

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

Chapter 7: Learn from Mistakes, Summarize Experience, and Spend Money Better

Just as Chen Xu was lamenting his situation, the phone on his desk suddenly rang.

He glanced at the caller ID—it was Xiao Dao.

Thinking about the 4 million yuan that was supposed to be spent, the disappointment of not being able to hire a female secretary eased a little.

"Old Xiao, how's it going? Do we need to pay a deposit or the full amount? I'll let the finance department know—we can transfer the money right away," Chen Xu asked cheerfully.

"No, Brother Xu! I've got good news! We saved 1.2 million on the equipment purchase!" Xiao Dao's excited voice came through the phone.

Chen Xu was drinking water and nearly choked.

His entire mind went blank. He even wondered if he had heard wrong.

"What did you just say?"

"Brother Xu, we saved 1.2 million!" Xiao Dao repeated excitedly.

Chen Xu was stunned.

Saved 1.2 million?

That meant they had only spent 2.8 million!

What kind of situation was this?

"How did it end up costing so little!? We can't be cheap and buy equipment dug out of some goblin mine! These machines are our livelihood—they have to meet the highest quality standards!" Chen Xu hurriedly asked.

"Don't worry, Brother Xu! The quality is top-notch! Definitely not some knightess that's been passed around by goblins! Everything is factory-original! We picked it up directly from the distributor's warehouse. We were practically one step away from grabbing it off the production line ourselves! Though honestly, we owe it to Gong Qi and the others. Without their connections and resources, we never would've gotten this deal!" Xiao Dao explained happily.

"I see... you've all worked hard," Chen Xu replied with a forced smile before hanging up.

*The system's strike came this quickly, huh?*

Sitting in his chair, Chen Xu felt a pain so deep he could barely breathe.

Originally, he could have spent 4 million in one go, but now he had only managed to spend 2.8 million.

Although he was still slightly ahead of the system, there was no doubt that the system had won back a round.

At this point, it was impossible for him to insist on buying more expensive equipment just for the sake of spending money.

But he had to learn from this lesson.

He couldn't let the system exploit a loophole like this again.

Even though he felt miserable and despairing, Chen Xu seriously conducted a post-mortem analysis.

He tried to figure out exactly where he had gone wrong and why this problem had occurred in the first place.

The biggest issue, he realized, was that he hadn't personally followed through on the entire process.

Just like President Pei and those predecessors who possessed money-losing systems, after making a decision that seemed completely foolproof, they relaxed their vigilance, then all sorts of unexpected incidents occurred, and before they knew it, they were being stabbed in the back.

"The root cause is that I didn't oversee everything myself!" Chen Xu concluded with a solemn expression.

If he had personally gone out and spent the money instead of leaving the procurement work to someone else because it was troublesome, could this situation have happened?

Obviously not.

Just as the philosopher Nietzsche once said:

*"That which does not kill me makes me stronger."*

He would carefully summarize his mistakes and reflect on them.

Failing to fully squander a huge amount of money this time wasn't important.

What mattered was learning from the experience and preparing for an even greater spending spree next time.

Meanwhile, looking at the brand-new computers and the dual 4K monitors, Gong Qi still felt as though he were dreaming.

When the company had changed ownership, he initially thought his position would be in danger.

Unexpectedly, not only had his job remained secure, but his treatment hadn't worsened at all.

Of course, that wasn't the most important thing.

The truly important part was that the new company was nothing like he had imagined.

His salary, social insurance, and housing fund contributions remained unchanged.

But the working environment was completely different.

Setting aside the top-of-the-line equipment that he and Ying Gao had personally purchased, under their former boss Du Qian, the company provided a daily meal allowance of 30 yuan.

For a small-to-medium-sized studio like theirs, that was already considered quite generous.

When Du Qian could no longer sustain the company and sold it, many employees, including Gong Qi himself, had mentally prepared for reduced benefits.

Yet now, although their salaries hadn't increased, weren't the employee benefits *too* good?

Looking at the freshly delivered latte on his desk, along with a mille-feuille cake, a box of taro egg tarts, and the beef rice bowl he had eaten for lunch—

Gong Qi had no doubt that if he worked in this environment for a month, he might gain ten pounds, maybe even more.

The image of Boss Du in his heart was already beginning to fade.

Picking up a spoon, Gong Qi scooped up a piece of durian mille-feuille cake.

As he savored the smooth cream and sweet durian flesh, Boss Du's image in his mind seemed to fade a little more.

In its place, it was gradually taking on President Chen's shape!

. . .

Wednesday.

Inside the company's meeting room.

Xiao Dao, Xiu Fu, Gong Qi, Ying Gao, and the leaders of the other three teams were all seated neatly in their chairs, waiting for Chen Xu to speak.

"We're about to start a new project, it's an action-adventure game," Chen Xu began.

Everyone silently nodded, especially Gong Qi and Ying Gao.

Under Du Qian's leadership, the company had released two consecutive games that failed to meet expectations and ended up losing money.

In their view, a major reason was that the target audience had been too small while the investment had been too large.

Now that the company had been acquired, launching an action-adventure game at least guaranteed a reasonably broad player base, regardless of its eventual quality.

"This is the first draft of the game's proposal. Feel free to take a look."

Chen Xu handed out printed copies of the design document.

Gong Qi, Ying Gao, and the other three team leaders opened their copies.

It was a very standard game design proposal, so none of them were particularly surprised.

Over the past few weeks, they had already learned bits and pieces about Chen Xu through Xiao Dao and Xiu Fu.

"President Chen, the game's setting is an alternate-history Sengoku-era Japan?"

"The game is designed to be highly difficult, and players won't be able to choose a difficulty setting?"

"It downplays RPG elements, and the final game won't even include a minimap, emphasizing exploration and map-design-based 'puzzle-solving' instead?"

The design document for Sekiro wasn't detailed down to every mechanic.

Chen Xu had only highlighted several of its key features and defining characteristics.

Even so, Gong Qi, Ying Gao, and the others were left dumbfounded.

Whether a game is actually fun can never be determined from a design document or a concept alone.

It's similar to movies—in game development, ideas are often the cheapest thing there is.

From development to release, game production is almost always a process of subtraction.

Developers constantly remove ideas that seem interesting rather than adding new ones.

For a competent game designer, the real challenge isn't addition—it's subtraction.

That being said, while a design document can't reveal whether a game will be fun, it can reveal what the game's selling points are.

And as they looked at the proposal for this action-adventure game titled Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice, its selling points seemed...

Far too niche.

In fact, almost *painfully* niche in their eyes.