FARM Away!

Futureplay

Case study

Introducing... Futureplay

"Our success wouldn't have been possible without Unity's great tools. Unity Ads brings something extra – something that creates a good feeling for the player, benefits the advertiser, and most importantly, increases our average revenue per daily active user (ARPDAU)."

JAMI LAES
Co-Founder and CEO, Futureplay

Founded in 2015, Futureplay's rise to success serves as a reminder of just how fast the mobile games industry can move. Of course, with a team collectively bringing over 60 years of experience from studios like EA, Rovio and Remedy to the table, Futureplay are anything but newcomers in their field. Nonetheless, forming a studio and developing, releasing and updating a successful game in under a year is an impressive feat. The game is "Farm Away!", a widely accessible mobile release that sees players tend to crops and livestock. It's also a creation that has thrived since the day it was launched, and helped a studio in relative infancy begin their journey with a robust revenue stream. Farm Away is Made With Unity, and it uses the Unity Ads platform to monetize players without asking them to pay a penny; something core to the values of its creators. "Unity Ads fuels our game by helping drive $0.15 average revenue per player per day in the US market," reveals Mika Rahko, Co-Founder and Head of Development, pointing to a notably successful implementation of the studio's preferred monetization model.

The challenge

Of course, building a studio and a popular game in such a short time frame wasn't without significant challenges, but the Futureplay team had much experience at its disposal. And just how quickly Rahko and his colleagues have moved is quite remarkable. "When we started creating Farm Away in May 2015, we went from concept to launch in a rapid five months," he confirms. Unity may be famed for its ability to enable lightning fast games development, but even so, Futureplay's pace stands out. Without building a solid monetization strategy, the investment of effort, time, and talent could go to waste - regardless of the speed or quality of your team's work.

Futureplay needed a business model that could be built into their debut release's gameplay from day one and guarantee results after a blazingly fast development process. The team were keenly aware that players could move between games at an even faster rate. "Our success depended on a monetization strategy that doesn't scare away players, and we knew from day one that we wanted ads to power our view-to-play model to achieve optimal adoption," confirms Rahko.

The solution

Clearly, though, the challenge facing Futureplay was not insurmountable, in part because the engine they were using could also serve as their monetization platform. "Having made the game in the Unity engine, it made perfect sense to reach out to Unity Ads for their native integration as the first ad network in the game," offers Rahko. That meant that as Futureplay set about shaping their game and building support for rewarded video ads as a monetization solution, they could do so in one and the same tool; particularly significant when getting the most from rewarded ads means designing them into the very heart of a game.
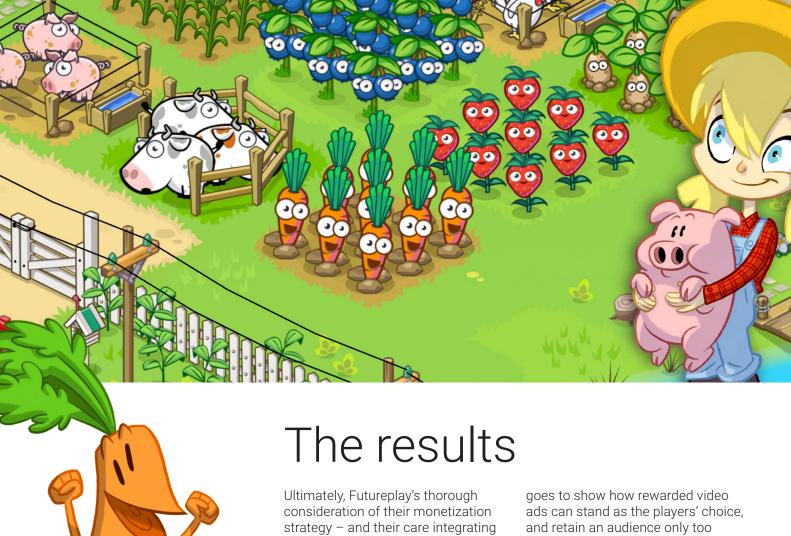
Exactly how Futureplay approached integrating ads into the pleasure of playing Farm Away is particularly enlightening. "Our secret to success is focusing on creating a monetization method that has positive reinforcement," suggests Jami Laes, Co-Founder and CEO. "We give our players a choice when they want to watch video ads, stirring engagement." For example, players choose to watch video ads by clicking a cloud that rains so they can harvest crops with double profits for four hours. Or, through simply clicking the sun and watching their points double from the over abundance of sunshine. "We avoid triggering ads when a player has run out of energy, needs a lifeline, or just outright failed. Instead, we firmly believe in creating a positive experience at all times that creates a good feeling for the player, which separates us from our competition."

It's a fascinating, thoughtful approach, and one that many developers could be wise to consider. Pairing rewarded video ads solely with positive experiences is a simple mantra that may serve many games looking to enjoy similar revenues to those seen at Futureplay.

The results

Ultimately, Futureplay's thorough consideration of their monetization strategy – and their care integrating it into Farm Away's gameplay – got the studio very definite results. "Even though we lose half our players after day one, since everything is player initiated from the get-go we're seeing a daily ad conversion of 80% – meaning players are really watching," enthuses Laes. "Even more amazing is that we're seeing an average of 22 ads watched per install," Rahko adds. "And this engagement is sending our revenue through the roof – driving $0.15 average revenue per player per day in the US market."

Additionally, Futureplay has seen Unity Ads bolster Farm Away's retention, which feeds directly back into those revenues. To further the studio's commitment to providing a positive experience for the players, the team has set a cap to prevent users from being overburdened with ad content. But those caps left some players crying out for more ads, which goes to show how rewarded video ads can stand as the players' choice, and retain an audience only too happy to consume rewarded content. "When control caps are reached, we're getting tons of player feedback that they want to reap even more profit from crops by watching rewarded video ads," explains Laes. "So we've had to adjust these cap limits a bit to appease consumer demand."

Put simply, Unity Ads' role in Farm Away has been significant, and of benefit to both the players and the studio, proving that the right monetization strategy really can provide a win-win situation. "We're overly impressed with the time to market, and our success wouldn't have been possible without Unity's great tools," Laes concludes. "Unity Ads brings something extra – something that creates a good feeling to the player, benefits the advertiser, and most importantly, increases our average revenue per daily active user (ARPDAU)."

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About Unity Technologies
Unity Technologies is the creator of Unity, a flexible and high-performance end-to-end development platform used to create rich interactive 3D and 2D experiences. Unity's powerful graphics engine and full-featured editor serve as the foundation to develop beautiful games or apps and easily bring them to multiple platforms: mobile devices, home entertainment systems, personal computers, and embedded systems. Unity also offers solutions and services for creating games, boosting productivity, and connecting with audiences including the Unity Asset Store, Unity Cloud Build, Unity Game Performance Reporting, Unity Analytics, Unity Ads, and Unity Everyplay. Unity Technologies serves over 1 million monthly active developers including large publishers, indie studios, students and hobbyists around the globe. For more information, visit: **http://unity3d.com/ads**.