GAMEBIZ

The Incubator's "Sherpa" Model
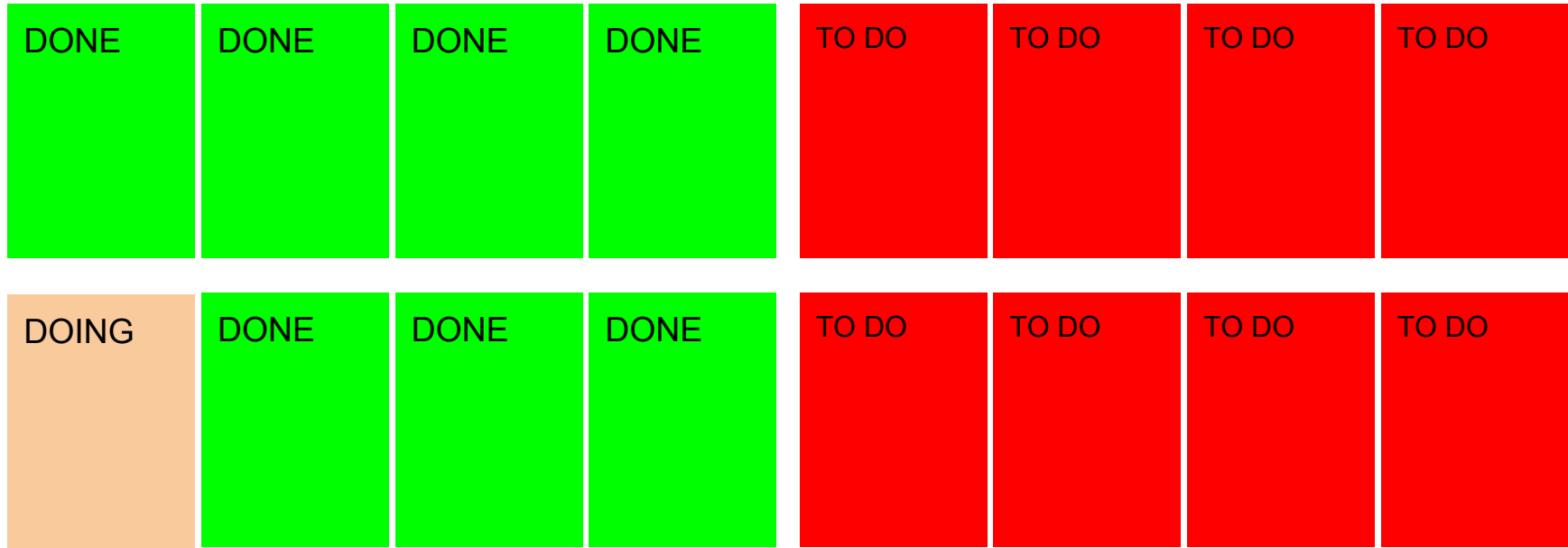
by ENTI-UB

GAMEBIZ

The Card Game

Sherpa Deck = 16 (+N) lenses
by ENTI-UB

Sticker's Album [for the cards of a concrete team]

TO DO	TO DO	TO DO	TO DO		TO DO	TO DO	TO DO	TO DO
TO DO	TO DO	TO DO	TO DO		TO DO	TO DO	TO DO	TO DO

Sticker's Album [evolution for a concrete team]

DONE	DONE	DONE	DONE	TO DO	TO DO	TO DO	TO DO
DOING	DONE	DONE	DONE	TO DO	TO DO	TO DO	TO DO

Sticker's Album [evolution for ANOTHER concrete team]

DONE	DONE	DOING	DONE	TO DO	DONE	TO DO	TO DO
TO DO	DONE	TO DO	DONE	TO DO	TO DO	DONE	TO DO

Sherpa Card (the PROJECT cards…)

Tags:

[List of tags...]

Topic:

[What we'll talk about]

Description:

[This is …]

To avoid:

[We don't want that]

Traffic light:

Mission:

[Next Sprint assignment is...]

Driver:

[Resource attached to this Assignment as a QR code]

EVOLUTION

Topics for the <u>cards</u>

0. Ruleset
1. Briefing and topic
2. State of the art
3. Pitch
4. Documentation
5. Landed objectives
6. KPI's and indicators
7. Targeted audience
8. Time frame (duration)
9. Modality
10. Platform
11. UX and accessibility
12. Interface
13. Concept and storytelling
14. Art
15. High Level Dynamics (Aesthetics)
16. Main Mechanics
17. Monetization

18. User acquisition
19. User retention
20. Pointification
21. Rewarding system
22. Analysis
23. Planning
24. Marketing
25. Distribution
26. Funding
27. Prototyping
28. Playtesting
29. Balancing
30. Iteration
31. Release
32. Maintenance
33. General Business Model

Tags for the <u>cards</u>

1. Art
2. Programming
3. Design
4. Business

(JP's)

Resources (drivers) for the <u>cards</u>

Please check and complete the Google Sheets file available <u>here</u>

Sherpa Card (00. RULESET)

1. The sherpa meets the team within a weekly basis (for instance, it stands for 16 weeks in ENTI PRO)
2. The sherpa detects the main issues during the meeting and selects, explains and offers the card(s) accordingly
3. The sherpa updates the "sticker's album" for the team
4. The card(s) mission(s) should be implemented during one week by the whole team in addition to the rest of their existing duties
5. The concluding remarks and results are commented during the next meeting
6. Learning occurs :)

Sherpa Card (01. BRIEFING AND TOPIC)

Tags:

Business

Topic:

Which discipline? Identification of generic and specific objectives

Description:

Projects begin by asking your client what the needs are. List them all

To avoid:

Blurry and unfocused messages from the very beginning

Traffic light:

Mission:

Meet your client. Sit together. Interview them. Try to list the general objectives to be addressed.

Write a preliminary list on the potential solutions to the challenge. Discuss it with your client and your mentor.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (02. STATE OF THE ART)

Tags:

Art,Programming,Design,Business

Topic:

What is there and does it work or not?

Description:

In order to create you need to know what's been already developed first

To avoid:

Feeling blind while developing

Traffic light:

Mission:

Find 5 [video][serious] games attached to the same audience that you are intending to feed while improving similar competences or being applied in the same field or using a similar game mechanic.

Document their pros and cons.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (03. PITCH)

Tags:

Art,Programming,Design,Business

Topic:

Present to impress and sell

Description:

Services and products need to be produced and presented to the client for them to double check

To avoid:

Confusions and misunderstandings

Traffic light:

Mission:

Find a suitable date for you, your mentor and your client to meet. Pitch what your approach to their problem is and let them Q&A a bit afterwards.

Change accordingly and retune the objectives.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (04. DOCUMENTATION)

Tags:

Art,Programming,Design,Business

Topic:

Knowledge Management

Description:

Document what you do, what you don't and why for everybody to stay at the same page now and ever

To avoid:

Losing knowledge and meaning (understanding)

Traffic light:

Mission:

Create a virtual repository for your documentation. There are several free tools that can be used out there.

Define a methodology (code, naming, folder's structure…)

This is a never ending (long term) task.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (05. LANDED OBJECTIVES)

Tags:

Business

Topic:

What you need to happen

Description:

Your client knows what should happen. You need to understand it quite specifically to find a suitable solution

To avoid:

Disconnection with your client's needs

Traffic light:

Mission:

Meet your client. Sit together. Interview them. Try to list the specific objectives to be addressed.

Write a preliminary list on the concrete solutions to the challenges. Discuss it with your client and your mentor.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (06. KPI's and INDICATORS)

Tags:

Design,Business

Topic:

What are you measuring?

Description:

You are supposed to track user's behavior. Therefore you need to decide where and when to measure performance and attitude

To avoid:

Unbalanced options for the user

Traffic light:

Mission:

Find, justify and document your KPI's

Driver:

Sherpa Card (07. TARGETED AUDIENCE)

Tags:

Art, Design,Business

Topic:

Who will act as the player of the experience

Description:

You should design for your target avoiding doing it for yourself. You need to know who your players are and what they like. It is about customer centricity.

To avoid:

Non Matching your target

Traffic light:

Mission:

Think about your product's niche.
Think about your user's segment.
Think about your client's needs and expectations.

Then, provide the project with an audience's oriented market study.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (08. TIME FRAME)

Tags:

Business

Topic:

Time to market

Description:

Client and/or market demand. The solution needs time to be finalized. You should shorten duration (time frame) as much as possible.

To avoid:

Being late...

Traffic light:

Mission:

Meet your client. Sit together. Identify their time to market expectations.

Analyze market and competitors.

Define your time frame and use it as a premise.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (09. MODALITY)

Tags:

Design

Topic:

Build a set of categories for your game

Description:

Decisions need to be taken to decide about the game's genre, projection and camera type, gameplay type, user interaction, etc.

To avoid:

Undetermination

Traffic light:

Mission:

A game requires a GDD (Game Design Document). And a GDD describes the genre of the game, the type of view for the camera, its single or multi player characteristic, the nature of the platform where it resides (analog or digital)...

Think about the different "modalities" in your game.

Take some binary decisions.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (10. PLATFORM)

Tags:

Art,Programming,Design,Business

Topic:

Where are they playing?

Description:

Platform can be anything from the Transmedia world, either analog or digital. You should choose the ones that best fit this project

To avoid:

Making them play where they don't like or don't have to stay

Traffic light:

Mission:

Analyze existing possibilities depending on the needs and interests of your target audience besides your briefing and budget.

List their features and constraints.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (11. UX AND ACCESSIBILITY)

Tags:

Design

Topic:

We love to live in a usable world

Description:

User Experience (UX) helps building intuitive-to-use games and Accessibility offers them to the whole demographic

To avoid:

Unintelligibly games

Traffic light:

Mission:

Find some time to think about your user's needs and abilities when it comes to use a game. Couple your findings with some literature on UX and Accessibility. Adapt it to the platform that you've decided to implement the experience in.

You might sketch a bit...

Driver:

Sherpa Card (12. INTERFACE)

Mission:

Analyze existing possibilities in terms of interfacing by looking at several games that can be considered close to any of the modalities of yours. Do it from different angles then.

Think and act as a player. Then design the interface your game deserves.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (13. CONCEPT and STORYTELLING)

Tags:

Art,Design

Topic:

Do you have a story that wants to be told?

Description:

Everything gets better if storytelling is applied. You need to find the metaphor behind your design. Everyone loves epic

To avoid:

Disengagement and disconnection

Traffic light:

Mission:

Find your concept. Try to explicit your metaphor. Connect what happens inside the game with the story to be told for your players to understand their goals.

Is there a universe? What about the characters? and their relations?.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (14. ART)

Mission:

Analyze existing possibilities in terms of art by looking at several games. Do it while thinking what the tendence is, what the market demands, what your niche is, what your players like...

Be flexible and open minded.

Think as an engineer. Act as an artist.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (15. DYNAMICS/AESTHETICS)

Tags:

Design

Topic:

What are the pleasures that your game is offering?

Description:

You need your players to feel memorable inside a remarkable experience. Choose among the existing pleasures to decide on the mechanics later

To avoid:

Boring your players. Disengagement

Traffic light:

Mission:

Review existing metrics (LeBlanc, Reiss, Radoff, Yu Kai Chou, Bartle, Amy Jo Kim, etc) to understand what Motivational Design is about.

Choose the pleasures/motivators/ dynamics/aesthetics that will underlie in your game.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (16. MAIN MECHANICS)

Tags:

Design

Topic:

Challenges take the form of activities

Description:

Dynamics stands for pleasures that ensure motivation. Game elements take these to a practical implementation that is a mechanic, a mission, an activity.

To avoid:

Dropping the playful attitude

Traffic light:

Mission:

There are hundreds of game mechanics available. You might find them in books, posts of blogs and even by looking at the games you play. Collect the game mechan work within your design and combine them to create something worth to be played. Distinguish your game!.

You might invent if you dare...

Driver:

Sherpa Card (17. MONETIZATION)

Tags:

Design,Business

Topic:

A game is a business and a business delivers some income

Description:

Sustainability in terms of a balanced business model and a monetization design strategy is a must if your game is one of the pieces to sustain your professional activity

To avoid:

Bankruptcy

Traffic light:

Mission:

Understand that game design can and should be economically driven (too).

Think about models: advertisements, freemium, DLC's, monthly rates, premium, etc.

Make the model compatible with your game.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (18. USER ACQUISITION)

Tags:

Design,Business

Topic:

Growing the users that play your game (and convert)

Description:

More users imply more conversion and therefore propagation, monetization and long term sustainability for your strategical approach

To avoid:

Being the one and only

Traffic light:

Mission:

Look at some of the existing strategies and specialized companies when it comes to user acquisition.

Try to learn from what the big names do.

Incorporate the cost of a user acquisition strategy to your business plan.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (19. USER RETENTION)

Tags:

Design

Topic:

Once they catch a wave, we want them to stay there for a while

Description:

Users convert if they stay within the game. And they might stay if we keep it sharp when it comes to their interest and engagement. It is more difficult to retain than to acquire.

To avoid:

Wasting your users

Traffic light:

Mission:

Look at some of the existing strategies and specialized companies when it comes to user retention. Game Design will help you out too.

Try to learn from what the big names do.

Incorporate the cost of a user retention strategy to your business plan.

Driver:

EVOLUTION

Sherpa Card (20. POINTIFICATION)

Tags:

Design

Topic:

The point system behind your game

Description:

Players act and the game reacts to it. Performance and attitude can be tracked by the pointifcation system. The system allows the players to be compared. Leaderboards can be established.

To avoid:

Randomness

Traffic light:

Mission:

Analyze what needs to be measured. Establish a pointification system behind the actions allowed in your game.

Test it and balance it accordingly.

It is about PBL (Points, Badges and Leaderboards).

Driver:

Sherpa Card (21. REWARDING SYSTEM)

Tags:

Design

Topic:

You'll never leave if you feel rewarded by the experience

Description:

When playing games, performance is measured, feedback is given and rewards are offered to stimulate players while placing them visible to the rest

To avoid:

Tiredness and demotivation

Traffic light:

Mission:

Think about ways to reward your players before, while and after playing or finalising a challenge.

Distinguish between tangible and intangible, expected or unexpected, timed or random...rewards.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (22. ANALYSIS)

Tags:

Art,Programming,Design

Topic:

You need to know the scope of your production

Description:

Your potential game can be dimensioned and quantified in terms of Art and Assets creation

To avoid:

Harmful backtracking

Traffic light:

Mission:

Analyze all the artistical assets implied in the project and their relation to the game mechanics.

Make a list.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (23. PLANNING)

Tags:

Art,Programming,Design,Business

Topic:

To create your route plan

Description:

Videogames are multidisciplinary. This turns into complexity. Then, you need to plan. Who does What for When?

To avoid:

Getting lost after a few iterations while loosing your money and time.

Issues with ROI and time to market.

Traffic light:

Mission:

Take your client's briefing needs in terms of budget, time to market and features.

Then, grab your project analysis and start matching tasks with resources through time.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (24. MARKETING)

Tags:

Business

Topic:

People doesn't buy what doesn't exist

Description:

Marketing your game is the other 50%. You should start marketing from the very beginning

To avoid:

Feeling alone inside the dungeon because your target never knew about your game

Traffic light:

Mission:

Plan your Marketing campaign.

Define your objectives while answering these questions:
-How can you reach your target?
-Which tools will you choose to do that?
-Do you have a partnership or an alliance that can be of any help?

Manage content and time wisely.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (25. DISTRIBUTION)

Tags:

Business

Topic:

The channel that delivers

Description:

There are channels to distribute and your game should flow through them to land in the hands of your potential players

To avoid:

Nobody receiving your game

Traffic light:

Mission:

Take your business model.

Take your game platform(s).

Learn about the channels available.

Channels need maintenance so select them wisely.

Then plan your distribution campaign accordingly.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (26. FUNDING)

Tags:

Business

Topic:

The money, the better

Description:

There's no game that doesn't need a substantial amount of funding to get through. Money to create it, to raise it and to keep it up and running

To avoid:

Selling your soul

Traffic light:

Mission:

Start working on your business plan.

Do you know about finances? It might be not.

Sit and meet with an expert.

Evaluate several options.

Find your game's campaign break even point.

Start thinking about where to gather the funding you need from.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (27. PROTOTYPING)

Tags:

Art,Programming,Design,Business

Topic:

Do it before creating it

Description:

Sketching and prototyping your game requires much less effort that developing it entirely and serves as a powerful way to detect errors in design.

To avoid:

Long term development without feedback

Traffic light:

Mission:

There are several sketching and prototyping tools out there.

Find them out.

Choose the one that best fits your needs.

Incorporate the cost of prototyping to your business plan.

Sketch your pilot as close to the game you imagine you can.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (28. PLAYTESTING)

Tags:

Art,Programming,Design,Business

Topic:

Test it before creating it

Description:

The experience can be tested once the prototype has been produced. The playtest session can be designed so that it is offered to players belonging to the intended audience

To avoid:

Common errors and mistakes

Traffic light:

Mission:

Decide if to playtest in company or not or both.

Design your playtest session (surveying, think aloud protocol, task tests, recording, etc.).

Find a significant amount of individuals
To playtest (6 to 12).

Go!. And extract some valuable conclusions to modify and reinforce your game.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (29. BALANCING)

Mission:

Filter your main game mechanic through a Balancing test to see if it connects with your intended audience: short vs long / skill vs chance / cooperation vs competition / etc…

Driver:

EVOLUTION

Sherpa Card (30. ITERATION)

Tags:

Design,Business

Topic:

PDCA: Plan, Do, Check, Act

Description:

Re-do your game's design with the conclusions taken from your playtesting sessions. Change things, play it again and re-loop

To avoid:

Thinking that it is over when it is not

Traffic light:

Mission:

Playtest.

Conclude.

Modify.

Begin again until you consider your game to be finished.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (31. RELEASE)

Tags:

Art,Programming,Design,Business

Topic:

Ready to go!

Description:

There's a day when you consider your game to be finished. And several conditions arise that make it happen.

To avoid:

An endless development

Traffic light:

Mission:

It is a good exercise to force yourself to determine a suitable date for your game to be ready to go.

Your business plan might lead you to a "somehow" realistic release date.

Work hard to accomplish it.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (32. MAINTENANCE)

Tags:

Art,Programming,Design,Business

Topic:

Bugs (and DLC's) happen

Description:

The development team should be ready for the bug fixing that happens despite of all the efforts. Continuous experiences demand adding new content.

To avoid:

Miserable and/or too short experiences

Traffic light:

Mission:

Fix bugs ASAP and you will avoid hater behaviors.

Extend the experience by designing new content. Think about DLC's and Seasoning strategies.

Driver:

Sherpa Card (33. GENERAL BUSINESS MODEL)

Tags:

Business

Topic:

Plan to succeed

Description:

It describes how to create, deliver and capture value through your game

To avoid:

Unnecessary shipwrecks

Traffic light:

Mission:

Meet your mentor.

Meet your team.

Create the business model.

Iterate it.

Until you consider it well shaped.

Driver:

GAMEBIZ

☺

Sherpa Deck
by ENTI-UB