

How to sell more games

Entertainment retailers have key lessons to be learnt if they want to maximise in-store sales, says **Daniel Todaro**, managing director of field marketing specialist Gekko. So take note...

[RETAIL: THE STATE WE'RE IN]



WE'VE surveyed the effectiveness of a number of High Street retailers and found that the true gaming specialists are exceptionally good at doing what they do – the likes of GAME and Gamestation know what they need to be doing and have a very loyal customer base.

you are getting around the same level of information and choice, but there is no recommendation. So from a gamer's perspective, would you buy in that store? I doubt it. In the non-specialist type of stores, it's often parents buying for their kids, and again, they need to get decent advice on whether a game is the right format, suitable for the child and the right version – it is a complete minefield. For a lot of the non-specialists it appears to be a rather formulaic approach. They look at the top ten titles and stock those, but you can get those in pretty much any supermarket, too.

There's a great deal of confusion out there for the non-gamer – I wouldn't know what to buy my daughter and currently you wouldn't get that advice from anywhere else but a specialist.

What are the likes of Virgin and HMV going to do to address the fact that games are getting bigger than

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Those kind of retailers get customers who go in every Saturday or at least once a month to get advice, recommendations and so on.

On the other side of the coin, if you go to an HMV or to your local Tesco

music – are they going to be moving games from the back of the store to replace music? Everyone's in a battle to survive and gaming is one of the ways to do that. The competition is going to get very fierce.



THE FIVE POINT PLAN

There are two distinct types of consumer, the non-gamer – such as parents – and the gamers themselves. Both need to be targeted separately by gaming manufacturers to achieve maximum exposure and sales opportunity.

MERCHANDISING

Consumers might have an idea of what games consoles or games they want, but at the same time they need to know what is available to them.

Displays should highlight the most popular products (with reviews/explanations). Most purchases do not occur on impulse, they are driven by first day release, availability and the must-have game. Targeting and driving impulse purchases through should be done through genuinely effective promotional displays.

STAFF TRAINING

Customers need reassurance that they are buying the right product, so a confident, knowledgeable staff member is an invaluable resource.

Each staff member will have varying knowledge and experience. It is imperative to identify these individual strengths and assign appropriate staff to a specific skill areas.

Recommendations of a game or console can be paramount in helping new gamers, or parents of gamers, make a choice.

DEMONSTRATIONS

Console demonstrations illustrate technological advances in gaming and make a lasting impression on the consumer. Without demonstrations a non-gamer may not understand that a console can serve to operate various media entertainment.

BRAND AWARENESS

With the tremendous introduction rate of new consoles and games retailers must clearly identify each brand's attributes/differences to guarantee consumer trust.

GAME INFORMATION AND 'SILENT SALESMAN TOOLS'

Consumers often want to research products by themselves but with such a vast selection on offer it can become an overwhelming process, especially for new gaming consumers. Information, guides and clear advice must be on display as it ultimately strengthens the sales process.