

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

Chapter 11: Can a Game Developer's Actions Really Be Called Stealing?

Hyakukin Studio was something of an oddity in the gaming industry.

Despite being just a studio, its members had all come from major top-tier game companies.

Every one of them was an industry elite, including several star game producers with outstanding reputations.

In terms of technical expertise, aside from the world's biggest AAA publishers, Hyakukin Studio was considered among the best in the business.

And if the focus was narrowed specifically to action games, then outside of a handful of companies that specialized in action titles, there were very few studios that could compete with them.

However, whether due to management issues or simply because too many talented developers were working together, everyone had their own ideas, making it difficult to reach a unified vision.

As a result, since its founding, not a single game developed independently by Hyakukin Studio has become a success.

They had fallen into an endless cycle of:

"Project fails → take outsourcing jobs to pay off debts → start another project → fail again → take outsourcing jobs to pay off debts."

Ironically, some of the games they worked on as contractors occasionally became massive hits.

Because of this, both the industry and players jokingly referred to them as the Ultimate Work-for-Hire Studio.

Some players even joked:

"A game outsourced to Hyakukin Studio might or might not be fun, but a game developed entirely by Hyakukin Studio is guaranteed not to be fun."

. . .

"President Chen, in terms of action-game technology, Hyakukin Studio is indeed one of the best third-party contractors available."

"But compared to the level of technology they provide, their outsourcing fees simply aren't cost-effective."

"And although they're highly skilled, their reputation in the outsourcing business isn't particularly good."

Gong Qi hurriedly explained why Hyakukin Studio hadn't been included among their preferred choices.

To summarize in one sentence, Hyakukin Studio's reputation was larger than its actual value.

If you asked whether they had the technical ability, the answer was absolutely yes.

But at the same time, they were expensive.

Just like luxury brands, much of what you paid for wasn't the product itself but the name attached to it.

Furthermore, Hyakukin Studio had a few notorious incidents in its history that had damaged its reputation within the industry, leaving its public image far below the level of its technical capability.

After listening to Gong Qi's explanation, Chen Xu finally understood.

In game development, from the perspective of most players, the difference between cutting-edge technology and technology that's merely very good isn't usually enough to become a selling point—at least not unless there's a truly massive gap.

But that only applied to ordinary bosses.

Was he an ordinary boss?

With the system backing him?

Of course not.

After hearing Gong Qi's summary, Chen Xu's eyes immediately lit up.

This was exactly what he wanted!

A studio with strong technical ability.

A studio that charged outrageously high prices.

A studio that would allow him to dramatically increase the budget without actually ruining Sekiro.

After all, even though his goal was to lose money, he had no intention of destroying the classic masterpieces from his previous life.

Chen Xu was very aware of his own limitations.

To put it bluntly, he was nothing more than a plagiarist.

At most, he could make improvements to commonly criticized aspects of games from his previous world, such as optimization, graphics, and technical performance.

But when it comes to gameplay design itself?

He didn't believe his current self could surpass the originals.

That was why, whenever employees occasionally flattered him, their compliments simply went in one ear and out the other.

He never took them seriously.

His only goal was to extract money from the system.

"Good! Then it's settled—they're the ones!" Chen Xu made the decision on the spot.

Then he picked up his phone and glanced at the time.

"Gong Qi, get in touch with Hyakukin Studio immediately. Don't let someone else snatch them up first."

Without giving anyone time to react, Chen Xu issued the order decisively.

3:30 PM.

Time for afternoon tea.

If he remembered correctly, today's menu was Durian Mille Crepe Cake with Cappuccino.

Excellent.

Filled with anticipation for the upcoming food, Chen Xu pushed open the door and left, leaving behind a room full of stunned employees.

Inside the office, everyone looked at one another in silence.

Gong Qi sat back down in his chair, his face full of helplessness and conflicted emotions.

There was nothing he could do.

He had never fought a battle with such abundant resources before.

In the past, every dollar had to be stretched as far as possible.

He was the kind of person who wished he could split a single coin in half and spend it twice.

Everything had always been about maximizing cost-effectiveness.

But now?

President Chen was dissatisfied with both the price and the outsourcing studios he had selected.

At this thought, Gong Qi could only sigh.

"President Chen truly is someone who pursues perfection."

"Personally, I think President Chen may have had another intention entirely."

As if suddenly realizing something, Xiu Fu narrowed his eyes slightly and spoke up.

The moment those words were heard, everyone perked up and listened attentively.

"Think about it. If President Chen simply wanted a contractor with better technical capabilities, why didn't he just tell us directly? Why use such an indirect, almost suggestive way of expressing it?"

Xiu Fu smiled faintly as he pointed out what he considered the most crucial detail.

Hearing this, everyone fell into deep thought.

Gong Qi and Ying Gao instinctively nodded.

"That's right. There must be some deeper meaning behind it."

After pondering for a few seconds, Xiao Dao seemed to have realized something as well. His eyes lit up as he chimed in.

"Exactly."

Looking at the bewildered expressions around the room, Xiao Dao and Xiu Fu exchanged glances.

The smiles on their faces grew wider.

That's right.

You may all be experienced industry veterans.

You may be the company's long-time employees.

But the two of them had lived under the same roof as President Chen for three whole years.

Nobody understood President Chen better than they did.

No longer keeping everyone in suspense, Xiu Fu slowly explained his theory.

“Hyakukin Studio may not have good cost-performance, but there's no denying that their technical capabilities are the strongest.”

“Think back to your school days. If you wanted someone to tutor you, would you choose an average student—or the student ranked number one?”

Picking up a document from the table, Xiu Fu casually fanned himself with it.

For a moment, he carried the air of a master strategist, calmly directing events while enemies crumbled before him.

*I'd choose the pretty one...*

As memories of youth surfaced, Gong Qi rubbed his slightly receding hairline and sighed silently.

Still, he wasn't stupid.

At this point, he already understood what Xiu Fu was implying.

“So President Chen wants us to learn their techniques?” Ying Gao voiced Gong Qi's inner thoughts.

“What do you mean by *learn their techniques*?”

Xiao Dao immediately looked displeased.

“Are we not paying them?”

“This is about learning advanced industry technologies and development concepts!”

Everyone understood what he meant.

There was no need to say it out loud.

*Learn their techniques* sounded much better.

“Hire them as contractors, deeply study their technology, and perhaps even recruit some of their people.”

“Then use that knowledge to cultivate our own internal team.”

Xiu Fu continued laying out his reasoning.

“Right now, we're making an action game and our technology isn't mature enough, so we need outside help.”

“But what about the second project?”



“The third?”

“And every project after that?”

“We can't keep outsourcing forever, can we?”

As he finished speaking, the small meeting room erupted into excited discussion.

This was a path they had never even considered before.

Yet the more they thought about it, the more feasible it seemed.

Building expertise from scratch was incredibly difficult.

But if someone was willing to let them study—*Ahem*—If someone was willing to let them learn, then it became an entirely different matter.

After all, outsourcing—even to studios other than Hyakukin Studio—required a substantial amount of money.

But if they could absorb the technical know-how along the way, future game projects wouldn't require such massive development costs.

Lower development costs meant higher profit margins.

And higher profits meant larger project bonuses.

Their future bonuses, no less.

Thinking of this, everyone couldn't help but sigh in admiration.

As expected.

President Chen was still President Chen.

They had only been focused on the money spent on outsourcing.

Meanwhile, President Chen was already planning for the company's future.

That was the difference between them and him.