ROCKSTAR

Game Design by Chris Crawford

Rockstar is a game with the theme of music. Music is something that is universally enjoyed. It's also a theme that is accessible to all audiences. It's also a theme where everyone will find something that they like.

The player takes on the roles of band leader, band manager, and record producer. The player's goal is to acheive fortune and fame while having a great time.

The game takes the player on a cycle of creating new albums, marketing them, and then going on tour. There are also a few surprises along the way.

The game asks players to make impactful choices and see how those choices play out over time. This leads to gameplay that is both dynamic and casual friendly. It's also full of features that support the freemium model and make it a great example of a social game.

The game's core mechanic creates a sense of anticipation. The player will always keep playing to see what happens next, to create one more album so they can level up their characters, or to earn enough in game money to purchase new clothing for their rockstars.

The platform is Iphone and the target audience is an expansion of the normal social game audience. This game will appeal to many demographics.

The game uses a dual currency system for monetization. Players can buy specific quantities of real money currency and use that for buying all kinds of virtual goods.

Players can invite their friends to go on tour with them or share funny game events that happen via social media.

The universe of Rockstar will allow the players to feel like musicians. Your surroundings will either be a studio or a stage, but these environments are the player's own. The player can chose to bring a robotic fire breathing t-Rex on tour, or the player can paint their studio pink. Most of the game's setting will come from it's colorful cast of characters.

Three groups of characters

The Player

The player has a customizeable character that represents them. Players can choose if they are male or female and have a few choies for base appearence. There will also be a wide array of virtual goods that allow for customization of the player character, or musicians in your band.

The Musicians

Bands are comprised of the player's character and musicians.

Musicians have unique looks, personalities and skills. The player will have to find the right musicians if they want to be sucsesfull in the music world.

Other Players

Other players play an important role in fleshing out this universe. Players can compare stats to their freinds' and even go on tours with them!

See Rockstar-extendedGDD for more details on how these groups function.

Art Style

This game would do well with a fun art style that uses vivid colors and exagerated character proportions. I think this game could have a little bit more grit and edge than most typical social games.

The characters and environments will be done in 3D and the UI will be done in 2D. Because the characters will be animated with different intruments and different clothing, 3D is the more practical choice.

Camera

During most of the game that camera will be at a 3/4s overhead view. It will show an player's musicians when they are working in the studio.

When a musician is rocking out particularly hard the camera will automatically close up on that musician.

The camera will also change during all minigames to present a view that faces the characters.

Controls

The game's controls will be entirely touch based.

Advantages of using 3D

Easily change character clothing.

Dynamic Camera.

MECHANICS

The core mechanic of this game was inspired by GameDev Story. It has been heavily modified and expanded on.

The core gameplay of Rockstar is a about the player making impactful choices and then seeing how those choices play out over time. There are also three minigames.

I'll go over a few important mechanics and then walk you through the flow of creating an album.

Passage of Game Time

The game play time happens in real time but with the passage of gametime accelerated. The hands on the clock move faster than in real life time. 24 hours game time may take only 2 minutes in real life time.

The game makes use of this in various ways. Your album may take 6 game months to record but you will make profits for 2 game years.

Rockpoints and Gold

The game uses a duel currency system. First there are Rock Points (RP). Rock Points are spent on anything from the development of your album to a new hat for one of your musicians. They are earned whenever a player completes an album, or goes on tour.

There is also Gold (G). This is the real money currency. $1 USD = 160G.

It can be spent on items, upgrades and consumables that can only be purchased with gold.

Gold can also be spent in substitute of RP.

MECHANICS

Fans

Over the course of play, players accumulate fans. Fans are loyal custumers that will buy your albums and go to your tours. The more fans a player has, the more RP they will earn.

The problem is fans are in a constant state of flux. Fans are fickle! Some fans may not like your latest album and you may lose them. You may fire your band's coolest member and lose fans.

Your band may gain a lot of fans based on your clothes, or some other seemingly unimportant choice.

You can expand your fan base by trying new things.

But the best way to expand your fanbase is to co-headline a tour with another player!

Album Score

Completed albums have a point value that constitutes how good they are. Better albums sell more copies.

The value is based on everything that went into the album.

Nearly everything you do; from musicians and equipment used, to what type of album you decided to record, and even some random variance, will effect this score.

Your Album Score and your fans determain the sales of your album and the success of your tours.

The best way to describe the gameplay is a run through of the album creating and tour processes.

1. Creating an Album

Players start out by selecting an album's theme. The theme can have an impact on your fan base.

Romance

Sadness

Future

Parties
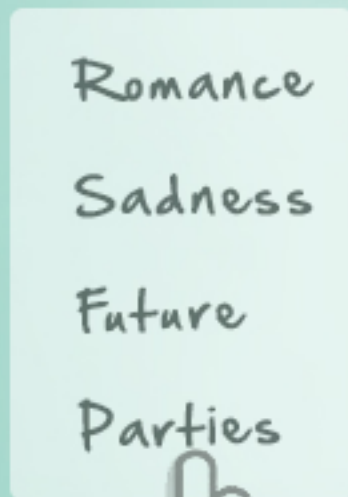
I choose that one

Players will be presented with a menu full of themes and be asked to select one.

They will then be presented with a second menu asking to select the abum's direction. These choices have an RP cost. Here are a few examples:

Select Direction

None, 0 RP
High Production, 5,000 RP
Quick and Dirty, 1,000 RP
Experimental, 8,000 RP

1. Create a new album (select theme and direction)

2. Conception phase

3. Select album qualities

4. Recording phase

5. Name album

6. Special event (chance)

7. Marketing

8. Release/reviews/collect RP and XP

9. Go on tour (optional)

2. Conception Phase

In this phase you will see your band start to work on the album. It takes an average of two game months to complete this phase.

Different icons may appear over a musicians head, these represent +1 point towards one of your album's different qualities. Better musicians will have a higher chance of giving your album additional points.

The player can further influence the outcome by encouraging musicians by tapping on them in a rhythm.

This phase starts organically and can be ignored by the player.

3. Album Qualities

In this phase the player will have to select the qualities of the album that they want to boost further. The player will have a number of points to invest in qualities.

Select Qualities
Points Remaining (2)

Wacky
Poetic
Extreme
Heavy

As the player progresses they will unlock more qualities as well as points to put towards qualities.

4. Recording Phase

The recording phase is similar to the conception phase, it starts organically and takes time to play out. The difference is that the player can help encourage the band by trying to tap along to the song they are playing.

The song in the minigame is based off of the selected theme from step 1.

5. Name the Album

The player names the album by running a random album name generator. They can go through it as many times as they want.

6. Special Event (Chance)

There is always a chance of a special event happening. These events can effect your fans and/or RP gained from the next album. Here are some events:

Your music was pirated -RP +fans

Invited to play the National Anthem +RP +fans

Hot sauce sponsorship +RP

Soft drink commercial +RP -fans

Release live album +RP

Endorsement deal +RP -fans

Band mate demands more money -RP

7. Marketing

Players can spend extra RP to promote their album. Using different promotions will reach different demographics. If you have used the same promotion recently it will be less effective.

Select Marketing

Word of Mouth -0RP
Fliers -100RP
Pay what you want MP3 -1,000RP
Featured on Tunes store -5,000RP
Radio Single - 10,000RP
Music Video - 20,000RP

MECHANICS

8. Release and Reviews

After marketing your album it will be re-leased to the public. After a few game days pass the sales begin to trickle in, and you will see the reviews.

Reviews are based on your album score, qualities, marketing, and other factors. It's the final report on your album.

High scores indicate that you should capitalize on this album further.

After the release of an album RP steadily flows in every game month, eventually dropping out to zero at around two game years (on average).

I am hoping to never hear this again. I give it a 2

This Album is awesome. I give it 9.5

9. Go on Tour

Players have the option of going on tour anytime. Tours can be solo or Co-head-lined. Going on tours are expensive but can earn huge amounts of RP and even win over some more fans. It'll also help secure your current fans.

While players are on tour they can see their band playing to a crowd. They will see the mood of the crowd. The better the crowd's mood, the more RP will be made at the end of the show.

Your band plays your most recent album. The better your album score, the better the average mood.

The player has a way to directly impact the mood during the show. By deploying pyrotechnic effects the player can thrill the crowd.

Pyrotechnics are a consumable item that thrills the crowd and will boost the mood for a few seconds.

There are also non-consumable items that can be purchased to entertain the crowd.

MECHANICS

Musicians

Musicians each have 5 types of instruments that they can play. This can never be changed. These skills may be increased by giving various things to your musician. You can pay RP on various types of training and recreation, which will increase your musician's stats.

Your musician can be further augmented by changing his equipped instrument. Instruments will give your character stat bonuses that will transfer to your albums.

You can even buy premium outfits and instruments for your musicians which will make them look different and may give a stat bonus.

See **VirtualGoods-sample** spreadsheet for examples.

Musicians can be fired at anytime. Once purchased musicians can be rehired for free. New musicians can be hired for Rock Points or Gold.

Player Character

Completing albums and tours gives the player XP. As the player gains XP their character will level up, each time gaining one skill point, and one additional point to put towards an album's direction.

Skills can be used to manipulate different aspects of the game and are chosen from a branching skill tree. Players will be able to reset this tree and reinvest skill points for a fee.

Musicians have personality traits

e.g.

Cool – Attract more fans.

Hothead – Increases likely-hood of certan events.

Virtuoso – Particularly good at one instrument.

LEVEL DESIGN

In this game there are no set levels to progress through. Instead, players will always be presented with a goal to work towards. Meeting this goal will award extra RP and XP. Ocassionally this will give the player a special item. The goal will be presented at the top of the screen whenever the player is in the studio. This ensures that the player always has a reachable goal to chase.
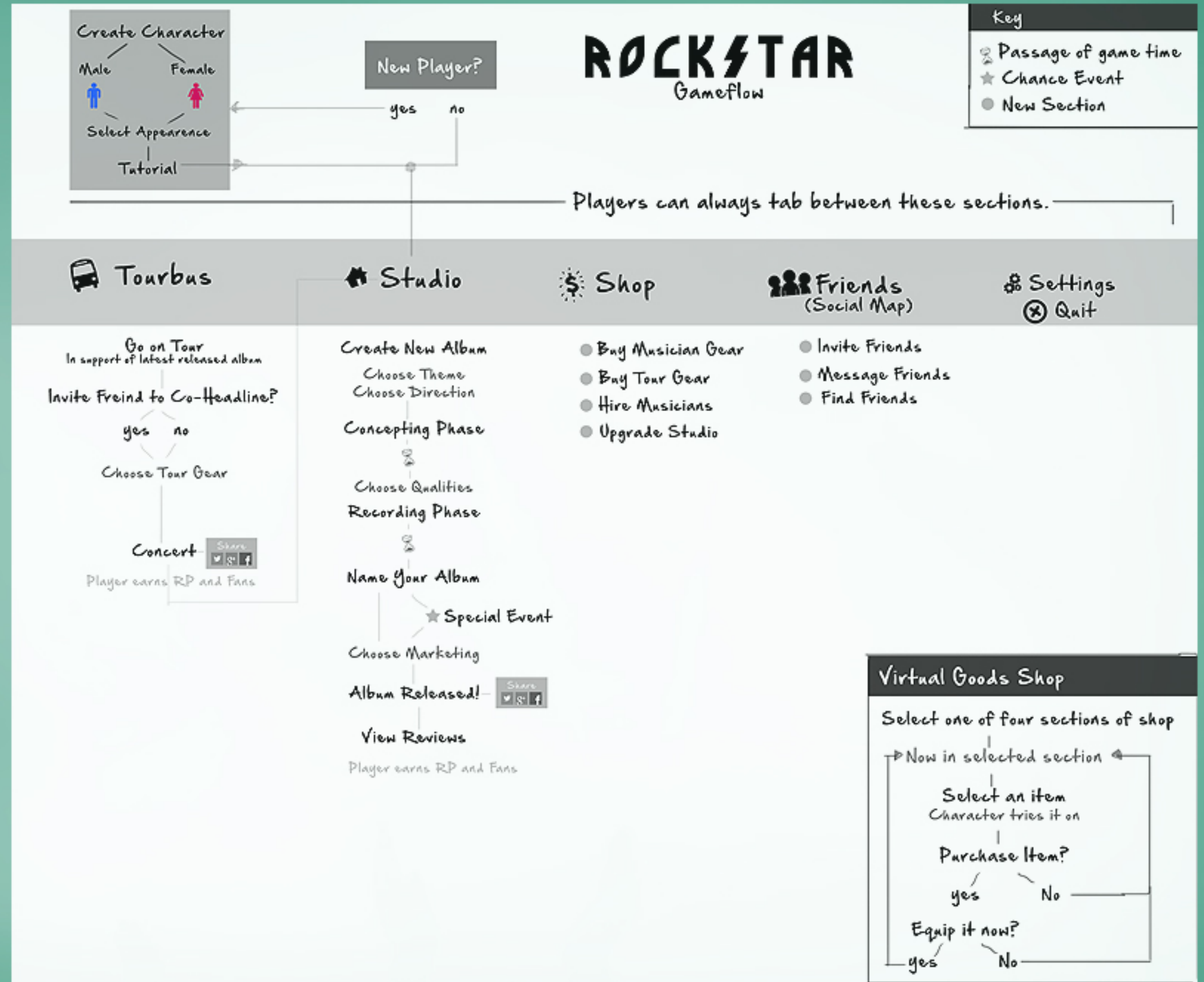
SampleGoals

Reach 50,000 fans
Go on a co-headlining tour
Release an album with two guitarists and a violinist
Film 3 Music Videos

GAMEFLOW

Here is the basic game-flow.

I've included a high res image of this chart with this presentation.

ROCKSTAR
Gameflow

New Player?   yes   no

Create Character
Male   Female
Select Appearance
Tutorial

Players can always tab between these sections.

🚌 Tourbus

Go on Tour
In support of latest released album

Invite Freind to Co-Headline?
yes   no

Choose Tour Gear

Concert   Share
Player earns RP and Fans

🏠 Studio

Create New Album
Choose Theme
Choose Direction

Concepting Phase

Choose Qualities
Recording Phase

Name Your Album

★ Special Event

Choose Marketing

Album Released!   Share

View Reviews
Player earns RP and Fans

💲 Shop

- ● Buy Musician Gear
- ● Buy Tour Gear
- ● Hire Musicians
- ● Upgrade Studio

👥 Friends
(Social Map)

- ● Invite Friends
- ● Message Friends
- ● Find Friends

⚙ Settings
⊗ Quit

Virtual Goods Shop

Select one of four sections of shop

▷ Now in selected section ◁

Select an item
Character tries it on

Purchase Item?
yes   No

Equip it now?
yes   No

MONETIZATION

$1 USD = 160 Gold

The game makes most of its profits through in app purchases of virtual goods, both non-consumables and consumables.

This game uses a dual currency system. The first currency is RP (Rock Points). These are given to the player throughout the course of play. The second currency is G (Gold). Gold can only be obtained by exchanging real money in specific quantities.

Most of the items priced in RP will also be available to buy with Gold. The coolest items will be sold only in exchange for Gold.

All game purchases are made in the shop section. This section will be easily accessible at all times. Featured items will show up in the player's studio.

In addition to Gold spending, the game will also have real estate set aside for Ad banners and cross game promotion. Because of the theme of the game, it has an incredeble potential for tie ins with real brands.

Please view the included Rockstar-monetization document and sample spread sheet for more details.

Projected Gold Spending

70%   non-consumable
20%   shortcut spending
10%   consumable items

Gold gets...

★ Gear
★ Clothes
★ Consumables
★ Studio Upgrades
★ Touring Equipment
★ Hire Musicians

First 3 Months

The game should launch with enough content to keep avid players interested for 3 months.

After 3 Months

By 3 months out the game should receive regular updates that add interesting content. This game lends itself well to music genre themed expansion packs.

After 6 Months

By the 6th month mark we should introduce a new twist to the machanics. One that adds some additional depth to the game.

The flow of content updates should continue as long as the game is supported.

Country Music Update:

Includes themed clothing (cowboy hats!)
New instrument – Acoustic Guitars
New Musicians with new instrument skills
New Themes
New Qualities

Co-Headlining Tour

Every time the player goes on tour they will be prompted to Co-Headline the tour with a friend.

Going on tour with a friend's band increases the RP and XP earned. It also exposes the different groups of fans to each other. Two players that are touring with well matched albums will gain huge amounts of fans by cooperating.

Friends (Social Map)

At any point during play players will be able to go to their Friends section. Here players can see how they are doing in relation to their friends. This is also where most friend related actions occur, such as invititations, messaging, and finding other players.

Players will be able to compare different stats like number of fans and total Rock Points earned.

Social Networks

The game will organically present options to post to social networks at various milestones. You will also be able to invite your friends at any point and discover new friends in app. There will also be an area to access from the main menu that allows players to find other players.

Posts clicked on from a social network will reward both parties with consumable items.

Weekly Album Challenge

Players will be presented with a weekly challenge to produce a unique album. They will be asked to create an album with a particular theme and quality. All users that create this album this week will be put on a leader board that is sorted by album sales.

All players that complete this challenge will unlock unique content that they can only unlock by completing the weekly challenge.

After a week the leaderboard is wiped and a new challenge is put up. This gives any player the oppurtunity to be on the leaderboards for a week.

The limited time content keeps players coming back weekly.

MOCKUP

This mockup shows the player's band on tour. The player can interact by deploying pyrotechnics. This will increase the mood of the audience.

Pyrotechnics are replenishable by the real money currency Gold.

There is an empty banner at the top to either feature ads or other titles.

Cross Promotional banner

Smoke   Flame   Mood

x2   x7

THE END

Thanks for viewing this sample document.

-Chris Crawford