

Master of Time 24

Chapter 24 Research & Development

Almost everyone in the meeting calls me out on the absurd price regardless of whether they have any skills or experiences in the financial or economic sector.

This is because \$199.99 is far too cheap for something as advanced as the PlayStation. If built normally on an assembly line, it would cost at least \$1,500 for just the components alone.

Labor, marketing and distribution put the pricing well in the \$2000, maybe even the \$3000. Then what about profitability? It is pointless to produce a product that does not bring in profits.

Therefore, it is understandable that everyone is highly emotional.

The PlayStation I am proposing is a 32-bit home console, powered by an "experimental" computing architecture running at 1.2 GHz. This is stupidly fast compared to every other console on the market, which runs in the MHz instead.

Super Nintendo Entertainment System only have a 3.58 MHz CPU.

And it is selling like hot water.

Furthermore, PlayStation has 32MB of System RAM, 8MB dedicated video RAM, digital stereo sound, 16 GB of expandable memory, removable memory card slots for save files, dual shock controllers and much, much more.

Not only that, the console itself acts as a home media system, capable of playing CD and DLCD. Even a DLCD player alone is already exceed the price point by several folds – and the damn thing is not even on the market yet.

In other word, PlayStation is a beast of a gaming console. Therefore, the price point should worthy of its specifications.

"Everyone, please calm down. Hmm... you there. How much a game cartridge goes for on the market?"

I point at one of the Hydra agents standing by the wall, listening on the conversations.

They have come along with the scientists just incase there some fighting involved. The scientists can defend themselves since they did have some combat training, but in a real battle, they are more of a tactician and strategist.

"About \$50 sir. I recently brought one for my son a week ago. I think it was called Super Mario World or something. There is this Italian plumber riding a tiny dinosaur and stomping on mushrooms. I don't really get it much, but my son loves it."

The agent replies.

"\$50 bucks. How much does a compact disc cost? Can't be more than dollar or two to manufacture. It is not like they are cartridges with a lot of electronics inside. If we sell a game for that much, the profit margin is simply insane. And I am not talking about a dozen or so games. I'm talking about thousands of games if not tens of thousands."

I let all that sink into everyone present. Each game can bring in hundreds of millions, not to mention the copyright and merchandising.

"If I could, I would have given the console away for free. We make money on the consumables instead, and a console is only as popular as the games available. To prevent a similar situation in 1987, each game must past rigorous testing before being published."

I gesture at the scientists.

"This is where you come in. The people I have working for me in the game development department is... how I put it? Less than satisfactory. I should have fire the lot of them for their incompetent but firing everyone on my first day seems a bit extreme. Besides, I probably won't find anyone better than them in this industry, at least in America."

I realize that I am going off topics. My mind to tend to wander.

"Ahem. I need you guys to take lead in the game development department. Run a seminar or training course. Teach those idiots how to code and stuff. Do whatever you think is necessary. Just make them into professional programmers as soon as possible and I will forever be grateful."

I even clap my hands and bow.

This earns a few chuckles.

"There is no need for that, Supreme Commander. Hydra is entirely at your service. We will do our best with what we have. By my estimation, we should have them coding like a basic AI in a few months or so."

One of the scientists in the front remarks.

I didn't like the estimated time given, but there is little I could do.

It takes time to train people – normally.

Sometimes I wish I was back in the 31st century.

"I think that would be great. And Larry. I want a prototype on my desk in a month time. Do make sure that it also looks good. If I see a brick, you know where it will go flying to."

Larry Norman assures that it will be ready by then.

He dismisses my little threat since as long as he does his best, I will not chastise him. At least, I wouldn't be throwing bricks at his head.

"I will have to assemble a team to research how all of this fit together for the console. They should be able to develop a working version within a week or so. Having unlimited funding at one disposal does help."

Larry comments.

I totally forgot about research and development phase of the production.

It is needed for any new product.

The engineers need to know how the components fits together correctly. They also need to program the hardware, so it works as intended.

"Oh. If you have spare time, add networking capability into the hardware as well. I think we will need that once the Internet is available. Coop gameplays is very popular in the future."

The Internet should have been commercially available on the 1st of January 1990 according to history, but there is some strange delay.

It might have something to do with Atlantis.

Atlantis has the Internet since the 1960. It should be called the Intranet instead due to it encompasses only the island nation. However, Atlantis Internet is accessible anywhere around the globe thanks to all the satellites.

Any country with a supercomputer should be able to hack into that network. It is intentional, so they can learn all the things that are happening on the island. Of course, whether they believed what they read on the Atlantis Intranet is another question.

Some stuffs did get leaked to the public hence the buzz about a super advance island nation. Atlantis appears on the news many times.

Still, no delegates being send to the United Nations yet.

I wonder who will be sent by Hydra. It must be an Atlantean due to their distinct hair and eye colors, but over the four decades, almost all second generation Atlantean are part of Hydra.

Anyway, none of that really interest me currently.

"So, are we all in agreement about the pricing?"

Everyone nods once they understand the true revenue stream.

Console does not bring in money. It is the games that do.

And I plan to release a lot of games for the console.

It is as simple as jumping into the future, grab a copy of the finished game and return to the past to duplicate and distribute.

Oh wait! It is exactly that!

Why don't I just do that for the PlayStation then?

Fuck research and development!

Larry becomes flabbergasted when I drop the working console into his hands. I brought back quite a few for everyone. They are curious of the machine they will be building.

"Dismantle it, learn how it ticks and mass produce."