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## Brand History

Successful companies are known for establishing their role in the video game industry with landmark games. Riot Games, creator of the widely popular multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) League of Legends, focuses on competition and constant updating of the game to keep it fresh for players. Telltale Games, a company that combines simple color palettes, cel shading and a storydriven narrative to cement their episodic genre within the industry. Naughty Dog, yet another recently established, but incredibly successful company, made its name through exceptional storytelling and clutch combat experiences. While each company is arguably successful at what they create, they are not risk takers. Each brand more or less sticks to the genre that they are most comfortable with, having been satisfied with the success of their intellectual property (IP). Because of this notion, not many are willing to try and branch out into different types of genres.

Of course, taking such risks usually comes with its problems. The company may lose its reputation as a quality developer overall if mistakes are made. Hence, not many will use their creative expertise at something new and unknown to them. In their minds, if a game is already a smashing hit, there is no need to work on other genres. The company would simply build off from the success of a single genre, leaving little room for variety. However, as eSports continue to grow and legitimize itself, not branching out to multiple genres may prove to be the downfall of many video game companies. They are essentially closing themselves off from many different types of players.

One company that has created multiple as well as widely successful IP's is Blizzard Entertainment. Known for their polish and refinement in terms of creative development, Blizzard's games have managed to create landmark successes in many different categories and genres. Starcraft for example, is a real-time strategy (RTS) game that pioneered the world of eSports, which notably began in South Korea. Since then, eSports had shown exponential growth because of the kick start it had with audiences on the other side of the world. Warcraft, yet another RTS, later became a massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG). Its success is largely in part of the company's ambitious vision to expand its horizons from the RTS genre, something that it has already done well. This was often described as the riskiest decision made in Blizzard history, perhaps in any video game company, as they had never created an MMORPG before. They were successful in their endeavor. Blizzard Entertainment created a world wide phenomenon that boasts millions of players across the globe, all the while remaining the number one MMORPG to this day.

The Diablo series, a hack and slash genre, cemented itself as a classic amongst fans, so much so that Nintendo had recently announced a port of Diablo 3 for the Switch. The action further branched out with the console community to Blizzard. More recently, Blizzard's newest IP Overwatch, a first person shooter (FPS), generated yet another global success, scoring over 40 million players by May 2018. With colorful and unique character designs not usually seen in an FPS before (take the Call of Duty series for example), Overwatch had polished the FPS genre by steering away from the grey and gore seen commonly in FPS'. Inspired by the hit game Team Fortress, the developers at Blizzard had brought in a fresh palette of colors into Overwatch while adding its own signature polish to the game.

The combination of fresh colors and memorable character designs caught on with millions, including high-end media outlets covering the massive hit. Eventually, Blizzard decided to take it a step further by creating the Overwatch League (OWL), an eSports league that follows the model of professional sports by signing in players, organizing teams and assuring salaries to members. ESPN had recently acknowledged the potential within eSports and have decided to partner up with Blizzard by broadcasting the OWL on their channel. In doing so, eSports is formally recognized as a legitimate competitive sport, something that was and still is laughed at decades ago.

However, even as eSports continue to garner attention to major media outlets, the stigma of being a professional player still has weight. It is undeniable that the gaming industry has had an explosive and notable growth, partly thanks to the rise of gaming tournaments and streaming, but many audiences (most recently on NBC news) believe “gaming” and “salary” do not go together. To many viewers, the notion of being a professional athlete in video games is just downright silly. Everything from the diction to the interview by NBC was dismissive to said pro-players. The stigma usually denotes laziness and entitlement. Overall not a very established reputation outside of the gaming community.

Blizzard Entertainment had come a long way from their small titles and ports. Before leading the charge within the eSports industry, Blizzard started off as a small, tight knit company founded by Mike Morhaime, Frank Pearce and Allen Adham in February 18, 1991. Known as Silicon and Synapse at the time, the company focused on creating ports of games for other brands, as they had no prior knowledge of the game industry. Morhaime and the rest of the team originally named the company based on the combination of computer parts (silicon chips) and

the human mind (synapses). Of course, nobody understood the idea, so the name didn't catch on. Later, the company changed its name to Chaos Studios, although it didn't stick around for too long.



*The first logo used in the history of Blizzard Entertainment. The amount of misspellings and jokes flying over people's heads came as no surprise, as nobody really understood the name.*



*The Chaos Studios logo used from 1993 to 1994.*

The picture on the right was the first logo used in 1991-1993, before

changing temporarily to Chaos Studios in 1993-1994. The company finally settled on Blizzard Entertainment and updated its logo accordingly in May 1994. They stuck with the blue logo since, only

changing in color and gradient depending on the franchise. For example, in the opening scenes of the Diablo games, the



*The current logo of Blizzard Entertainment versus a coloration found in the opening scenes of the Diablo 3 cinematic.*

company's logo would swap out the blue for a hellish red. This color swap fitted with the overall theme of the Diablo franchise, which involved a dark storyline and gorey violence.

As with any creative process, feedback was a key factor in the creation of the logo. Its founding came solely from a dictionary. The team started with a dictionary and narrowed down a list of words. They then passed it on to their employees and legal department before finalizing the trademark. According to co-founder Allen Adham, they specifically chose "Entertainment" because the company wanted the franchises to grow from being just games. He, as well as the

rest of company, wanted them to be in other types of medium. Almost 2 decades later, Blizzard Entertainment succeeded in doing just that. Not only did they immortalize their own franchises within novels, comic books, and eSports, but their successes within the video game industry had laid the precedent of what it meant to be a high-end video game developer.

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