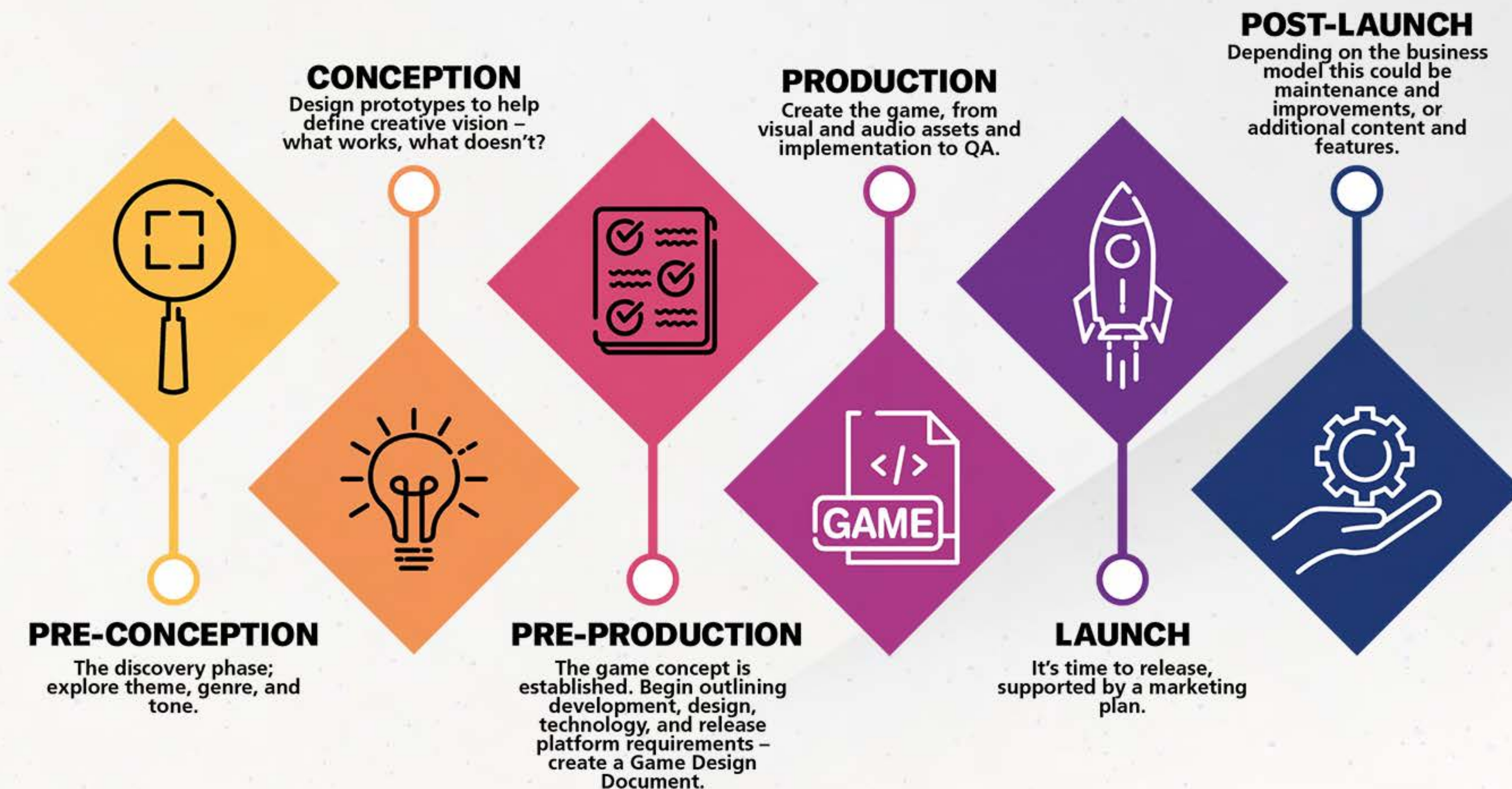




THE GAME DEVELOPMENT PROCESS:

An Introduction



1



PRE-CONCEPTION

This is your discovery phase. During the pre-conception stage, you start developing your theme. The theme is what your game is built around – from the genre and tone of the game to the look and feel. Is it a Role-playing game, Action-adventure, Shooter, Puzzle, Real-Time strategy?

Consider any constraints that you need to work within, for example, do you need to use specific tools or software, have you been set an overarching theme from a Game Jam? What are the timescales you are working to? How many levels are you aiming for? What is the art style?

2



CONCEPTION

This is when you refine your creative vision and make a concrete plan for your game. You might create prototypes and define your concept even further. All your ideas might not work, don't be afraid to scrap ideas and to discover what works best for your game.

Invest the majority of your initial planning phase into researching your idea and concept. Consider what works well in similar games, and what you think doesn't. Consider your game's business model: is it a one-off release, or a live game that you'll continue to support post-release?

TIP: CONCEPT ART

Start developing artwork and sketches to set the tone of the overall game. These early drawings will help form the direction of the game and will provide a visual guide to the overall look and feel.

3



PRE-PRODUCTION

Pre-production is where the game concept is established and you scope the technology requirements, such as the tools needed to allow art production to begin. Outline the vision, scope and requirements by creating a Game Design Document (GDD).

A GDD aligns everyone on the scope and vision of the game. It may include:

- Project scope
- Business Model and Platforms
- Target audience
- Concept
- Tone/Genre
- Story and characters
- Game Mechanics
- Gameplay
- Concept Art
- Level Design
- Environment Art

The GDD is also a sum of many smaller technical blueprints and proposals for features and systems within the game. These smaller blueprints are written in a way that allows budgeting and resource allocation. A GDD can also contain manuals for how to make content:

- Technical documentation on how features work once they have been implemented
- Tutorials for how to make a piece of content
- The expected paradigms of the content e.g., if the weapon in your game is a spear, then you need to outline the game design rules surrounding the spear.

A GDD is continuously updated and improved as the game is developed. It is not necessarily one document; it may be in a wiki format structured to support accessible information to the team.

4



PRODUCTION | PART 1

In production you'll build and iterate to create your game. You'll bring it to life, from creating your assets, features, and content to QA, getting it ready for Alpha, Beta, and eventually launch.

• **Art and Animation:** The Characters, Environments, Weapons, Vehicles, User Interface elements are created and rendered to look exactly how they should look in the finished game. Animation will bring your characters to life.

• **Design:** Collaborate with other disciplines to create your features. For example, iterate on gameplay loops as a systems designer, create interactive worlds as a Level Designer or make the game more approachable as a UX Designer.

• **Coding:** Write your source code to bring every element of your game to life. You'll code all your ideas into interactive graphics and sounds to create an immersive experience for the players.

• **Audio:** Think about the different situations in your game that need sound effects e.g. running, jumping, fighting, swimming, victory, defeat etc. You will also record dialogue if you have a script.

• **Quality Assurance:** Ensure that the game functions to the highest quality possible. Test every element, report any bugs, and support other disciplines with feedback for further iteration.

Look out for:

- o Crashes - Steps that cause the game to crash at any point
- o Progression Blockers - Issues that prevent a player from completing parts of the game
- o Collision Errors - Issues that affect how game objects collide with each other
- o Logic Errors - Issues with the gameplay logic that cause the game to function incorrectly
- o Visual Issues - Visual errors with content i.e., floating geometry, z-fighting, skinning issues
- o Audio - Errors with audio, such as mis-timed sound effects or large disparities in sound volume
- o Gameplay Imbalances - Incorrect values that can throw off the quality and balance of the experience
- o Compatibility Issues - Does the game run well on most combinations of supported hardware?

5



RELEASE/LAUNCH

You are now ready to share your game with the world. Although this is the final stage of development it is not the end of the cycle. In modern game development the post-release plan is equally as important as the production period.

TIP: PORTFOLIO

Make sure you save your work & planning and use it in a portfolio when applying for a role in the games industry.

6



POST RELEASE | PART 1

You have released your game, now what? This depends on your business model; is it a one-off release, or a live service game?

If you've created a live game this is when the real work starts; you need to consider how you are going to enhance your player acquisition and retention; expanding your player base. This will take shape in many ways from improving the overall game through patches to quality-of-life improvements – e.g., cleaner UI & enhancing regular actions through streamlined mechanics.

Listen to player feedback; they will be the best critics of your game by letting you know what works for them and what doesn't. What do they want to see more of or less of? For a live product it is essential to plan for content updates to keep your game relevant and interesting, over years to come.

POST RELEASE | PART 2

To keep engaging your players after the game's release consider:

• **Downloadable content (DLC):** This not only gives you the opportunity to add new content but also helps to keep your game relevant, while supporting your game's commercial success.

• **Free content updates:** This is a great way to re-engage and retain your audience.

• **Seasonal releases:** Plan larger releases in a regular cadence to engage players. If relevant to your game, consider seasons passes as a means to finance these content updates.