PLAYBOOK FOR INCLUSIVE GAME DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING

2023

ROVIO

At Rovio, we believe that the true essence of gaming lies in its ability to bring people together, create connections, and provide immersive experiences that transcend boundaries. We recognize our responsibility to ensure that our games not only entertain but also reflect the diversity of the players who enjoy them.

This Playbook for Inclusivity in Game Development & Marketing reflects our strong dedication to fostering a culture that celebrates representation and inclusivity. The key to unlocking the full potential of our games lies in embracing the unique perspectives, talents, and backgrounds of our employees and the broader gaming community.

The collective power of our diverse workforce drives our company's success. We value the individual differences that each team member brings to the table - their varied life experiences, knowledge, creativity, and innovative thinking. This rich tapestry of diversity defines our culture and shapes our reputation and achievements as a company. And we go beyond paying lip service to diversity; we actively promote and encourage inclusivity in all aspects of our work

We celebrate the diversity of our employees, recognizing that age, color, disability, ethnicity, family or marital status, gender identity or expression, language, national origin, physical and mental ability, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and other unique characteristics are what make us stronger as a team.

And just like we believe that this diversity strengthens our company and teams, we believe our games are stronger when we don't leave anyone behind. This playbook starts our collective journey toward a more inclusive future. By following its principles and fostering a diversity, equity, and inclusion culture, we can create games that resonate with players from all walks of life. Together, we will build bridges, break down barriers, and redefine what it means to be a gamer.

Let this playbook be a testament to our commitment. Let us embrace diversity, equality, and inclusion as the cornerstones of our game development and marketing efforts. Together, we can shape the future of gaming, one inclusive experience at a time.

As we embark on this journey, let us remember that the impact of our work extends far beyond entertainment. Games have the power to shape perceptions, challenge biases, and inspire change. By actively prioritizing representation and inclusivity, we can create experiences that resonate with players, allowing them to see themselves reflected in the characters they control and the narratives they explore.

We recognize that achieving true representation in our games requires ongoing effort and collaboration. It involves engaging with diverse voices, listening to marginalized communities, and working alongside talented developers who bring unique perspectives. By fostering an inclusive work environment that encourages the free expression of ideas, we can push the boundaries of creativity and ensure that our games are as diverse as the world we live in.

This guide will provide practical guidelines, best practices, and resources to empower our teams in creating inclusive games and marketing campaigns. It will serve as a reference for understanding the importance of diverse representation, addressing unconscious biases, and making conscious decisions that promote inclusivity at every stage of the game development and marketing process.

CONTENT

WHY WE PLAY BY THE PLAYBOOK

ON ONE HAND, IT'S A VALUES CASE

Our games are created to stand the test of time, to become years-long hobbies for our players.

While we develop our games to specific audiences, we do not accomplish this by excluding others from the fun. Our way of crafting joy welcomes diversity and thrives on inclusivity.

Our games don't include content that excludes anyone based on, e.g., age, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, or disability.

We strive to craft joy, and joy cannot be achieved through discrimination, exclusion, or exploitation.

ON THE OTHER HAND, IT'S A BUSINESS CASE

When we create inclusive games, we actively expand our player base by reaching out and being relevant to diverse audiences. Inclusive market and player research help us better understand traditionally underrepresented player communities and their preferences. And diversifying our teams will bring different viewpoints into the day-to-day and combined with inclusion, it unleashes the potential for innovation. Accessibility is crucial to remove unnecessary barriers. Representation matters, and we aim to showcase diverse characters and inclusive storytelling. Cultural sensitivity is essential to avoid stereotypes so that everyone has a positive game experience. In marketing, we use inclusive campaigns that resonate with different communities and to maximize our reach, don't exclude anyone at these critical parts of our funnel.

We expand the player base, brand reputation, and loyalty

When we prioritize inclusivity, we tap into a broader customer base. By designing games that resonate with diverse audiences and catering to their unique needs, we expand our reach and attract a wider range of consumers. This translates into better player experience, improved retention, and enhanced customer loyalty—a recipe for sustainable growth and profitability.

Inclusivity strengthens our brand reputation as well. By actively championing diversity, equality, and inclusion, we position ourselves as a socially responsible company that aims to change the world positively. We strongly believe that this positive brand perception ultimately translates into customer loyalty, repeat business, and invaluable word-of-mouth referrals—further amplifying our impact on the bottom line.

We set ourselves apart from our competitors

To truly differentiate ourselves, we must set higher standards and remain steadfast in our commitment to inclusivity, even if it means diverging from prevailing norms. By sticking to our values and the guidelines in this playbook, we set a high standard for ourselves and the whole industry.

We should not settle for tokenistic gestures or perpetuate harmful stereotypes. Instead, we commit to creating games with broad representation, where diverse characters and narratives are thoughtfully and authentically woven into the fabric of our storytelling. By setting this higher standard, we offer players an immersive experience that reflects the rich diversity of our world.

We commit to tasteful and inclusive marketing campaigns that celebrate the essence of our games without resorting to exploitative or exclusionary tactics. We choose to remain true to our principles, engaging with players respectfully and inclusively.

UNDERSTANDING THE PLAYERS
RESEARCH & EMPATHY DO MIX

Inclusive user research aims to understand the players' diverse needs and make their voices heard when making product and design decisions.

Diverse Participant Recruitment: How to Capture the Voices of All Players

When conducting user research, strive to include individuals from diverse demographics, such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic background, and physical and cognitive abilities. This helps gather insights from a broad cross-section of users, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of their needs and preferences.
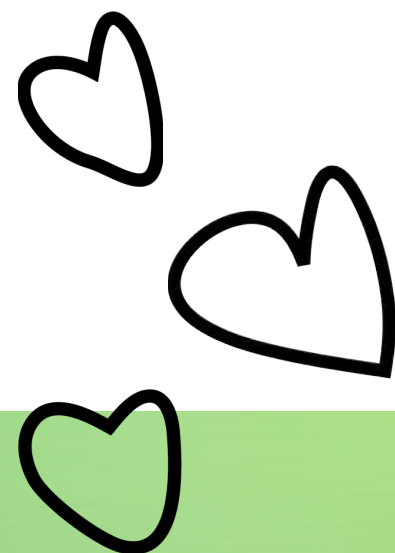
Inclusive Research Methods: How to Gather Insights That Matter

Employ research methods that accommodate different communication styles, learning abilities, and accessibility needs. For example, use a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, and usability testing. Ensure that these methods are adaptable to participants with various levels of familiarity with technology and different languages, if applicable.

Inclusive Data Analysis: How to Interpret Data with Sensitivity

Analyze research data with a keen eye for diversity-related insights. Look for patterns and differences across user segments to understand how different groups interact with the product or service. Avoid generalizations and make sure to highlight specific needs and perspectives.

Identifying Player Segments without Stereotypes: How to Embrace Complexity

You can still group your users into meaningful player segments based on shared characteristics, needs, and behaviors. Consider factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, culture, language, socioeconomic status, education, occupation, and physical and cognitive abilities. Ask yourself; What of those are really needed for your game design? Can you deliver the same insights and impact without using stereotypes or making assumptions about any specific group? If you use personas, base them on actual data and insights from the research rather than generalizations. Use names and images for your personas that reflect a diverse range of cultures and backgrounds. Avoid names or images that could unintentionally reinforce stereotypes and trigger biases you cannot control.

Player Personas: How to Reflect Diverse Accessibility Needs

If you use player personas, ensure that they account for players with various accessibility needs. Consider factors such as visual impairments, motor limitations, and cognitive differences. This will help in designing products that are usable for everyone.

Overcoming Bias: How to Create Equitable and Inclusive Research

To confront and overcome bias in player research, you need to recognize personal and team biases, ensure objectivity in data analysis and interpretation, and actively seek diverse perspectives within the research process.

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS

1. How do you make sure you include individuals from diverse demographics in your player research?

2. Do your research methods accommodate different communication styles, learning abilities, and accessibility needs?

3. What's your process for analyzing data for diversity-related insights?

4. How do you group your research participants? Are you cautious of stereotypes and assumptions?

5. How have you made sure your player personas account for users with various accessibility needs?

6. Have you recognized personal and team biases and how do you mitigate them?

More resources: Inclusive UX research, Why diversity and inclusivity matter in UX research

GAME ACCESSIBILITY 101:
MAKING GAMES UNIVERSALLY ENJOYABLE

We recognize that everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy and engage with games, regardless of their physical abilities or cognitive differences. Accessibility avoids creating unnecessary barriers between players and the kind of experience intended for players. It also allows a player to engage with the game and its content in a way that works best for their unique needs and capabilities. Taking accessibility into consideration when designing games breaks down walls and opens up doors for a broader audience to enjoy our games. Designing with constraints in mind is simply designing well.

IDENTIFYING BARRIERS FOR A MORE LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

Physical Barriers

Any challenges related to motor skills, dexterity, or mobility that may limit a player's ability to interact with the game.
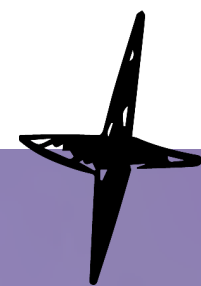
Cognitive Barriers

Potential difficulties that players with cognitive disabilities, learning differences, or neurological conditions may face when engaging with the game's mechanics or content.

Sensory Barriers

Any challenges related to vision, hearing, or other sensory impairments that may impact a player's ability to perceive and interact with the game.

You should remember that disability can also be situational. People's skills change depending on where they are. For example, in a crowded place, it's harder to hear. While new parents get really good at doing things with one hand, just like people do when they're standing on a bus or subway. And when we're very busy, everything can feel overwhelming. What we can do, what's safe, and what's right always changes.

DESIGN FOR ACCESSIBILITY → CREATE DELIGHT

Incorporate accessibility considerations from the early stages of game design to ensure inclusivity throughout the development process.

Here are some key principles to keep in mind:

User-Centric Design

Prioritize user feedback and involve players with diverse abilities in the playtesting process to identify and address potential accessibility issues.

Streamlined User Interface

Simplify the user interface and ensure it is intuitive, with clear icons and minimal text. Make it easy for players to navigate the game using touch gestures.

Scalable Difficulty

Consider using automatic difficulty scaling that intelligently adjusts itself based on the player's abilities and performance, or allow the player to choose their preferred difficulty.

Bite-Sized Gameplay

Design gameplay mechanics that can be easily understood and completed in short play sessions, as mobile gaming often caters to on-the-go and quick entertainment.

Considering Diverse Audiences Makes for Universally Engaging Games

Gaming Motivators

Identify what motivates mobile casual players, such as the desire for quick entertainment, relaxation, social interaction, or competition. Design gameplay elements that align with these motivations.

Mobile Context

Recognize that mobile gaming occurs in various contexts, such as during short breaks, commuting, or social settings. Account for these contexts by providing gameplay elements that can be easily picked up and put down without losing progress or the ability to participate in game events.

THE SOUND, LOOK AND FEEL OF ACCESSIBLE GAMING

Audio

While audio is an important component of mobile games, it's crucial to consider audio accessibility for players with hearing impairments or those who prefer to play without sound. Remember the following design considerations:

Subtitles and Caption

If you use spoken dialogue or instruction, remember to provide optional subtitles or captions for dialogue, instructions, and essential audio cues, allowing players to understand the game's content without audio.

Sound Alternatives

Include visual or haptic alternatives to convey crucial auditory information, ensuring that players with hearing impairments can still engage with the game effectively.

Visual

Visual accessibility encompasses various degrees of vision loss, including total blindness, partial impairment in one or both eyes, color blindness, and difficulties perceiving certain colors. E.g. According to National Eye Institute, 8% of men are estimated to be colorblind. Developing games for the visually impaired presents challenges that vary based on the severity of the disability, especially when relying solely on visual elements without auditory or haptic feedback. Always when possible, you should aim to involve the visually impaired community already in the early stages of game development, as they possess valuable insights and expertise in making games more accessible. In addition, there are game development tools (such as filters in graphic design software) allowing you to assess the appearance of your design from the perspective of individuals with colorblindness. **Some tips for the design:**

Visual Hierarchy

Clear visual hierarchy doesn't only improve the experience of those with visual impairments, it makes the game better to use for all.

Clear Contrast and High Saturation

Use high contrast and saturation to ensure that essential elements stand out and are easily distinguishable, benefiting players with visual impairments or color blindness.

Non-Color Cues

Pair color information with pattern, texture, or icon to convey information.

Controls

Mobile gaming relies heavily on touchscreen controls; ensuring accessibility in this area is vital. Remember the following design considerations:

Customizable Controls

Provide options for players to customize control layouts, allowing them to adapt the controls to their preferred hand placement or accommodate motor skill limitations.

Adjustable Sensitivity

Allow players to adjust the sensitivity of touch controls, ensuring they can find a comfortable and responsive setting based on their touch accuracy or motor abilities.

Simple Controls

Use controls that are intuitive and easy to learn, perform, and remember.

One-Handed Play

Optimize the game for one-handed play by designing controls that can be comfortably reached and operated with a single hand, allowing players to multitask or play on the go.

Assistive Touch Support

Ensure compatibility with mobile device accessibility features, such as assistive touch or switch controls, which can provide alternative input methods for players with limited dexterity or mobility.

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS

1. Is your game easily understandable without audio?

2. Do your systems demand a high level of mental effort?

3. Could your controls be more straightforward, adaptable, and less taxing?

4. Does your visual information translate well across various screen sizes?

5. Is there a limit to the intensity level in your game?

6. Is color distinction crucial for your gameplay or UI?

7. Are you targeting a particular difficulty level for players, like easy or hard?

8. Is your text easily readable and legible, even after localization?

More resources: Game accessibility guidelines, A color accessbility testing tool, Great article on visual accessibility, IBM accessibility toolkits, WebAIM contrast tool

REPRESENTATION MATTERS:
CRAFTING INCLUSIVE NARRATIVES

Representation is not merely about tokenism or surface-level diversity; it is about capturing the essence of the human experience. We must strive to reflect the richness and complexity of our diverse world within our games. This means incorporating a broad spectrum of races, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, ages, and cultural backgrounds, among other aspects of identity. By doing so, we allow players to see themselves and their communities represented on screen, validating their existence.

Even when working with non-human characters, it's common to add human-like qualities to them. This helps shape their personalities and stories. Even if the game doesn't focus on complex narratives, having characters with distinct personalities and backgrounds is useful for crafting related content such as marketing creatives.

We need to invest time in thorough research to accurately represent diverse characters, cultures, and experiences. We should also seek input from diverse team members, consultants, focus groups, or community members, who can provide valuable insights and feedback.

More resources:
cc: DEIA inclusion playbook
Inclusive screenwriting by Pixar

CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES AND TROPES: HOW TO SHAPE AUTHENTIC NARRATIVES

Avoid perpetuating harmful stereotypes or relying on clichés when creating characters or narratives. Strive to present nuanced and multi-dimensional representations that break free from preconceived notions. Craft storylines that reflect the experiences and challenges faced by underrepresented communities. Consider how various identities intersect and influence characters' journeys, ensuring their stories are respectful, authentic, and empowering.

Be mindful of cultural appropriation and offensive portrayals. Seek guidance from cultural experts when portraying other cultures to ensure respectful and accurate representation of them. You can for example set up Slack groups where people from different cultures and backgrounds can volunteer. If you know you need a lot of help (e.g. throughout the whole game project), consider hiring an external consultant for cultural sensitivity support.

RED'S FLAGS: HOW TO OVERCOME HARMFUL STEREOTYPES

Environment and Culture Stereotypes and What to Avoid

Exoticization and Orientalism

Depicting certain cultures or regions as exotic, mystical, or primitive.

Urban Decay

Associating urban environments with crime, poverty, and decay, reinforcing negative stereotypes about inner-city communities.

Tribalism

Portraying indigenous or tribal communities as savage or primitive.

Narrative Stereotypes and What to Avoid

Damsel in Distress

Depicting female characters as solely in need of rescue, reinforcing the notion that women are passive and weak.

Mighty Whitey

Featuring a white protagonist who becomes more competent or influential than local characters in non-white cultures, promoting a white savior narrative.

Evil Foreigner

Portraying characters from specific ethnic or national backgrounds as villains, contributing to xenophobia and prejudice.

Character Casting, Visual Stereotypes and What to Avoid

Tokenism

Including a single character from an underrepresented group as a superficial attempt at diversity without meaningful representation or role in the game.

Oversexualization

Depicting female or male characters with exaggerated sexualized traits and attire, reducing them to objects of desire.

Racial and Ethnic Stereotyping

Using visual cues or accents to stereotype characters based on their racial or ethnic backgrounds, perpetuating harmful generalizations.

Gender Stereotypes and What to Avoid

Hypermasculinity

Depicting male characters as overly aggressive and emotionally detached.

Ditzy or Damsel Men

Portraying male characters as incompetent and needing constant help.

Damsel in Distress

Depicting female characters as helpless and in need of rescue.

LGBTQIA+ Stereotypes and What to Avoid

Stereotypical Gay Best Friend

Representing gay characters as solely existing to support and provide comic relief for heterosexual protagonists.

Transgender Deception

Portraying transgender characters as deceitful or deceiving others about their gender identity. Don't use their gender identity as a plot twist or source of humor.

Flamboyant or Over-the-Top Characters

Avoid portraying LGBTQIA+ characters as overly flamboyant or stereotypically "campy".

Disability Stereotypes and What to Avoid

Inspiration Porn

Portraying disabled characters as solely inspirational or heroic due to their disability.

Evil or Pitiful Disabled Porn

Depicting disabled characters as either malicious or tragic.

Miracle Cure Narrative

Promoting the idea that a character's disability can be cured or fixed.

Magical Disabilities and Superpowers

Be careful about creating fantastical or supernatural disabilities, they can feel alienating to those with disabilities.

Age Stereotypes and What to Avoid

Elderly Incompetence
Portraying elderly characters as feeble, forgetful, or technologically inept.

Youth as Rebels
Representing young characters as rebellious troublemakers.

Ageism
Age as a source of humor or ridicule.

Youth as the Standard
Portraying youth as the standard of beauty, intelligence, or desirability.

Body Image and Size Stereotypes and What to Avoid

Fat Shaming

Depicting overweight characters as lazy, unintelligent, or lacking self-control.

Heroic Body Idealization

Presenting only characters with a specific muscular or slender body type as heroic or admirable.

"Ugly" character

Portraying characters with non-standard beauty features as unattractive or undesirable.

Tokenized Plus-Size Characters

Including plus-size characters as token representations without providing depth or meaningful roles for these characters.

Only one body type

Only using one narrow ideal body type for all characters.

Cultural and National Stereotypes and What to Avoid

Stereotypical Accents

Assigning certain accents to characters based on nationality or ethnicity perpetuates caricatures and assumptions about their cultural backgrounds.

Terrorists from Specific Regions

Portraying characters from specific countries or regions as terrorists.

CHAMPIONING INCLUSIVITY IN MARKETING

CAPTIVATE AUDIENCES WITH INCLUSIVE MARKETING

Showcasing Diversity in Marketing Materials: How to Celebrate Your Players

To effectively target diverse audiences, it is crucial to reflect diversity in marketing materials. Use inclusive imagery featuring individuals from various backgrounds and abilities to ensure potential customers can see themselves represented. Tailor marketing campaigns to resonate with different demographics, recognizing each group's unique interests and preferences.

Speaking the Language of Inclusivity: How to Engage Authentically

Craft messaging that embraces inclusivity, demonstrating that your brand values and respects all customers. Use language that avoids stereotypes and assumptions and instead focuses on shared values and experiences. Be mindful of cultural sensitivities and nuances when crafting messaging for global audiences.

Amplifying Diverse Voices and Perspectives: How to Share Unique Stories

Steering Clear of Tokenism and Stereotypes: How to Embrace True Representation

Promote authentic representation by featuring diverse voices and perspectives in marketing content. Collaborate with content creators from different backgrounds to ensure an inclusive range of perspectives. Highlight diverse player testimonials and success stories to showcase the breadth of experiences within your community.

Recognize and avoid tokenism, which involves including individuals from underrepresented groups solely to create an appearance of diversity. Instead, strive for meaningful and authentic representation. Challenge stereotypes by showcasing diverse individuals in a range of roles and contexts. This approach helps break down harmful preconceptions and fosters a more inclusive brand image.

Be committed to portraying characters in games and crafting marketing communications that steer clear of outdated gender roles, sexual objectification, or any other harmful stereotypes. Make sure your content remains respectful and non-offensive and promotes positive values, discouraging any form of discrimination or antisocial behavior.

ROVIO'S OWN INCLUSIVITY CHECKLIST

To uphold these principles, we adhere to the following checklist in our games or marketing materials:

Zero Discrimination

We do not condone any content that promotes discrimination based on age, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, disability, or any other protected characteristic. Our games and marketing materials are designed to be inclusive and welcoming to all players.

Respectful Language

We avoid using inappropriate, hateful, or offensive language in our content. Our communications aim to foster a respectful and positive environment for our diverse audience.

No Harmful Stereotypes

We avoid perpetuating harmful stereotypes related to gender, race, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, disability, or any other aspect of diversity. Our content seeks to promote diverse and authentic representations.

Mindful of Body Image and Representation

We are mindful of the portrayal of body image in our games and marketing. We avoid promoting unrealistic beauty standards or body shaming, instead promoting body positivity and diverse representations.

Accessibility

We ensure that our games and marketing materials are accessible to players with different abilities. We strive to make our content inclusive and usable for everyone.

Cultural Sensitivity

We respect and embrace cultural diversity, avoiding cultural appropriation and insensitive representations. Our content celebrates various cultures authentically and respectfully.

Mindful of Social Issues

We approach social issues responsibly, avoiding trivializing or exploiting sensitive topics. Our content is mindful of the potential impact on players and society.

Mindful of Sexual Content

We handle sexual content with sensitivity, ensuring that it is appropriate and consensual. We avoid objectifying characters or promoting explicit material.

Diversity in Character Roles

We strive to provide diverse and meaningful character roles in our games. Characters should not be limited by stereotypes or relegated to token roles.

EXAMPLES OF CHARACTER PORTRAYAL

Sheriff Who Enjoys Baking

This character is a sheriff who also has a passion for baking. He challenges typical gender and racial expectations by combining a leadership role with a nurturing hobby, illustrating that people's identities extend beyond their job or ethnicity.

Lawyer Using a Wheelchair

She's a lawyer who uses a wheelchair. Her character emphasizes intelligence and professional success, rather than her disability. This portrayal effectively represents diverse individuals authentically, avoiding the inclusion of characters solely for diversity's sake.

Let's hit the beach

We're committed to avoiding oversexualization, aiming to represent characters in ways that respect both their individuality and our diverse player base. Additionally, we strive to build game worlds that embrace body type diversity, reflecting the rich variety found in the real world.

In designing characters like Ms. Musgrove and Nora for a beach scene in our game, our priority is respectful and appropriate portrayal.

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS

1 Do you condemn any content that promotes discrimination based on age, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, disability, or any other protected characteristic?

2 Do you avoid using inappropriate, hateful, or offensive language in your content?

3 Do your communications aim to foster a respectful and positive environment for a diverse audience?

4 Does your content seek to promote diverse and authentic representations, and avoid perpetual harming stereotypes related to gender, race, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, disability, or any other aspect of diversity?

5 Do you avoid promoting unrealistic beauty standards or body shaming, and instead promote body positivity and diverse representations?

6 Have you ensured that your games and marketing materials are accessible to players with different abilities?

7 Do you respect and embrace cultural diversity, avoiding cultural appropriation and insensitive representations?

8 Do you approach social issues responsibly, avoiding trivializing or exploiting sensitive topics?

9 Do you handle sexual content with sensitivity, ensuring that it is appropriate and consensual?

10 Do you provide diverse and meaningful character roles in your games?

More resources: Apiary on Inclusive Marketing, Inclusive Marketing with Google

BUILDING A SAFE SPACE TO PLAY

In our commitment to building inclusive and vibrant gaming communities, we recognize the importance of fostering safe and harassment-free spaces for all players. We believe that every individual should be able to enjoy our games without fear of discrimination, harassment, or bullying. This chapter outlines our active stance in creating a culture of respect, empathy, and inclusion within our gaming communities.

ESTABLISHING CLEAR COMMUNITY GUIDELINES:
HOW TO CREATE SAFE SPACES

Develop comprehensive community guidelines/Code of conduct that outline your gaming communities' expected behaviors and values. These guidelines should clearly state that harassment, discrimination, hate speech, and any harmful behavior will not be tolerated.

ENCOURAGING POSITIVE PLAYER INTERACTIONS:
HOW TO BUILD SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

Design community engagement campaigns to be positive and inclusive. Organize events that encourage teamwork, fair competition, and collaboration, and provide rewards or recognition to players who help others and show good spirit.

MAKING IT EASY TO REPORT EXPERIENCES:
HOW TO PRIORITIZE PLAYER SAFETY

ENGAGING IN PROACTIVE MONITORING:
HOW TO PROMOTE A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

Implement user-friendly reporting tools within your games and community platforms to allow players to report harassment, hate speech, or any other harmful behavior. Ensure that all reports are taken seriously, thoroughly investigated, and addressed promptly.

Regularly monitor game chats, forums, and social media channels to detect and address any harassment or toxic behavior. Implement automated systems or employ dedicated staff to proactively identify and intervene in potentially harmful situations.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY:
HOW TO BUILD TRUST AND RESPECT

Communicate openly with the community about your commitment to fostering a safe environment. Provide updates on actions taken against harassment and enforce consequences for those who violate community guidelines, ensuring transparency and accountability in maintaining a safe space for all.

COLLABORATION AND INVOLVEMENT:
HOW TO COLLABORATE WITH THE COMMUNITY

Engage in open dialogues with players, listen to their concerns, and involve them in the decision-making process regarding community guidelines and safety measures. By involving the community, you can collectively work towards creating an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and heard.

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS

1. Do your guidelines clearly deter harassment and harmful behavior while promoting a safe environment?

2. Are you fostering teamwork and fair play, with recognition for positive player interactions?

3. Is reporting straightforward, and are reports promptly addressed for player safety?

4. Do you actively monitor and intervene to promote a healthy community?

5. Are you transparent and accountable in handling rule violations?

6. Are players actively involved in shaping community rules and safety measures?

More resources: Rovio Games Code of Conduct, Fair Play Alliance, Discord community guidelines, Supercell Safe and Fair Play policy, Innersloth Code of Conduct

A DIVERSE AND SAFE WORKSPACE UNLEASHES CREATIVITY

What about our own teams?

WHY DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION MATTER

They Unleash Creativity and Innovation

Embracing diversity within your teams ignites a powerful fusion of perspectives, experiences, and ideas, propelling novel and inclusive game development. A diverse team in a psychologically safe environment unleashes creativity, unlocks novel problem-solving, and gains a comprehensive understanding of players' diverse needs.

They Attract Talent

Commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment attracts exceptional talent from all walks of life. Top-tier professionals thrive in a workplace that empowers their unique strengths and recognizes their contributions, sparking creativity and dedication.

They Forge a Culture of Belonging

Establishing a safe and inclusive workspace for every team member, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or other characteristics, forges a culture of belonging where everyone is valued and celebrated. This sense of inclusion fuels team spirit, collaboration, and a sense of shared purpose.

## They Elevate Performance and Success

A safe, inclusive workspace sparks dynamic synergy, fostering open communication, trust, and psychological safety. This elevated team environment drives performance, empowers agile problem-solving, and ensures seamless collaboration.

DIVERSE AND SAFE WORKSPACES FOR COLLABORATIVE CREATIVITY

As an individual game team, empowering your workspace to be diverse and safe is pivotal to unlocking collaborative creativity and delivering inclusive gaming experiences. Here's how you can champion inclusivity and teamwork for your team's success:

Embrace Inclusive Team Composition

Prioritize diverse team composition by seeking talent from underrepresented voices. Diverse perspectives enrich the creative pool and foster collaborative and innovative game development.
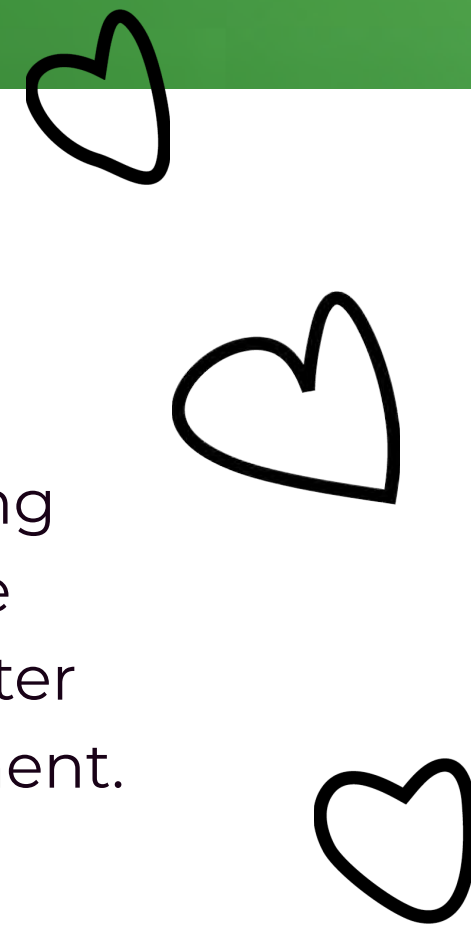
Cultivate Respect and Psychological Safety

Create an inclusive environment where every team member can freely contribute their unique insights. Zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment ensures a respectful and supportive workspace, nurturing open communication and collaborative creativity.

Empower Collaborative Leadership

Encourage inclusivity in leadership roles, empowering every member to lead collaboratively. Collaborative leadership caters to diverse player needs and fosters an environment of innovation and acceptance.

Promote Empathy and Awareness

Nurture empathy, awareness, and cultural sensitivity through ongoing team-based initiatives, including diversity and inclusion training. Empathy fuels creativity and enables games that authentically reflect diverse experiences.

Integrate Diverse Perspectives into Design Processes

Encourage every team member to contribute valuable insights and feedback, embracing diverse viewpoints to drive innovation.

Communicate Openly

Foster an environment of openness with team-based channels for feedback and active listening. Collectively seeking feedback creates space for innovative ideas to drive game development forward.

Celebrate Diversity

Applaud team's diverse identities through team-based events and celebrations. Celebrating diversity inspires pride and empowers us to create innovative features that resonate with players from all walks of life.

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS

1 Are you actively seeking talent from underrepresented voices to enrich your creative pool and drive innovation?

2 Does your workplace have zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment, allowing every team member to freely contribute unique insights?

3 Are you encouraging inclusive leadership to cater to diverse player needs and foster innovation?

4 Do you nurture empathy and cultural sensitivity through diversity and inclusion training to authentically reflect diverse experiences in our games?

5 Are all team members actively encouraged to contribute diverse insights to drive innovation in your design processes?

6 Have you created an open environment with channels for team-based feedback and active listening, fostering innovative ideas in game development?

7 Do you celebrate your team's diverse identities through events and recognition, empowering us to create features that resonate with a wide range of players?

More resources: McKinsey Insights on DEI, Why diverse teams are smarter by HBR

CONCLUSION:
SHAPING THE FUTURE OF INCLUSIVE GAMING

As the realm of video games continues to grow and diversify, the importance of designing games that cater to a wide range of players, regardless of their background, abilities, or preferences, cannot be overstated. In this playbook, we've explored the myriad reasons why inclusive game design is so important, highlighting considerations for making and marketing games that allow those games to resonate with a diverse audience, maximizing the joy they can deliver.

Inclusive game design ensures that everyone can participate in the joy of gaming, irrespective of their physical or cognitive abilities. By incorporating features such as customizable controls, subtitles, and colorblind options, game developers open the doors to a wider audience, enhancing the experience for players with varied physical and mental abilities. This not only makes gaming more enjoyable for individuals with disabilities but also promotes a culture of inclusivity within the gaming community.

Video games and popular culture influence the way we perceive the world in an immense way. Games offers a platform to tell diverse stories and portray characters from all walks of life. When players encounter characters and narratives that reflect their own experiences, it fosters a sense of validation and empowerment. Moreover, it helps others develop empathy and understanding for different perspectives, ultimately contributing to a more tolerant and compassionate society.

In conclusion, making games that include everyone is important. It's not just the right thing to do; it's also key to a successful and modern gaming industry. In our diverse and connected world, the gaming industry has a special chance to be a leader in including everyone. It is our hope that this playbook can inspire empathetic game design and marketing and provide some direction when considering the diverse audiences that our games touch.

As developers, players, and enthusiasts, let us embrace this vision of gaming as a space where everyone is welcome and represented, as it is not only important for the industry but for the betterment of society as a whole. The future of gaming is inclusive, and it promises to be brighter and more exciting than ever.