

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

Chapter 27: So *This* Was President Chen's Real Intention!

January 16th, 11:00 AM

After sleeping the entire morning, Chen Xu arrived at the office right on time—just before lunch.

According to the development schedule, Sekiro's internal development would be essentially finished by the end of the month.

Only the final polishing phase would remain.

As for localization and voice acting, the Chinese, Japanese, and English versions were easy enough to arrange.

After all, those were the three dominant languages in the gaming industry.

However, localization for other regions was still under evaluation.

It wasn't that suitable candidates couldn't be found, the problem was that very few domestic studios specialized in languages such as French, German, Spanish, or Italian, let alone provided voice-over services for them.

As a result, Chen Xu couldn't be certain whether the studios he had found were actually competent.

Even though he wasn't short on money, he couldn't simply judge based on price alone.

Spending 100 yuan on something worth only 10 yuan would make him an idiot.

Even if his goal was to burn through the system's funds, he wasn't about to turn himself into a fool.

"Brother Xu, honestly, Chinese, English, and Japanese voice acting alone should be enough."

"And Brother Xu, you also want us to hire three QA teams to test the game around the clock in shifts. That's really unnecessary. The money would be far more effective if we spent it on marketing and promotion."

While giving his work report in the office, Xiao Dao couldn't help voicing his opinion.

Although localization and voice acting for smaller markets weren't particularly expensive, even mosquito meat was still meat.

Wouldn't that money be more useful if saved for later promotional campaigns?

Besides, voice acting wasn't something that dramatically affected the player's experience.

Its impact was relatively limited.

And only *good* voice acting improved the experience.

Bad voice acting could actually make things worse.

More importantly, Sekiro wasn't a story-driven game in the first place.

The sense of immersion provided by voice acting wasn't nearly as significant as people imagined.

As for QA testing, Xiao Dao and Ying Gao had originally envisioned something much simpler.

The internal team would test the game first, then they would hire a reputable external QA company to perform additional testing.

As long as there weren't any game-breaking bugs that interfered with the main storyline, that would be sufficient.

What they had never expected was for Chen Xu to order them to hire three of the best QA companies in the country and have them conduct testing in three rotating shifts.

That was simply ridiculous.

What game company operated like that?

Hearing Xiao Dao's concerns, Chen Xu nodded.

Then he rejected them.

"This is Morning Star Games' first game. If we're going to make it, then I want it presented in the most perfect form possible."

*Are you kidding?*

*If I let you guys handle the testing internally, wouldn't that save a huge amount of money?*

Three outsourced QA teams, combined with localization and voice acting expenses, only amounted to around 15 million yuan.

Employee salaries for the next two and a half months probably wouldn't be nearly as high as before.

After all, the game was basically finished, what reason would employees still have to work overtime?

Sure, overtime pay existed, but everyone was in their twenties and weren't drowning in debt.

And with the company's generous salaries and benefits, a comfortable vacation was far more appealing than earning extra overtime pay.

At this rate, he was worried that he might not even have a chance to hand out overtime bonuses.

Then there was the annual party budget and year-end bonuses.

The company had only been acquired a little over three months ago, and no product had even been released yet.

The system wouldn't approve a particularly large budget for those expenses.

Which meant there would still be at least 20 million yuan sitting on the books.

Just thinking about that figure made Chen Xu feel a little hopeless.

He genuinely had no idea how to spend that money in a legitimate way that wouldn't disrupt the project while still passing the system's review.

The system had simply given him too much money.

Watching Xiao Dao leave the office and close the door behind him, Chen Xu sat in his chair and slowly let out a sigh.

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Outside the office, Ying Gao and several other employees had been waiting.

The moment Xiao Dao emerged, they immediately gathered around him.

"What did President Chen say?"

Xiao Dao shook his head and repeated Chen Xu's words to everyone.

"So what are we supposed to do now?"

"Does the company still have enough funding?"

"If we keep spending like this, won't we run out of money for marketing later?"

The employees looked worried.

In their eyes, Sekiro's development budget was simply enormous.

So enormous that it made them feel as though they were walking on thin ice.

They constantly feared that some mistake in a single department could cause serious problems.

The budget for this one game was already greater than the combined cost of five games back when they were still part of Target Games.

Although everyone had immense confidence in the game's quality, they also carried deep concerns.

After all, aside from the employees who were solely responsible for art assets and 3D modeling, everyone who had participated in the game's systems, level design, combat mechanics, and core framework all knew exactly how unusual this game was.

With such a distinctive style, if it wasn't promoted on a large scale, could it even recover its development costs?

"Alright, everyone, that's enough," Ying Gao said.

"Since President Chen has already made up his mind, there's nothing we can do about it."

Then he sighed.

"And honestly, after seeing how President Chen has treated us since joining the company, haven't you all realized something?"

"President Chen is someone who pursues perfection to an incredible degree. To him, the quality of the game itself is far more important than marketing."

"That's true, but if three testing companies are running bug checks around the clock, what exactly are we supposed to do next?" Xiao Dao asked as he pulled over a chair and sat down.

From this point onward, their primary responsibility would be fixing whatever bugs the testing teams reported.

But to be honest, Xiao Dao and the others were quite confident in the game.

Bugs were unavoidable, of course.

But they didn't believe there would be many critical ones.

At worst, there would be modeling and texture-related issues.

For example, players might occasionally clip through a wall and fall into an unintended area outside the map.

Or certain conflicts might cause texture rendering errors.

"But what about optimization?" Ying Gao suddenly said.

Xiao Dao paused.

"President Chen hired those outsourced teams to test for bugs," Ying Gao continued.

"But can QA testing solve optimization issues?"

A slight smile appeared on his face.

Xiao Dao's eyes widened.

"That's right! Optimization!"

"So *this* is what President Chen really meant!"

He slapped his thigh and jumped to his feet.

As a gamer—especially a PC gamer—what was the first thing players worried about?

Was it whether the game was fun?

Was it whether the story was terrible?

Of course not.

Those were things players only discovered after spending time with the game.

The most immediate and obvious issue was optimization.

On PC, every player's hardware setup was different.

Some machines were top-tier monsters, like Lü Bu riding Red Hare.

Others were jokes, like Lü Bu riding a dog.

Unlike consoles, which used standardized hardware that developers could optimize specifically for a single configuration, PC hardware varied wildly.

Frame generation times weren't nearly as stable as they were on consoles.

There were also rendering optimization concerns.

Because console hardware was standardized, game engines could utilize rendering techniques that simply weren't practical on PCs.

For PC gamers, optimization was therefore an extremely important factor.

A game could have amazing gameplay, beautiful graphics, and an incredible story.

But if players were forced to experience it at fifteen frames per second, none of that would matter.

They simply wouldn't keep playing.

"I don't expect average gaming PCs to maintain 4K at 60 FPS using frame-generation technology," Ying Gao said with a smile.

"But at the very least, we should be able to maintain a stable 120 FPS at 1080p and 60 FPS at 1440p."

"That's a huge task..." Xiao Dao slowly exhaled.

After all, the game was scheduled for release in the first quarter.

And there was also the upcoming Lunar New Year holiday in between.

The amount of time left was extremely limited.

"Which is exactly why," Ying Gao said as he looked toward Chen Xu's office, "I think President Chen didn't say it directly."

"He was worried that we'd feel too much pressure."

Everyone fell silent.

The more they thought about it, the more it made sense.

The reason for hiring three testing companies to work in shifts wasn't simply to find bugs.

It was so that the development team wouldn't waste valuable time repeatedly searching for issues that professional testers could uncover far more efficiently.

The schedule was tight.

The workload was heavy.

If Chen Xu had directly ordered them to focus on optimization, the pressure might have become overwhelming.

So instead, he emphasized his pursuit of perfection, subtly hinting at what truly mattered.

Optimization.

Even though the office door remained closed, everyone seemed to see, beyond that door, the radiant image of President Chen standing there, glowing with boundless brilliance.

Meanwhile, completely unaware of the dramatic conclusions being reached outside, Chen Xu was still sitting in his office worrying about one thing:

How on earth was he supposed to spend the remaining twenty million yuan before the system settlement deadline?