



UCD Quinn School of Business

# THE BUSINESS OF **GAMING**

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**CASE STUDY:**

**Launch of Halo 3 for XBOX 360**

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## CASE STUDY:

Launch of Halo 3 for XBOX 360



### BACKGROUND:

Solve the following case study and be in with a chance to win a one-day internship with Microsoft Ireland's XBOX team. The winner and two finalists will be announced at the XBOX talk to be held at the UCD Quinn School from 18:30 - 20:00 on Thurs, 9th October 2008. The case study winner will be photographed and their win will be announced to media. Students should work on an individual basis, completing one case study per person, and entries should not exceed one typed A4 page or two handwritten A4 pages (i.e. 1,000 words) or they will be disqualified.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Read the following synopsis on the launch of Halo 3 for XBOX 360 in Ireland. After you have read the synopsis, attempt the five questions on page 3, drawing from your knowledge of the business world and your individual creativity. Be advised, the strength of your answers to these questions will ultimately determine the winner! If possible complete this assignment in Word or other word processing programme and send it via e-mail to [businessoftalks@ucd.ie](mailto:businessoftalks@ucd.ie) otherwise post it to the address attached at the end of this document. **Strict deadline for entries is 12:00pm on Mon, 6th October 2008.**

### SYNOPSIS:

Halo 3 is the first person shooter game for 16s which is exclusive to XBOX 360. The game is the third title in the Halo series, which is one of the most popular entertainment franchises in history. With the launch of Halo 3 in Ireland, XBOX wanted to extend media coverage into mainstream media through a strategic Public Relations (PR) campaign without alienating loyal, gaming media.

Although the Halo series is one of the most popular entertainment franchises in history - Halo 2 previously broke box office records when it broke the sales record previously set by Spiderman 2 upon its release in cinemas. Unlike, Halo 2, Halo 3's title lacked any identifiable "stars," therefore limiting its appeal to Irish lifestyle media - the core media group being targeted. XBOX faced the challenge of keeping the XBOX 360's core media contacts, the gaming press, while extending coverage into the mainstream media.

The overall objective was to make Halo 3 the most successful entertainment launch in Irish history and drive widespread appeal of the game. XBOX had to get people talking and position the launch of Halo 3 as a pop and cultural phenomenon. The advertising creative behind the Halo 3 game centred on the theme of "Heroes" and sought to illustrate that each of us can be a hero if we step up to challenges, akin to the Halo 3 main character, Master Chief.

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### STRATEGY:

A) Seed title introduction with gaming media prior to the launch, to ensure gaming press fans are kept in the loop and made to feel special. This involved a series of tactics to include:

1. European Press Trip

- Four journalists from the entertainment/gaming media invited to an exclusive preview of the Halo 3 game.

2. Preview Event

- XBOX LIVE Gaming Centre event in September where preview copies were made available. The event enabled gaming journalists to prepare reviews that would coincide with Halo 3's release and secured a feature in the Irish Times prior to the title's release.

3. Seeding Details of the Launch

- A series of news announcements were made to include: competition to win the first copy of Halo 3 in Ireland, details of the availability of the game in Irish video games stores and the identity of the celebrity coming to launch Halo 3.

4. Activity Targeted at Irish Gamers

- On street promotional activity with two street performers to bring the Master Chief character to life! At the entrance of the Stephen's Green Shopping Centre, 1,000 people took their picture alongside Master Chief in costume.

B) Position Halo 3 as a "cult phenomenon," by adopting a movie premiere style launch.

C) Pick Halo 3's own action hero and Hollywood star that would resonate with the Irish public and lifestyle media.

1. Richard Dean Anderson, the star of TV series MacGyver and Stargate

- Launch photocall and media interviews with star- Ray Darcy Show & TV3's Exposé
- Launch party in Tripod for Microsoft staff, media & key influencers
- Midnight launch with retail partner, Gamestop at Stephen's Green Shopping Centre branch. 500 customers queued to purchase their copy of Halo 3.

D) Take advantage of worldwide XBOX launch plans to drive economies of scale but also to demonstrate the truly global nature of the Halo 3 launch.

### EVALUATION:

Media coverage was extensive and Halo 3 had a record number of pre-orders. XBOX 360 sales outshone the PS3 and Nintendo Wii following the September launch.

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## QUESTIONS

- 1 Define the term, 'economies of scale.' (5 marks)
- 2 The XBOX team along with Public Relations company formulated a strategic PR campaign to launch the Halo 3 game to the Irish market and drive customers to purchase their copy. Explain challenges this communications team had to consider to ensure campaign success. (5 marks)
- 3 In your opinion, what part of the PR campaign led to the success of the launch of Halo 3 in Ireland? (10 marks)
- 4 What role did celebrity endorsement play during this campaign? (10 marks)
- 5 Propose two other PR tactics that could have been implemented during this campaign to drive sales of Halo 3 around Ireland. (10 marks)

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**Upon completion, email or post your entry to the following address:**

Email: businessoftalks@ucd.ie

Post to: Agata Mazurkiewicz  
Marketing Office  
UCD Quinn School of Business  
UCD  
Belfield  
Dublin 4

Phone: 01 716 4833

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