

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

Chapter 39: President Chen Meant It Exactly Like This!

February 20

The game's store page on Steam had finally passed review.

Meanwhile, the first batch of 2,000 Collector's Editions produced by Stellar Props Manufacturing had already arrived at the warehouse.

The only problem left was how to sell them.

"Since the package includes physical merchandise, players have to provide a shipping address. But Steam also has its two-hour unconditional refund policy..."

Inside the office, Gong Qi and Ying Gao were reporting on the latest progress.

Chen Xu had been browsing Steam's list of worst-rated games, daydreaming about one day joining the ranks of the legendary "money-losing" predecessors whom President Pei and the others so admired.

When Gong Qi and Ying Gao walked in wearing worried expressions, Chen Xu immediately assumed something serious had happened.

After listening to them...

That was it?

He let out a long sigh of relief.

*You scared me for nothing.*

This was actually good news!

If the Collector's Edition were sold directly on Steam...

Sure, players might react exactly as he'd predicted at first—calling him a greedy businessman.

But there was another possibility he had overlooked.

Negative publicity was still publicity.

Previously, he'd only considered the outcome that benefited him.

He'd completely ignored the possible side effects.

Thinking about it now, Chen Xu broke into a cold sweat.

What if the controversy kept growing and eventually some wealthy players actually bought it?

For example, gaming YouTubers who made videos for views.

Or streamers looking for entertaining content.

They were all perfectly capable of buying one.

And once the package arrived, wouldn't that be disastrous?

After all, although he'd deliberately raised the price sky-high, his intention had never been to rip players off.

He simply didn't want to spend all that money on marketing.

So the quality of the merchandise was actually excellent.

If a YouTuber uploaded an unboxing video, or a streamer unintentionally convinced viewers it was worth buying, then a bunch of well-off players might impulsively purchase the Collector's Edition before the settlement period ended.

That would completely defeat the purpose.

Selling it on the official website was much better.

Forget trying to make players call him a greedy merchant or deliberately creating a terrible first impression.

Just quietly hide it in some forgotten corner of the website.

The longer it stayed unnoticed, the better.

"Our company already has an official website, doesn't it?" Chen Xu said.

"Just update it a bit and add a page to sell the Collector's Edition."

"And don't spend any marketing resources promoting it."

"Players who genuinely like our game will naturally follow our updates and eventually discover it on their own."

"After all, it's a limited edition."

"It's meant for players who truly love our game."

Chen Xu earnestly advised Gong Qi.

If Steam wouldn't allow it, then so be it.

They could simply patch up the company's website and add an online store section.

How hard could that be?

Better yet, they could even cut a portion of the several million yuan originally budgeted for promotional advertising.

Two birds with one stone.

"But, President Chen..." Ying Gao's voice trembled with emotion.

It almost sounded as if he were crying tears of blood.

For most game companies, marketing budgets were usually 1.5 to 2 times larger than development costs.

Some mobile games even spent three or four times their development budget—or more—on advertising.

But their Sekiro?

Its marketing budget wasn't even one-tenth of its development cost.

At other companies, designers and planners practically clung to the boss's legs, desperately trying to move a little money from marketing into development.

But here, everything was backwards.

"Enough."

"We shouldn't obsess over launch-day sales."

"The one who laughs first doesn't necessarily laugh last."

"The one who laughs at the end is the real winner."

Chen Xu clapped his hands, cutting Ying Gao off before expressing what he was truly thinking.

*What are you all doing?*

*Do you still want me to achieve financial freedom or not?*

*If the game sells too well right away, how am I supposed to drive a Bentley one-handed?*

*How am I supposed to live the carefree life I've been dreaming of?*

"Then, President Chen..."

"What if we make the Collector's Edition more attractive?"

"For example, adding official website authentication and a unique serial number for each copy?"

Ying Gao proposed what he thought was an excellent idea.

He was trying every possible way to increase the Collector's Edition's appeal.

"No!"

"Rejected!"

Chen Xu refused without the slightest hesitation.

At a time like this, he had to remain absolutely firm.

Whether an employee's suggestion was good or bad, he would reject it all.

Everything would proceed according to the original plan.

The situation was already looking excellent.

Everything was in place, all they had to do now was wait.

There was absolutely no need to complicate matters.

"Then we'll go make the arrangements, President Chen."

Gong Qi quietly tugged on Ying Gao's sleeve before speaking to Chen Xu.

"Mhm. Go ahead."

Chen Xu nodded with satisfaction.

Now these were the kind of obedient, reliable employees he liked.

*'Stop trying to come up with clever ideas all the time. Just help me get through this settlement period safely.'*

*'Once the next settlement cycle begins, I'll raise everyone's benefits by another level!'*

. . .

"Old Qi, why'd you stop me?" Ying Gao asked unhappily after they left the office.

"Old Gao, I know your intentions were good," Gong Qi sighed. "But you still haven't understood what President Chen is thinking."

"Huh?"

"Think about it. What was President Chen looking at when we walked into his office?"

Ying Gao thought back for a moment before answering uncertainly,

"I think... Steam's worst-reviewed games list?"

"Exactly!" Gong Qi nodded. "President Chen is actually a boss who cares deeply about a game's reputation."

"Multiple language localizations, full voice acting in different languages, an innovative gameplay style, hiring three separate QA companies just to eliminate bugs, constantly reminding us to optimize the game without holding anything back."

"Don't all those things prove it?"

"But..." Ying Gao wanted to argue.

"You know as well as I do that Sekiro is a very unusual game."

"When a game receives massive advertising, what kind of players does it attract?"

Gong Qi looked at Ying Gao expectantly.

"Casual players... and people who just follow the crowd."

Ying Gao suddenly slapped his palm.

"I get it!"

"Exactly." Gong Qi smiled.

"Those players make up the majority of launch sales."

"But at the same time, they're also the least patient."

"Their reasons for buying a game are simple."

"They saw a streamer playing it."

"Their friends are playing it."

"Or the advertising convinced them it's the hottest game around."

"So what do you think would happen if those players tried Sekiro?"

"They'd probably... leave pretty bad reviews."

Ying Gao's expression turned serious.

"That's exactly why I think President Chen doesn't want a massive marketing campaign."

"If too many casual players are drawn in right away, the result could easily backfire."

"As for the Collector's Edition..."

"No other game company is willing to spend money on physical merchandise the way we are."

"So I think that's also part of President Chen's long-term plan to rebuild and strengthen the game's reputation later on."

"I just don't know exactly how he intends to pull it off."

Gong Qi carefully laid out his reasoning.

"But if that's the case..."

Ying Gao suddenly thought of something.

"Doesn't that make the trailer we edited... kind of inconsistent with that strategy?"

"By that logic, we made it look way too cool."

Gong Qi shook his head.

"A game still has to attract players first."

"Otherwise, there won't be any later reputation to recover."

"And every flashy move shown in that trailer is actually something players can perform themselves."

"So it isn't false advertising."

"If anything, it can become excellent promotional material for a second wave of marketing later."

Ying Gao inhaled sharply.

"President Chen... actually thought everything through that thoroughly?"

He had almost ruined President Chen's entire plan.

"We ordinary people only think one step ahead."

"But President Chen thinks three steps ahead every time he makes a move."

"That's what makes him so remarkable."

Even Gong Qi himself couldn't help feeling completely convinced.

At first, when the idea had occurred to him, he had only been half convinced.

But the more he explained it to Ying Gao, the louder and more confident his voice became.

That's right, this was exactly what President Chen had been thinking all along!