

Primary Research Findings

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Abstract

This paper will focus on research and analysis aiming toward expanding brand awareness for the Latinx Games Festival. This paper explores the educational, career, and social concerns for members of the Latinx community looking to pursue a career in game development and STEM. The purpose of the study is to explore topic motivations for the identified target market and how it will impact a social media campaign plan for the Latinx Games Festival. The topic of career advice is the topic covered as part of secondary research. An online survey was published addressing panelist participation incentives; this primary research identified potential concerns the target market may have concerning being a panelist at a festival.

Capstone Thesis Project

Introduction

Video games have a wonderful way of bringing people together. Games provide people with a platform to tell stories that come from within each and every one of them. For those in the Latinx game development community, games are a way to showcase their culture and share their authentic voices.

The ‘Voices of Change’ campaign was created to highlight and expand how the Latinx Games Festival aims to make those connections possible. To build a brand awareness campaign around a common value to build a community of Latinx professionals and its publics. Whether to network or learn how to break into the industry, the Latinx Games Festival is the center for it all.

Thesis Statement

For Latinx gamers, the Latinx Games Festival is the bridge for dreams to become a reality. For the Latinx Games Festival, a social media campaign will be created focusing on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. The goal is to build brand awareness to recruit panelists, and expanding its online presence by increasing its social media mentions and tags.

Situation Analysis

Company Overview and Current State

The Latinx Games Festival (LXGF) is a passion project headed by Executive Director Jason Vega out of Long Beach, California. The first festival occurred on September 14, 2019 at the Museum of Latin American Arts (MOLAA). The prime focus of the festival is to build a community of Latinx game professionals and its publics. From publishers to developers, gamers

to press, the Latinx Games Festival aims to encourage and create opportunities for the future of Latinx game development.

The video game industry is dominated by Caucasian characters. As diverse as the world is, their creators are dominated by a similar demographic: Caucasian males. Gamergate initiated vicious attacks against people of color, women, and other genders within the video game industry. African and Latin Americans are much of the population in the United States. It is strange to note this massive demographic is overshadowed in the video game industry.

In 2017, Jason Vega, a Puerto Rican from New York, looked to change that. As a result of co-organizing the Game Devs of Color Expo, the Latinx Games Festival was born. On September 14, 2019, the first Latinx Games Festival empowered the Latin community from within. Aiming at highlighting Latin game development and industry opportunities by offering insight from panelists at what it takes to blossom within this industry. Representatives from Amazon Game Studios to Xbox, from Nintendo to game developers across Latin America, assembled in Long Beach, California to share stories and network.

The focus of this research is to establish guidelines and efforts needed to acquire panelists for the annual Latinx Games Festival. Research will highlight the lack of diversity in video games to showcase the need for the Latinx Games Festival. Research will include questionnaire data conducted through social media regarding expectations for potential panelists. The data will focus on those in game development to esports to the Latin community.

SWOT Analysis

Figure 1: SWOT analysis chart

FIG. 1	HELPFUL	HARMFUL
INTERNAL	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	Dedicated team Inexpensive ticket prices Experience	New event Awareness Finance
EXTERNAL	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	Networking Positive feedback Community outreach	Other industry related events Finance Negative feedback

In the strength category, the Latinx Games festival aims to keep ticket prices affordable to be accessible to all. The Latinx Games Festival organization has over 10 years of industry experience. The Latinx Games Festival is a passion project of Latinos wanting to expand awareness of their culture and its influence within its community.

In the weakness category, the Latinx Games Festival had its first event in September 2019 with a second online two-day event scheduled in November 2020. The attendee count for the first festival translated that awareness was not maximized. Social media along with paid promotion will help increase its reach to the public with a lower ticket price.

The Latinx Games Festival relies on the support of its sponsors in order to fund the event. Additional expenses are passed onto Jason Vega. With prime financial backing, the Latinx

Games Festival would have the opportunity to expand. This would include payment to staff and panelists as additional incentive.

The campaign will leverage opportunities by its members networking often to spread the festival's mission to expand awareness and support. The Latinx Games Festival team involves many currently working within the video games industry. These members are involved in other industry events and committees. The opportunity to network often will prove beneficial for the festival's future.

The first Latinx Games Festival met with positive praise and received equally positive feedback. Press news revealed the need for the festival. The Latinx Games Festival will be held at the Museum of Latin American Art. This will help promote not only the festival but the museum as well.

Threats to the success of the campaign will be from other video game industry events such as PAX, SoCal Gaming Expo, the Electronic Entertainment Expo, and more. These events draw in large crowds from the video game industry, electronic products, cosplay, and the community. The Latinx Games Festival is not aiming to be a trade event. The Latinx Games Festival cannot function without the support of its sponsors. Their financial support makes the event possible.

This crucial aspect is a red flag for the longevity of the festival's existence. Negative feedback inspired the need to acquire sponsors early and the need to recruit co-organizers to assist with the festival logistics. The first event (stress test) revealed flaws in product presentation, high ticket price, production, and other areas. These influenced the improvements for the upcoming years to come.

Competitive Analysis

In regard to competitive analysis, the Latinx Games Festival is the first of its kind. Latinx groups such as Latinos in Gaming and the Puerto Rico Game Developers work within the same targeted industry. There are multiple video game industry events throughout the year. These are PAX (West, East, South, AUS, Unplugged, and Dev), Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3), SoCal Gaming Expo, and more. However, these focus on the industry games and products.

The Latinx Games Festival concentrates on a specific demographic to raise awareness. The goals of the popular events are not on the radar of the LXGF. The popular festivals are costly and are scattered throughout the world. The Latinx Games Festival aims to remain local to its community at the Museum of Latin American Art.

Problem Statement

The Latinx Games Festival wishes to expand its brand awareness and online presence in order to recruit panelists. Due to the coronavirus pandemic and need for social distancing (Faiola, 2020) content will be created for virtual events in order to build a community and its publics. Social media paid ads will target the desired to promote the main virtual event in November.

Target Market and Buyer Persona

Target Market

The primary target market for Latinx Games Festival are gamers with a bachelor's degree or pursuing a degree. They are male or female between the ages of 20-30 years old. Latinx Games Festival is seeking this target market with Latinx ethnicity. The average income for this market is \$15,000-\$55,000 annually.

They are looking to grow their skills in video game development. Some are in secondary school pursuing a degree for the field. They work in the video game industry and looking for ways to network. Latinx Games Festival provides a platform to connect its target market with opportunities to make connections. Panels provide insight to skills needed to thrive within the video game industry. Consumers can interact with developers from Latin American countries.

Buyer Persona

The ideal consumer is male or female, 20-years-old, college student pursuing a degree in computer science. They are knowledgeable of coding, UX design, and Maya. They live in Los Angeles, California with an income of \$28,000 annually.

This ideal consumer enjoys listening to podcasts, gaming, hiking, and fitness. They enjoy losing themselves in games with friends and keeping up with technology trends. They have interest in the ever-growing world of esports, care about local, state, and national politics, the effects of climate change, and family.

Figure 2: Image of a male coding on the computer.

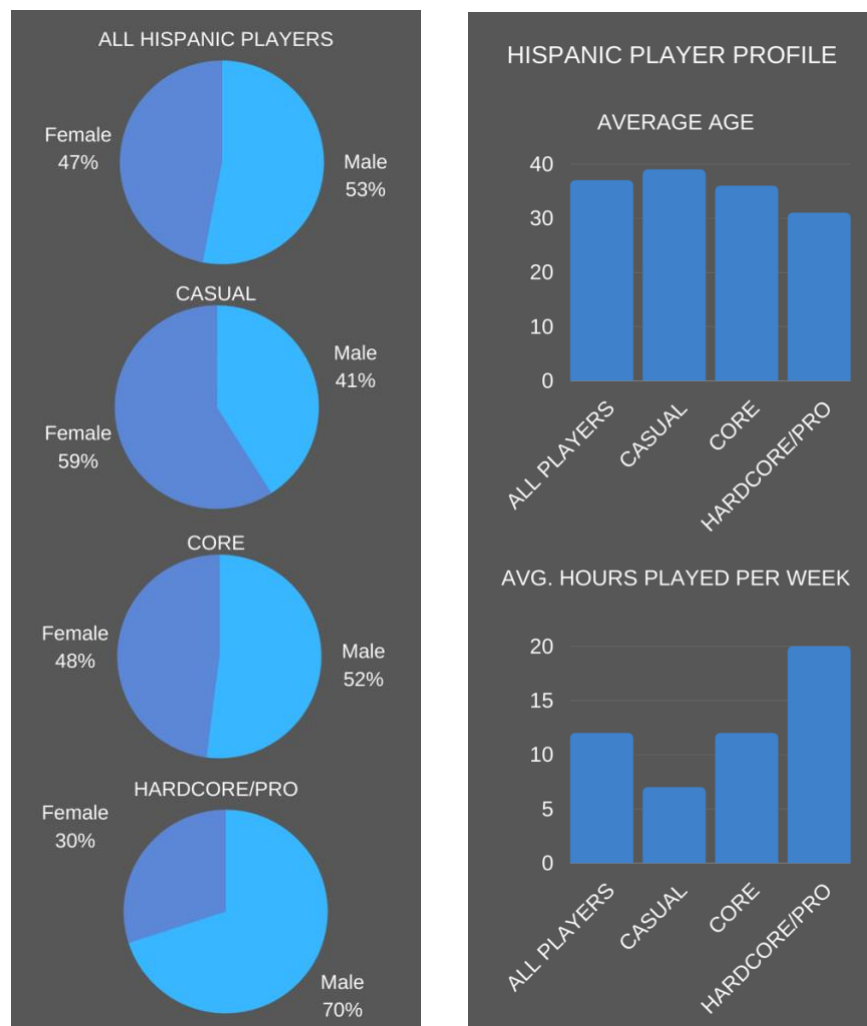


Image made on Canva.com by author.

Secondary Research

Secondary research involved data collected from ThinkNow Research in regard to Hispanic gamers. Hispanic Gamers spend more time playing video games than Non-Hispanics according to a study by ThinkNow Research (n.d.), as found on secondary research. Hardcore and professional Hispanic gamers are likely to identify as young males.

Figures 3 and 4: Infographics



Primary Research Design

Market research is critical for any business to understand their target market. Survey

Gizmo (2020) breaks down the advantages and disadvantages to conducting online surveys and focus groups. Focus groups are designed to provide company feedback from customers about their products and services. The important element of a focus group is that they conducted at a physical location. Questions can be clarified if a respondent has a question. Due to the expense and the current global coronavirus pandemic, conducting a focus group at this time will not be suitable for the Latinx Games Festival.

Online surveys are an additional form of market research. They require least effort and are an efficient way to receive feedback. The disadvantage to conducting an online survey is there is a greater risk a respondent misinterprets a question. Due to the current state of affairs, these surveys can be conducted from the safety of one's home. At this time an online survey will be best suited to the needs of the Latinx Games Festival. The formal online survey will include the following questions and will be available the third week of September:

1. How old are you?
 - a. 15 - 19 years old
 - b. 20 - 30 years old
 - c. 31 - 45 years old
 - d. Over 46 years old
2. Do you work in the video game industry?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. Do you believe there is sufficient Latinx representation in video games?
 - a. Yes

- b. No
4. Would you be interested in being a panelist for a games industry-related festival?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 5. Which incentives are important to you as a potential panelist?
 - a. Meals and swag
 - b. Travel distance
 - c. Paid accommodations
 - d. Appearance payment
 6. As a potential panelist, how far are you willing to travel (non-pandemic)?
 - a. Less than 50 miles
 - b. 50 - 100 miles
 - c. 500+ miles
 7. Have you heard of the Latinx Games Festival?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

Primary Research Findings

Introduction

This study is with the intent of understanding the motivators to attract potential panelist for the annual Latinx Games Festival. Due to the coronavirus and social gathering concerns, communities have opted for a digital approach on platforms such as Zoom and other streaming platforms. Research involved two online surveys conducted on the social media channel Twitter. Two questions were asked in regard to panelist incentives and travel distance. These surveys

were conducted over a 24-hour period. The low number of participants translated the surveys will need to be conducted again for a longer period of time.

Method

Five participants answered two of the above questions that relate to this research by completing an online survey. The online survey was published on Twitter to survey video game industry followers who had an interest in participating on event panels. The questions were designed to be clear and concise in order to draw participation. Word of mouth marketing for the monthly virtual events resulted in

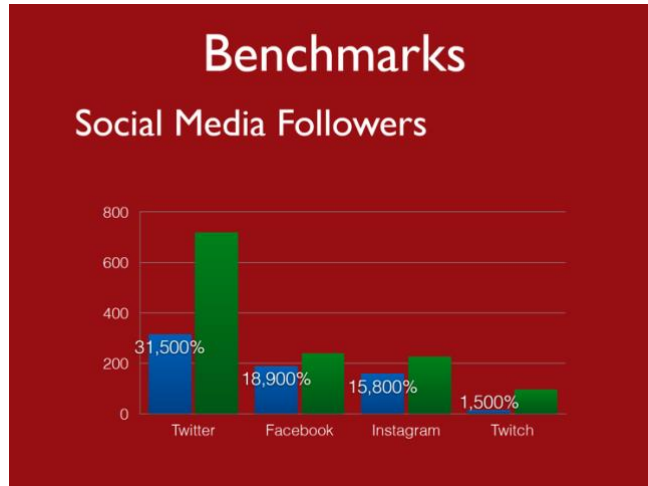
A blind survey was conducted with respondents answering two questions in regard to incentives and travel distance. Based on Twitter analytics, 75% of survey respondents identified as male and 25% of survey respondents identified as female.

The online platform used to conduct this survey was Twitter. Of the respondents, 75% identified as male, while 25% identified as female. Due to the nature of Twitter surveys, an additional survey will need to be conducted using the online platform Survey Monkey. Post the main virtual event in November, blog post will be published both on the website and social media channels to generate organic engagement and reach.

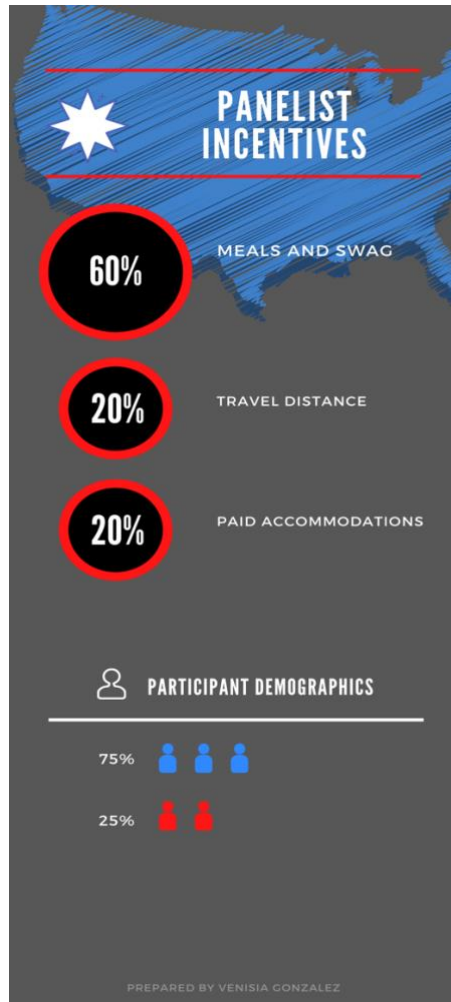
Results

The original online survey conducted in February 2020 featured a low number of survey respondents. The word of mouth marketing provided social media benchmarks for follower growth that exceeded the original goal.

Figure 4: Social media followers benchmarks



Figures 5 and 6: Survey respondent infographics



Conclusion

The online survey results concluded that an additional online survey will need to be conducted. The survey will need to be conducted on Twitter for a 7-day period and on Facebook. Spreading the survey will allow for a broader reach for accurate results. Information gathered will allow for the Latinx Games festival to better understand the motivations to recruit panelists for events in the future. Post the main event in November, a survey will be sent out to all panelists to review their experience. Those responses will allow the Latinx Games Festival to make any necessary adjustments to their recruiting methods to meet the needs of industry professionals.

Conclusion

The Latinx video game community continues to grow each year. It is absolute for the Latinx community to have a seat at the table to share their authentic voice. The Latinx Games Festival continues to be the bridge that makes dreams a reality. By understanding the needs of the target market, the Latinx Games Festival can find creative strategies in social media marketing to continue expanding its online presence, brand awareness, and engagement. Word of mouth marketing continues to prove as an effective organic method to share information and experiences across all channels.

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