

EAT, SLEEP, GAME, REPEAT

THE WE ARE SOCIAL
GAMEFLUENCER REPORT

we
are
social

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BEFORE WE BEGIN

INTRODUCTION



MORE THAN JUST



IMAGE: CD PROJEKT RED

It fills whole football stadiums. Draws millions of fans across the world. Attracts million-dollar sponsorships from brands like Mastercard and BMW. And today, it lives at the intersection of modern culture, influencing everything from music to movies to fashion.

Nope, it's not sports. It's gaming. And together with esports, gaming dwarfs many actual sports in terms of viewership and revenue. Gaming has also far surpassed both movies and music combined to become the biggest form of media in the world.

(World Economic Forum, 2020)

THE GLOBAL VIDEO GAMING INDUSTRY TOOK IN AN ESTIMATED US\$180 BILLION IN 2020 – MORE THAN SPORTS AND MOVIES WORLDWIDE. GAMES LIKE CYBERPUNK 2077 COST US\$317 MILLION TO PRODUCE, SIMILAR TO HOLLYWOOD BLOCKBUSTER BUDGETS.

THE GUARDIAN, 2021

In 2021, the global gaming market was valued at US\$198 billion, with APAC holding the highest market share. (Modor Intelligence, 2022)

AVATAR, THE HIGHEST-GROSSING MOVIE OF ALL TIME AT THE BOX OFFICE, TOOK US\$237 MILLION TO MAKE AND RAKED IN US\$2.8 BILLION.

MEANWHILE, GRAND THEFT AUTO V COST US\$265 MILLION AND MADE US\$6.4 BILLION

PRESTIGE, 2022
SCREEN RANT, 2021
& TWEAKTOWN, 2022

FUN AND GAMES



THE RISE OF GAMING AS A CULTURAL POWERHOUSE

UNDERSTANDING GAMES,
GAMERS AND GAMEFLUENCERS

Just 10, 15 years ago, games were the exclusive domain of the 'nerd', the awkward wallflower, the social pariah. Stereotyped as a lone activity participated within geek subculture, gaming tended to conjure up images of a scrawny, pale-faced, sexually-inexperienced celibate who plays games because of his lacklustre eligibility and appeal.

But fast forward just a decade, and everything's changed.

Games have become an integral part of pop culture, with its tendrils in everything from music to TV shows and movies, like Disney's Free Guy and Scott Pilgrim vs the World. (Screen Rant, 2021)
And gamers, by extension, are now the kids you wanna be. (The Next Web, 2018)

SO WHAT'S BEHIND THIS CULTURAL UPHEAVAL?

HOW DID A BASEMENT PASTIME TAKE OVER PRIME TIME?

HOW DID GAMING BECOME MORE INFLUENTIAL THAN HOLLYWOOD?

To answer these questions, we looked at the incredible growth of Gaming, the transformation of Gamers and the ascendance of Gamefluencers.





NEW CULTURAL FRONTIERS CALL FOR NEW CULTURAL ICONS.

Personalities with followers in the millions and engagement levels marketers can only dream of. Supercharged by 24/7 video game streaming services, chat rooms and tightly knit communities, the followers are so much more than just spectators; they're active participants.

COMMUNITY. CO-CREATION. CO-EXISTENCE.

They're the driving forces behind the rise, power and reach of gamefluencers worldwide.

With this billion-dollar industry growing at lightspeed, brands should not be caught playing catch up. And that's why we created this report.

WHO ON EARTH ARE GAMEFLUENCERS?

**GAMEFLUENCERS.
WHERE DID THEY COME
FROM? WHO ARE THEY?
AND WHAT DOES THEIR
RISE TO POWER MEAN
FOR BRANDS TODAY?**

**READY?
START.**



METHODOLOGY





PABLO DRAG QUEEN
Oceania



MEZAME
Southeast Asia



JANELLEYACE
Southeast Asia



MIKAFABS
Southeast Asia



HELM
South Asia



VIRKAYU
EU



AMBUSH
EU



RAWZU
EU



TOUCHPAD WARRIOR
North America

HOW WE PREPARED THIS REPORT

OUR METHODOLOGY

To get inside the headspace of the modern day gamefluencer, we mined and structured our insights through three lenses - Culture, Community and Conclusions.

1

CULTURE

Uncovering how pervasive and influential gaming has become in modern culture led us to dig around the WWW, streaming sites and social media platforms.

Everything from trending Google searches, memes and viral videos informed our findings.

3

CONCLUSIONS

From our findings, we identified the core lessons and common themes brands need to be most aware of as they seek to explore the potential of activating the gaming space.

2

COMMUNITY

We spoke to nine gamefluencers in five regions (Oceania, Southeast Asia, South Asia, North America and Europe) who shared their journeys, challenges and dreams with us.

In deep-dive interviews, they gave us a private look into who they are, how they got there and where they see the industry headed.

SECTION 1

**IT'S A GAMER'S WORLD,
WE'RE ALL JUST PLAYING IN IT**

HOW POP CULTURE HAS PROPELLED GAMERS INTO PRIME TIME

What happens in the video game universe rarely stays there anymore. Gaming is so intertwined with pop culture that it's now being called "the world's favourite form of entertainment".

(Reuters, 2018)

And we're just starting to appreciate gaming's influence in music, film, fashion, arts, and beyond.



1990s

GAMING HAS CONQUERED THE BIG SCREEN

Ever since Super Mario Bros. burst into cinemas in 1993, games have been fertile ground for movie adaptations and are regarded as part of American popular culture.

(ResearchGate, 2018)

Uncharted, one of PlayStation’s most acclaimed video game franchises, became a 2022 blockbuster, starring Tom Holland and Mark Wahlberg. (CinemaBlend, 2022)

The Witcher on Netflix, an adaptation of CD Projekt Red’s video game of the same name, garnered 541 million hours of views in the first month of its release. (The Drum, 2022)



IMAGE: PRESSSTARTONCE



IMAGE: PLAYERTHEORY

2010S



IMAGE: ESPN

GAMING AND SPORTS: THE COMPETITION'S HEATING UP

Gone are the days when gamers and athletes were seen as polar opposites. Gruelling training schedules, college scholarships on offer, big brand sponsorships, mob-like fans and lucrative prize pools in the millions are blurring the line separating the two day by day. (Chicago Tribune, 2016)

But in two important areas, gaming is quickly pulling ahead of traditional sports - viewership and revenue.

Ninja, Fortnite streamer and pro player with over 18 million followers on Twitch, was the first gamer ever featured on the cover of ESPN Magazine in 2018, proving that pro gaming has truly entered the mainstream consciousness. (AFK Gaming, 2022)

Global gaming revenue grew 20% to US\$179 billion in 2020, far eclipsing North American sports' US\$75 billion. (MarketWatch, 2021)

CELEBRITY GAMERS ARE SCORING BIG

They're reading scripts one moment and picking a controller up the next. Celebrities who game, like Mila Kunis and Henry Cavill, are drawing in fans from both fields - and proving that "gamer" and "unpopular" don't have to go together.

On Twitch, Snoop Dogg smokes blunts and streams Madden to over 700,000 followers on his Twitch channel Doggydogg20. He's even joined an esports organisation, FaZe Clan's board of directors and content creators.

IMAGE: SNOOP DOGG



2020s

IT ISN'T AN AFTERTHOUGHT – IT'S THE MAIN COURSE

More and more artistes see games as the only place with the freedom to show off optimal creativity and personality.

Ariana Grande materialised in Fortnite for the MMO's glittery three-day concert, Rift Tour, in 2021. Players could even buy her skin so they could play as her in-game. (The Verge, 2021)

The previous year, Travis Scott collaborated with Fortnite to turn an entire island into a psychedelic stage. Over 27.7 million players turned up for the "Astronomical" Live Event. (Polygon, 2020)



IMAGE: BANDWAGON

LUXURY FASHION LABELS ARE STEPPING UP THEIR GAME

Just like gaming, fashion offers an escape from drab reality. (Vogue, 2021) No wonder then that some of fashion's most envelope-pushing collaborations have come from the world of gaming.

Balenciaga created a VR world called "Afterworld: The Age of Tomorrow" to let fans deep dive into their Fall 2021 collection. (HYPEBEAST, 2020)

In Gucci Arcade, players immerse themselves in vintage gaming worlds bedecked in Gucci House prints, motifs and codes.



IMAGE: GUCCI

ALL THE WEB'S A STAGE

IF YOU STREAM IT, THEY WILL COME.

Most gamefluencers owe their initial success to the emergence of new performative community-driven platforms: Twitch, Discord, as well as our old friend YouTube.

And it's no coincidence that their streams are designed for one thing: maximum engagement among a niche community. (#paid, 2022)

For gamefluencers just starting out, live streaming as they game while chatting with viewers gives them the chance to build their brand and fanbase any time, all the time.

TWITCH, THE NUMBER 1 PLATFORM FOR GAMEFLUENCERS, GREW ITS VIEWERSHIP BY 45% TO OVER 24 BILLION HOURS WATCHED IN 2021.

VOUGOV, 2021

"What sets Twitch apart from other streaming services is its sheer scale, with the synchronised chat feature receiving more comments than any other platforms."

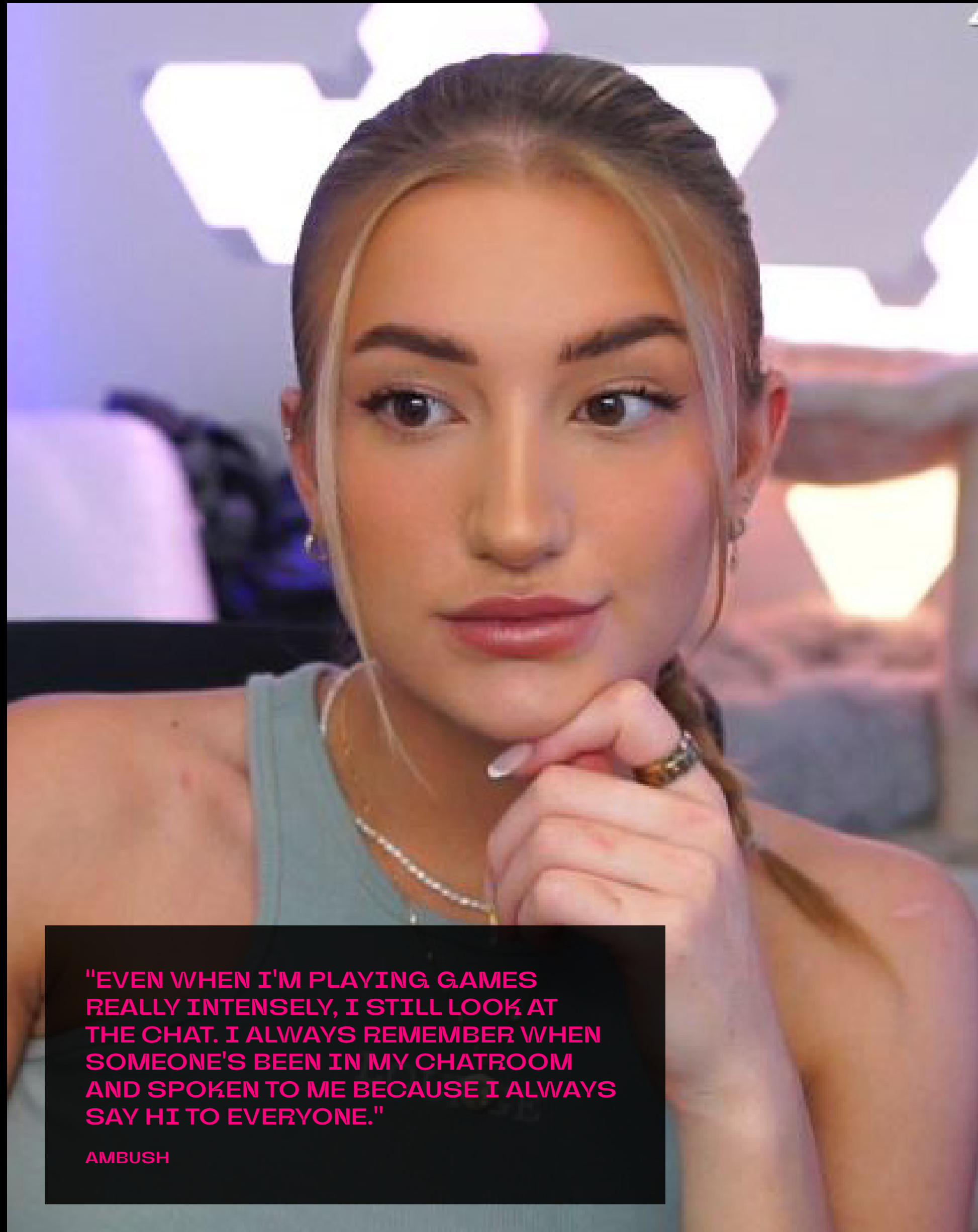
(Put Your "Hand Emotes in the Air:" Twitch Concerts as Unsuccessful Large-Scale Interaction Rituals, 2022)

DISCORD HAD A JUMP OF OVER 100 MILLION MONTHLY ACTIVE USERS (MAU) DURING THE PANDEMIC, REACHING AN ALL-TIME HIGH OF 10.6 MILLION CONCURRENT USERS IN 2020.

BUSINESS OF APPS, 2022

Gamefluencers then slowly branch out to the usual suspects of Instagram and Twitter. But their bread and butter remains live streaming, because that's where they can interact with their followers in real time and create authentic, organic relationships.





"EVEN WHEN I'M PLAYING GAMES REALLY INTENSELY, I STILL LOOK AT THE CHAT. I ALWAYS REMEMBER WHEN SOMEONE'S BEEN IN MY CHATROOM AND SPOKEN TO ME BECAUSE I ALWAYS SAY HI TO EVERYONE."

AMBUSH

EYES GLUED TO THE GAME.

Gamefluencers' communities are committed, loyal, and supportive. They're the textbook definition of a captive audience - eyeballs glued to the screen and actively engaged for hours on end. In fact, the engagement rate of some gamefluencers is as high as 30%. (Tagger, 2022)

1 IN 10 CONSUMERS WORLDWIDE FOLLOW GAMEFLUENCERS. IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC, GAMEFLUENCERS ARE THE MOST POPULAR ONLINE PERSONALITY.

YUUGOV, 2021

To explain these astronomical figures - especially as compared to those of other influencers - you only have to look at how gamefluencer platforms have been designed. Apart from the ever-present chatroom, features like Twitch Extensions, Twitch Bits and Twitch Plays are just a few ways the platform offers innovative ways for streamers to monetise, maximise and maintain viewership.

(VentureBeat, 2022)

"Twitch and its effects on the traditional Para-Social Relationship (PSR) model: The psycho-emotional factors that have created this unique relational dynamic between gamefluencer (persona) and their viewers ... include (i) Reciprocal Interaction, (ii) Community Affiliation and (iii) Fandom."

(The one-and-a-half sided parasocial relationship: The curious case of live streaming, 2021)

SECTION 2

GET FAMILIAR WITH
GAMEFLUENCERS



PUTTING A FACE TO THE GAME-R

WHO ARE GAMEFLUENCERS?
HOW ARE THEY SHAPING CULTURE?
AND WHY CAN'T THEY BE IGNORED?

With the boom in gaming over the past few years - fuelled in no small part by pandemic-era restrictions - there are now as many types of gamefluencer personas as there are games.

What unites them? What makes each stand apart? To get inside the headspace of these personas, we talked to various gamefluencers around the world. Not just digging into what types of games they play and why, but also diving deeper into their relationships with their followers. Knowing the kinds of followers they have, what they care about, and unpacking how gamefluencers create lasting bonds with their communities.

INTRODUCING.... THE FOUR GAMEFLUENCER ARCHETYPES

SPECIALISTS, CRITICS, SUPERFANS AND ENTERTAINERS

Based on the current gamefluencer landscape and data from our interviews at hand, we then mapped the rich and diverse tapestry of streamers across two axes:

(1) Their level of expertise (whether they're pro gamers or casual players) and

(2) Their interest in gaming genres and degree of specialisation (whether they usually play just one game or a number):

What emerged from each quadrant were four unique gamefluencer archetypes that we're calling:



1 SPECIALISTS

Gamefluencers who are highly skilled in a specific game or genre. Many are esports stars and globally-renowned experts in their fields, drawing in a large crowd - a great opportunity for brands looking for a wide reach.

WHO HAVE WE INTERVIEWED?



WHY ARE THEY A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH?

i. The Crowd Experience

Their pro-level skills at a game mean that the livestream experience offers a highly immersive, high-stakes experience for viewers of Specialists. This heightened collective engagement also typically branches out to other experiences beyond gaming.

ii. The Perfect Play

Watching their gaming idols at the top of their game is a rewarding experience, much like following a pro football game, keeping viewers firmly at the edge of their seats.

iii. Tips, Tricks and Shortcuts

Specialists are known for their mastery of a particular game. Viewers follow them for their unique personal strategies and often ask for advice on coming out on top.

2 CRITICS

Gamefluencers with incredible industry expertise and general gaming knowledge. Audiences trust these gamefluencers for their industry command and look to them for the latest gaming-related recommendations. Brands can boost their credibility through partnerships with Critics.



MIKAFABS

i. Industry Knowledge

Critics have clocked plenty of hours under their gaming belts. They're the pros viewers turn to for reliable advice and feedback on the video game world - what new games are on the horizon, what developers are working on and the latest industry gossip.

ii. Discovery

Critics are a great source for newbies to get a handle on the large and fast-paced world of gaming. They offer a fun and friendly way to discover new games, new communities and new playstyles.

iii. Two-way Relationships

The relationships critics have with their followers are mutually beneficial - critics give viewers a glimpse into the inner workings of the gaming industry, while viewers provide feedback and help boost their clout.

3 SUPERFANS

Gamefluencers who are known for their deep love of a specific game or genre. Often amateur gamers, these gamefluencers are relatable and enthusiastic. Brands that partner with Superfans can leverage their enthusiasm to get the audience excited about their brands' offerings.

WHO HAVE WE INTERVIEWED?



JANELLEYACE



TOUCHPADWARRIOR

WHY ARE THEY A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH?

i. Shared Fandom

As amateur gamers, Superfans are a relatable and enthusiastic portal to a diverse range of gaming experiences, sharing personal insights and fostering open communities.

ii. 24/7 Sociality

Streamers and viewers may best be described as “playing alone together,” but the bonds they form are real. Their shared experiences and interests are cemented by the hours spent playing and chatting together.

iii. A Guiding Hand

As gamers who have tunnelled deep into a specific game or genre, viewers turn to these streamers as expert guides, who know the ins and outs of the game.

4 ENTERTAINERS

Gamefluencers with big personalities, and who play a wide range of games. They draw in audiences with their relatable and entertaining personalities. Viewed as their friends, audiences trust their opinions - an opportunity that brands can tap on.



PABLODRAGQUEEN



MEZAME

i. Parasocial Fandom

Beyond simply being good at a game, Entertainers are equipped with larger-than-life personalities that draw audiences in with their humour.

ii. Ambient Sociality

Streamers and viewers engage in this casual form of social bonding, which creates a kind of cordial and communal expansiveness in their lives – a feeling of inclusion in a community or scene, and provides access to others even though you may not be physically present in the same room.

iii. Wide-ranging Entertainment

Entertainers appeal to players whose interests lie outside of a specific game or genre. So rather than eventually becoming bored watching the same game all the time, the Entertainer offers a diverse array of experiences to keep audiences enthralled and engaged.

SECTION 3

LEVEL UP WITH
GAMEFLUENCERS

**GAMEFLUENCERS
ARE A LEVEL UP FROM
OTHER INFLUENCERS**

Although gamefluencers are still a fairly new type of influencer and may not have the kind of traction that travel and fashion influencers have, they rise above in one important aspect - engagement.

These gaming personalities command an enviable influence over their followers. Their communities are often supportive, deeply engaged and loyal - the result of a combination of on-demand availability and heightened two-way interaction, thanks to the advent of streaming sites.

UNCOVERING GAMEFLUENCERS' TRIO OF ICONIC SUPERPOWERS

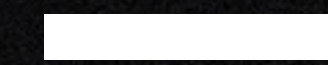
SUMMARISING THE
GAMEFLUENCER DIFFERENCE

Gamefluencers wield far greater clout over their audiences than traditional influencers.

(Influencer MarketingHub, 2021)

And it's all due to their powers of

CONNECTION



HUMOUR



REPRESENTATION



THE POWER OF DEEP CONNECTION

The first thing that makes gamefluencers such a breed apart from other influencers is the unique way they use their streaming platforms. Twitch, YouTube, Discord - these open a window into the personal lives of gamefluencers that other platforms and other types of influencers just can't match.

Instead of a highly curated - and edited - slice of life on Instagram, gamefluencer followers can connect to one another in a direct, unfiltered and spontaneous way.

"A livestreamer might not respond directly to every viewer's comment or remember all of the interactions, but the opportunity for reciprocity is omnipresent. This creates social opportunities to both witness and directly experience reciprocal communication with the media personality ... Engaging with one's audience fosters a sense of closeness and connection between viewer and performer and has been found to be an effective tool for cultivating a following and demonstrating one's "realness" to their audience."

(The one-and-a-half sided parasocial relationship: The curious case of live streaming, 2021)

64%

of gamers say they value video games because they make them feel less lonely, and that it helps them connect with other people.
(StudyFinds, 2022)

The sheer amount of time followers spend watching and chatting with gamefluencers only further strengthens this power of connection.

"MY FOLLOWERS OFTEN TELL ME: 'I ALWAYS RETURN TO YOUR STREAM BECAUSE YOU READ MY COMMENTS AND YOU ALWAYS REPLY.' BECAUSE I DON'T JUST SAY HI AND GO BACK TO MY GAME. I WANT TO KNOW WHO MY FOLLOWERS ARE AND HOW THEY'RE DOING TODAY. I'M INTERESTED IN THEIR LIVES."

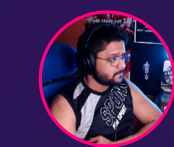


PABLO DRAG QUEEN

Over time, a rapport is established, friendships are built - and curiosity and interest about a gamefluencer then naturally extend into other areas of their lives beyond gaming.

Connection. Chemistry. Continuation. Together, these result in unparalleled intimacy between gamefluencers and their followers. And the stronger the connection between them, the more likely that followers will find the content created by gamefluencers enjoyable.

"SHARING PERSONAL THINGS ALWAYS GETS ME THE MOST ENGAGEMENT."



HELM



THE POWER OF HUMOUR

In the entertainment world, laughter is king. Just look at the longevity and the millions of followers of Saturday Night Live (with over 900 episodes), a talk show like The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon (which has garnered 11 Emmy nominations and 2 awards) or [Ryan Higa's](#) online comedy skits (with more than 21 million YouTube subscribers).

And there's no exception when it comes to social media and brand interactions - 91% of people prefer brands to be funny, while 72% pick brands that use humour over the competition. (PR Newswire, 2022) So it's no surprise that gamefluencers who are at the top of their game are consistently funny, irreverent or just plain wacky.

(Humour and Comedy in Digital Game Live Streaming, 2022)

When brands use gamefluencers with a wacky and quirky sense of humor, they are not impairing their reputation and conventional brand prestige by associating themselves with that brand of humour. Audiences can appreciate that this is a manner of respecting the gamefluencer's sense of style and giving them free rein.

This power of laughter helps to keep followers engaged and attract whole new ones. But gamefluencers have another ace up their sleeve - inside jokes. These could be references that only other gamers will get, memes or memorable things that happen during the stream. Signalling closeness and camaraderie, shared humour rewards viewers for being part of the in-group.

"I THINK THAT MY VIEWERS ARE DRAWN TO MY CONTENT BECAUSE OF MY GAMING STYLE AND THE JOKES I MAKE."



RAWZU

45%

of Gen Zs in the UK and US want to see more memes and funny content on social media, while 37% want a behind-the-scenes peep at creators' lives. (The Age of Influence, 2021)



THE POWER OF REPRESENTATION

Gaming is a platform where anyone can express their true selves freely. A glance at the effort developers spend on character customisation these days tells you just how critical self-expression is for player motivation and enjoyment. (Free to be me, 2009) Picking your character's gender and physical characteristics, and adorning them with customisable skins and limited edition accessories all give gamers the freedom to represent who they really are or to explore alternative identities. (Polygon, 2013)

For both gamefluencers and their followers, it opens up worlds where you can be anyone or anything. Gamefluencers who aren't afraid to be themselves while streaming and who advocate for realness and authenticity become role models for their followers. [Stream Queens](#) are an all-drag team of gamefluencers on Twitch who are changing ideas of how a typical gamefluencer should look, sound and behave. (Vogue, 2021)

Through their streams and channels, "alternative" gamefluencers are showcasing diversity, bringing like-minded people together and providing a safe space for their followers to express themselves, get advice and get together in the real world.

"OFF STREAM, WE HAVE A THRIVING DISCORD COMMUNITY WHO MEET ON WEEKENDS FOR THINGS LIKE MOVIE NIGHTS AND MAKEUP COURSES. WE DO THIS A LOT TO MAINTAIN A STRONG COMMUNITY."



PABLO DRAG QUEEN

"I'M VERY PROUD IN THAT I'VE BEEN ABLE TO BRING MORE FEMALES INTO GAMING AND LIVE STREAMING. BECAUSE WE DESERVE TO GAME, TO BE ON THIS PLATFORM TOO AND TO KICK ASS."



AMBUSH

"MOST OF THE TOP STREAMERS ARE STILL SCREAMING STRAIGHT WHITE MEN, BECAUSE THAT'S THE MAIN AUDIENCE, BUT WE'RE CHANGING THAT."

**HASHTAG TRASHLY, MEMBER OF STREAM QUEENS
VOGUE, 2021**

GAMEFLUENCERS – HERE FOR A GOOD TIME & A LONG TIME

CULTURALLY IN-SYNC

Gamefluencers have a handle on what's happening both in and out of their game world, allowing them to authentically connect with their followers. The diversity of gamefluencers, the games they play and the views they hold are also a direct reflection of their adeptness in wading through culturally complicated waters.

“Video games provide players with a ‘safe’ place where they can acquire culture and play with cultural identities in a virtual environment that realistically imitates real life (Zielke et al., 2009). On top of that, video games let players soak in cultural content in an engaging way (Mortara et al., 2014).”

(Intercultural Perspective on Impact of Video Games on Players: Insights from a Systematic Review of Recent Literature, 2019)

SOCIAL WHIZZES

Gamefluencers create engaging and addictive content through shared humour, from in-game antics to real-world shenanigans. What drives their entertainment value is the positive energy that they bring to the chat, as positive vibes beget positive engagement. Fun, joy and positivity are indelible aspects of their sociable personalities.

If streamers are overly negative or rude, viewers are unlikely to form a positive attitude towards them or even support them. Personality traits are different for every streamer, and they must decide what's best for their content and their followers.

(Consumers' attitudes towards personal branding on Twitch.tv and their subsequent purchase intention, 2020)

ALL ABOUT COMMUNITY

Successful gamefluencers spend a lot of time building strong communities around them and creating non-judgmental, inclusive spaces. Their initial passion for gaming is the bedrock of their community, but it often sparks an exploration into other areas of interest, such as fashion, beauty and identity. (Elite Daily, 2020)

Online communities foster strong interpersonal relationships built on a shared interest. A sense of community that forms around a streaming personality reinforces parasocial relationships with the streamer themselves and contributes to its longevity.

(The one-and-a-half sided parasocial relationship: The curious case of live streaming, 2021)

CORE TO WHO THEY ARE

NEXT UP: GAMEFLUENCER CORE VALUES

So far, we've seen that gamefluencers are pros at using their powers of **Connection, Humour and Representation** to maximise engagement with their followers. And to keep their fans loyal, interested and passionate, gamefluencers rely on their **Cultural, Social** and **Community** intelligence.

These unique attributes culminate in three core gamefluencer values that, as we'll see in the following section, set them far above traditional influencers.



IMAGE: MIKAFABS

SECTION 4

**THE VALUES THAT
BIND THEM**



GAMEFLUENCER CORE VALUES

WHAT'S DRIVING GAMEFLUENCERS TO THE PINNACLE OF CULTURE

To anyone outside looking at the Twitch phenomenon, the question that's invariably asked is: "Why would anyone watch someone else play a video game?"

The answer is: gamefluencers. While no two are alike, it all boils down to their individual personas and the unique ways they go about building their communities.

But it's not just about sitting in front of a camera and playing Minecraft - successful gamefluencers leverage the core values that differentiate them from other influencers to stay on top of the game:

INTIMACY

JOY

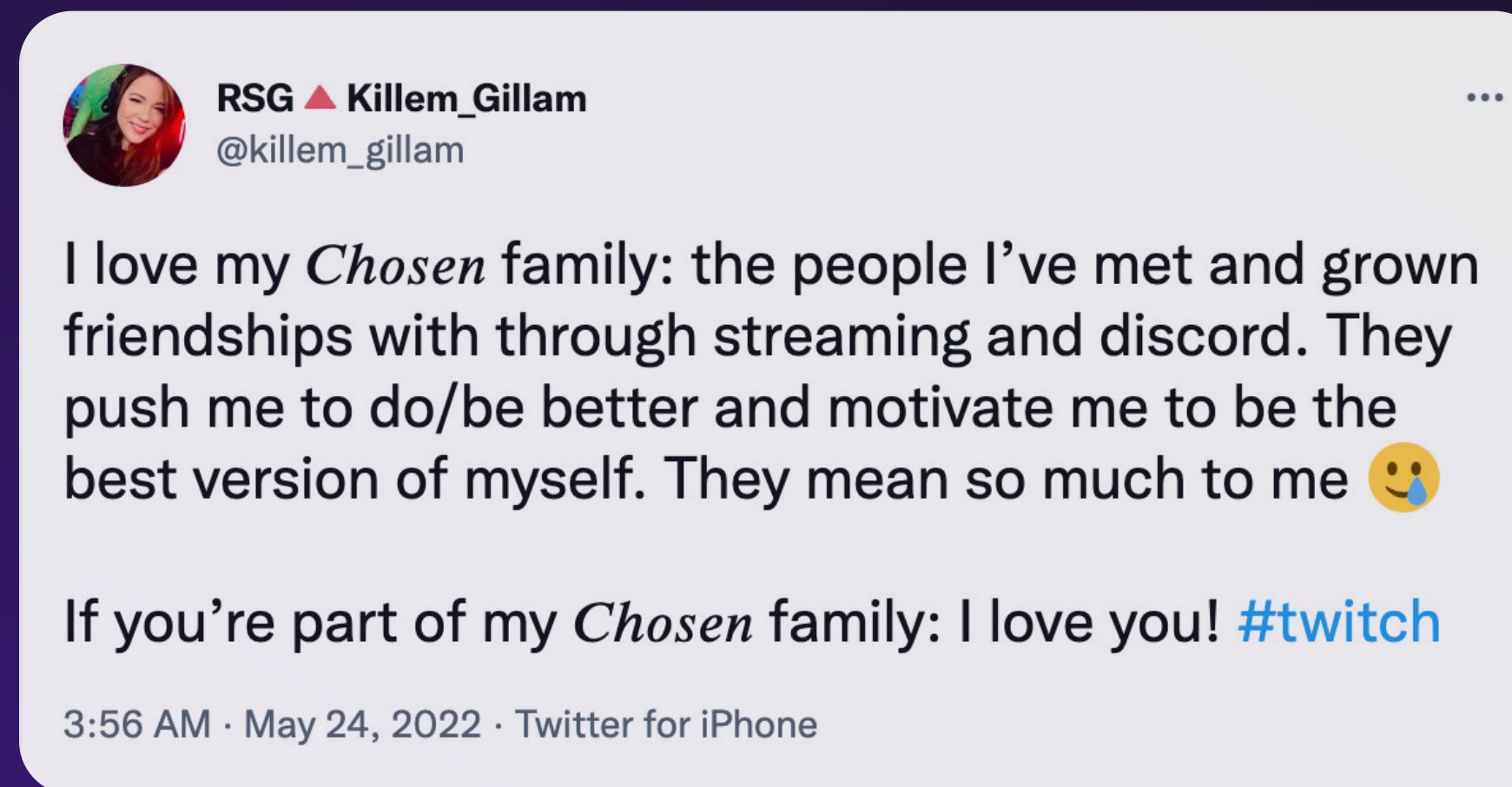
INCLUSION



CORE VALUE 1: INTIMACY

Followers, for gamefluencers, are everything. The close rapport and deep connections they've struck with hundreds, if not millions of people around the world, are core to who they are. And intimacy is the fundamental connector that binds these communities. Intimacy is what builds trust and makes their bonds authentic.

But this level of intimacy is hard won. It's gained through a long, extensive but mutual investment in time and effort. It's built on trust, openness and a shared sense of vulnerability, and cemented by a combination of inside jokes, personality quirks and shared triumphs and losses, both in-game and out.



FRIENDS FIRST, FOLLOWERS SECOND

What happens in the chat is often just as important as what happens in the game. And so gamefluencers often go the extra mile to get to know their followers better. From a quick "hi" to the room to running polls on what to do next in-game to co-streaming with megafans, they know that building bonds with their followers is key to their sustained popularity.

For followers, the fact that their gaming heroes treat them as friends, not just another social media metric, only further strengthens the level of intimacy. And it works - 39% of Twitch viewers think of their favourite streamer as a friend.

(Amazon Ads, 2021)

"I TRY TO MAKE MY STREAM A FRIENDLY SPACE, LIKE 'HEY, HOW'S SO-AND-SO? HOW ARE YOU DOING? HOW'S YOUR KIDS? HOW'S THE DOG?' JUST TALKING, GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER A LITTLE BIT. I TRY TO MAKE SURE TO KNOW AT LEAST A LITTLE BIT ABOUT EVERYBODY."



TOUCHPADWARRIOR

UNITED BY AN IMMERSIVE PASSION

Live streaming is a highly immersive experience that actively involves both gamefluencer and followers. And depending on what's at stake, tensions can run high - Red Bull held a [24-hour long stream](#), pitting college students across the world against each other, with the top teams winning a state-of-the-art gaming hub for their university.

These are often extraordinary experiences shared by complete strangers. Despite that - or rather, because of that - [research has shown](#) these experiences often result in feelings of closeness and stronger relationships between participants.

Add to this the incredible amount of time spent together engaged in the same activity - streamers are often on for four to ten hours a day, and oftentimes longer (SBNation, 2019) - and it's easy to see how these organic interactions result in unique, long-lasting bonds between gamefluencer and follower.

"GAMING ALWAYS GAVE ME A SENSE OF FREEDOM AND ESCAPISM. I STARTED STREAMING JUST SO I COULD CONNECT WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE SIMILAR EXPERIENCES AROUND THE WORLD."



PABLODRAGQUEEN

"I NEVER FELT LIKE I BELONGED IN A GROUP, SO I CREATED MY OWN GROUP OF FRIENDS ON TWITCH. BEING ABLE TO HANG OUT WITH THEM EVERY DAY IS GREAT, AND NOW IT'S MORE THAN JUST A HOBBY."



AMBUSH

THE REAL WORLD HAS ENTERED THE CHAT

Many followers treat gamefluencers like their extended family. As a result, real-world problems can sometimes intrude into the livestream. Relationship issues, problems at the workplace, the loss of a loved one - gamefluencers see their platforms as an opportunity to help others open up and find consolation among like-minded friends, often drawing on their own well of experience to bridge divides. In-game friendships that started out dedicated to just one passion point now have branched out to different parts of life, further illustrating how powerful and intimate these links are within these communities.

"SOME OF THEM REALLY TREAT YOU LIKE FAMILY. I REMEMBER WHEN MY MOM AND I HAD COVID, I WAS GETTING MESSAGES FROM UNKNOWN PEOPLE TO GET WELL SOON. THEY ALSO SUGGESTED ALL THE THINGS WE NEEDED TO DO TO GET BETTER AND HOLD UP."



HELM

71%

of Twitch users say that watching a stream during a difficult period of their lives helped them cope. (Frontiers of Psychology, 2020)



IMAGE: BOARDROOM

59%

of followers trust the brand recommendations and advice given by influencers. But that number is much higher for followers of gamefluencers - 66%. (YouGov, 2021)

HOW BRANDS CAN POWER UP AUTHENTICITY WITH INTIMACY

With intimacy comes trust and reliability. It's an authentic bond that gives weight to what gamefluencers say and credibility to what they do. Followers see gamefluencers not as unapproachable celebrities, but as close friends and trusted confidantes.

This unparalleled level of intimacy gives brands a way to co-create experiences for an audience who's already predisposed to liking and trusting its source. And that's the battle half won.

Their intimacy with their loyal and engaged followers also gives gamefluencers a leg-up in knowing what appeals to them and what doesn't. This is a difficult-to-reach segment of the population - a predominantly male Gen Z cohort of 18 - 24 years of age (YouGov, 2021) - and so brands need to work closely with gamefluencers to uncover what makes them tick.

The key is to find the right match between brand, gamefluencer and target audience that will help unlock a lasting and powerful partnership that benefits everyone.

The Doritos' "[DoritosChip](#)" emote 🍟 is used by Twitch communities to reward each other with food - a fun way to build intimacy. It was used 1,057,000 times between 2 November 2017 and 8 January 2018, becoming Twitch's most-used branded emote.

[Doritos Bowl](#) is a recent (2021) campaign that involved four gaming titans (big names in the field: Swagg, itsHafu, lolTyler1, and iiTzTimmy) leading their teams in four different games. Team effort gameplay fosters trust and intimacy through collaboration and communication while participating in this fun sport.

CORE VALUE 2: JOY

While it's the game that draws followers to a particular gamefluencer at first, it's the gamefluencer's personality that keeps them coming back for more. It's their sense of fun, irreverence and sheer entertainment factor, much more so than simply their skill at the game.

(YouGov, 2021)

Together with streaming services' many collaborative features and incentives built to drive higher and higher engagement levels, it's no wonder followers spend millions of hours joyfully engaged with their favourite gaming personalities.

86%

of UK and US followers say they like the humour of the gamefluencers they follow, while 70% say they like the overall entertainment value.

(YouGov, 2021)



ALL IN ON THE JOKE

What happens in the chat is often just as livestreams are, where like-minded people come together to hit pause on the outside world for a couple of hours. And the glue that holds these communities together is their shared passion - not just for the game, but also for the inside jokes and references that everyone's in on.

"WHEN I PLAY VALORANT, SOMETIMES MY WHOLE BODY MOVES TO DODGE A SHOT. IT MAKES MY FOLLOWERS LAUGH. IT'S WEIRD, BUT IT BRINGS US TOGETHER."



JANELLEYACE

YOU LIVE(STREAM), YOU LEARN

But it's not all just playtime. Livestreams can also be a place to learn and grow. Streamers who are highly skilled are justifiably one of the more popular types of gamefluencer out there, keeping their followers glued to their seats by sharing tips and tricks, and their personal strategies.

Followers, on the other hand, are a valuable source of feedback for gamefluencers. By picking up what appeals to their fans in real time, gamefluencers can change up the game to make their livestreams more fun and engaging over the long run. This two-way reciprocal learning process is a joyful exchange of ideas that keeps gamefluencers on their toes and followers learning and growing.

44%

of UK and US followers like the gaming skills of their favourite gamefluencers.
(YouGov, 2021)

"STREAMING IS EDUCATIONAL AS WELL. WHEN YOU WATCH SOMEONE, YOU WANT TO LEARN FROM THEM. A LOT OF THESE YOUNG KIDS, THEY JUST WANT TO LEARN HOW TO PLAY THE GAME RIGHT. THEY'RE TRYING TO GET BETTER."



RAWZU

"I'M LIKE A SPONGE BECAUSE I'M SO HUNGRY FOR FEEDBACK THAT IF NOBODY GIVES IT TO ME, I PANIC AND I'M LIKE, 'I'M SURE I DID SOMETHING WRONG. OH MY GOD. THEY HATE ME.'"



MIKAFABS

ORGANICALLY LIVING IN THE MOMENT

Joy is also found in the atmosphere created in a livestream. What happens on Twitch and YouTube is largely unrehearsed, spontaneous and unpredictable - whatever you say goes, and whoever you want to be, you can be. This freedom to think on your feet and improvise rewards those who are unafraid to be authentically themselves.

Live streaming is also a fairly new invention. Rules are still being made up as everyone plays, giving participants the freedom to experiment and be joyfully silly without judgement.

"EVERYTHING IS LIVE. WE'RE USED TO IMPROVISING AND TALKING ABOUT WHATEVER POPS INTO OUR MINDS. IT'S JUST 'PRESS START AND GO,' WHICH I LIKE BECAUSE IT'S MORE GENUINE. EVERYTHING IS JUST REAL."



AMBUSH

"RIGHT NOW, NOBODY KNOWS WHAT THEY'RE DOING. IT'S LIKE, EVERYTHING IS UNFOLDING IN REAL-TIME, AND I THINK THIS IS ONE OF THE RARE INDUSTRIES WHERE YOU CAN LEGITIMATELY SAY, 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN IN SIX MONTHS. I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN IN ONE YEAR.'"



MIKAFABS



HOW BRANDS CAN POWER UP CREATIVITY WITH JOY

The core value of joy gives brands the permission to step beyond the norms, the expected, the tried and true. To truly maximise their partnerships with gamefluencers, brands should see livestreamed content the way they do - as a free-for-all playground, where rules are meant to be broken, and nothing is ever taken too seriously, even precious brands themselves.

KFC, together with Twitch streamers DrLupo and Anthony Kongphan, gave followers the chance to win a KFC gift card by trendjacking PlayerUnknown Battlegrounds' catchphrase, "winner winner chicken dinner" - a joyful celebration of a highly popular in-game lingo.

Ninja made his livestream gameplay more exciting through a collaboration with Uber Eats whereby he unlocked discounts and promo codes for his fans and followers by maximizing his number of kills.

Only by trusting gamefluencers to navigate their communities with joy and candour can brands hope to connect with this younger demographic. Brands also should see community quirks, inside humour and passion points as ways to create content that resonates with them.

Pringles embraced the gaming community's love for the weird and inexplicable by creating a zombie mascot called Frank, and bringing him into the bedrooms of Twitch followers everywhere, making it into the top 10 most watched stream globally with over 9.9 million minutes watched in early 2021.

WHAT DO GAMERS WANT FROM BRANDS?

75%

CONTENT THAT'S RELEVANT TO THEIR INTERESTS

70%

INFORMATION ON HOW TO USE THEIR PRODUCTS OR SERVICES

83%

ENTERTAINMENT

(Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022)



CORE VALUE 3: INCLUSION

Gaming is a great leveller. Ever since the dawn of the first arcade machines, what mattered most wasn't your age or gender or how much money you had in your pocket - it was ability.

"...There was no gender or status bias in arcade competition, and the machine didn't care if the player was popular, rich or an outcast. As Herz put it, 'It didn't matter what you drove to the arcade. If you sucked at Asteroids, you just sucked.'" (Herz, 1997, p. 47) "

(A Brief Social History of Game Play, 2005)

At its best, gaming culture gives the marginalised and the outcast a place where they feel they can belong. Games open up spaces - whether it's a livestream or a games convention or even a strip mall arcade centre - where people are free to express themselves. And as the central figure that sets the tone of their channels, gamefluencers play a critical role in fostering this sense of inclusion.



"THERE ARE SO MANY TYPES OF PEOPLE IN MY STREAM. I THINK IT'S REALLY COOL. I HAVE YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND 15. BUT THEN I ALSO KNOW SOME OF MY EVERYDAY VIEWERS THAT ARE AROUND 30 TO 50 YEARS OLD. IT'S SUCH A BIG DIFFERENCE IN AGE, WHICH I THINK IS REALLY FUN."



AMBUSH

DIFFERENT GENRES FOR DIFFERENT TASTES

With over 30 video game genres (such as Educational, Vehicle Simulator, City-Building, Tactical FPS) and counting (GameDesigning, 2022), there's a game for everyone. And with over 8 million active Twitch streamers with over 100,000 streams happening every single day (Streamer's Playbook, 2022), there are communities of all kinds ready to welcome every persuasion.

But it's not just that gamers are spoiled for choice these days. Developers are also getting better at creating games that reflect the diversity around us. Notable recent examples include protagonists of colour like Deathloop's [Colt Vahn](#) to The Last of Us II's gay characters, [Ellie](#), [Dina](#) and [Lev](#).

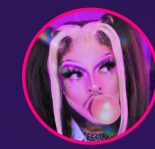
LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD

Live streaming has changed the social fabric of gaming by connecting minorities and giving them a voice and safe space to create and build community. (HeadStuff, 2022) Gamefluencers have helped by creating welcoming spaces, being non-judgemental and sharing their own personal life experiences with their followers.

For the LGBTQIA+ community, a growing number of streamers are challenging the normative stereotype of the “straight, white nerd gamer,” and standing up to misrepresentation, discrimination and harassment. LGBTQIA+ gamefluencers like [Elix](#), [Pixelmanta](#) and [Eret](#) are just a handful of names who are bringing their own unique voices to the community and opening up spaces for queer creators and followers.

At the same time, gamefluencers are rising to tackle issues around female empowerment and representation. Body-shaming, stalking, threats of abuse, sexist bans, even poorly thought through marketing campaigns are rife, with 77% of women admitting they receive gender-specific discrimination when gaming (PinkNews, 2021), and streamers like [Nihachu](#) are calling out the community’s double standards and lack of sensitivity. On their part, Twitch, in 2001, responded by launching the [Twitch Women’s Alliance](#) to “amplify, support and uplift all women streamers.”

"WHEN YOU'RE IN THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY, WE ALL HAVE THAT ONE THING IN COMMON - BEING QUEER. IT'S A LAUNCHING POINT TO CREATE A COMMUNITY. WE ALL KNOW HOW IT FEELS, AND WE'VE ALL BEEN THROUGH VERY SIMILAR THINGS."

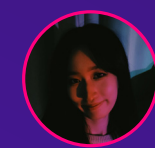


PABLO DRAG QUEEN

87%

of this generation's queer community play video games and build tight knit communities within them.
(ThinkWithGoogle)

"BEFORE, BIGGER STREAMERS WOULD BE NINJA AND SHROUD - ALL MALE STREAMERS. NOW WE HAVE POKIMANE, QUARTERJADE AND MORE. THEY'RE NOT JUST FEMALE, THEY'RE GOOD AT GAMES AS WELL. I THINK FEMALES ARE STARTING TO BUILD UP A NAME FOR THEMSELVES."



JANELLEYACE

ABLE GAMING

For persons with disabilities, live streaming can be a game changer. It’s an avenue for social interaction, a way to earn an income, as well as a platform where they can support and inspire others with disabilities.

But it’s not all a bed of roses. Disabled gamefluencers have been vocal about the everyday challenges they face that make even the simple act of logging on and talking on a mic difficult. In games, these range from absent menu and UI narration to a lack of full aim assist features that render most FPS (first-person shooter) titles unplayable. (Eurogamer, 2022)

The video game world is slowly changing for the better - an increasing number of modern games come with extensive accessibility features built in, and promising steps are being taken in designing accessible controllers and devices. (The Washington Post, 2019)

Because to quote Microsoft, “When everyone plays, we all win.”

"MY STREAM IS NOT DESIGNED FOR SYMPATHY, AND DON'T LET A DISABILITY STOP YOU FROM DOING WHAT YOU WANT TO DO. DON'T FEEL BAD FOR ME. I WANT YOU TO COME WATCH MY AWESOME GAMEPLAY INSTEAD."

**- LIGHTSHOOTER
TWITCH STREAMER
WITH ARTHROGRYPOSIS**

HOW BRANDS CAN POWER UP IDENTITY WITH INCLUSION

Gamefluencers are challenging norms and pushing boundaries. But they can't do it alone. Brands have the perfect opportunity to partner with gamefluencers out there whose values align with their own, whether it's championing diversity and inclusion, or simply drawing much-needed attention to underrepresented communities.

Pilsen Callao, a Peruvian beer brand, created a [gaming tool](#) that converts voice calls into signal language to bridge the accessibility gap between deaf gamers and other players.

Diversity, inclusivity and equality in gaming are white spaces that are ripe for brands to enter with a positive and authentic message. Doing so not only allows brands to give minority groups a voice and visibility, but also lends credibility to the brand itself.

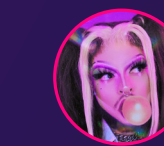
"THE YOUTH OF THIS INDUSTRY, AND SHARED COMMON TOUCHPOINTS, HAVE CERTAINLY MADE IT A BETTER PLACE TO BE THAN SOME TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES."

**– MORGAN GRAY
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER AT GAME DEVELOPER,
CRYSTAL DYNAMICS**

THE WASHINGTON POST, 2022

IMAGE: WORLD FEDERATIONS OF ADVERTISERS

"SOMETIMES, BRANDS JUST WANT TO BE SEEN CELEBRATING PRIDE AND GET MORE VISIBILITY FOR BEING QUEER FRIENDLY. A LOT OF BRANDS HAVE REACHED OUT TO ME BUT WHAT THEY WANT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE AT ALL, SO I JUST SAY 'NO!'."



PABLO DRAG QUEEN

As we've seen, the relationships gamefluencers have with their followers are built on trust and honesty. That means these partnerships need to be carefully considered and purposeful if they are to ring true, or they might risk sounding perfunctory and backfire.

Manga brand, mayamada showcased 40 players and gamemakers from underrepresented groups in its campaign called "[Do I look like a gamer?](#)", with the aim of challenging stereotypes of what a gamer should look like.

Intimacy, joy and inclusivity are core reasons why gamefluencers offer one of the most exciting partnership opportunities for brands today.

The genuine connections they've built with their followers over countless hours of close interaction lends credibility to what they say and do. While their unique brand of humour - spontaneous and unpretentious, enriched with inside jokes - turns mere passive spectators into active participants.

And though they'd be the first to admit there's much more work to be done to make gaming more diverse and inclusive, their efforts to encourage open, honest conversations and be a positive role model for their communities are seeding a tidal wave of change in the larger gaming world and beyond.

Brands thinking of striking a partnership with gamefluencers need to start by looking at their own values first. Finding strong links between the brand's values and those of the gamefluencer's is the first step in co-creating experiences that are authentic and purposeful. If done well, this collaboration has the potential to not just build brand awareness and drive sales but to truly resonate with players and make a difference.

FOR A PARTNERSHIP TO WORK, IT HAS TO SHARE VALUES



SECTION 5

HOW DO BRANDS START PLAYING?



PARTNERS FOR THE WIN

HOW BRANDS CAN WORK WITH GAMEFLUENCERS EFFECTIVELY

START WITH WHAT THEY KNOW – AND LOVE – BEST

The love of the game is what binds gamefluencers and their communities together. So a natural springboard for most brand partnerships is the world of gaming. These could be games themselves, gaming accessories or technology - products and services that both gamefluencers and followers are already familiar with and may have been actively using.

Still, gaming is far from the only avenue open for rewarding partnerships. For example, brands as diverse as G FUEL, Reebok and Intel have collaborated with [@LuluLuvley](#), who's on the NRG Esports Apex Legends team. And [@Swagg](#), a professional Call of Duty player, has been sponsored by the likes of Nesquik, Doritos and Twisted Tea.

Even when it comes to activating partnerships with gamefluencers, the only limit's the imagination.

In general, branded content typically happens where all eyes are glued - on stream. These range from simple product placements, 30s shoutouts to live reviews, all the way to guerilla stunts. Activations can also happen off-stream - for instance, through gamefluencer edition products and branded swag, collectibles and mascots.

Regardless of the format, what's important is that brands keep their ideas grounded on the three gamefluencer core values of intimacy, joy and inclusion. Finding a common purpose and leveraging what sets them apart from other types of influencers are key to unlocking cut-through thinking, fostering meaningful long-term relationships with gamefluencers and delivering content that hits home with their followers. Gamefluencers are choosy when it comes to promoting products and services. These content creators prefer to work with brands that share their values. (P2P, 2022)



G FUEL COLLABORATED WITH PEWDIEPIE TO LAUNCH "YUZU SLASH," A LIMITED EDITION ENERGY DRINK.

IMAGE: PEWDIEPIE

"IT'S SUPER SIMPLE. I HAVE A FRIDGE IN THE BACKGROUND OF MY STREAM, AND A TOWER OF MONSTER ENERGY DRINKS NEXT TO IT. I DON'T DRINK OTHER ENERGY DRINKS, JUST MONSTER. AND WHEN PEOPLE ASK ME, I TELL THEM ABOUT THE DRINK. AND WHENEVER I GO TO AN EVENT, THEY SOMETIMES ASK ME TO WEAR A MONSTER-BRANDED SHIRT."



AMBUSH

"I'VE SEEN A LOT OF FRIENDS SAY THEY PAIR UP WITH OTHER GAMING BRANDS, SUCH AS CORSAIR. USUALLY, THEY'D JUST ASK FOR A CERTAIN CONTENT THAT'S RELATED TO YOU USING THEIR BRAND."



JANELLEYACE

WORKING OUT WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T

WHAT WORKS: BEING REAL

Gamefluencers value authenticity. This is as true for their relationships with their followers as it is for the partnerships they strike up with brands. When they're considering whether to work with a particular brand, they often go with those they already know, love or admire.

So to succeed, a collaboration needs to uplift both brand and gamefluencer through an authentic relationship that captures the true value of the product or service in the gamefluencer's life. Offering a glimpse into the many ways a brand adds real-world utility to a gamefluencer can help convert audiences into believers, and in a manner that's more organic and believable than simply having someone mouth off ad copy.

"WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR IN A BRAND IS SOMETHING THAT FEELS TRUE AND ORGANIC TO ME. IT HAS TO BE SOMETHING I WOULD USE IN EVERYDAY LIFE."



TOUCHPADWARRIOR

WHAT DOESN'T:

At the same time, a gamefluencer's close connections with their followers means that the chat can easily detect when their favourite gaming personality is suddenly acting woodenly, a little off, as if reading straight off a script - like disingenuously pushing a product they'd never use. Followers will very quickly suss out messaging that's tone-deaf or an activation that glosses over gaming nuances, and brands can end up being shown in a bad light.

"YOU CAN TELL IF SOMEBODY'S FAKING AN INTEREST IN A GAME, OR IF THEY DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT. SO, WHEN A BRAND ISN'T REALLY PREPARED OR THEY DON'T HAVE ANYTHING REAL TO BRING TO ESPORTS, THE AUDIENCE WILL KNOW AND IT MAY BACKFIRE."



MIKAFABS

WHAT WORKS: FREEDOM

Don't look at gamefluencers as yet another "channel". Think of them as a creative partner. After all, they know their followers best - the content they're a fan of, the type of humour they appreciate and perhaps even the brands and marketing ideas they gravitate to. Don't let the bonds they've built with their fans based on intimacy and joy go to waste. Write briefs with gamefluencers' personalities in mind, don't be afraid to bounce off "what-ifs" with them and most of all, give them the freedom to be themselves.

80% of Twitch approve of streamers being sponsored. But the bottom line is: they don't want to be sold to - they want to be entertained and educated through personal interactions with their favourite influencers.

(Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022)

WHAT DOESN'T:

Gamefluencers owe everything they have to their followers. They're not going to do anything that will betray their loyalty just because they were paid to do it. If a brief is too creatively stifling or a format hasn't been tailored to a particular community, the results will almost always fall flat. Being loose and collaborative, and keeping an open mind are essential. Brands will do well to put their trust in the gamefluencer's instincts, and take the time to understand their ethos and objectives to ensure a partnership that benefits everyone.

"LISTEN TO YOUR CREATOR. LISTEN TO THE CREATORS THAT YOU'RE TRYING TO SPONSOR. THEY KNOW THEIR AUDIENCE, THEY KNOW WHAT WOULD WORK, THEY KNOW THEIR CONTENT. IF YOU FORCE THEM TO DO SOMETHING THAT'S NOT THEIR STYLE, IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK."



VIRKAYU

WHAT WORKS: KNOWING THEIR NICHE

Successful gamefluencers have established themselves in a specific niche. They've either gained their followers thanks to the one-of-a-kind personas they adopt on stream, or they're a world-renowned esports gamer with skills anyone would trade their Xbox for. While others are admired because of their views on diversity and inclusion.

Because followers are drawn to gamefluencers who share their passions, sense of humour or values, targeting a specific audience segment relatively simple - to reach the people you'd like to reach, look at who the gamefluencer attracts.

"I WANT TO WORK WITH BRANDS THAT I KNOW, AND THAT MY FOLLOWERS KNOW TOO. IT'S ALL ABOUT THE RIGHT FIT."



AMBUSH

WHAT DOESN'T:

But not all matches are made in gaming heaven. For a partnership to take off, brands first need to do a deep dive into their chosen gamefluencer and their niche community. This calls for, at the very least, desk research and interviews, but better still, in-depth profiling and persona building. Otherwise, brands risk a serious disconnect between the brand's own ethos or their product's or service's purpose with the gamefluencer's lifestyle and preferences.

"I GET A LOT OF OFFERS FROM COMPANIES TO DO THINGS THAT MAKE NO SENSE TO ME, LIKE CHARGING PEOPLE TO PLAY WITH YOUR FAVOURITE STREAMER WHEN I ALREADY PLAY WITH MY FOLLOWERS FOR FREE EVERY SUNDAY. IF I'M INTO THE IDEA AND I KNOW MY CHAT WILL ENJOY IT, I'LL TRY AND DO IT. BUT IF IT FEELS REALLY OFF, I WON'T."



AMBUSH





IMAGE: DORITOS

GAMEFLUENCER PARTNERSHIPS: IT TAKES TWO TO SCORE BIG

When done right, gamefluencer partnerships have the potential to ignite brand love and engage audiences at a larger scale than almost any other social channel out there. The trick is finding the collaborative sweet spot between brand and gamefluencer.

Getting to know the battleground and its players is the first step to making this happen. It's understanding where your brand sits in a gamefluencer's particular niche, and how it meshes with their persona and on-stream style. Then the real work begins - carefully pulling together a campaign that contributes and adds value to the partnership.

And all the while keeping one thing in mind - the community. The relationships in those livestreams took months and years to establish. They're built on a bedrock of authenticity, trust and mutual respect, and brands need to leverage on these key values to truly create meaningful and impactful experiences.

But perhaps most importantly, enjoy yourself. Let your hair down a little. Play. If nothing else, gaming is the purest celebration of freedom, creativity and a balm against taking yourself too seriously. If you're not having fun, your audience isn't going to either.

SECTION 6

PARTNERING UP



WHAT WE BELIEVE AT WE ARE SOCIAL

We believe gaming is no longer a subset of culture - it is culture. It's the driving force behind trends in fashion, food, technology and more. And it's bringing with it enormous creative opportunities for brands across every industry.

With that in mind, here's how we're decoding the world of gaming to help brands get a headstart:

BE A PLAYER

Dedicated squads of gamers across our global offices immerse themselves in actual playtime and social listening, helping to uncover gaming subcultures and nuances to identify brand relevance.

LEVELLING UP EXPERIENCES

Our goal is always to add real value to gamers by giving them a fresh, unexpected perspective on how they can experience the game.

CUSTOMISED COMMUNITIES

The fragmented gaming ecosystem makes it complicated to navigate, so we tailor solutions based on brand fit and specific communities to ensure the greatest momentum and impact.

CONNECTED AMPLIFICATION

We drive tangible results through the larger ecosystem to give brands a competitive edge within the game world and beyond it.





LET'S GET SOCIAL

Get in touch with us to find out how the social gaming universe can connect your brand to whole new audiences.

✉ sayhello@wearesocial.sg

🌐 wearesocial.com