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Digital Artefact

Case Study

The What?

The goal of this digital artefact is to study and develop my understanding in regards to the marketing processes when a new game/product is being released.

Ultimately looking at marketing to:

A) Secure the buyer purchase through successful marketed 'conversions'.

What means are used to convert the consumer into a purchasing player? This could be looking at content deployed pre, during or post release.

B) Fund-raising & getting audience participation via Kickstarter for this particular case study.

Looking at what types of content companies/game developers use while campaigning their game.

Do they have social media platforms?

How do they engage with their audience via content?

For this case study I will be looking at the games 'Exploding Kittens' & 'FrostHaven'.

Approach

Looking at the pre, during & post release audience engagement will give me an idea if there is a systemic approach that companies deploy when releasing a product such as a table top game. Will they vary much from the other? We will see.

Both of these products were funded from the Kick Starter website so they are niche in the sense that they can involve participation from the audience and the audience can see their support turn into progress towards an official licensed product .

In hopes to develop my understanding I will need to:



- *Understand the game. Its concepts, operations and role within the board game community.*

- *What type of content is used to market the game.*



- *When and how is this content deployed.*

- *Audience Reach/Participation*

- *Converting audience into customers*



- *Product campaigning*

- *Kickstarter attributions to success*

Exploding Kittens



Exploding Kittens is humble and innocently immature. This tabletop card game raised a staggering \$8,782,571 from 219,382 people. Crazy!

From Kickstarter:

"Exploding Kittens is a highly strategic kitty-powered version of Russian Roulette. Players take turns drawing cards until someone draws an exploding kitten and loses the game. The deck is made up of cards that let you avoid exploding by peeking at cards before you draw, forcing your opponent to draw multiple cards, or shuffling the deck. The game gets more and more intense with each card you draw because fewer cards left in the deck means a greater chance of drawing the kitten and exploding in a fiery ball of feline hyperbole."

When creating this game, Elan Lee figured to design a fun game for family & friends to play in the hopes to improve audience participation as he felt that the games we was making (EG: Halo 1 & 2) were divisive and didn't bring people together. So he used Kickstarter.

The general concept and idea behind Kickstarter is that you pitch your product on a platform where people can assess your submission and if they like the product they will help bring it to life by pledging money towards it.

The more money you pledge, the larger the return
EXPLODING KITTENS PLEDGE

Pledge US\$ 20 or more

THE EXPLODING KITTENS DECK

One copy of Exploding Kittens.
(Ages 7+)

-To order multiple decks, just add \$20 for each extra deck you'd like.
(extra shipping charges may apply)

ESTIMATED DELIVERY SHIPS TO
Jul 2015 Anywhere in the world

15,505 backers

Pledge US\$ 35 or more

THE NSFW DECK

One copy of the Exploding Kittens deck PLUS one copy of the NSFW deck. This is a deck of bonus cards that were too horrible/incredible to include in the kid friendly version.
(Ages 30+)

-To order multiple pairs of decks, just add \$35 for each extra pair of decks you'd like. (extra shipping charges may apply)

ESTIMATED DELIVERY SHIPS TO
Jul 2015 Anywhere in the world

202,934 backers

Pledge US\$ 100 or more

THE COLLECTOR'S DECK

Two copies of both decks from the previous reward but one of each will be signed by the creators of the game. (So you don't have to ruin the fancy signed decks with your filthy game playing hands.)

ESTIMATED DELIVERY SHIPS TO
Jul 2015 Anywhere in the world

Reward no longer available

200 backers

Pledge US\$ 500 or more

THE DECK OF LEGENDS

Everything from the previous reward PLUS each of the game creators will draw you a custom card. (We apologize in advance for Elan's drawing skills.)

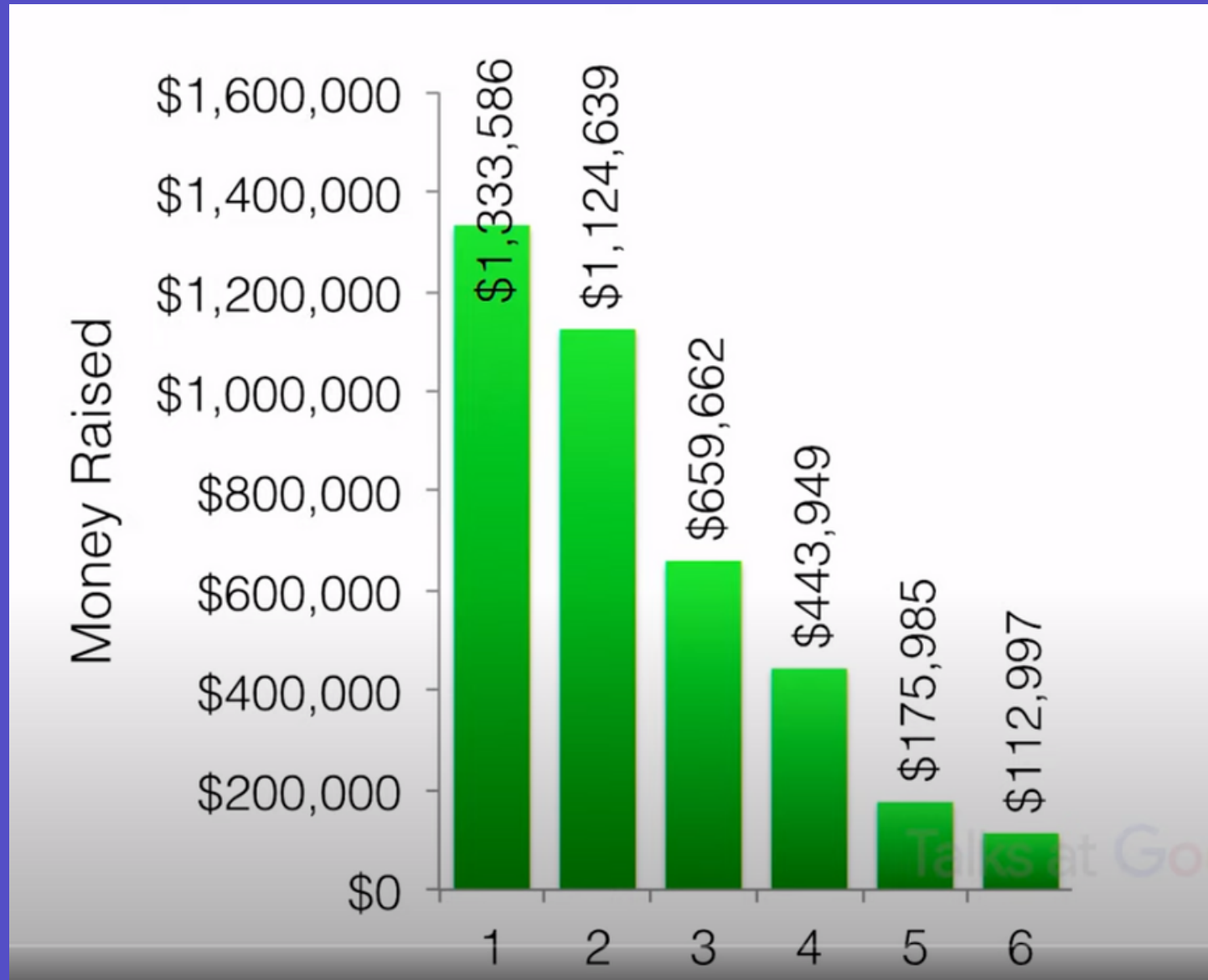
ESTIMATED DELIVERY SHIPS TO
Aug 2015 Anywhere in the world

Reward no longer available

5 backers

They absolutely took off within the first day, beating their target quota and smashing it out of the park. The support was phenomenal on the first week.

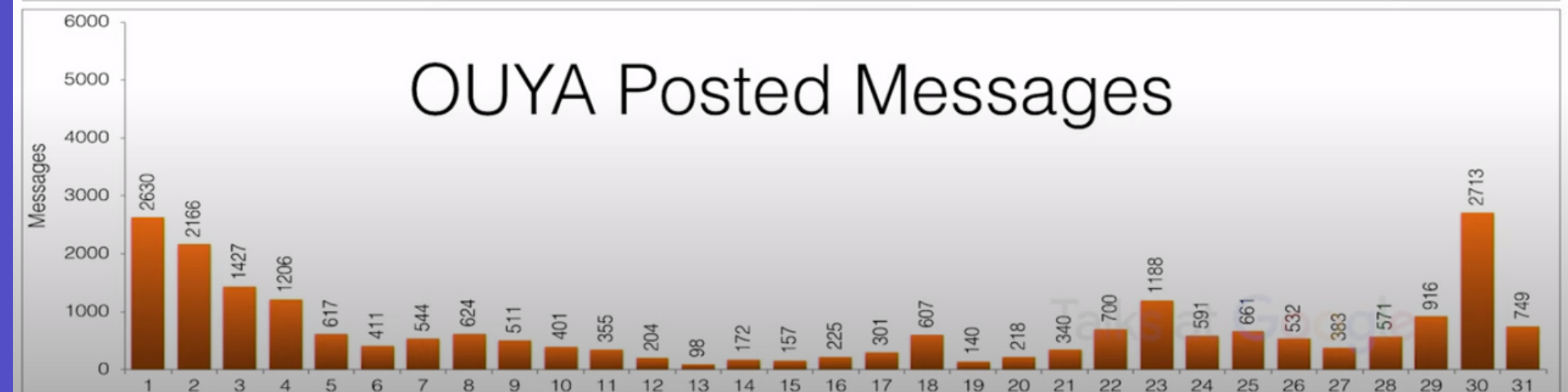
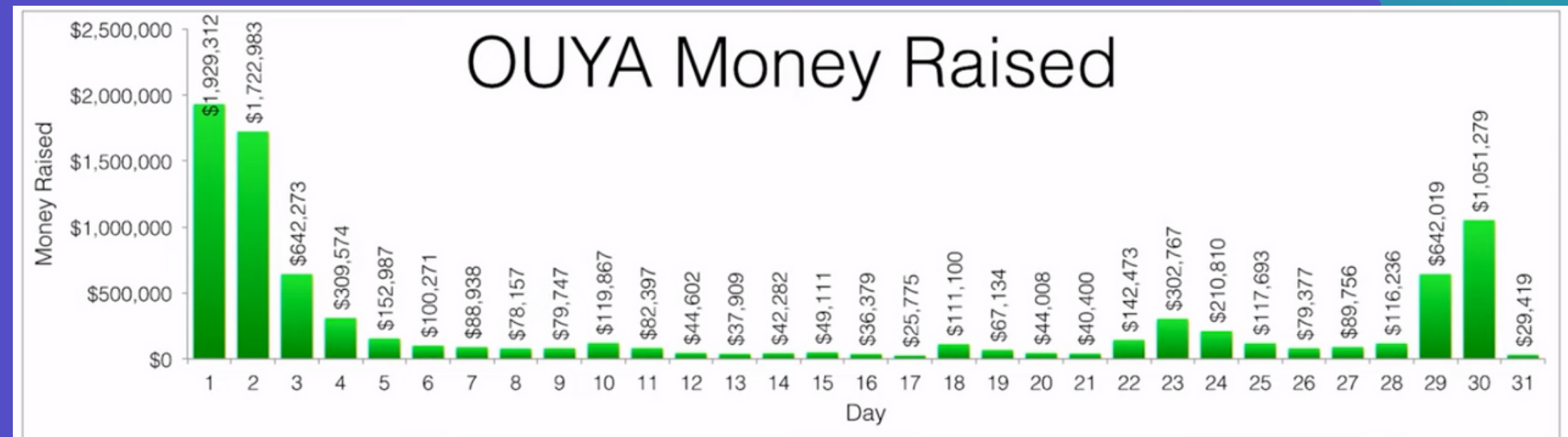
1 Million Dollars raised in 7 Hours



He noticed a downward trend in pledge amounts so he figured he would look at some data.

What the graph shows is the most funded game on Kickstarter during the time Exploding Kittens was released. The Data represents the money raised on each day of the 30 day campaign and the second graph shows correlating activity on the forum by the day. He simply noticed on peak days of forum activity the sales would also spike along with

it.
OUYA WAS THE #1 GAME ON KICKSTARTER AT THE TIME



LOOK WHAT YOU DID

BACKER ACHIEVEMENTS



100% FUNDED
1000% FUNDED
10,000% FUNDED
100,000% FUNDED
CREATE AN EXPLODING KITTENS WIKIPEDIA PAGE

1,000 BACKERS
10,000 BACKERS
100,000 BACKERS
150,000 BACKERS

MOST-BACKED CARD GAME EVER
MOST-BACKED GAME EVER
MOST-BACKED CAMPAIGN EVER
POST 25 PICS OF A REAL TACOCAT
POST 25 PICS OF MAGICAL ENCHILADAS

100 TWITTER FOLLOWERS
1000 TWITTER FOLLOWERS
10,000 TWITTER FOLLOWERS
50,000 TWITTER FOLLOWERS
100,000 TWITTER FOLLOWERS
POST 5 PHOTOS OF WEAPONIZED BACK HAIR

100 FACEBOOK LIKES
1000 FACEBOOK LIKES
10,000 FACEBOOK LIKES
100,000 FACEBOOK LIKES
POST 25 SELFIES WITH GOATS

POST 25 PICS OF A BEARCAT
POST 25 PICS OF A POTATOCAT
POST A PHOTO OF 10 PEOPLE WEARING CAT EARS
POST A PHOTO OF 50 PEOPLE WEARING CAT EARS
POST A PHOTO OF 100 PEOPLE WEARING CAT EARS

POST FIVE YOUTUBE VIDEOS OF SONGS ABOUT EXPLODING KITTENS
POST A PICTURE OF TEN BATMANS IN ONE HOT TUB
POST A PICTURE OF FIVE SPIDERMANS IN ONE KAYAK

Kickstarter works in a way where if they raise up to X amount of money they will celebrate by raising the stakes in a way, this is called a stretch goal. Some encouragement to get people to pledge and continue to gain funding and momentum for the product.

Elan Lee decided to reverse engineer this ideology after noticing the correlation between community activity and how well the Kickstarter for OUYA had gone that same day. So what he did was he created goals for the pledges not based on financial stretches but participation goals. If they had 25 pics posted of 'Beard Cat' or 5 pics of 'Weaponised Back Hair' they would do things like double the cards in a deck or upgrade the deluxe box.

The ultimate goal was to not raise money but to raise a crowd.

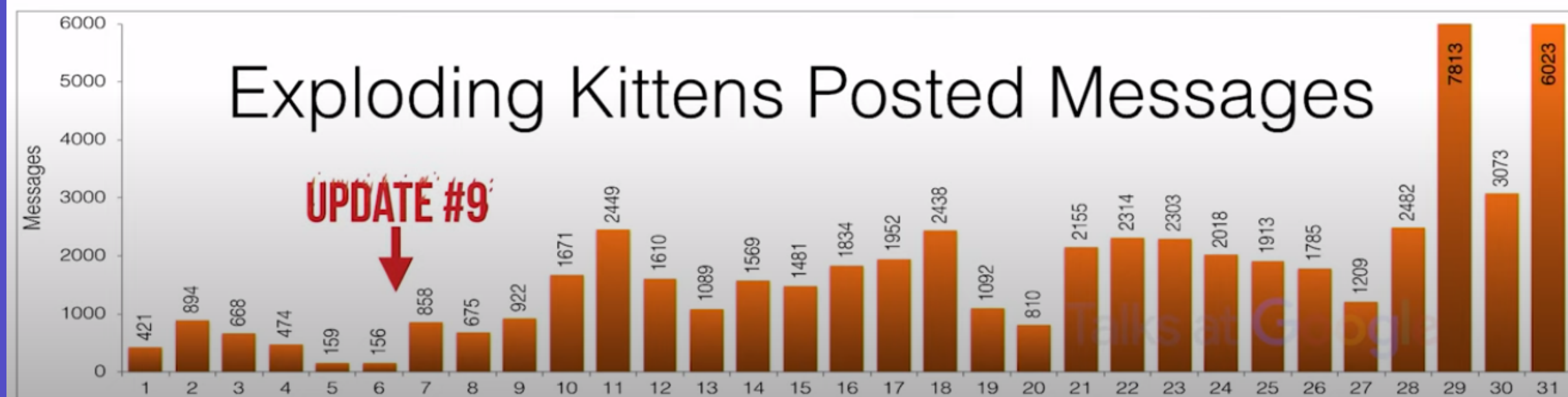
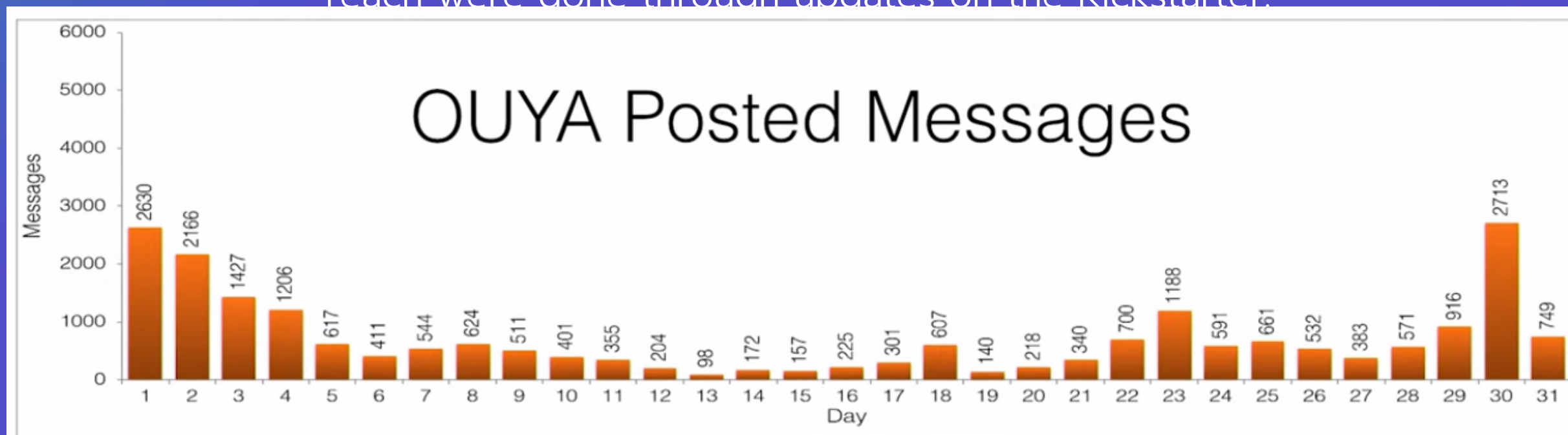
What people did with this was they took the Exploding Cats audience participation games and started making clothes, art and even got tattoos of an unreleased game all because they wanted to be apart of the party that was happening.



Update #9 is when Elan Lee decided to roll out this plan of attack and it clearly resonated with the audience as they went on to make a total of \$8,782,571 after 31 days of campaigning. \$4,931,753 more than their staggering un-predicted performance from the first 6 days of fund raising.

No massive marketing budget was required, no ground breaking technology or product needed, just an organic card game and collaboration with the audience.

They only used Facebook, Instagram & Kickstarter to communicate to their audience. Most of their significant reach were done through updates on the Kickstarter.



Frosthaven

● Raised \$12,969,162

● #1 Funded Board Game

● Sequel to smash hit Gloomhaven.

Frosthaven is similar to Exploding Cats in the same way that it smashed previous funding records on Kickstarter.

Although the playing grounds were a little different if you were to compare the two. Exploding Kittens was mostly organic growth for a new fresh game, whereas Frosthaven is the sequel to 'Gloomhaven' a game which held the number 1 spot on 'Boardgamegeek' for most of 2017, 2018 and 2019.

So in short you'd really expect nothing other than an amazing product.

They had much more funding.

The player base already existed.

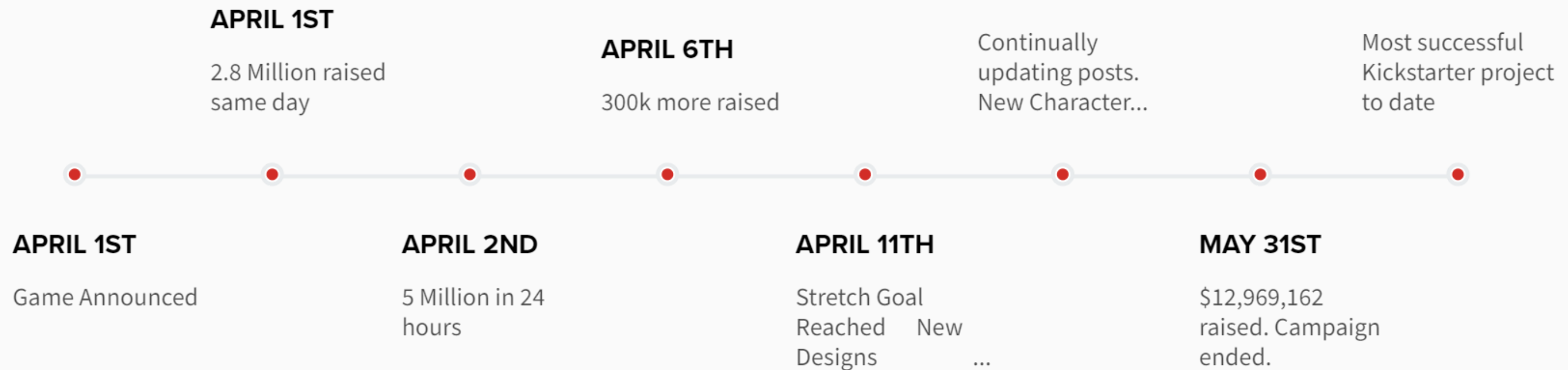
Backed by a bigger team all round

Already had the recipe worked out

Could work with the communities feedback loop



31 DAYS OF SUCCESS



The content which Cephalofair Games decided to release along with their Kickstarter was cinematic and of high quality. They used 3D renders to show you the games map, high quality character splash and character cards, almost taking you through a journey of the games lore.

IN CONCLUSION

It was good to compare the two, Exploding Kittens & Frosthaven.

Both were successful beyond their original means and are enjoyed by many millions of people in the world. The content that Exploding Kittens used for their Kickstarter was very simple, graphics, some memes related to the game and the games art. Though their approach was based on building the games crowd through very simple easy to do yet challenging tasks that required resources which were free in nature so everyone could participate.

This is what allowed them to become the #1 game on Kickstarter at the time until Frosthaven beat it, building hype around community engagement.

Where as in the case of Frosthaven, the creators had the budget to splurge and create high quality content. The biggest take back from the study was that high quality/professional type content such as HD 3D renders and character art could convert someone into a player but ultimately what converts a view into a purchase is organic content.

Organic in the sense that it resonates with the brands ETHOS, its values and narrative. Content that feels right for the audience as it isn't pushing the product itself but more the narrative and engagement that can be provided if you were to purchase.

Personal Note

As I graduate with hopes to become a content creator the lessons in the case study were valuable. My branding experience w/ @grownasskiid going forward I need to take a moment, repose and plan content carefully. Sure you can take photos of a new T-Shirt in a studio shoot but that content is only offering face value on an aesthetic level. What could I do to stimulate the audience? How could I tell a story beyond a photo of a product.

Its challenging but invigorating. Telling narrative through content.

Content = Branding.

Branding = Values/Narrative.

Thanks!

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