

MKT 499: Marketing in the Gaming Industry

Spring 2023 – Monday/Wednesdays 4-5.50pm PST
JFF 240 - 4 Units

Professor: Franco De Cesare

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Office Hours: M/W 6-7pm – Location TBD

Note: there is no prerequisite for this course (it will be waived – students who have not taken BUAD 307 can contact Marshall’s undergraduate advising office at undergrad.advising@marshall.usc.edu and include their student ID and course section number 16468R to request clearance to register)

Course Description

The Gaming industry just turned 50 yrs. old in 2022, and as it enters its 6th decade, it has reached a level of unprecedented magnitude, maturity and complexity.

Marketing for the \$160 Billions Gaming industry, is more critical than ever, in an industry with nearly infinite games availability (over 700k games on mobile, console and PC), a massive global reach of over 2.5 Billions players/gamers, and a variety of platforms - including big tech companies as Apple, Google, Meta and Amazon, joining traditional Gaming Brands Sony PlayStation, Microsoft Xbox and Nintendo - as well as brands/companies firmly entrenched on gaming communities (e.g. Twitch, Discord, Reddit...).

This course will help students gain a deeper understanding of gaming marketing by examining the marketing mix (i.e., product, price, place, and promotion) across the global gaming industry. Class sessions will cover topics traditionally crucial to the marketing of games, such as launch marketing (for specific titles), consumer insights (targeting and segmentation) and brand management (for Gaming Platforms/Consoles), as well as the critical importance of data analytics, performance marketing (user acquisition and retention) and community engagement (through social and owned/earned community platforms).

Ultimately the course will expose and prepare students for a possible career in marketing for the gaming industry, throughout the large ecosystem which also now includes content creators, e-sports and future technology (AR/VR, Metaverse, blockchain...).

Learning Objectives

This course aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to:

- define gaming marketing, including its function for key entities in the gaming ecosystem, such as games Developers and Publishers, tech and distribution platforms, gaming-centered brands.
- understand the unique nature of gaming marketing as an equal combination of arts and science: specifically, describe how brand and performance marketing are integrated in today’s gaming marketing.
- analyze current trends and opportunities in the gaming industry related to the marketing mix (i.e., product, price, place, and promotion): specifically, understand the critical role of Content Creators (Influencers, Streamers...) and Digital Platforms (Discord, Twitch, Apple, Google Play, Facebook Gaming, Xbox, PlayStation...).
- describe various measures of performance, or metrics of success, relevant to “free-to-play” and “live services” games marketing, with specific focus on marketing drivers for in-game economy.
- capture how future technology (blockchain, VR/AR...) will impact marketing efforts in the gaming industry.
- demonstrate an understanding of strategic gaming marketing by developing a marketing plan for a game and a game-centered brand of interest.

