

Winter Games Trailer Pulse

Who left their mark at The Game Awards?

Trailers are the biggest draw to The Game Awards; *GTA VI*/*LEGO Fortnite* seize the day; and sci-fi/superhero make a bold return.

Winter is a pivotal season for the gaming industry, with key cultural moments like holiday sales and The Game Awards marking the debut for numerous highly-anticipated games.

Building off hype or existing franchises can obviously lead to great success, but perfecting the trailer is just as important.

As game trailers are viewed by thousands and sometimes millions, they play a major role in determining which games consumers might seek out in the coming year.

NRG's *Winter Games Trailer Pulse* unpacks the shifting trends for successful video game trailers, analyzing the top titles that stood apart from the pack.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

01

The Game Awards is more like the Super Bowl than the Oscars.

Some viewers of The Game Awards are interested in who might win "Game of the Year."

However, the majority tune in specifically to see what new trailers or games are being announced—especially those from big-name franchises, publishers, or developers.

02

For some, performances and cameos made The Game Awards feel too long and unfocused.

Nearly all elements of The Game Awards are controversial. Some like the trailers, others feel it detracts from the "stars" of the show (the developers).

Celebrity cameos are often enjoyed but can create skepticism if they aren't organic.

Overall, the trailers and awards are the "must-see" parts for viewers, whereas the "extra" stuff contributes to a sense that the show is pandering.

03

"Solo" showcases are great for established IP, while showcases help smaller titles gain traction.

Established games don't have to abide by traditional rules for releasing a new trailers. If hype or pre-existing interest is sufficient, success can still come from individual announcements or events.

On the other hand, for lesser-known titles and franchises, big gaming showcases can help capture audiences who are already tuning in for other reasons.

04

Science fiction and Superhero games see a boost in comparison to other genres.

With games like *Marvel's Blade*, *Jurassic Park: Survival*, *Last Sentinel*, and *Exodus* being announced, there is renewed excitement around upcoming science fiction and superhero games since the summer.

While "superhero fatigue" may have hit the theaters, the same isn't necessarily true for gaming.

IN THIS REPORT...



What game trailers people watched



What people remember from The Game Awards



Which games players are looking forward to



How viewers' interest peaks and dips throughout trailers



What marketers can take away from this year's top games

Most viewers of The Game Awards come for the trailers, but too many eyes creates a double-edged sword.

Game world premieres are still a focal point of The Game Awards; however, some feel that they are just advertisements that extend the show and take away from the awards and developers getting a chance to speak.



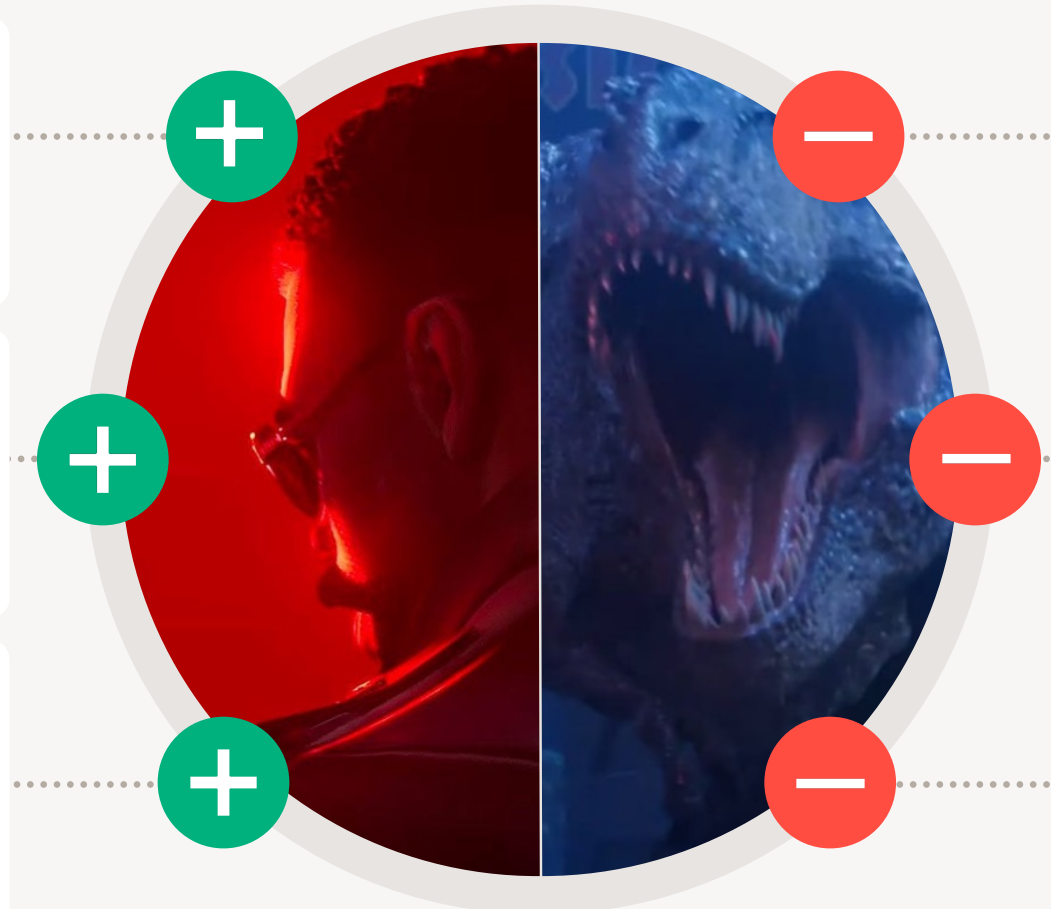
I enjoyed watching The Game Awards for the **world premieres and announcements of new games** along with their trailers, which made me excited about upcoming releases in the next few years.



I **watch to see the trailers for upcoming games**. I always check out the highlights on YouTube after it's over, because **watching the other parts isn't interesting**.



The **trailers are the best part of the game awards**. They always catch my attention and keep me engaged with the show.



They didn't let the developers talk too much on stage. They did, however, let the **videogame presentations go on for too long**.



The 2023 Game Awards was a little boring due to the **number of trailers included** and **not giving much time to the winning developers** to give commentary about their games.



I felt that there were **too many ads** and **not enough time for people to say their speeches** while accepting their awards.

The Game Awards also suffers from a lack of focus with too much variety of content.

The volume of trailers and game presentations causes the show to run longer, meaning that developers have less time to talk. And some viewers felt that the celebrity appearances and musical performances were superfluous.

CELEBRITY HOSTS



I **didn't enjoy most of the celebrity guest hosts**. I get the appeal sometimes, but **it usually feels like pandering** to pull more people in.



I don't understand why the game awards keeps bringing in random celebrities. Yes, I can **understand if the celebrity is in the game, but otherwise, it just feels like a waste of money** to bring them in.



TOO LONG



I least like the speeches from specific developers because they can **take too long and extend the show too much**.



The length of it felt **too long compared to the prior years** that I have watched the show.



FEELING ALL OVER THE PLACE



It felt slow and long, with some awards seemingly unnecessary and many musical **performances interrupting the flow**.



I felt like there was too much sponsored content that **did not feel organic** or natural, causing the show to feel a little all over the place.



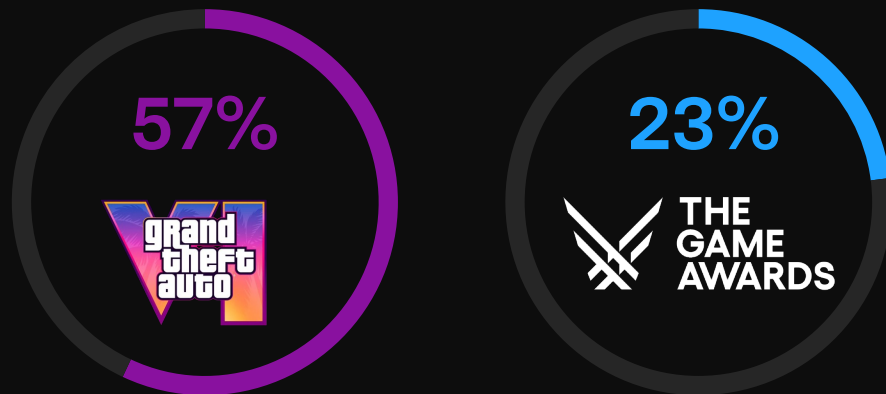
Now looking at the performance of individual trailers...

GTA and LEGO Fortnite shined on their own, while TGA helped (some) others.

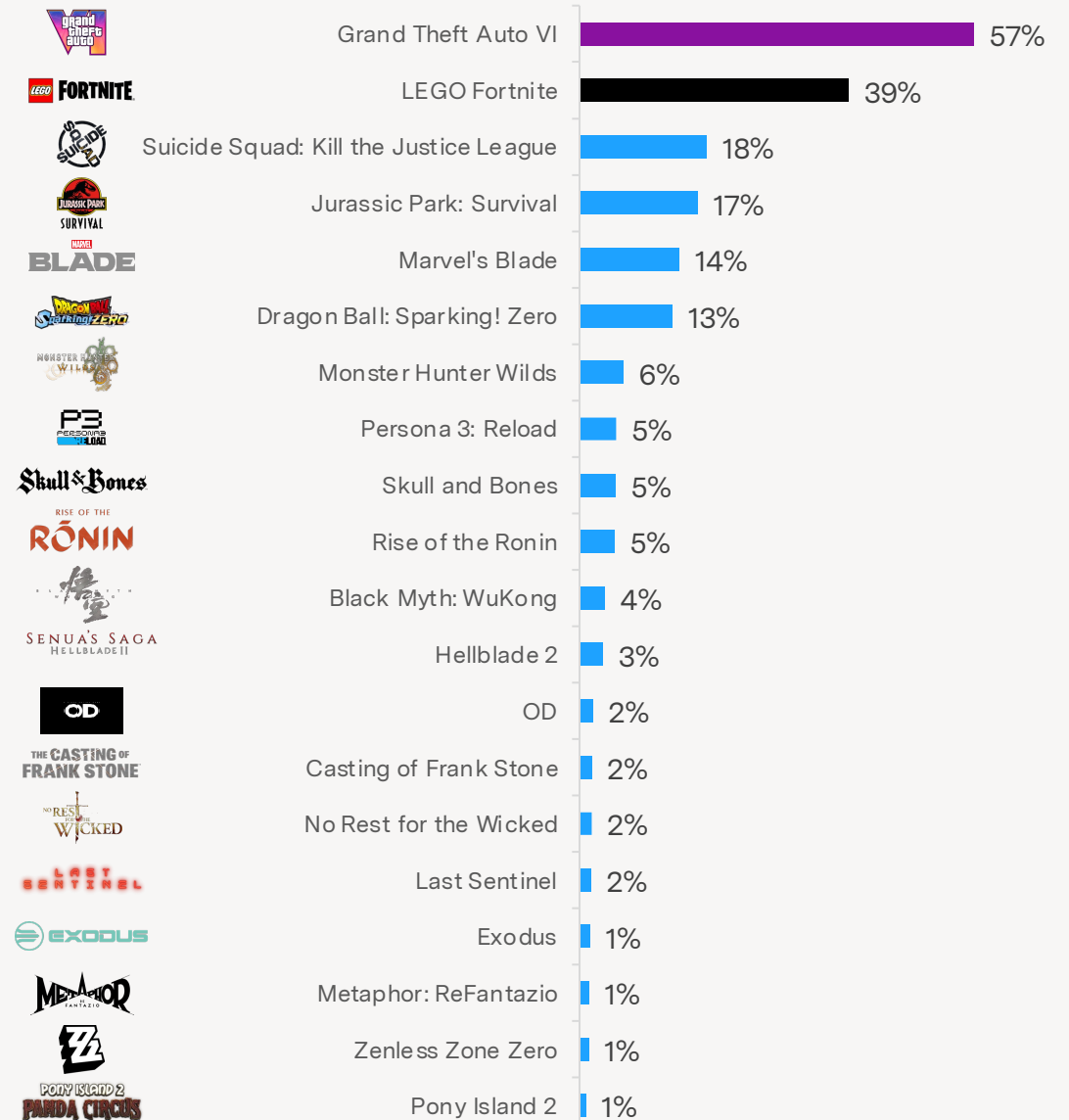
GTA VI and LEGO Fortnite trailers captivated and excited audiences largely due to the brand presence they carry. They didn't need to bundle their announcements with other titles and carried enough weight on their own to capture interest.

On the other hand, smaller, lesser-known titles had mixed success from The Game Awards. While nearly 1/4 watched The Game Awards, not everyone remembered every trailer, with an average of 6% recall.


% of gamers who saw game trailer/show





% of gamers who saw trailer for game in the past 3 months




The most effective trailers use cinematics to drive interest early, but not at the expense of clarity. Gameplay is not always necessary, but helpful.








































 Having a balance of both cinematics and gameplay helps spark interest while making it clear what the game is like. 01

 Key characters being shown is important in creating interest and connection with the game. 02

 Crumbs of a larger-scale story help bolster curiosity around what the full game will provide. 03

 Showing game or developer logos early on can help generate interest (assuming the brand has enough equity). 04

Top games ranked by purchase intent

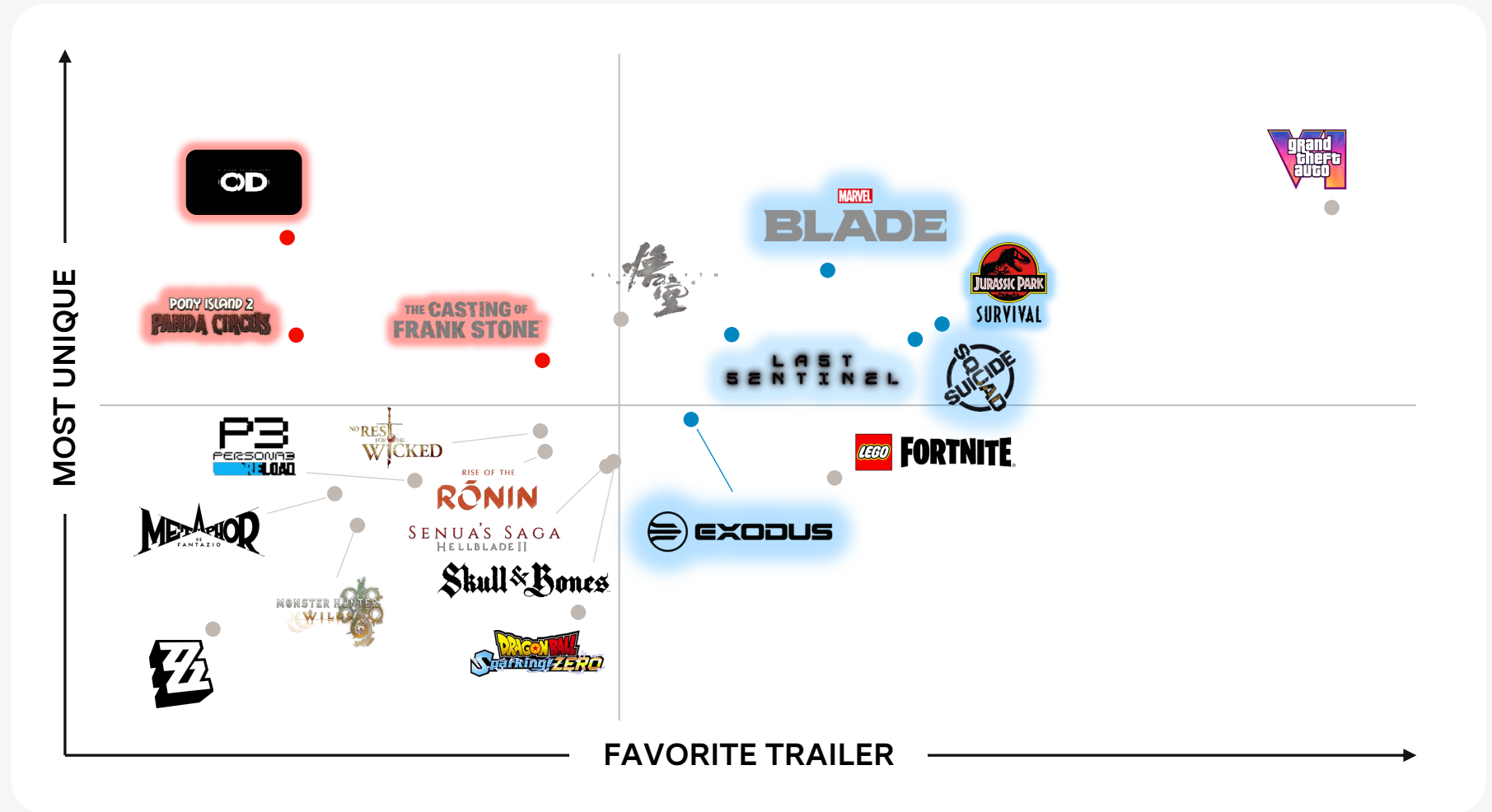
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Science fiction and superhero games have seen a boost in purchase intent since the summer.

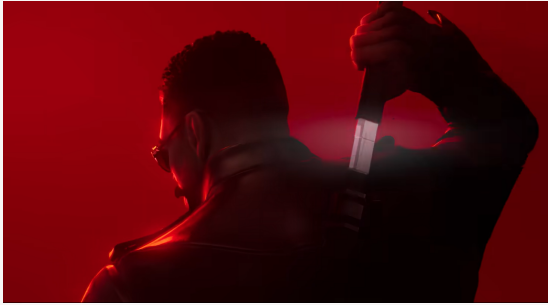
Established brands like GTA, Marvel, Jurassic Park, and DC see success in striking the balance between being unique while still staying fan favorites.

New IPs like *Black Myth Wukong*, *Exodus*, and *Last Sentinel* still stand out.

Horror games like *OD* and *The Casting of Frank Stone* are more unique but struggle in popularity. While games like *Marvel's Blade*, *Exodus*, and *Jurassic Park: Survival* evidence growing interest in **sci-fi and superhero games**.



Trailer Accolades – Winter 2024



BEST PACING

Marvel's Blade sees interest grow as viewers realize that the man in the barber's chair is the legendary superhero.



NOSTALGIA KICK

Jurassic Park: Survival rises in interest across the trailer due to its nostalgia as well as being easy to understand.



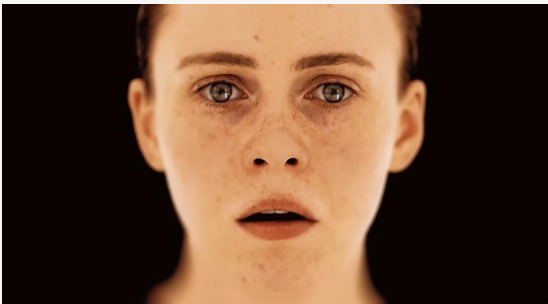
MOST BALANCED

Exodus builds interest in the characters through story cinematics and a glimpse of gameplay.



MOST VOLATILE

No Rest for the Wicked sees lots of spikes in interest from in-game clips but dips due to lacking in originality.



MOST UNIQUE

OD has aspects of story told in a unique and intriguing way; however, it does leave viewers with questions.



VIRAL POTENTIAL

Black Myth: Wukong retains interest by bringing inspiration from the classic story, new to audiences in the west.





BEST PACING

MARVEL BLADE

The trailer for *Marvel's Blade* is a slow-build, culminating to the climax of revealing the titular character Blade with his black suit and katana.

Key Learning: Focus on key characters and establishing a clear climax to the trailer to tie the story together.

KEY TRAILER ATTRIBUTES



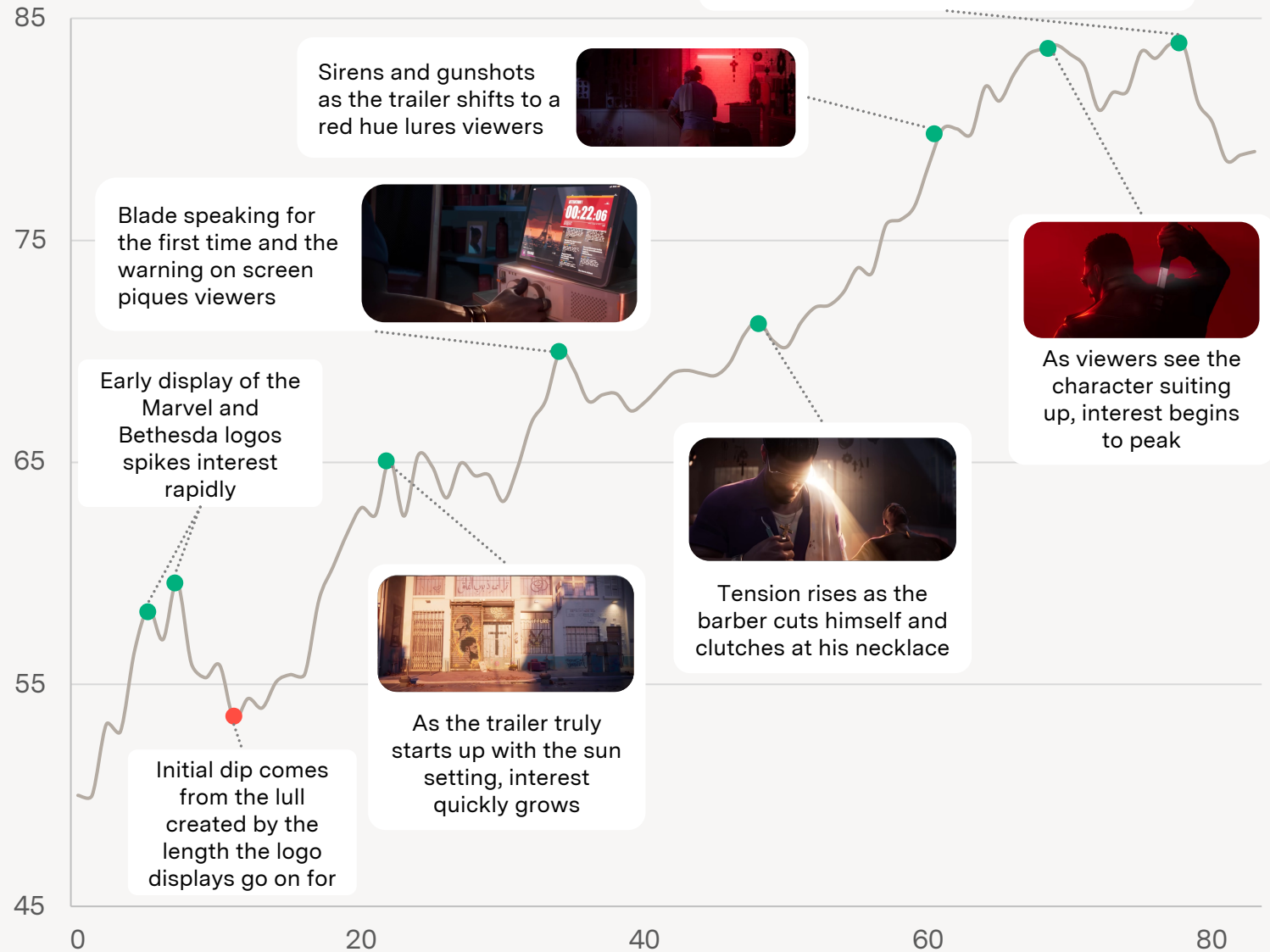
Gives a sense of nostalgia



Is easy to understand



Is from a brand that will create a new experience





MOST BALANCED



Exodus exceeds at tying in cinematic story clips with fast-paced combat gameplay. This helps give players a connection to characters as well as a taste of what the game will be like to play.

Key Learning: Having a balance of cinematics and gameplay helps drive home the entire premise of a game.

KEY TRAILER ATTRIBUTES



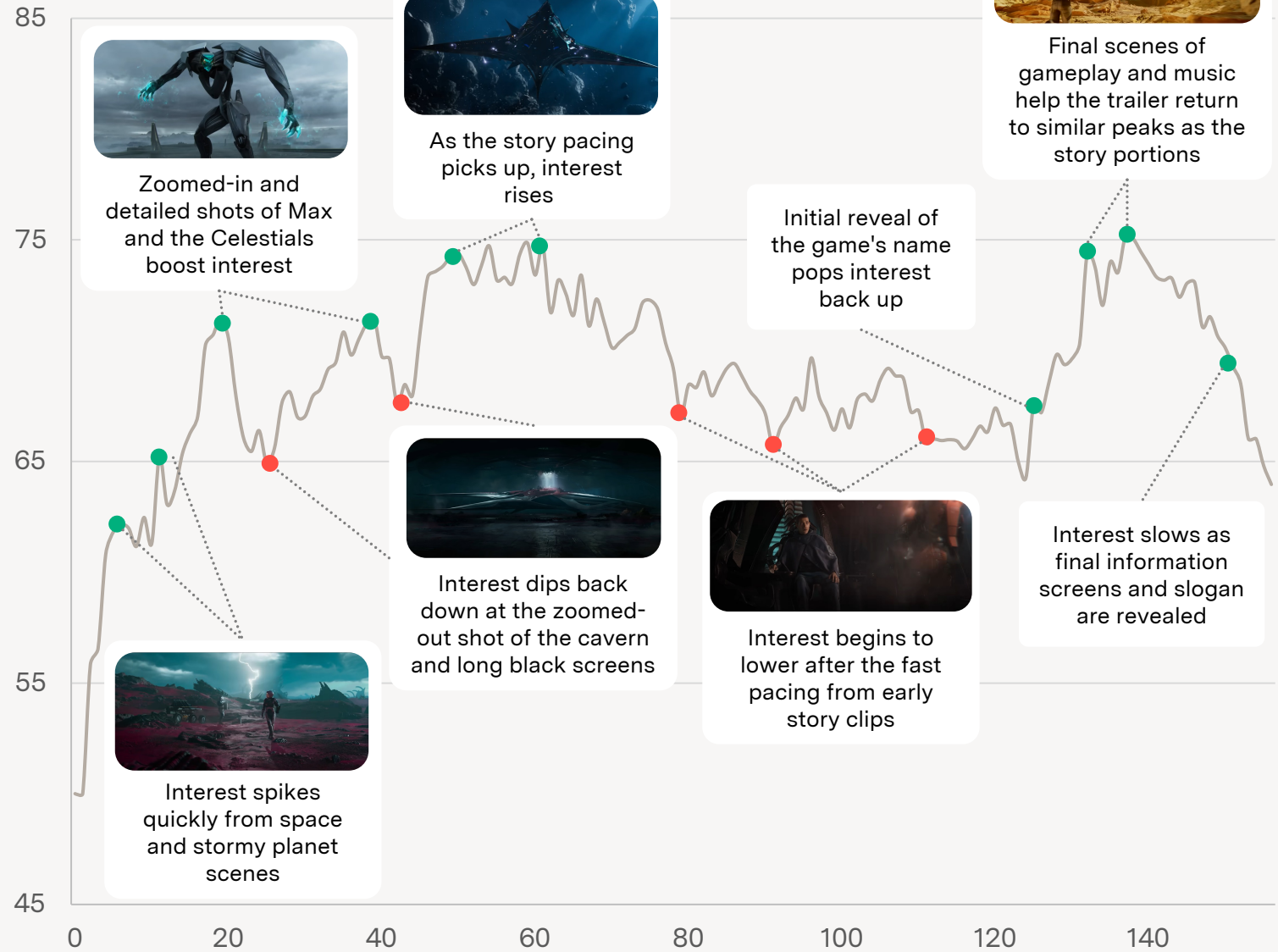
Shows enough of the game's story



Looks like the kind of game I would like



Shows enough of the game's characters





MOST UNIQUE



OD hones in on its uniqueness through its intense tone, backed by popular developers, to capture viewers. However, due to lack of gameplay and clear storyline, many viewers are left confused about what the game will entail.

Key Learning: Being unique can help drive interest in a trailer; however, viewers still want to have some hint of story or gameplay.

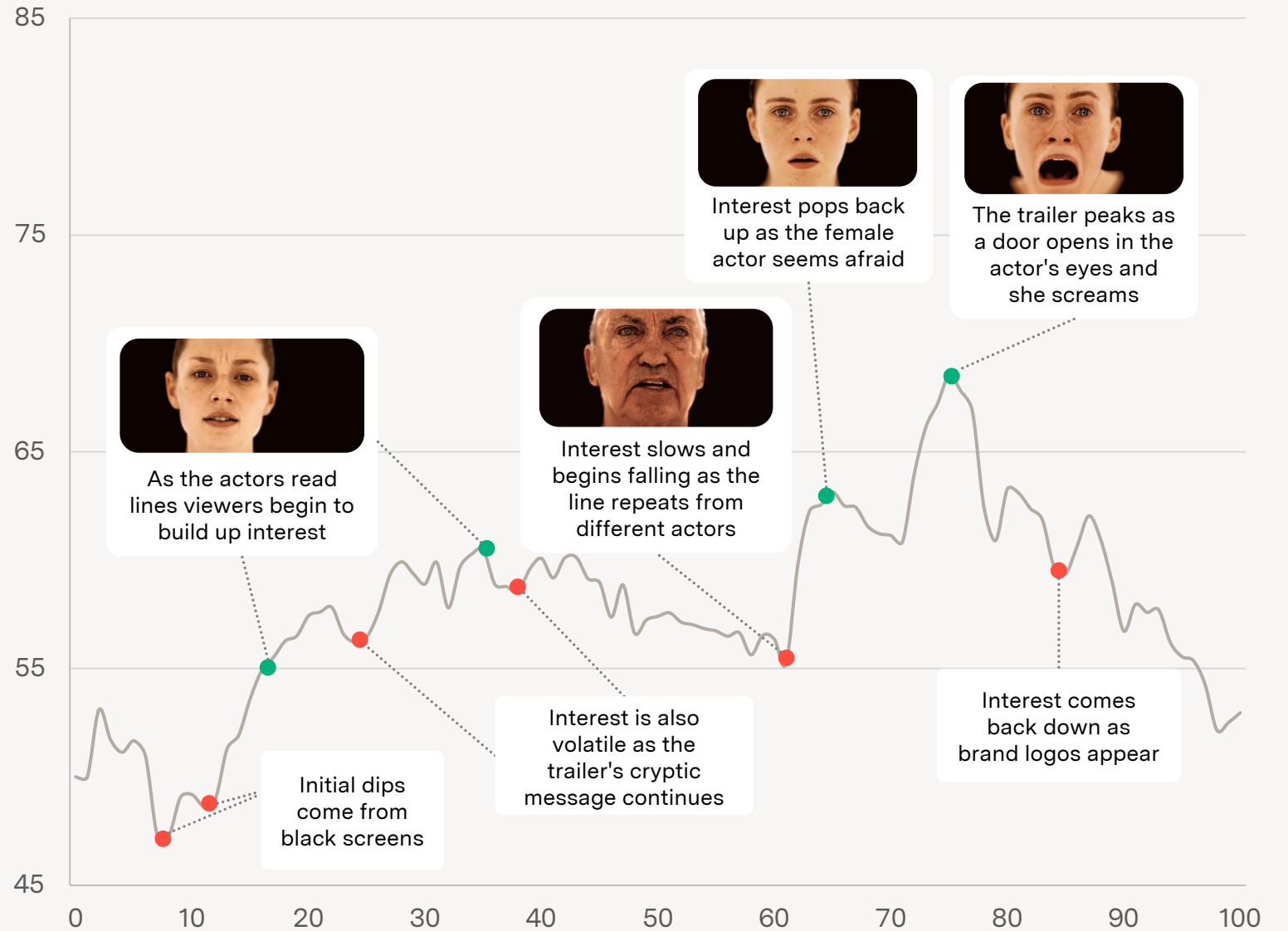
KEY TRAILER ATTRIBUTES



Has characters that seem compelling



Gets me invested emotionally in the game



Trailers are important for building anticipation but need to be thoughtful in their approach.

01

The Game Awards has largely become an avenue for showcasing new game trailers. But its length and extra components deter some viewers—a fact that showcase creators and game marketers should keep in mind.

02

Showcasing games at events that draw eyes can help bring extra attention to trailers for lesser-known games. However, if the franchise is well-established, trailers can be released independently and still find success.

03

Showing the name of the developer or game early on can help spike interest in the trailer, but only if the brand has enough pre-existing equity. In any case, having the right balance of cinematics, gameplay, and storyline clarity is key for driving interest in a new game.

04

Sci-fi and superhero themed games are on the rise, whilst horror games are unique but aren't necessarily driving interest. Given that, it's important for these genres to learn from one another on how to differentiate themselves while still appealing to the masses.



Have questions on these findings or our methodology? Reach out to:

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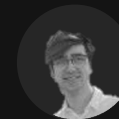


METHODOLOGY

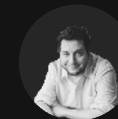
Data in this report is based on a study of 1,000 representative PC/console players, conducted online in December 2023. This study included participants ages 13-45 who play at least one hour of PC or console games a week. Participants were selected to be representative, in terms of age and gender, of demographic profiles of gamers in the US market.

Participants were assigned a random selection of 3 out of 20 trailers to view and give feedback on, with key metrics including purchase intent, purchase urgency, and likelihood to seek info. Participants were then re-shown 1 of the trailers as a “Dial Test,” followed by attribute ratings.

PEOPLE



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