although many players jokingly referred to NGI as "8GI" because they seemed to hand out scores of eight out of ten for everything, it was still a globally recognized media organization.

And when a major media outlet revealed information, people naturally assumed there was at least some credibility behind it.

After all, credibility is a media organization's most valuable asset.

Even if a publication chooses to sell out, it can only do so gradually.

Once a media outlet loses its credibility, it loses its audience and traffic.

And without an audience or traffic, how can it continue making money?

Yet now, this very media outlet appeared to be openly endorsing an obscure, virtually unknown company.

As a result, it instantly attracted the attention of countless players.

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"Holy crap, who the hell is Morning Star Games? NGI is one step away from calling them the saviors of the industry!"

"How much money did NGI get paid to write something like this?"

"Honestly, it doesn't feel like a paid article. Other than the game's genre and setting, they didn't even mention the game's title."

"Hyakukin was praising them in an earlier interview too. Maybe they actually have something special?"

"Whether they do or not, I don't know. But their workplace environment looks absolutely amazing!"

"I'm so jealous I'm almost crying. Look at that break room! Look at that equipment!"

"Am I the only one paying attention to President Chen? Those anonymous employee comments can't be real, can they? The amount of praise is insane. It's hard to imagine a designer being that good."

"President Chen: You don't want to lose your job, do you?"

"Found it! Found it! I just dug up information on the company. It used to be called Target Games—the studio that made Proud Three Kingdoms and Qin Empire. It was later acquired and renamed Morning Star Games."

"Wait, they made Proud Three Kingdoms? I actually bought that game! It was genuinely pretty good. No idea why it didn't sell. Can't believe the company got acquired."

"Heh. You people still trust these companies? They're hyping themselves up now, and sooner or later they'll reveal the game's title. This is obviously just a marketing campaign. You haven't even seen the game yet, and you're already believing the hype?"

"Why shouldn't people believe it? Just because the game hasn't been shown doesn't automatically mean it'll be bad. Does that logic even make sense to you? What a joke."

"Domestic game studios making a good game? Pigs will fly before that happens!"

"Why can't domestic studios make good games? The problem is those trash companies like Goose Games, not every developer in the country."

Before long, the comment section beneath the article had evolved from rational discussion and investigative digging into an all-out flame war filled with emotional arguments and insults.

But one thing was undeniable:

With the release of that interview article, Morning Star Games became famous.

Whether players were watching out of curiosity, treating it like a spectacle, or genuinely looking forward to the game, vast numbers of people began paying attention to the company.