Gaming UX and Revenue Optimizations for Apps

Improving your gaming app's player experience.

Personalized tips from Google UX researchers to help increase your gaming app's user engagement & revenue.

Optimizing your gaming app's UX can drive increased player **engagement, retention** — and ultimately, **revenue.**

A **seamless user experience** is essential for successfully onboarding new users *and* retaining loyal players, which unlocks a **sustainable revenue stream** for your gaming app.

So whether you're a seasoned game developer or just starting out, this deck is packed with insights and best practices that can help you **take your game to the next level.**

Google

Onboarding for early engagement and retention

Google

Activate Push Notifications

Activate push notifications to drive users to your app. Design a good value proposition.

1. Relevant: Think about what the player might really want to know.
2. Engaging: Design them with rich art and messaging.
3. Actionable: Let the player take action from the notification without opening the game or direct the user to opening the game with a deep link.
4. Beneficial: Make sure the player clearly understand the value of enabling these notifications in a well-designed in-game prompt.
5. Personalized: Personalize the content of the push notification to increase the open rates.
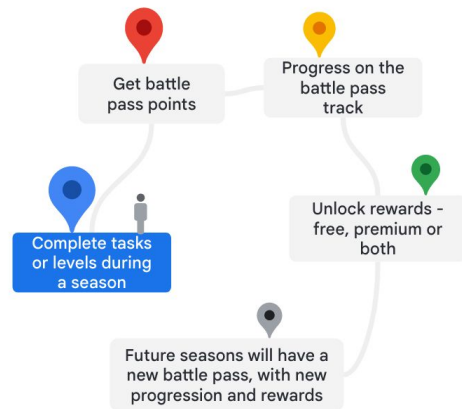6. Timely: Be mindful of the notifications frequency. If not optimized, players might choose to turn them off.

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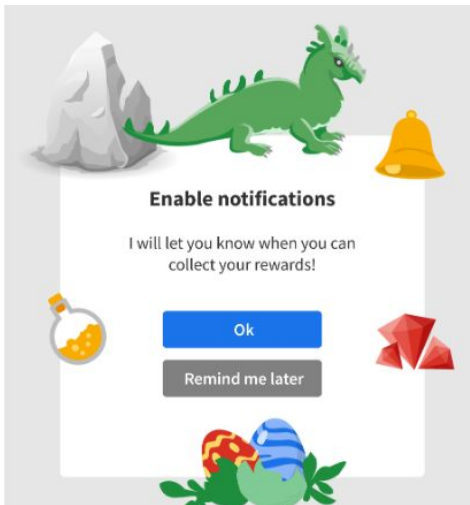
Leverage the power of battle pass to deepen the sense of a players progress

Battle passes are one of the most popular monetization methods. They feature in around 60% of the top 20% mobile games.

Battle pass brings an added layer of progression and a deeper sense of achievements to any game.

They also present opportunities for monetization. One should implement battle passes with rewarded ads or In App Purchases to monetize.

Get battle pass points

Progress on the battle pass track

Unlock rewards - free, premium or both

Complete tasks or levels during a season

Future seasons will have a new battle pass, with new progression and rewards

Create an early sense of accomplishment

Reward the player for going through some basic functions and meaningful milestones early on. These could be completing levels, spending coins for the first time, using special game features, building or upgrading an element or renovating their first building, using their first booster or power-up, or finding their first chest.

You can also reward them for connecting the game to a social media account or by following the game on social.

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Optimize for long term engagement and reducing churn

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Insert a welcome back message to re-engage returning players

Your game might have an intricate storyline, or a complex world with many features. The player might have come far along in the narrative and when they come back after a time away they might not remember exactly where they left things off. They might need a reminder of the game world, where they are or how far they've come in the story, what they've done so far, their purpose and their next action. A short welcome back intro screen could accomplish that.

You can also give them a free gift of items and boosters to kickstart their progress again.

Implement login calendars

Bring back the players daily with the promise of rewards. Login calendars offer a new player a reward for each day they log into the game. Login calendars function as part of the extended player onboarding, where players are given the motivation and resources to play and learn the game further, using those rewards. With that, comes higher stickiness, longer retention, and more engagement.

For a limited time, login calendars offer the new player a reward for each day they log into the game. They are usually made for 7, 14 or 30 days to incentivize the player toward longer and regular gameplay, beyond their first-time play experience. Login calendars and daily rewards generate more gameplay, which automatically leads to more learning and mastery of the game. The rewards themselves make playing more enjoyable, and boost retention further. These tips help players build a habit of playing the game early on.

Practical tips for implementing daily rewards:

1. Update and refresh regularly or ensure that they disappear if not claimed
2. Give an unlimited resource for a limited time (e.g. unlimited energy for the the next 1h)
3. Give a time-limited advantage (e.g. premium characters, improved character stats, playing with special power-ups and booster in the next X levels or X minutes)
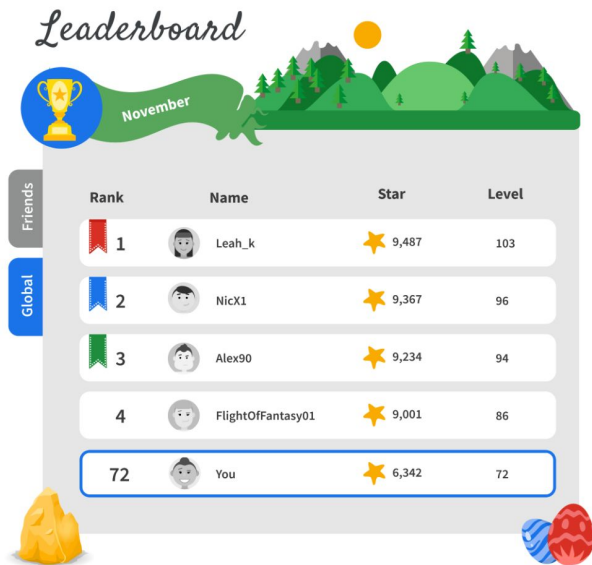
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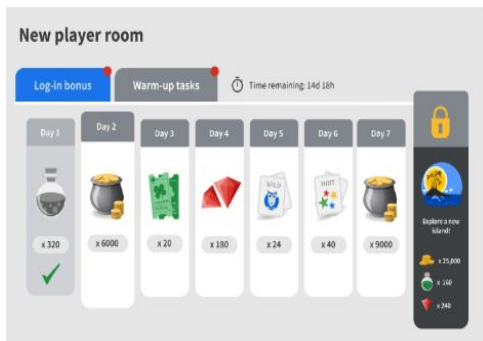
Reward the player for connecting on social to drive engagement and retention

Players can get a valuable item by following you on Facebook, Instagram or Discord. This way they stay in touch with the game announcements and updates. This sense of community drives deeper engagement, while the rewards boost retention and enhance gameplay.

Celebrate milestones in player development by giving rewards to all the players that share their player ID on the game's social pages.

Implement the leaderboards as a popular feature to compare player performance against others and become motivated to keep up their good game, driving retention.


Leaderboard

November

Friends | Global

Rank	Name	Star	Level
1	Leah_k	⭐ 9,487	103
2	NicX1	⭐ 9,367	96
3	Alex90	⭐ 9,234	94
4	FlightOfFantasy01	⭐ 9,001	86
72	You	⭐ 6,342	72

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Adjust the game to help players get unstuck where they might give up

If the player has reached a block and can't seem to win a level or progress, the game provides a way for them to get what they need to move on. E.g. if the player can't clear a level, after several tries, because they lack resources or skill, the game can adjust the difficulty level and give them extra free hints/wildcards or boosters or other needed resource to get unstuck (especially for non-spenders).

This could come based on the context in the game world: in-app messaging by a game character, a special IAP offer or available to unlock by watching a rewarded ad video.

One can also modify the game in critical moments to help the player progress and reduce churn. This can be done by:

1) Reducing game difficulty

2) Offering power-ups

3) Offering boosters or time-limited special advantages

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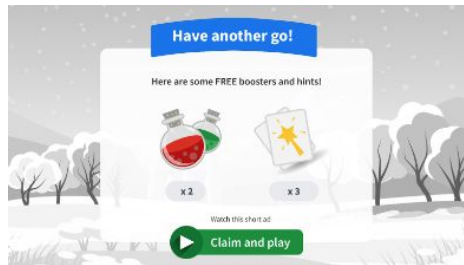
**Monetize your game while keeping the player experience top of mind**

Google

Implement Rewarded ads strategically for loss recovery, reducing game difficulty, or getting the missed resources

To optimize the game experience, you can anticipate the players needs or what they might be missing in critical game moments to avoid premature churns. You can leverage rewarded ads to monetize these critical moments by allowing the player to claim their needed resources by watching an ad.

This can be used for:

-Loss recovery

-Reducing level difficulty

-Getting the missed currency, items, and boosters

-Getting more life, energy or time

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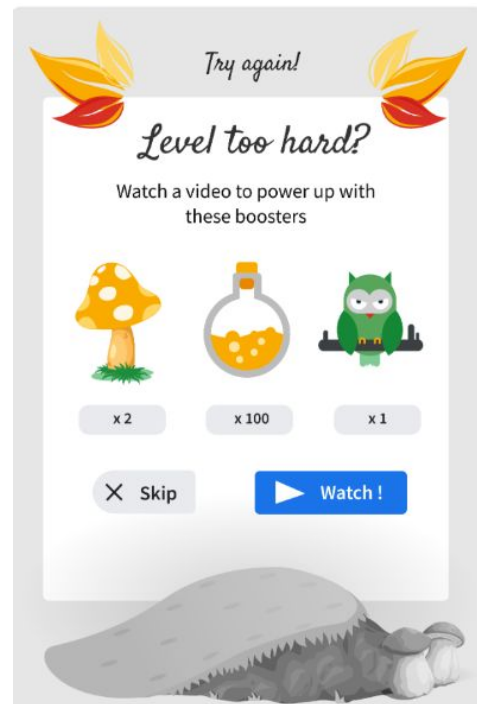
Implement interstitial ads

Interstitial ads make up more than 60% of ad revenue for card games and are crucial for maximizing ad revenue. Simultaneously, it is important to ensure seamless implementation without sacrificing user experience or player retention.
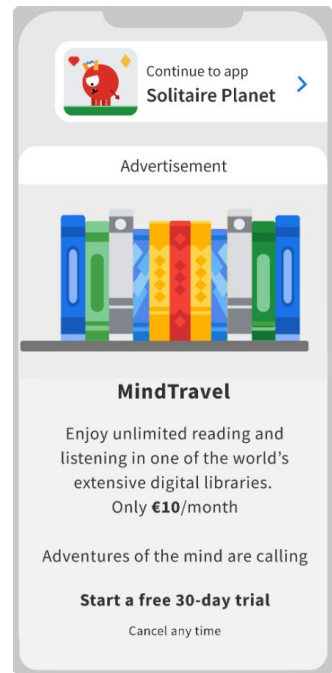
It is recommended to implement interstitial ads between levels and after a gameplay on the game result page.

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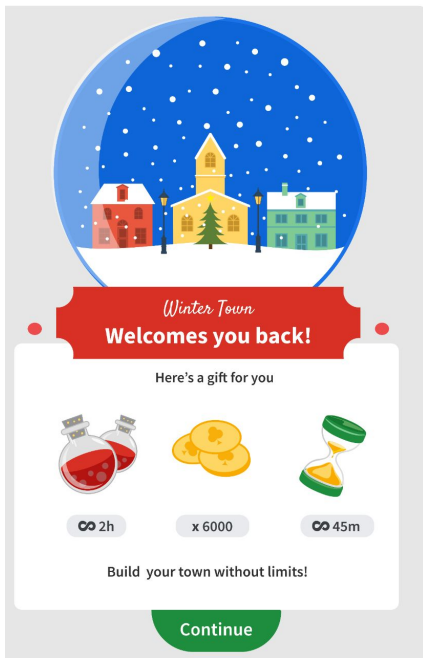
Monetize players before entering the game using App Open Ads

Implement an app open ad as a fullscreen at the moment of opening the game, but before entering the game itself, to monetize players before entering the game. The game branding should take up ~15% of the screen with the ad creative below.

Avoid targeting your new players so they don't get confused by this as their first entry experience.

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