

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

Chapter 56: Such High Requirements?

Compared to other story-driven games, interactive movie games have one major inherent disadvantage.

They can easily give players the impression that simply watching a playthrough provides the complete experience.

As a result, they are also the genre most likely to create "cloud players"—people who watch rather than play.

With most other games, even those heavily focused on narrative, the experience is still built around a core gameplay system. It might be puzzle-solving, an RPG, or an action-adventure game.

Players who have never actually played the game themselves inevitably miss many details and mechanics. If they try to discuss the game in depth, it's easy to expose that they only watched it.

Interactive movie games, however, are different.

Brief branching choices, QTE sequences triggered by different events, and controller vibration feedback all exist solely to enhance immersion.

But the actual story content experienced by viewers and players is virtually identical.

Under these circumstances, the genre suffers a serious disadvantage when it comes to game sales.

In his previous life, Quantic Dream, the studio behind Detroit: Become Human, was arguably the company that brought this genre to its peak.

Before that, they had already earned widespread recognition throughout the industry with Heavy Rain and Beyond: Two Souls.

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that around ninety percent of interactive movie games adopted UI and design philosophies derived from Quantic Dream's formula.

Even so, their later masterpiece, Detroit: Become Human, still couldn't match its tremendous popularity with equally impressive sales.

Released as a PlayStation 4 exclusive, it sold over one million copies within two weeks.

That sounded like an incredible achievement.

But its development budget alone had reached €35 million.

Marketing expenses added another nearly €30 million.

On top of that, Sony had invested enormous promotional resources into the game.

Even with over a million copies sold in two weeks, it still hadn't recovered its production costs.

However, thanks to its exceptional quality and excellent reputation, the game's long-term sales were remarkably strong.

After launching on PC and receiving regular holiday discounts, it gradually climbed to over nine million copies sold after five years.

Its launch sales weren't spectacular, but its staying power was outstanding.

Perfect for exploiting the System.

More importantly, from a technical standpoint, Detroit: Become Human would actually be easier to develop than Sekiro.

After all, the game emphasized audiovisual presentation far more than demanding gameplay systems.

As for the budget, there wasn't much to worry about.

A development fund of 150 million yuan was more than enough for Detroit.

In fact, Chen Xu felt that if he simply developed the game normally without deliberately wasting money, he might not even be able to spend the entire budget.

Although the game's development had cost €35 million in his previous life, the technology in this parallel world was considerably more advanced.

In particular, everyone at the company could use AI-assisted development.

Development cycles were much shorter, and even outsourced work carried significantly lower labor costs.

On top of that, he was essentially standing on the shoulders of giants.

He already knew exactly what the finished game should look like.

There would be very few wrong turns during development, and hardly any discarded prototypes.

All of that translated into saved development costs.

In other words, every 100 yuan he spent could achieve results worth 500 yuan.

"If only I could do what Capcom did while developing Resident Evil 4—keep scrapping and restarting development over and over until the project turned into a complete mess. Forget 150 million yuan—even 1.5 billion would disappear in no time," Chen Xu sighed.

Unfortunately, that wasn't an option.

Having made his decision, Chen Xu began recalling the game's details while drafting the project's initial design in his notebook.

The next day...

Morning Star Games Office.

"President Chen, I'm Bu Lao, General Manager of Raycus International's Shanghai branch and the consultant responsible for handling your recruitment request. We've already prepared a list of candidates for the assistant you requested."

Smiling politely, Bu Lao introduced himself.

"Nice to meet you."

Chen Xu was a little surprised by the introduction.

After all, he was only hiring a female secretary.

Did they really need to send someone this high-ranking?

Apparently noticing his surprise, Bu Lao smiled and explained,

"Although you're only recruiting an executive assistant, Morning Star Games has received a very high internal rating within Raycus International."

He was telling the truth.

If it had simply been a routine secretary recruitment, not only would the branch's general manager never have become involved—even one of the firm's senior consultants would have been unnecessary.

The key issue was that after reviewing Morning Star Games' profile, the company had immediately upgraded its internal rating.

In terms of size, it was merely a small-to-medium-sized studio.

But its potential was considered extraordinary.

The predecessor of Morning Star Games, Target Games, had been a small studio on the verge of bankruptcy.

Yet after being acquired, it had produced a blockbuster game in just six months.

It had also expanded into overseas markets and even recruited a group of employees from Japan.

All of these signs pointed to one conclusion:

This was a company with tremendous potential.

Raycus International wasn't one of Shanghai's long-established headhunting firms.

If they wanted to compete with those industry veterans, they had to focus on companies that might eventually grow into major corporations.

They might not make much money from them now, but that didn't mean they wouldn't make plenty in the future.

"Based on your requirements, President Chen, we've conducted a thorough screening. These are the candidates' résumés. You can take a look first."

Still smiling, Bu Lao handed over the folder.

"I'll have a look."

Chen Xu smiled as well, feeling a hint of anticipation.

He reached out and accepted the stack of résumés.

Slowly, he opened the first one.

Candidate One.

Excellent qualifications.

Outstanding capabilities.

The reason for leaving her previous company was simple enough—it had gone bankrupt due to poor management.

Nothing about that reflected badly on her.

The only problem was...

She looked about the same age as his mother.

That's fine. There's still the second one.

Candidate Two.

Also highly experienced.

Also exceptionally capable.

Her reason for changing jobs was equally straightforward.

Her former employer had shifted its strategic focus overseas, while she wanted to remain in China, so she had begun looking elsewhere.

But...

Why was her age completely different from what he had imagined?

Another woman approaching forty.

Taking a deep breath, Chen Xu continued reading.

The more résumés he flipped through, the more serious his expression became.

Beside him, Bu Lao's smile gradually faded as uncertainty crept into his mind.

What's going on?

Why does President Chen seem more dissatisfied the longer he reads?

That shouldn't be happening!

These are all candidates I selected personally!

He mentally reviewed the original recruitment requirements.

Outstanding ability.

Pleasant facial features.

Female.

Unmarried.

He couldn't understand where he'd gone wrong.

If the assignment had been given to one of the younger headhunters who had just entered the industry...

Seeing those requirements, combined with the fact that President Chen himself was young, they might have interpreted them superficially and simply looked for attractive "flower vase" candidates.

But that was precisely why they were ordinary employees, while he was the general manager.

Bu Lao understood something important.

For someone like President Chen, ability outweighed everything else.

He didn't understand video games, but he could certainly understand the discussions and reviews circulating online.

A man who had acquired a bankrupt game studio...

Invested an enormous amount of money into developing an incredibly ambitious and innovative title...

Faced overwhelming criticism at launch, yet stubbornly stuck to his vision until public opinion completely reversed...

And had even defeated one of Vencent Group's famous game studios...

Someone like that couldn't be judged by his age.

Therefore, the requirements for this executive assistant had to mean exactly what they said.

Outstanding ability spoke for itself.

Pleasing facial features made sense as well—an executive assistant represented the company's public image to a certain extent.

As for female, that was also easy to understand.

Compared with traditional businesses, game companies generally had fewer administrative chores.

There was no need to treat an executive assistant like a workhorse.

Besides, President Chen was only in his twenties.

Even if he retired at sixty, he still had another thirty or forty years ahead of him.

There was no urgent need to train a successor.

Finally, unmarried clearly meant that President Chen hoped his assistant's work wouldn't be affected by family obligations.

Based on those criteria...

The stack of résumés before him had been selected with painstaking care.

Not only did every candidate possess excellent academic credentials and exceptional professional ability...

Many were also knowledgeable in finance and law.

Several were even fluent in two foreign languages in addition to English.

They were, without exception, accomplished career women.

To recruit them, Bu Lao had personally called each candidate and explained Morning Star Games' unique advantages.

After all, executive recruitment was a two-way process.

And yet, President Chen still wasn't satisfied?

Just how high are his standards?