



The Modern **Gaming** Marketing Playbook

A 6-Step Architecture for the Era of Active Engagement





Half the planet is already playing.

Gaming is the largest active-attention medium in consumer life, yet most brands are still knocking on the wrong door.

3.5B

Gamers worldwide: nearly half the planet's entire population.

3×

Gaming's revenue vs. film and music combined.

37

The average player's age: consumers' real purchasing power.

Attention has shifted from passive viewing to active, rewarded participation.



About This Playbook

Four sessions. One framework. Applied.

THE PREMISE

**Marketers have more data than ever
but less certainty about what it means.**

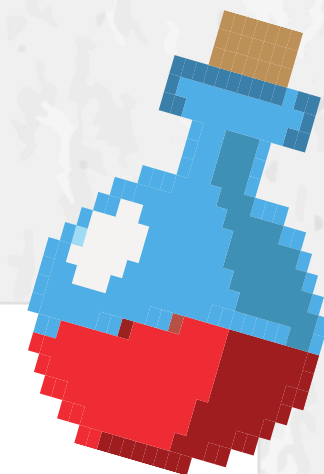
This playbook translates six primary-source webinars into a single applied framework. No research team required: just a planning cycle and a willingness to act on better information.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS

- CMOs and brand marketers planning occasion-based campaigns
- Retail media and performance teams with first-party data
- Creative leads evaluating AI production tooling
- Anyone building or refining a 2026+ gaming strategy

SOURCES

- 1 Sabah Beş'te, Kupa Peşinde**
Mimeda × Hepsiburada
- 2 Demystifying Games for Marketers**
Days 1 & 2
- 3 NEXT! AI & Mobile Experiences**
Premium mobile pipeline
- 4 NEXT! Global Ecosystem Alliances**
Mobile ecosystem



Attention Must Be Earned, Not Interrupted

Gaming has become the dominant, most active media format in consumer life.



THE LEGACY MODEL

Passive Interruption

Content is obscured by mandatory ad breaks. The audience is assumed captive, but captivity has never been the same thing as attention.

The brand speaks. The consumer endures.

The result: declining recall, rising skip rates, audiences trained to look away.



THE MODERN MODEL

Voluntary Participation

Active, rewarded interaction. If you value a customer's time, you have to offer something in return that's actually worth it.

The brand participates. The consumer chooses to engage.

The result: higher dwell time, measurable uplift, an audience that opted in.



How this playbook is structured.

Six connected steps; each one picks up where the last left off.



01

**Map occasion +
windows**

When to show up and
who to reach at each
moment.

02

**First-party data +
segmentation**

The behavioral data
that tells you exactly
who to target.

03

**Value-driven
gamified
experiences**

How to earn attention
rather than interrupt
for it.

04

**AI creative
scaling**

How to produce
better creative,
faster.

05

**Ecosystem
alliances**

How to reach gaming
audiences at scale,
not in fragments.

06

**Measure the
circle, not the
funnel**

How to know if it's
actually working and
on what.

Step 1: Map Occasion & Windows

Your campaign calendar is wrong. Consumer behavior doesn't follow the fixture list; it leads it.



T-1: PREPARATION

Basket-Building Before the Event

This is when people actually shop: stacking snacks, ordering jerseys, checking streaming options. Basket value runs 2.5× higher here than during the event itself. Win the basket at T-1 or miss it entirely.

T: THE EVENT

Presence, Not Performance

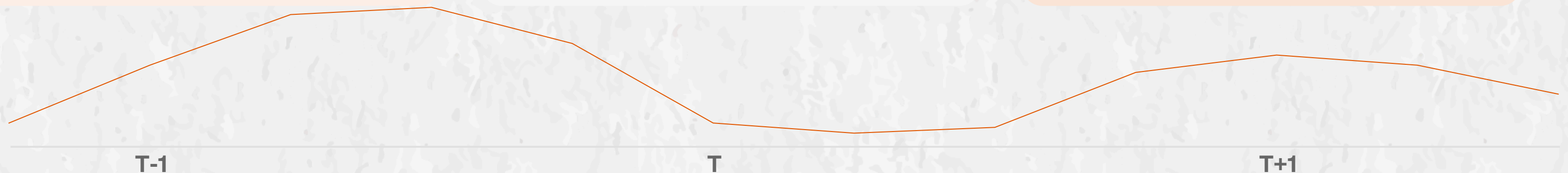
Once the event starts, buying intent collapses. People are watching, not shopping. This is the moment for ambient brand presence. Push a hard call-to-action at T and you're spending money to be ignored.

T+1: AFTERMATH

Recovery & Replay

The final whistle isn't the end. People replay highlights, share moments, and buy what they meant to grab before kickoff. A 50% uplift in practical categories has been measured in the 24 hours after major events.

INTENT



Sources: Sabah Beş'te, Kupa Peşinde (Mimeda × Hepsiburada)

Step 2: First-Party Data & Segmentation

The closer you look at your data, the more value you find.

SNACKS

Broad category

FOOTBALL SNACKS

Occasion-based

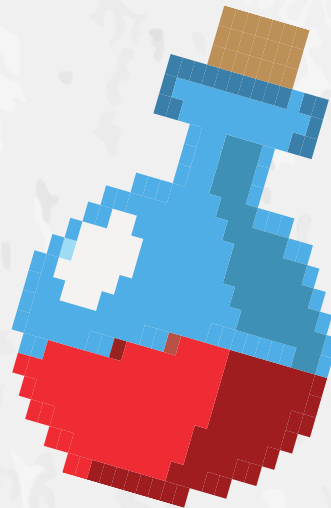
CORN CHIPS

Product-specific

TUESDAY EVENING BUYERS

Behavioral segment

+21% uplift: hiding in plain sight



Beyond Broad Demographics

Stop targeting 'football fans.' Target the person who buys corn chips on a Tuesday before a Wednesday night game. The specificity is the strategy.

Composite Baskets

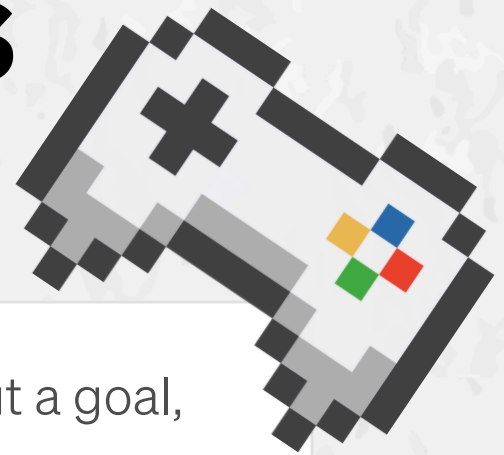
Your retail data knows things your media plan doesn't, like the fact that football snack buyers also buy oat milk at 5am. Find the unexpected pairings and activate them.

Predictive Modeling

If they bought game-night snacks three weeks running last season, they'll do it again this one. Connect past behavioral loops to future purchase intent.

Step 3: Value-Driven Gamified Experiences

The best ad is one the player chooses to engage with.



5x

THE ENGAGEMENT MULTIPLIER

Gamification outperforms standard display banners 5 to 1. The multiplier is real, but only if you build an actual game loop, not just a quiz.

GOAL

The clear outcome the player is working toward. Without a goal, it's just content.



RULES

The constraints that make it a game. What you can and can't do defines the challenge.



FEEDBACK

Real-time signals that show the player how they're doing: points, progress bars, timers.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: the player chose to be here

The Wordle Effect: A simple daily word puzzle became the biggest driver of net-new subscriptions for a legacy news brand. The game was free. The attention was not.

Strategic pathways.

Pick your entry point, then go deeper.



MORE COMMITMENT · MORE REWARD →

MASS REACH

Dynamic in-game ads

Billboards inside live game worlds. High reach, low friction.

CULTURAL TRUST

Influencers + streamers

Creators your audience already follows. Credibility at scale.

HABIT + RETENTION

Loyalty + rewards

Your brand inside the reward loop: points, badges, perks.

PHYGITAL SALES

Crossover commerce

In-game and in-store selling each other. Limited editions both ways.

NARRATIVE

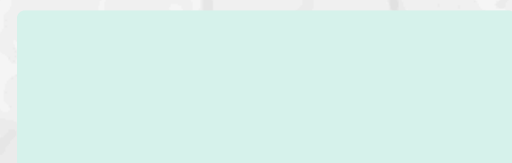
Brand integration

Part of the world, not an ad in it. The story belongs to you.

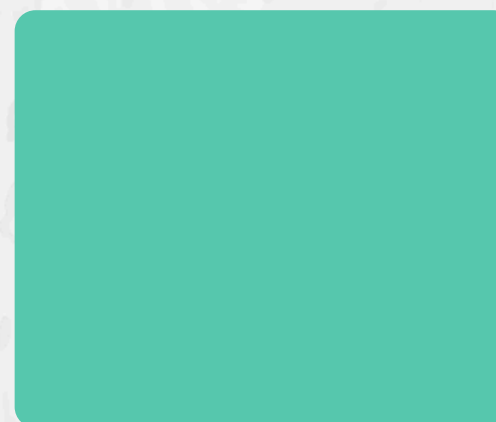
TOTAL FANDOM

Brand-owned worlds

You build the game. A community that lives inside your brand.



ENTRY POINTS



DEEP PLAYS

Sources: Demystifying Games for Marketers

Step 4: AI Creative Scaling

Generative AI doesn't just speed up production, it also changes what's possible to make.

BEFORE: THE LEGACY TIMELINE

10 DAYS

to ship one interactive ad unit

Concept & Brief

Engineering Build

QA & Compliance Testing

One Static Output

AFTER: THE AI ADVANTAGE

3 MIN

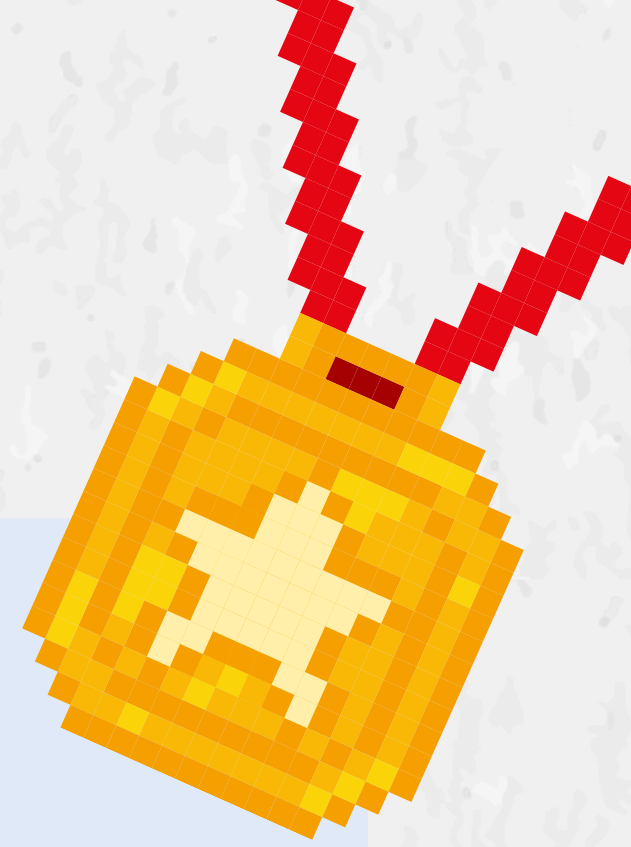
to ship one interactive ad unit

Concept & Brief

AI Prompt

Playable Output: infinite variants

When you're not spending 10 days in engineering, you spend those days making the creative actually good.



Step 5: Ecosystem alliances.

Gaming media is fragmented. The answer is strict centralization through the right partnerships.



DEVICE-LEVEL ACCESS

Operators + device manufacturers

Reach the consumer at the operating-system level before any app is opened. The most defensible position in mobile media.

DIRECT APP DEALS

Gaming apps + publishers

Direct integrations cut out the intermediaries. No ad fraud, no brand-safety surprises, no viewability guesswork.

SMARTER MEASUREMENT

Attention + sustainability

Attention metrics and carbon per media unit are both becoming non-negotiable. Set baselines before your next RFP.

CORE MESSAGE

Navigate fragmentation through strict centralization.

Fewer, deeper partnerships: one direct pipeline to premium inventory, measured on your terms.

Step 6: Measure the Circle, Not the Funnel

Success is judged on business outcomes across T-1, T, and T+1, not on vanity impressions.

4–5×

**Phase-Based
Incremental ROAS**

Run your spend in T-1 and this is what you get. The 24–48 hours before the event are worth more than the event itself.

75–95%

**Voucher
Redemption Rate**

Players chase rewards instead of skipping them, they chase them. That's what separates a voucher that gets used from one that doesn't.

2nd Screen

**Second-Screen
Search Spikes**

Captured during dual-screen live events. People watch the game with one eye and shop with the other.

**Customer
Lifetime Value**

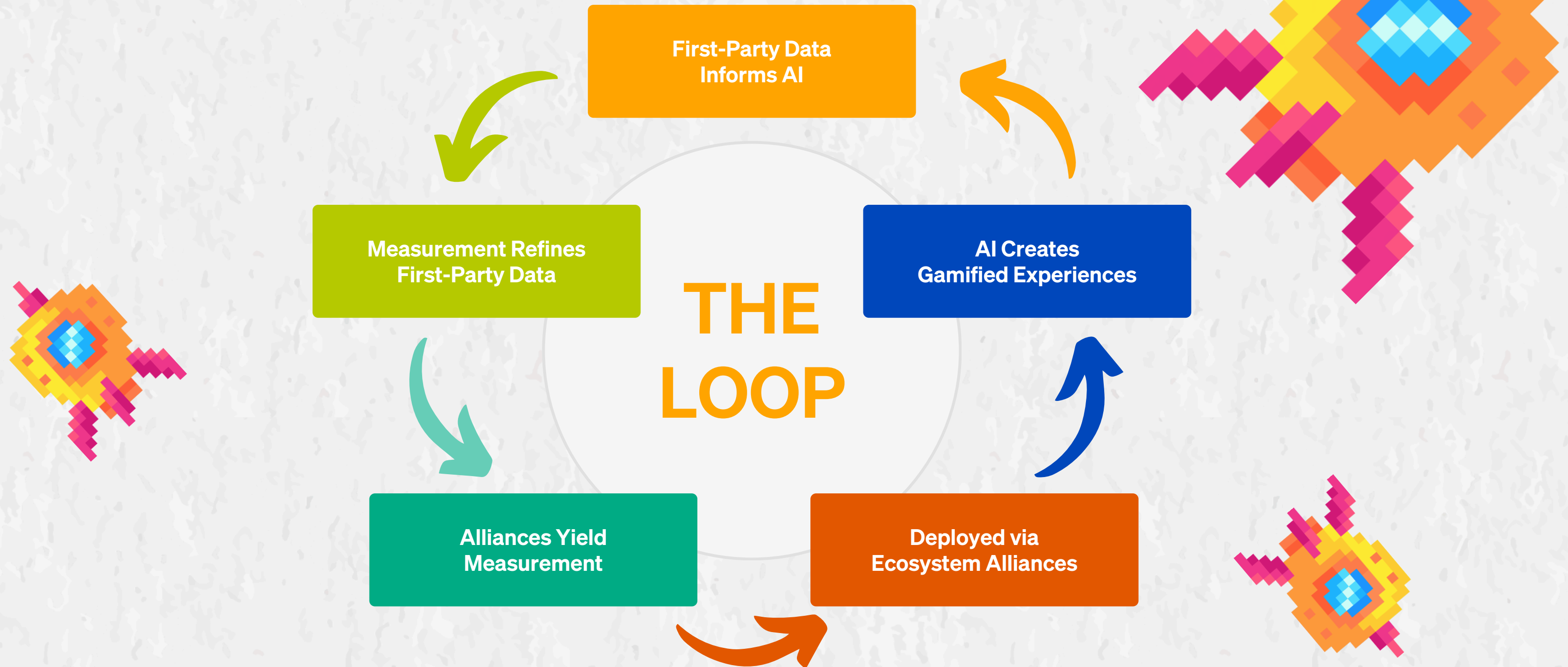
**Long-Term
Retention**

The real win is after the final whistle: converting event shoppers into repeat, loyal customers who return next season.



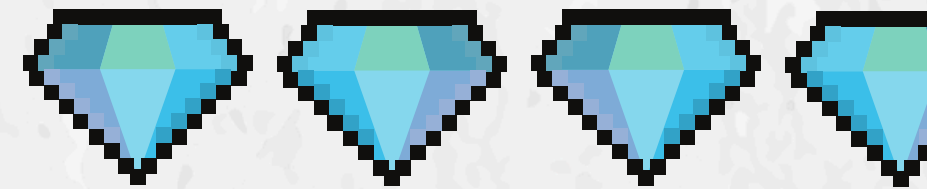
The Engagement Cycle

Five stages that reinforce each other, and each campaign makes the next one smarter.



/ From Playbook to Practice

Five moves to make in your next planning cycle.



Audit Your Occasion Calendar

Re-map one campaign into T-1 / T / T+1 windows. Find your first pilot moment.

1

Unlock a First-Party Segment

Define 2–3 intent-based micro-segments. Behavior, not demographics.

2

Prototype a Gamified Experience

Pick one pathway and ship a small voluntary-participation pilot.

3

Stand Up an AI Creative Pipeline

Trial a generative tool on one playable ad. Target minutes, not weeks.

4

Set Your Incremental Baseline

Define iROAS and redemption benchmarks before launch. Measure uplift.

5

The players are already in the game.

50%

of the global population already plays games.

\$200B+

global gaming market (and still growing)

It's time for your brand to press start.

Don't just read the playbook. Play it.

MEASURE YOUR READINESS

Gaming Readiness Assessment

20 quick questions across the six steps. Get your Gaming Readiness Score and see exactly where to start.

[Check your score](#)

KEEP LEVELING UP

MMA Academy

Go deeper on every step with the six full sessions behind this playbook: on demand, built for marketers, free for members.

[Explore MMA Academy.](#)

Press start. Then keep playing.