

You Were Told to Lose Money By Making Games, and You Actually Did It?

Chapter 9: President Chen Truly Has Great Foresight!

After serving the employees a hearty feast of motivational speeches, Chen Xu patted his backside and left the company.

There was no need for him to be involved in every aspect of the game's pre-production work.

After all, he was the boss now.

His responsibility was simply to make decisions and guide the overall direction.

As long as he prevented situations where employees had too much freedom and accidentally produced results that would stab him in the back, everything would be fine.

There was no need for him to personally involve himself in every little detail just to lose money and work himself like a dog.

Meanwhile, inside the meeting room, Gong Qi, Ying Gao, Xiao Dao, Xiu Fu, and the others held another private meeting.

The topic of discussion was none other than their upcoming project:

The new game, Sekiro.

Earlier, they had been so busy drinking in Chen Xu's motivational speech that they hadn't had time to think critically.

For a while, they had been moved by emotion and nostalgia for their dreams.

But now that Gong Qi and Ying Gao had calmed down, they realized there were some very serious problems.

Putting aside whether this niche gameplay concept would actually be good or not, the key issue was that they had absolutely no foundation in making action games!

What had they worked on before?

An RTS game and a TPS game.

Neither had anything to do with action games.

Although many TPS titles on the market included action elements, their own games certainly didn't.

Their previous TPS project had focused far more heavily on RPG mechanics—stats, progression systems, and numerical balancing.

After all, balancing numbers was at the core of RTS development.

That was their area of expertise.

And why had they done things that way?

Because they couldn't create satisfying shooting mechanics.

The RPG systems had essentially been a workaround.

Now they were supposed to make a game focused on action combat for the first time.

This was practically a nightmare-difficulty dungeon.

More importantly, Chen Xu had also given them a strict deadline.

The game had to launch by the end of the second quarter next year.

Even for a medium-sized game, a team of their size would normally need at least three or four quarters of development time, even with AI-assisted production tools.

And after development was complete, they couldn't just release it immediately.

A proper testing phase alone would require at least half a quarter.

They were already complete beginners when it came to action-adventure games.

And now they had to do it under an extremely tight schedule.

The most fatal issue was that, based on Chen Xu's current design draft, this wasn't even a conventional action-adventure game.

It was a game where player skill—specifically the combat and action system—was the central pillar.

It wasn't the usual action-adventure formula driven by gear progression and numerical growth.

At first glance, that might not sound like a huge difference, but in reality, the gap was enormous.

In games driven by equipment and stats, even if the controls feel terrible, players can continue progressing as long as the numbers, progression systems, and level design are decent enough.

The gameplay provides motivation to keep playing.

But when the action system itself becomes the core of the experience, everything changes.

Players must invest significant time learning and mastering the combat mechanics.

If the action framework isn't excellent, then no matter how impressive every other aspect of the game may be, players won't buy into it.

Yet they couldn't simply say it was impossible.

After all, they had just pledged their loyalty to President Chen moments ago.

If they gave up at the first sign of difficulty, what would that say about them?

For a moment, everyone wore troubled expressions.

Then suddenly, Xiao Dao—the man whom Chen Xu had once praised as "Sleeping Dragon"—lit up with inspiration.

As though he had thought of something important, he spoke up and broke the deadlock.

"I think we've overlooked a very important issue."

"That's right! We may have overlooked something crucial!"

Sometimes roommates who had lived together for three years really did think alike.

Before Xiao Dao could fully explain himself, Xiu Fu—the "Young Phoenix" to Xiao Dao's "Sleeping Dragon"—seemed to arrive at the same realization.

A look of sudden understanding appeared on his face.

Is this the capability of the boss's trusted confidants?

Seeing the two men looking as though they had already understood everything, Gong Qi, Ying Gao, and the others couldn't help feeling a sense of admiration.

"What insight do you have?" they asked eagerly.

"Insight might be too strong a word," Xiao Dao replied with a smile as he exchanged glances with Xiu Fu.

"But I do have a theory."

He paused before continuing:

"Do you all remember what President Chen said to us earlier?"

"Just because something is niche? Just because playing it safe seems easier? If all we care about is safety, then how can we ever achieve a breakthrough?"

Xiu Fu picked up where Xiao Dao left off, repeating the motivational speech Chen Xu had delivered earlier.

"Of course! President Chen had already anticipated this issue and was hinting at it all along!"

Gong Qi, Ying Gao, and the others carefully considered those words before suddenly reaching enlightenment.

On the surface, the statement seemed like a response to concerns about the game's niche appeal.

But wasn't it also a warning directed at them?

So what if they had never developed an action-oriented game before?

If they never tried, they would never succeed.

Only by doing it would they have a chance to break through and improve.

"But that still brings us back to the same problem," Gong Qi said with a troubled expression. "The schedule is too tight, and we don't have the necessary foundation."

The reason they were struggling with this issue wasn't complicated.

The launch deadline was extremely aggressive, and they lacked experience.

Game development wasn't nearly as simple as outsiders imagined.

To non-developers and ordinary players, the most important aspects of a game might seem to be gameplay, story, and graphics.

And indeed, those things were important.

You could even call them the soul of a game.

But did that mean everything else was unimportant?

From UI design and voice acting to animation quality and camera work—

All of these were critical elements that heavily influenced the player experience.

Just like FPS games and fighting games, the so-called "shooting feel" and "combat feel" weren't magical concepts.

They were the result of countless technical details and years of accumulated expertise.

That accumulated know-how was the true foundation of major game studios.

That's why pure FPS games and fighting games were almost always dominated by long-established industry giants.

Given their circumstances, creating a high-quality game within three quarters felt unrealistic.

Even getting the combat system to a merely acceptable level would already be an impressive achievement.

"Gong, you've become trapped by your assumptions."

Xiao Dao leaned back in his chair and revealed a faint smile.

Standing up, he casually fanned himself with the project proposal in his hand.

At that moment, his thoughts felt clearer than ever.

"It's true that we don't have much experience."

"But the industry does."

"And don't forget—we're Morning Star Games now, not the old Target Games."

As soon as Xiao Dao finished speaking, Xiu Fu immediately added:

"Have you forgotten President Chen's attitude when purchasing the equipment?"

From confusion to realization.

His words were like a bolt of lightning striking through the fog.

After thinking for only a moment, Gong Qi suddenly slapped the table.

Almost simultaneously, he and Ying Gao blurted out the same answer:

"Outsourcing!"

Everyone froze.

Then understanding dawned.

"That's right!"

"We may not have the expertise, but someone else does!"

"And didn't President Chen specifically tell us not to worry about costs during his speech? Wasn't that another hint?"

Ying Gao's eyes lit up with excitement.

"President Chen truly sees farther than the rest of us!"

They indeed lacked experience and technical foundations in action games.

But that wasn't a problem.

Because the industry had plenty of studios that did.

There were countless development teams whose own projects had failed, forcing them to survive by taking on outsourced work.

And unlike before, they weren't poor anymore.

Just look at the top-tier hardware throughout the office.

There was only one word to describe their situation now:

Rich.