

Bushido, and the art of staying sane in the gaming business

Lars Kroll Kristensen
Tech director, Unity studios

Ghost dog

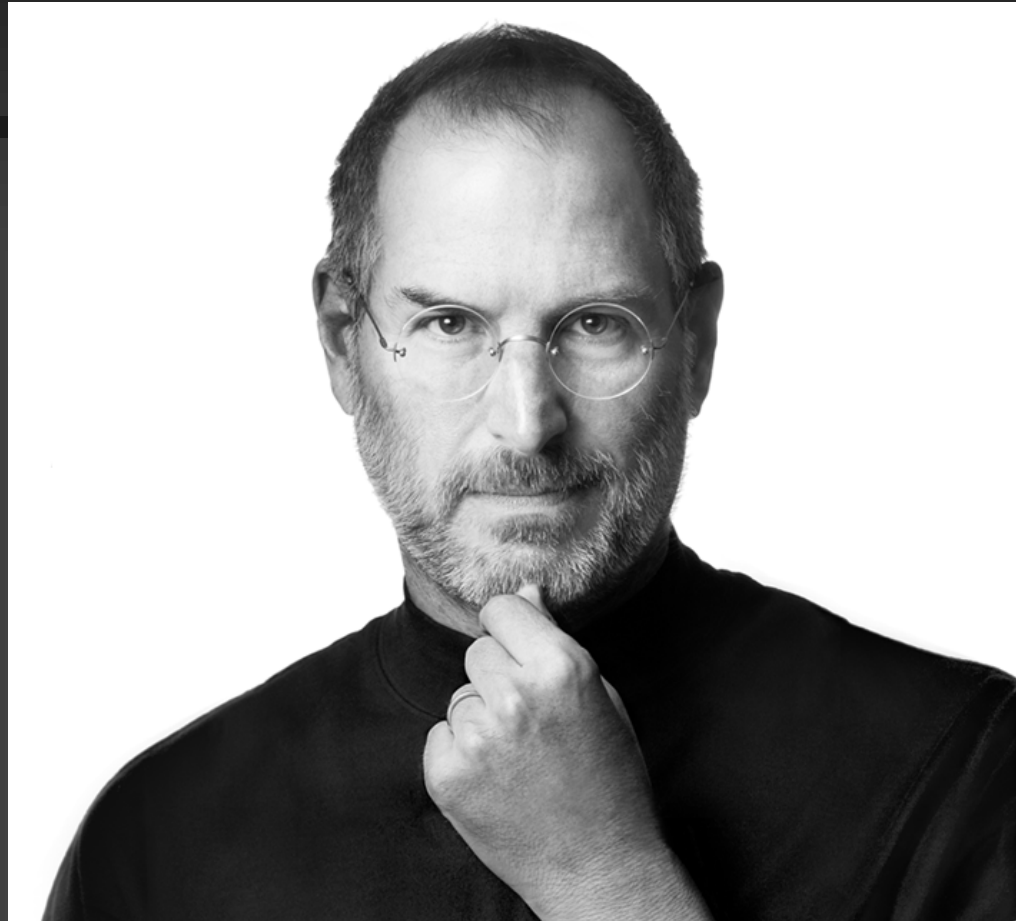
Jim Jarmusch

- Awesome movie
- Illustrates the way of the samurai, bushido
- Quotes from “Hagakure” (Hidden leaves) by Yamamoto Tsunetomo
- Beware metaphors, but there is wisdom there
- But what the hell does that have to do with “cool” ?



Core of cool

- Execution
- Innovation
- Branding
- Story telling
- Best in the world



unity studios Me

- Involved in 3 cool companies
- All game development
- All “Best in the world, at what we do”
- One of them bankrupt (which isn’t cool...)



unity studios

The best in the world

- The secret lies in defining carefully what you do....
- The best, by virtue of lack of competition
- The best, by virtue of experience
- The best, by virtue of skill
- The best, by virtue of brand

Runestone

- “Taking an enemy on the battlefield is like a hawk taking a bird. Even when it enters into the midst of a thousand of them, it pays no attention to any bird other than the one it has first marked.”



Runestone

- Developed “Seed” :a non-combat, roleplay centered MMO
- Zero competition
- Niche market: Clear, focused customer segment
- “Cool” story -> free marketing
- Non-feature became main selling point



Runestone

- The Way of the Samurai is in desperateness. Ten men or more cannot kill such a man. Common sense will not accomplish great things. Simply become insane and desperate





Runestone

- We dared do, what others dared not
- We addressed an untapped market
- We started with inadequate funding
- We were unexperienced
- We were basically crazy

Runestone

- “Every day, without fail, one should consider himself as dead. This is the substance of the Way of the Samurai.”



Runestone

- "Train yourself to let go of everything you fear to lose."
- Yoda to Anakin Skywalker



- We went bankrupt
- It sucks....
- ...But it's not the end of the world
- Part of pushing the envelope, is accepting risk
- Part of accepting risk, is letting go of fear
- Letting go of fear, lets you focus on important stuff.

- “Continue to spur a running horse.”
-Hagakure





Unity technologies

- Develops “Unity”: A very cool game engine
- Rethinking the business model and tech base of game engines
- Democratizing game development
- “Three guys in an apartment”
- Now: An industry standard



Unity technologies

- Clear mission: Democratizing game development
- Disruptively innovative
 - Business model, customer base, technology
- Changed gamedevelopment, or reacted to change
- FAFF (80-20 rule)

- Among the maxims on Lord Naoshige's wall there was this one: "Matters of great concern should be treated lightly." Master Ittei commented, "Matters of small concern should be treated seriously."





Unity studios

- A consulting/contracting company.
- Exclusively Unity projects
- Sister company to Unity technologies
- Active since before Unity was big
- Best in the world, by virtue of skill, experience, brand and to some extent lack of competition.

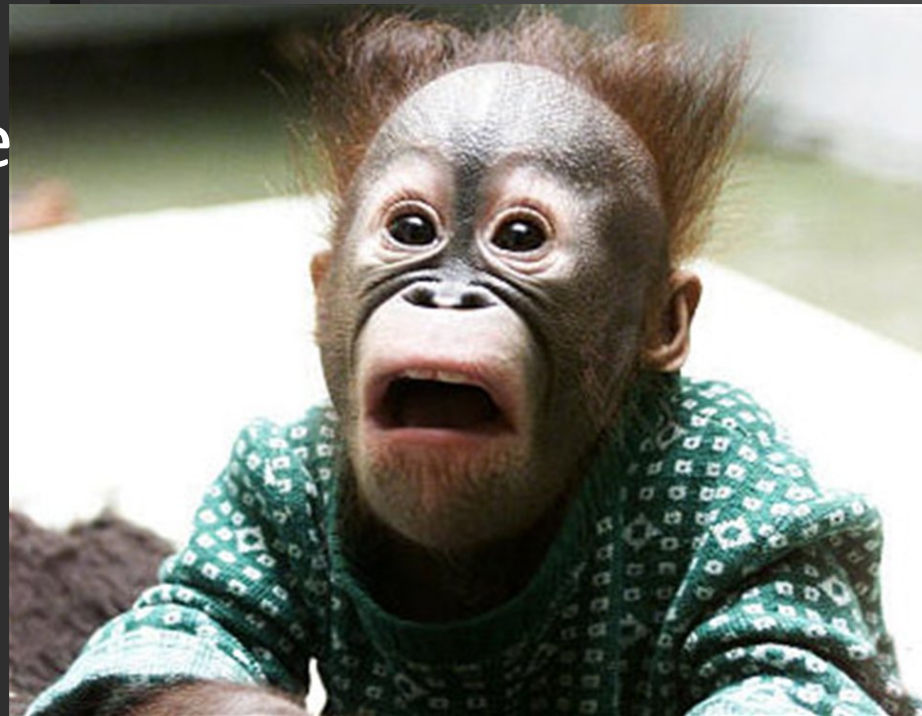


Unity studios

- Clear focus: only Unity -> Makes us specialists
- Hard problems -> Makes us experts
- Strong processes -> Execution
- Employees: cool place to work
- Track record: Tells the story
- Risk averse, not innovative,yet
- First own game out for Xmas (Assault marines, iOS)

Caveat emptor

- Furthermore, drinking a decoction of feces from a dappled horse is the way to stop bleeding from an injury received by falling off a horse.
 - Hagakure



Questions

- www.unity3d.com
- www.unity-studios.com
- Hagakure
- Kroll@unity-studios.com
- ...and don't drink horse feces OK ?