

Electronic arts: the success of ea sports and the company research paper sample

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Electronic Arts: The Success of EA Sports and the Company

According to Henderson (2009), the early beginnings of the gaming giant Electronic Arts began in 1982 when Trip Hawkins and his colleagues left Apple to create "Amazing Software." The company concentrated in creating software that makes "a personal computer worth owning". However, the name they first selected did not meet positive impact, thus the name change to Electronic Arts in 1982. Hawkins believed that the new name of the company reflects his belief that computer games are a new artform that must be given respect. Eventually, EA would showcase their passion proving game artistry through their record jackets and box covers. Their first released games presented in 1983 were specifically designed for the Atari 800 console. The games "Archon", "Pinball Construction Set" and the "M. U. L. E" presented a newer form of gameplay to players as they are now allowed to interact directly to the game. "M. U. L. E" became EA's first strategic time-management and multiplayer video game. The three games were then followed by the release of Seven Cities of Gold, Starflight, and The Bard's Tale. The three additional games were mostly exploration games, allowing players to select their roles in the game. The company, at first, published games by independent programmers. However, by the beginning of the 1990s, they began to create games from their own programming team. The company had a hard time pleasing the market with their obscure game titles and genres; however it easily dominated in retail. Slowly, the company's revenues continue to outclass its competitors such as Sega, Konami and Activision. However, Trip Hawkins left the company in 1991 to create 3DO, another game company .

Considerably, EA made most fame and success in their sports games under the banner of “ EA Sports”. According to Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton (2007) Trip Hawkins noticed that market for sports games is “ a predictable business that has a strong following”. The company then realized that sales of any sports game would increase per new season. New game seasons would also enable the company to continue updating the games to fit the new statistics. This would enable the company to keep selling the games each year. Having sports game deals with manufacturers and licensors as this would enable them to generate revenue with each game. The sports gaming genre would also be a productive market for EA to begin with as each country is known to support a particular sport with a passion. This is true in the field of football or soccer in the European region and in the Asian nations of Japan and Korea; American football for the Americans and Basketball for most nations around the globe.

Rubin (2012) noted that EA Sports’ first sport game is “ Julius Erving & Larry Bird: One on One”, playable for both Apple II and the Commodore 64 platforms. One on One became the first video game which was advertised by sports celebrities due to their character likenesses and the gameplay of the game title. Players had to use a range of both offensive and defensive moves that would allow them to shoot in their respective basketball hoops. The success of One on One enabled EA Sports to determine the fan base of the company in the sports. Evan and Nicky Robinson introduced “ World Tour Golf” in 1986 that offers players the chance to play golf in real-world inspired golf courses around the globe. The game is also the first of its kind to enable

players to edit their own courses, and how hard their course could become. Following the success of World Tour Golf, EA Sports released 1983 game Earl Weaver Baseball, produced by former Mattel producer Don Daglow. The game, like World Tour Golf, was classified as the first baseball simulator for any computer or gaming console. A year later, EA Sports signed in to the company John Madden to endorse the company's first football game. Madden became EA's assistant in terms of understanding the gameplay of both high school and college football, enabling EA to develop the simulator type sports game. In turn, the game was then entitled "John Madden Football". Madden was a known NFL commentator and a coach of the Raiders when they became champions in 1976. After the success of EA Sports' John Madden series, the company slowly developed additional games such as NHL Hockey, which enabled players to use actual professional hockey teams to bid for their chance for the Stanley cup; and the PGA Tour Golf II in 1992. The PGA Tour Golf II enables players to pick out of 60 professional golfers, and compete in stunning courses like actually in the game. Through the years, the game transformed to what is now known as Tiger Woods PGA Tour in 1999 and became EA's yearly offering for golf fans .

Griffin (2011) noted that upon EA's shift of leadership to CEO Larry Probst in 1995, the company slowly began to acquire small firms under the label. EA Sports also became prominent by the early 2000s as the company produced sequels for the John Madden Football franchise and the title "Franchise Mode", which also enabled players to create and play multiple football seasons and select their draft picks. The additional features of the Madden

franchise included player trade options on its 1997 release. As of today, the Madden franchise continues to generate revenues for EA Sports and is considered the “ biggest money-making series in video gaming history”. The Madden franchise is followed by the FIFA series, a soccer game that allows players to select from various Ligas and get a shot at the World Cup . In the start of 2003, EA Sports managed to earn revenues of up to \$2. 3 billion due to their deals with MLB, NBA, NHL and even NASCAR franchises. EA Sports often utilizes state of the art graphic technology to ensure that gamers are given the optimal gameplay experience. For the NASCAR administration, EA Sports could boost revenue, introduce the sport of racing in the public, and also aid their players maintain their skill while, not in the speedway.

Licensors also saw the impact of EA Sports to fans, enabling the company to create one of its most popular releases of the FIFA Soccer series. The 2004 FIFA Soccer game hosted 10, 000 international football stars from 350 local, regional and international teams. The game also boasted 16 different football leagues to accommodate each football team partake. 2004 also enabled EA Sports to understand the importance of online gaming since newer consoles and game programmers see the growing industry of online gamers. For Microsoft Xbox Live alone, the company generated \$50 million from its offering of 150 different genre online game titles. With this in mind, EA released several titles such as NFL Fever 2004, FIFA Manager 2004, Rugby 2004 and many others, all having online features.

At present, Electronic Arts continues to dominate the gaming industry’s sport market a seen in the report done by Business Wire (2012). EA Sports’

recently released FIFA Soccer 13 immediately sold 353, 000 games for both PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 consoles in its opening launch. The online version of the game had also been met positively by fans, making FIFA Soccer 13 the most played online game in 2012 with 1. 4 million online games done since it was launched. The game is also considered EA Sports' most popular game for 2012 due to its launch performance for the Apple iOS in North America alone. The 13th instalment of the FIFA Soccer series also became popular in Europe; a known soccer/football capital. London also hosted an opening launch for the FIFA game and was also met with a large crowd of over 10 million. It has been said that EA Sports' FIFA Soccer franchise is the main reason that US fans are now starting to become enthralled to soccer. Reviews to the FIFA franchise are also met with optimism by reviewers due to its First Touch Control interface, and the game's unpredictability alike its real-life counterpart . One can only wonder as to what EA Sports would consider creating next in the field of sports-related videogames as new sports franchises continue to inspire players and developers alike.

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