

Losing Money to Become a Tycoon: Starting with Games

Chapter 494: The GOG Creative Community

April 20th, Wednesday.

Tenda Group – Game Department

Hu Xianbin sat at his workstation, gulping down coffee while stubbornly wrestling with the story script for Struggle.

Development on Struggle was progressing simultaneously on multiple fronts.

At Halo Studio, Ruan Guangjian's team was still producing character concept art. Once Hu Xianbin approved the designs, they would be handed off to outsourced art teams for detailed 3D modeling. After that, the actors would be sent to a motion-capture studio to record animations.

Meanwhile, Hu Xianbin's task was to finalize the entire game's script as quickly as possible.

At first glance, it didn't seem particularly difficult.

After all, President Pei had already provided a clear story outline.

However, once Hu Xianbin actually began working on it, he discovered that it was far more difficult than he had imagined.

The game's major themes—schooling, examinations, job hunting, marriage, raising children, and other everyday life experiences—were all things commonly found in reality.

But precisely because they were so common, they came with a problem: everyone's experience was different.

There were billions of people around the world living completely different lives.

The poor each suffered in their own ways, while the rich each enjoyed their own forms of luxury.

So what kind of examples could truly represent the lives of "the poor" and "the rich"?

Society was layered and complicated.

Among poor people alone, some lived in remote mountain villages while others lived in urban slums.

Some lacked adequate clothing and food, while others could at least eat regularly but still struggled financially.

There were enormous differences even among people in the same social class.

In fact, two poor people often found it difficult to fully understand each other's circumstances.

Under those conditions, using individual cases to represent entire groups became an enormous challenge for the game's designers.

If they got it wrong, people would inevitably say:

"Poor people aren't like this at all."

And the entire foundation of the game would collapse.

How could they maintain authenticity while also ensuring the examples had enough universality to resonate with people from different backgrounds?

Hu Xianbin felt that he had been handed the most difficult challenge of his career.

Now there was no longer a Li Yada to pave the way for him.

Everything depended entirely on himself.

The pressure was immense.

As he sat there pulling at his hair and thinking, Min Jingchao walked over and lightly tapped on his desk.

"There's already a proposal for the new GOG event. Want to take a look?"

Hu Xianbin shook his head.

"I don't have the bandwidth for that right now. You handle it."

Then he instinctively glanced toward Li Yada's former seat.

"As long as Sister Li and Brother Bao don't raise any objections, it should be fine."

Min Jingchao nodded.

"Yeah. I've already posted the proposal in the group chat. Neither of them said anything."

Hu Xianbin replied immediately, "Then it's fine."

Feeling reassured, Min Jingchao returned to his workstation and sat down.

Displayed on his monitor was a proposal titled:

GOG Creative Community

The official GOG website already had a forum where players could submit feedback, report problems, and discuss the game. It was also part of the TPDb website ecosystem.

This time, however, Min Jingchao planned to add a new forum section called the Creative Community, specifically designed to collect player ideas for new heroes.

Of course, while designing this feature, he never forgot President Pei's teachings:

"A large workforce can be a treasure—or it can become a prison."

While fully respecting player creativity, they also needed to remain vigilant against the possibility that this creativity could become a "prison," causing the game to turn into a chaotic patchwork of unrelated ideas or a bizarre mishmash with no coherent identity.

As the game's balance designer, Min Jingchao was responsible for maintaining gameplay balance.

Meanwhile, Zhang Nan was responsible for preserving the game's artistic style.

Even so, the sheer volume of ideas generated by players would make screening and reviewing them an enormous undertaking.

A designer's job, therefore, was to anticipate such problems in advance and solve them through systems and mechanisms.

Min Jingchao divided the Creative Community into several simple sections and designed a player-driven preliminary screening system similar to upvoting.

The goal was to minimize the amount of time designers spent on low-level filtering work.

In Min Jingchao's vision, GOG heroes could be broadly divided into three categories:

1. Licensed IP Heroes

These heroes came from purchased intellectual properties.

The development team could simply adapt the existing characters into GOG, redesigning them while remaining faithful to their original appearances.

Their abilities would also be designed according to the character's established backstory.

2. Heroes Based on Internal Staff or Special Contributors

These heroes were inspired by employees or individuals who had made significant contributions.

Zadkiel was an example of this category.

3. Player-Created Heroes

Heroes designed by the players themselves.

Player-created heroes could be further divided into two subcategories:

Heroes focused on gameplay mechanics and abilities and heroes focused on appearance and visual design

After all, specialization mattered.

Most players found it difficult to excel simultaneously at character lore, visual design, gameplay mechanics, and numerical balance.

Balance design, especially, was an entirely different discipline.

Therefore, these aspects needed to be separated.

The Creative Community was divided into four sections:

- 1, IP Hero Submission Area
- 2, Special Contribution Hero Submission Area
- 3, Original Mechanic Submission Area
- 4, Original Appearance Submission Area

In the IP Hero Submission Area, the official team would periodically publish pinned posts announcing newly acquired IP characters. Players could then design abilities for these characters based on their existing appearances and backstories.

In the Special Contribution Hero Submission Area, the achievements and stories of outstanding employees, business partners, or exemplary players

would be introduced. Players could then design heroes around those individuals' distinctive traits.

In the Original Mechanic Submission Area, players only needed to focus on gameplay concepts and mechanics.

For example, if the current hero roster lacked a support hero with global-map abilities, players could simply propose an interesting gameplay concept. Other contributors—or the official team—would later provide the character art and backstory.

The Original Appearance Submission Area worked in exactly the opposite way.

Players only needed to submit character artwork or written backstories. Other contributors—or the official team—would then design the hero's abilities and gameplay mechanics.

All of these sections included extensive filtering and sorting functions.

Players could browse submissions according to popularity, posting date, number of likes, and other metrics.

For designs they liked, they could choose actions such as Like, Strongly Recommend, Hilarious, and Dislike.

This allowed players to perform an initial round of screening themselves, ensuring that the most popular concepts could be prioritized for development.

After all, since they were already crowdsourcing hero designs from the players, they might as well go one step further and have the players help with filtering ideas too.

Of course, a company as principled as Tenda Group would never exploit player creativity for free.

To encourage participation, Min Jingchao designed an extremely generous reward system.

Rewards for All Players:

When a player-designed hero was released, the first skin would be sold at 90% off, the second skin would be sold at 50% off, and the third skin would be sold at 20% off.

All players would receive these discounts for one month after each skin's release.

Rewards for Active Forum Members (Determined through a combination of login activity, likes, comments, and other engagement metrics.):

Active forum members would enjoy the above discounts without any time limit.

Even if a player lost active-member status, they could regain it by returning to the forum and participating again, restoring their benefits.

Rewards for Outstanding Contributors (Players who consistently produced highly popular ideas, regardless of whether those ideas were adopted.):

These contributors would receive the right to purchase all skins at a 70% discount. This discount would not stack with other discounts; the lowest available price would apply.

If one of their ideas was officially adopted, they would receive 5% of the profits generated by that hero's skins, their name or in-game ID would be permanently credited on the hero's information page as the original creator of the concept, and players could also equip special titles in-game, similar to: <Designer of Zadkiel>

Naturally, before uploading ideas, players would need to agree to certain legal terms and conditions to avoid potential copyright disputes.

Otherwise, it would be extremely embarrassing if Tenda Group adopted a design only to be sued afterward by the very person who submitted it.

Overall, the rewards were extraordinarily generous.

Especially the profit-sharing arrangement.

Once a concept was accepted, the creator would receive 5% of all skin profits for that hero.

The more popular the hero became and the better its skins sold, the more money the creator would earn.

In the ideal scenario, a player who designed a sufficiently enjoyable and beloved hero could theoretically live off that 5% revenue share for the rest of their life.

Of course, that was only the ideal case.

Even several years later, when the game might have over a hundred heroes, there would probably be only a few dozen players fortunate enough to achieve such success.

Nevertheless, these lucrative rewards would motivate talented players to devote enormous effort to hero design.

Trading 5% of skin profits for a hero that the player base genuinely loved—and simultaneously securing enthusiastic community participation—was a bargain.

At this moment, Min Jingchao wanted to say just one thing to Fingertip Games:

"Come on. You may have livers of iron, but the collective wisdom of the players is infinite!"

After reviewing the proposal one final time, Min Jingchao sent it to Ma Yiqun.

At present, the Terminal Chinese Web, the TPDb website, the game's official website, the forums, and related platforms were all maintained by the same group of people.

Since they were all websites and would eventually be integrated into TPDb anyway, developing everything together was the most efficient approach.

Once the forum overhaul was completed and the Creative Community went live, the announcement would undoubtedly create a massive sensation among the player base.

President Pei will probably be pleased that we've come up with such a brilliant solution, right?

. . .

Meanwhile...

Pei Qian was sitting alone in his office, worrying.

As for the special mission for this settlement cycle—"Learning Never Ends"—he still had absolutely no idea how to complete it.

At most, Pei Qian could spend 8% of 20 million yuan, which meant investing 1.6 million yuan in himself to learn some kind of knowledge or skill.

If, by the time of settlement, the system judged that he had "achieved meaningful learning results," it would allow him to either reduce or increase the available System Funds by 12.8 million yuan.

But there was a prerequisite:

He had to spend the full 1.6 million yuan.

The less he spent, the smaller the adjustment to the System Funds would be.

The reason Pei Qian had agonized over this for three weeks without reaching a decision came down to two major questions:

What kind of course could possibly cost 1.6 million yuan within a few months?

And:

If such a course existed, could he improve enough for the system to judge that he had actually "learned something"?

If the system concluded that he had "failed to achieve meaningful learning results," then all he would have done was spend 1.6 million yuan without receiving any reduction in System Funds.

That would make the entire exercise practically meaningless.

Pei Qian had considered many possibilities:

Management.

Economics.

Foreign languages.

Painting.

And more.

But the more he thought about them, the less reliable they seemed.

First, although he was extremely busy, he might have enough time to attend classes, but not enough time to truly master what was being taught.

Second, even if he had the time, his brain might not be able to keep up.

Third, courses he realistically had time to learn usually couldn't cost anywhere near 1.6 million yuan.

And the ways of spending 1.6 million yuan often didn't involve learning anything genuinely useful.

The system was also incredibly crafty.

Pei Qian had briefly considered trying some clever loophole, like claiming that *"spending 1.6 million yuan and learning a painful lesson"* counted as learning, hoping to win through wordplay.

The system would probably just roll its eyes at him.

This was far too difficult.

As the days continued slipping by, Pei Qian felt that he could no longer postpone the decision.

The longer he delayed, the less time he would have left to study.

Since he couldn't come up with a solution himself, he would have to ask someone else for advice.

But who?

After some thought, he decided to ask Tang Yishu.

Among all of the employees who constantly overinterpreted his actions, Tang Yishu was probably the least affected by that tendency.

At the same time, she was exceptionally discreet and never revealed anything she shouldn't.

She seemed like a good choice.

With that in mind, Pei Qian sent Tang Yishu a message asking her to come to his office.

Soon, a knock sounded at the door.

After entering, Tang Yishu spoke first.

"Senior... we still haven't recruited all the Management Trainees yet..."

Pei Qian waved his hand.

"Didn't I already say the deadline is Saturday? No need to rush."

"Actually, I wanted to ask you about something else today."

"I need your advice."

"What do you think I should learn, if I wanted to learn something new?"

Tang Yishu froze.

She blinked several times in confusion before answering:

"I... I don't know."

Pei Qian felt a wave of sadness.

He was a little disappointed by that answer.

Am I really seen as a flawless person by everyone?

Do people genuinely think I have no room left to learn or improve?

Ah... misunderstandings between people are truly terrifying.

After thinking for a moment, Tang Yishu added:

"Senior, I don't know what you need to learn the most."

"But... I do know what you least need to learn."

Pei Qian raised an eyebrow.

"Oh? What do I least need to learn?"

Tang Yishu replied:

"Games."

Then she added, "Game design."*