Playing the Long Game

The Vital Importance of Purpose, Mission, and Vision
to Your Indie Game Development Business

by Gianfranco Berardi

GBGames

Indie Game Development!

Why are you here?

- **Why?** To share insights
- **What?** You with greater purpose
- **How?** Tell the cautionary tale of GBGames

Agenda

- Who am I?
- Cautionary Tale: GBGames
- Lessons learned

Agenda

- Who am I?
- Cautionary Tale: GBGames
- Lessons learned

Who Am I?

Quick Bio:

- Gianfranco Berardi

- Independent game developer

- Blogger
  - https://www.GBGames.com/blog/

- Pronouns: he/him/his

Who Am I?

Father's encouragement to dream big:

- Study hard, so you can...
- Get good grades, so you can...
- Get a good job, so you can one day...
- Become president of the company.

Who Am I?

Full-time employment

- WMS
- Leveled up – programming, game design
- Saved some money
- ~4 years intertia

Who Am I?

Full-time employment

- WMS
- Leveled up – programming, game design
  - BONUS POINT: learn where you can
- Saved some money
- ~4 years intertia

Agenda

- Who am I?
- **Cautionary Tale: GBGames**
- Lessons learned

Full-time Indie

The Beginning

- November 2009 decision
- Figured out finances -1 year runway
- Quit WMS in May 2010

Full-time Indie

The Beginning

- Moved to Des Moines
  - Cost of living
  - Girlfriend
- Hit the ground…slothily

Full-time Indie

ModernAmericanSoccer.com

- Made plans for a soccer-based game
- Watched World Cup
- Blogged about soccer, US-perspective
- Realized it wasn't such a niche
- Game industry competition

Full-time Indie

ModernAmericanSoccer.com

- Made plans for a soccer-based game
- Watched World Cup
- Blogged about soccer, US-perspective
- Realized it wasn't such a niche
  - BONUS POINT: do market research!
- Game industry competition

Full-time Indie

Decisions

- What to work on
- What to pay for
- What to outsource
- What to do myself

- Customers?
- Platforms?
- Tools?
- Advice?

Full-time Indie

Ludum Dare #18

- 48-hour competition: Finished "Stop That Hero!"
- Had a flagship project to work on now!

Full-time Indie

Stop That Hero!

- "One-month" project.
- Plagued with:
  - Hard decisions (game design/business)
  - Missed self-imposed deadlines
- Over a year **(-$$$)** before first commercial release

Full-time Indie

Analysis Paralysis

- Running out of money
- Lots of options
- Lots of pressure
- Lots of self-doubt
- Lots of self-criticism

And worst of all...

Full-time Indie

Analysis Paralysis

... NO CRITERIA!

Full-time Indie

Meanwhile...

- Member of ASP (http://asp-software.org/)
- Became President (**+$**, **-hours**)
- Now running two organizations

President of Trade Association

Meanwhile...

- Member of ASP (http://asp-software.org/)
  - BONUS POINT: join a trade organization!
- Became President (+$, -hours)
- Now running two organizations

President of Trade Association

An Organization in Transition

- Founded in 1987
- Shareware
- "Mission Accomplished"

...now what?

Full-time Indie

Parallels

- Root causes
  - Lack of purpose
  - Lack of mission
  - Lack of vision
- Therefore: sporadic and inconsistent actions

Full-time Indie

Need Credits to Continue

- Ran out of money/time
- Contract work
- Isolated
- Back on "corporate welfare"

Full-time Indie

Need Credits to Continue

- Ran out of money/time

- Contract work

- Isolated

  – BONUS POINT: networking is important

- Back on "corporate welfare"

Agenda

- Who am I?
- Cautionary Tale: GBGames
- **Lessons learned**

Lessons Learned

Strategic Planning Is Vital

- Purpose
- Vision
- Mission

Lessons Learned

Purpose

- Your Why

- Provides context

- *"The vessel into which you pour your life"*
  - Life on Purpose by Dr. Brad Swift

Lessons Learned

Purpose

GBGames - old purpose:

- To be my own boss?
  - Stressful
- To make money?
  - Easier ways to do that!
- To make games?
  - Lots of options here. No real focus.

Lessons Learned

Purpose

GBGames – new purpose:

To assist people in exploring and discovering their passion for learning.

- Excited?

- Want to know more?

Lessons Learned

Vision

- Your What
- What success looks like
- Your North Star
- Decisions flow from here

Lessons Learned

Vision

"To the person who does not know where he wants to go, there is no favorable wind."

- Seneca, Roman philosopher

Or if you prefer Yogi Berra's description of the old GBGames: "If you don't know where you're going, you might not get there."

Lessons Learned

Vision

GBGames – old vision:

- ???

- "Convenient and compelling entertainment on your time." **BORING!**

Lessons Learned

Vision

GBGames – new vision:

> A world in which curiosity is encouraged, creativity is supported, and continuous learning is promoted.

Lessons Learned

Mission

- Your How
- "Core Focus" - Gino Wickman, Traction
- Filter for opportunities vs "opportunities"

Lessons Learned

Mission

GBGames – old mission:

- ???
- Make games I might want to play?
- Hope other people like them?

Lessons Learned

Mission

GBGames – new mission:

Creating educational entertainment that encourages exploration and a love of learning.

Lessons Learned

Mission

And as for Stop That Hero!

- No longer relevant
- Doesn't fit the mission
- Painful decision
- But easy.

Lessons Learned

Note:

Mission ≠ Mission Statement

- Not a piece of paper!
- Not mere words!
- Not "corporate BS"!
- Your mode of operation

Lessons Learned

Immediate benefits for you

- Clarity
- Focus
- Decisions make themselves

Lessons Learned

Immediate benefits for you

- No more whining about a lack of energy or motivation!

Lessons Learned

Other immediate benefits

- People are interested

- People want to help

- People become fans

- People self-select

Lessons Learned

Purpose moves people

To Sell is Human by Daniel H. Pink: hospital handwashing experiments showed an appeal to purpose ("prevent patients catching diseases") was vastly more effective than an appeal to self ("avoid catching diseases yourself").

Lessons Learned

Going forward (slide from 2014)

GBGames success:

- Money is reward, not a goal

- Encouraging a love of learning

Your purpose/vision/mission?

Lessons Learned?

GBGames in 2015

+ Focused on putting in game dev hours (quota)

+ Kept awareness of goals all year long

- Not much to show for it (0 games published)

Lesson learned: Need a better project plan.

Lessons Learned?

GBGames in 2016

+ Outcome focused: I shipped!

+ Earned income from sales!

- Just not a lot.

Lesson learned: Need a promotion plan, too.

Lessons Learned?

GBGames in 2017

+ Earning more income!

+ Being very delibrate.

- Still slow going.

Purpose/Vision/Mission in the Wild

Who talks about this stuff?

- *Traction: Get a Grip on Your Business* by Gino Wickman

- Entrepreneur Magazine's *Start Your Own Business*

- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey

- *The Lean Startup* by Eric Ries.

- Every business book ever, pretty much.

Purpose/Vision/Mission in the Wild

- Vogelsap's Jeroen Van Hasselt during his Control Conference 2015 presentation on why The Flock failed: "Vogelsap is a studio that specializes in making thrilling 3-D experiences that we present in an event and adventurous-like manner."

  https://youtu.be/AbqMjCPmaa8

Purpose/Vision/Mission in the Wild

- Toca Boca's About page:

  "...we believe in the power of play to spark kids' imaginations and help them learn about the world. We design our products from the kids' perspective to empower kids to be playful, to be creative and to be who they want to be."

Purpose/Vision/Mission in the Wild

- EA: "We exist to inspire the world to play."

- Microsoft: "Our mission is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more."

- Activison: "We strive to make the most fun, thrilling, and engaging entertainment experiences for our players, who live in a world with many entertainment options."

- Nintendo: "We are strongly committed to producing and marketing the best products and support services available."

Purpose/Vision/Mission in the Wild

- Facebook: "Founded in 2004, Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected."

- Honest Tea: "seeks to create and promote great-tasting, healthier, organic beverages."

- IKEA: "...our vision is to create a better everyday life for the many people. Our business idea supports this vision by offering a wide range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them. "

Purpose/Vision/Mission in the Wild

March of Dimes:

- Original purpose: cure polio.

- MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

- Now what?

- False start, then...

- "The mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality."

march of dimes®

A FIGHTING CHANCE FOR EVERY BABY℠

Once more on the S.S. Metaphor...

Game Over

Questions? Comments?

Gianfranco Berardi

https://www.GBGames.com/

gberardi@gbgames.com

Twitter: @GBGames

plus.google.com/+GbgamesLLC

facebook.com/GBGamesBlog

Playing the Long Game

The Vital Importance of Purpose, Mission, and Vision to Your Indie Game Development Business

by Gianfranco Berardi

GBGames

Presented at the April 2017 IGDA Des Moines chapter meeting.

Pretend you're on a poorly drawn boat in the ocean.

Take a moment to ask yourself: which way do you steer this boat?

You have no map, so you don't know where you are.

You have no destination, so you don't know where you want to go.

And you have no compass, so you couldn't figure out which way to turn even if you knew where you wanted to go in the first place.

You're at the whim of the wind and currents.

You're literally going with the flow, which might be fine, except you don't get to decide if the flow is going in the right direction.

You don't know what the right direction might be!

Indie Game Development!

And that's the indie game development business.

For most people.

Many treat the indie game development business as a roll of the dice. If you get lucky, you get a hit, or at least can survive until your next game is released.

But most indies make almost nothing.

Is there a better way?

Why are you here?

- **Why?** To share insights
- **What?** You with greater purpose
- **How?** Tell the cautionary tale of GBGames

The purpose of this talk is to share the insights I've gained running my business full-time and failing at it. My purpose for you is to learn from my failure.

I want you to leave this talk with an aim to clarify your vision and run your own businesses with greater purpose.

I will explain what happened with my business as a cautionary tale.

Agenda

- Who am I?
- Cautionary Tale: GBGames
- Lessons learned

We'll talk about:
- who I am, including a bit of history and why you should care about what I have to say
- how I started my business part-time and ran it full-time from May 2010 through September 2012
- what went wrong and what lessons we can take away from it

Agenda

- Who am I?
- Cautionary Tale: GBGames
- Lessons learned

Who Am I?

Quick Bio:

- Gianfranco Berardi
- Independent game developer
- Blogger
  - https://www.GBGames.com/blog/
- Pronouns: he/him/his

I officially started GBGames, LLC part-time in 2004.

I started writing for my blog in 2005, where I write about all aspects of running an independent game development company, including game design, technical issues, and marketing.

I liked sharing what I learned. Some of my more popular posts are about starting an LLC in Illinois and a primer on copyright law.

Who Am I?

Father's encouragement to dream big:

- Study hard, so you can...
- Get good grades, so you can...
- Get a good job, so you can one day...
- Become president of the company.

My father said these things to me a lot.

There was always an expectation that I was going to succeed in life.

Who Am I?

Full-time employment

- WMS
- Leveled up – programming, game design
- Saved some money
- ~4 years intertia

I got a full-time job programming slot machines (across the street from Midway). I made no serious exit plans.

It was a good company, which might have made it harder for me to leave.

Intellectually, I knew being independent was safer than depending on someone else for a paycheck.

Emotionally, it was a harder sell. But I did it.

Who Am I?

Full-time employment

- WMS
- Leveled up – programming, game design
  - BONUS POINT: learn where you can
- Saved some money
- ~4 years intertia

BONUS POINT: While I could say I wished I was running my own business, I did take advantage of the experience.

I learned a lot about programming and game design working on slot machines, both of which I had little experience with, and both of which were vital to running my business independently.

Agenda

- Who am I?
- Cautionary Tale: GBGames
- Lessons learned

So for four years I ran my business part-time.

Then I decided I needed a change.

Full-time Indie

The Beginning
- November 2009 decision
- Figured out finances -1 year runway
- Quit WMS in May 2010

I set a goal for myself in November 2009 to quit my job and move to Des Moines by November 2010.

Once the decision was made, it was freeing.

And I got antsy.

Seven months ahead of schedule, I did it.

Full-time Indie

The Beginning

- Moved to Des Moines
  - Cost of living
  - Girlfriend
- Hit the ground...slothily

I moved to Des Moines, where my burn rate would be slowed.

Also, instead of a 300+ mile drive to see my girlfriend, it became a 3 mile drive.

Then I took a month off. I had no specific plans, but the World Cup was starting.

Full-time Indie

ModernAmericanSoccer.com
- Made plans for a soccer-based game
- Watched World Cup
- Blogged about soccer, US-perspective
- Realized it wasn't such a niche
- Game industry competition

I wanted to make a Facebook MMO about soccer.

PlayFish/EA beat me to it.

I abandoned the effort as I didn't think I could make a decent game on my own that could compete with organizations with a lot more resources.

My soccer blog similarly withered on the vine.

Full-time Indie

ModernAmericanSoccer.com
- Made plans for a soccer-based game
- Watched World Cup
- Blogged about soccer, US-perspective
- Realized it wasn't such a niche
  - BONUS POINT: do market research!
- Game industry competition

BONUS POINT: Running ModernAmericanSoccer.com on my own, I had no chance against fully-staffed companies. I could have realized this fact earlier had I done some simple research (search engine searches would have worked). I would have learned about all of the existing US-based soccer blogs from organizations such as Sports Illustrated and Nike.

Market research can save you time, effort, and money.

Full-time Indie

Decisions

- What to work on
- What to pay for
- What to outsource
- What to do myself

- Customers?
- Platforms?
- Tools?
- Advice?

So, the World Cup is over, and I set myself to the task of running my business.

It turns out that running a business is hard.

There are a lot more decisions to make than I expected, and for each decision, I had no idea what choice would be better than any other.

What to work on next wasn't planned.

Full-time Indie

Ludum Dare #18

- 48-hour competition: Finished "Stop That Hero!"
- Had a flagship project to work on now!

Ludum Dare is a 48-hour solo game development competition. The 18th edition was in August 2010, and I had just spent time learning about creating artificial intelligence for games.

I was very proud of "Stop That Hero!" and got a little bit of positive feedback.

Without anything else going on, STH! became the first commercial project I was to work on.

Full-time Indie

Stop That Hero!

- "One-month" project.
- Plagued with:
  - Hard decisions (game design/business)
  - Missed self-imposed deadlines
- Over a year (-$$$) before first commercial release

I had no real oversight on my own project, and no real direction.

Minor design decisions and major business decisions were agonizing.

Ended up spending all savings working on one project.

Now I could argue that one of the lessons I learned was project management, but that one was too obvious.

Full-time Indie

Analysis Paralysis

- Running out of money
- Lots of options
- Lots of pressure
- Lots of self-doubt
- Lots of self-criticism

And worst of all...

As my savings lost digits, and my income was static, I started to panic.

I thought I knew what analysis paralysis was, but I had no idea how terrifying it could be.

Keeping going, even though it wasn't working? Start something else and stop forward progress? GAH!

Full-time Indie

Analysis Paralysis

... NO CRITERIA!

And yet I still had no way to determine what a good decision was from a bad one.

It was a stressful time for me.

Full-time Indie

Meanwhile...

- Member of ASP (http://asp-software.org/)
- Became President (+$, -hours)
- Now running two organizations

I was a member of the Association of Software Professionals, a fantastic organization of independent software business owners. At the time, I was on the board of directors, and when the president retired, I stepped up for the position, which included a stipend.

While it took time away from my business, it did help with most of my expenses, although not all of them.

President of Trade Association

Meanwhile...

- Member of ASP (http://asp-software.org/)
  - BONUS POINT: join a trade organization!
- Became President (**+$**, **-hours**)
- Now running two organizations

BONUS POINT: I would highly recommend joining a trade organization. If you have a local business, join your community's chamber of commerce.

By being involved, you'll meet the leaders in your field, make some great connections, and learn a lot.

President of Trade Association

An Organization in Transition

- Founded in 1987
- Shareware
- "Mission Accomplished"

...now what?

The ASP was originally the Association of Shareware Professionals, with the then-radical mission to promote try-before-you-buy as a method of marketing software.

With the rise of the Internet, the ASP grew, and shareware is now the default.

So, almost 30 years later, what should the organization do?

Full-time Indie

Parallels

- Root causes
  - Lack of purpose
  - Lack of mission
  - Lack of vision
- Therefore: sporadic and inconsistent actions

There were obvious symptoms to try to fix, but I wanted to find the fundamentals, the principles behind what was going on.

Full-time Indie

Need Credits to Continue
- Ran out of money/time
- Contract work
- Isolated
- Back on "corporate welfare"

By the time I figured it out, I had run out of savings.

Since I had my nose to the grindstone, I didn't make time to meet up with people as much as I should have, and so when it came time to get some incoming cash flow, I had nothing to fall on and no one I could ask for help.

Any contract work I found fell through, so I ended up getting a day job again.

Full-time Indie

Need Credits to Continue

- Ran out of money/time
- Contract work
- Isolated
  - BONUS POINT: networking is important
- Back on "corporate welfare"

BONUS POINT: if I could do it all over again, I would have made an effort to meet with more people in the industry, both in person and online.

It would have been completely different if I had a support network of people to lean on when I needed them, and vice versa. I might still be working full-time on games, even if not for GBGames.

Agenda

- Who am I?
- Cautionary Tale: GBGames
- Lessons learned

There were a lot of lessons learned as a result of my failure, but the largest ones are my focus here.

Lessons Learned

Strategic Planning Is Vital

- Purpose
- Vision
- Mission

While strategic planning encompasses a lot more than these three, I think they make up the base.

Everything else in your business, such as your marketing plan, comes out of these three fundamental pieces.

Lessons Learned

Purpose

- Your Why
- Provides context
- *"The vessel into which you pour your life"*
  - Life on Purpose by Dr. Brad Swift

Life on Purpose by Swift is one of those books that really changes your life.

Your purpose isn't just something you do.

It's what gets you up in the morning. It's what drives you.

Lessons Learned

Purpose

GBGames - old purpose:

- To be my own boss?
  - Stressful
- To make money?
  - Easier ways to do that!
- To make games?
  - Lots of options here. No real focus.

My old purpose for GBGames was not well-thought out.

I just wanted to run my own business making games.

Now, this excites me!

My new purpose gives people a decision point: you either want to know more about what I'm up to, or you don't.

It generates energy.

Lessons Learned

Vision

- Your What
- What success looks like
- Your North Star
- Decisions flow from here

Knowing what you are trying to accomplish makes a huge difference.

Decisions almost make themselves when you have a clear idea of your ultimate destination.

Lessons Learned

Vision

"To the person who does not know where he wants to go, there is no favorable wind."

- Seneca, Roman philosopher

Or if you prefer Yogi Berra's description of the old GBGames: "If you don't know where you're going, you might not get there."

Yogi Berra's quote almost defines what GBGames was about.

Lessons Learned

Vision

GBGames – old vision:

- ???

- "Convenient and compelling entertainment on your time." BORING!

I tried, but it was not a very compelling vision.

Lessons Learned

Vision

GBGames – new vision:

> A world in which curiosity is encouraged,
> creativity is supported, and
> continuous learning is promoted.

MUCH BETTER! I think about this all of the time. I know exactly what I want GBGames to accomplish in the world.

Lessons Learned

Mission

- Your How
- "Core Focus" - Gino Wickman, Traction
- Filter for opportunities vs "opportunities"

Your mission allows you to know where your focus is.

There are always going to be lots of opportunities, but you need to be clear on what you are doing so you know which opportunities are really distractions.

Lessons Learned

Mission

GBGames – old mission:

- ???
- Make games I might want to play?
- Hope other people like them?

Before, GBGames had no clear mission.

I think lots of business owners in general, and indie game developers specifically, have this problem.

GBGames was my means for making games I might enjoy, and my financial security was dependent on being lucky enough for other people to also like those games.

That's not a strong and clear mission.

Lessons Learned

Mission

GBGames – new mission:

Creating educational entertainment that
encourages exploration and a love of learning.

Now, this? This is a mission.

Imagine a upward trend in the popularity of
extremely violent first-person shooters. In the past,
it would be an opportunity to capitalize on.

Today, I don't even have to think about it, as an
extremely violent FPS doesn't fit my mission. It
doesn't pass the filter, and I can quickly decide to
ignore the "opportunity" that's really a distraction.

Lessons Learned

Mission

And as for Stop That Hero!

- No longer relevant
- Doesn't fit the mission
- Painful decision
- But easy.

I didn't have plans to make STH! an educational game, and I don't think I can retroactively apply educational aspects.

It's hard to let go of my baby, but it is very clear that it doesn't fit my mission, so it has been put on the backburner. I hope to get back to it and finish it properly, but I do not see it as relevant to my business anymore.

Note:

Mission ≠ Mission Statement

- Not a piece of paper!
- Not mere words!
- Not "corporate BS"!
- Your mode of operation

The mission statement is your concise way of communicating to yourself and to everyone else what your actual mission is.

You can't just write it down or put it on your website and forget about it.

You have to believe in the mission.

Lessons Learned

Immediate benefits for you

- Clarity
- Focus
- Decisions make themselves

Focus is one of the things that most business owners feel they are lacking.

Knowing exactly why you wake up in the morning, what you want to accomplish in the world, and how you intend to do so brings amazing clarity and focus to your decisions.

Lessons Learned

Immediate benefits for you

- No more whining about a lack of energy or motivation!

A common complaint with new game developers is the struggle they have staying motivated to work on their game projects for more than a few days at a time.

It's easy to get distracted when you don't have a larger vision you're trying to make a reality.

It's easy to decide to sleep in or skip a day/week/month of game development when you don't care about what you're working on.

But the good news is that having a well-defined vision, purpose, and mission makes it easy to feel energized and motivated even when you're struggling!

Lessons Learned

Other immediate benefits

- People are interested
- People want to help
- People become fans
- People self-select

What is amazing is how quickly people let you know if what you want to accomplish is something that resonates with their interests.

People will show up offering to help you succeed.

Other people know up front that your interests are not compatible. It saves time for everyone.

Lessons Learned

Purpose moves people

To Sell is Human by Daniel H. Pink: hospital handwashing experiments showed an appeal to purpose ("prevent patients catching diseases") was vastly more effective than an appeal to self ("avoid catching diseases yourself").

A study that signs placed next to soap dispensers that appealed to purpose resulted in doctors washing their hands signficantly more frequently than signs that appealed to self-interest.

Purpose moves people.

Lessons Learned

Going forward (slide from 2014)

GBGames success:

- Money is reward, not a goal
- Encouraging a love of learning

Your purpose/vision/mission?

Without strategic planning, you haven't defined success. By default, the obvious score to keep is money-based, such as cash in the bank and sales numbers.

But money is a reward, not a goal in itself.

I will be successful if, by playing my games, my nieces are encouraged to a lifelong love of learning.

What about you?

Lessons Learned?

GBGames in 2015

+ Focused on putting in game dev hours (quota)

+ Kept awareness of goals all year long

- Not much to show for it (0 games published)

Lesson learned: Need a better project plan.

Since my original talk in 2014, my business has been more focused.

Although I did have some false starts in 2015. I had a self-imposed quota on the number of hours minimum per week I wanted to do game development in (output), but I didn't focus too much on outcomes.

But it was the first time I kept my goals in front of me all year rather than coming up with a list of things I'd like to accomplish and then forgetting about them for 12 months.

Lessons Learned?

GBGames in 2016

+ Outcome focused: I shipped!

+ Earned income from sales!

- Just not a lot.
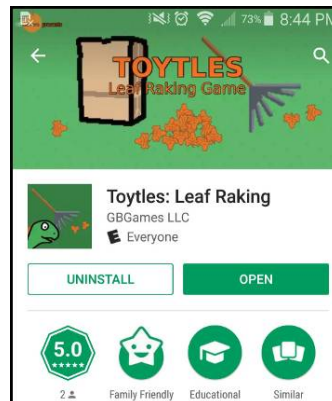
Lesson learned: Need a promotion plan, too.

In 2016, I shipped my first educational title.

It's not pretty, but I was incredibly proud of what I put together. It fit my mission and purpose, and I got it out there.

Unfortunately, I focused almost entirely on trying to create it and did almost nothing to tell people about it.

But persistence and keeping my eye on my North Star got me further than it has in years.

Lessons Learned?

GBGames in 2017

+ Earning more income!

+ Being very delibrate.

- Still slow going.

So far in 2017, I am working on porting the game to multiple platforms, and I'm also doing contract work creating a geography game for a family.

I should be feeling exhausted (after all, I still have a day job as well as my business and the contract work), but instead I'm energized.

Purpose/Vision/Mission in the Wild

Who talks about this stuff?

- *Traction: Get a Grip on Your Business* by Gino Wickman
- Entrepreneur Magazine's *Start Your Own Business*
- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey
- *The Lean Startup* by Eric Ries.
- Every business book ever, pretty much.

I had a hard time convincing people that strategic planning is important.

I had a hard time being convinced myself that it was important. It turns out that a lot of business books I read always talked about the importance of vision, mission, and purpose.

Usually within the first few chapters.

I must have skipped it, thinking, "Yeah, I know why I want to make games. Let's get to the real meat of your business tips", not realizing what I was missing.

Purpose/Vision/Mission in the Wild

- Vogelsap's Jeroen Van Hasselt during his Control Conference 2015 presentation on why The Flock failed: "Vogelsap is a studio that specializes in making thrilling 3-D experiences that we present in an event and adventurous-like manner."

https://youtu.be/AbqMjCPmaa8

vogelsap

I was watching this presentation and caught this interesting quote about 1:34 into it.

Clearly this is a game developer who realized how important it was to stand out by having a compelling mission.

Vogelsap is not a company that will make a mediocre 2D platformer or a match-3 puzzle.

You know what they're about.

Purpose/Vision/Mission in the Wild

- Toca Boca's About page:

  "...we believe in the power of play to spark kids' imaginations and help them learn about the world. We design our products from the kids' perspective to empower kids to be playful, to be creative and to be who they want to be."

Similarly, Toca Boca is never going to make a blood-and-gore shooter.

If you're a parent, you can probably trust that whatever they make is safe and kid-friendly.

Purpose/Vision/Mission in the Wild

- EA: "We exist to inspire the world to play."
- Microsoft: "Our mission is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more."
- Activison: "We strive to make the most fun, thrilling, and engaging entertainment experiences for our players, who live in a world with many entertainment options."
- Nintendo: "We are strongly committed to producing and marketing the best products and support services available."

It seems that the larger you get, the more vague or open your mission becomes.

It can be disappointing how a company like Nintendo can have such a vague mission statement, but perhaps that is why they struggled with the Wii U. They technically can do anything and not have someone say, "Well, that doesn't really fit with what we do."

Purpose/Vision/Mission in the Wild

- Facebook: "Founded in 2004, Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected."

- Honest Tea: "seeks to create and promote great-tasting, healthier, organic beverages."

- IKEA: "...our vision is to create a better everyday life for the many people. Our business idea supports this vision by offering a wide range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them. "

Facebook's mission puts some context into why they invested so heavily into Oculus and VR.

And you won't expect Honest Tea to use high fructose corn syrup or other highly processed ingredients.

Purpose/Vision/Mission in the Wild

March of Dimes:

- Original purpose: cure polio.
- MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!
- Now what?
- False start, then…
- "The mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality."

march of dimes®
A FIGHTING CHANCE FOR EVERY BABY™

March of Dimes is kind of the poster child for the importance of having a clear mission.

After polio was mostly erradicated, March of Dimes tried to leverage its huge network of donors and volunteers to tackle a number of different issues, such as aging.

No one cared about these multiple and varied topics, so they lost a lot of money and efforts and momentum.

When they focused on healthy babies, they made a turnaround.

Once more on the S.S. Metaphor...

Once again, pretend you're on a poorly drawn boat in the ocean.

Take a moment to ask yourself: which way do you steer this boat?

Only this time, you know what your destination is.

You know why you want to go there.

And you know how to steer the boat.

Do you think you'll have a better time?

Game Over

Questions? Comments?

Gianfranco Berardi

https://www.GBGames.com/

gberardi@gbgames.com

Twitter: @GBGames

plus.google.com/+GbgamesLLC

facebook.com/GBGamesBlog

Thank you.