

# Case Study - Silicon Sisters Interactive

BMKT 365

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*The case of Silicon Sisters Interactive can be found at <http://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/business-administration/official-case-challenge/sample-cases.php> (2010)*

*Updated news at <http://www2.canada.com/theprovince/news/story.html?id=be1461a3-5d11-4ed5-83f7-889fdeae703f&p=1> (2013)*

# The Case of Silicon Sisters Interactive

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## 1. SITUATION ASSESSMENT

**Symptoms:** Silicon Sisters Interactive (SSI) introduced their first game School 26 quite successful and gained a lot of free press and publicity

**Issues:** They are currently developing a new game called Everlove which is a romance novel in form of a casual game, and targets women aged 35-50 year old. Several marketing challenges arise at the time: how to convince targeted consumers to move from reading novels to “playing” in novels and how to seek alternative channels to distribute the game directly to this market within a limited budget,...

**Opportunities:** Huge potential for new quality game made for women, no considerable competitors at the time and a lot of free press thanks to their special business story

**Persons making the decision:** Brenda Bailey Gershkovitch (CEO) and Kristen Forbes (COO)

**Time frame:** Next 6 months (assumed)

**Complexity of case:** Analytical

## 2. SWOT MATRIX

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canada’s first female owned and run video game studio, female focus, successfully introduced School 26 → High brand awareness</li> <li>• Gained a lot of publicity and free press</li> <li>• Games made for women and girls by women and girls → Product design skills</li> <li>• Much experience with gaming industry</li> <li>• Understanding women audiences’ tastes</li> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> mover advantages in female gamer segments</li> <li>• Strong supporting academic researchers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeking suitable distribution channels</li> <li>• Limited financial resources</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A large female gamer segment has been ignored or recently targeted but in a superficial level → overall lack of quality in games produced for females</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertainty</li> </ul>

- In casual game: the average social female gamer worldwide: 43 year old
- Female gamers are a very fast-growing, potentially lucrative
- Rapidly growing number of female gamers on smartphones and social networks. Even more women play games on these platforms than men do
- Weak rivalry

### 3. OVERALL PROBLEM STATEMENT

How to convince targeted consumers to move from reading novels to “playing” in novels and how to seek alternative channels to distribute the game directly to this market within a limited budget

### 4. MARKETING TOOLKITS

#### Target market

Women: gamers, 35-50 years old, are more inclined to play with real-life friends, actively engage in social media, may well read romance novels (e-books), but have never integrated these pursuits before

In casual game category: most of (female) gamers prefer Facebook for gaming sessions

#### Porter’s 5 forces analysis for female gamer market

	<p><b>THREAT OF ENTRY</b>          (-) Learning curve effects, patents          (-) High sunk cost (R&amp;D expenses)</p>	
<p><b>BARGAINING POWER OF SUPPLIERS</b>          (-) A small amount of experienced and creative female game designers</p>	<p><b>INTENSITY OF RIVALRY</b>          (+) Currently, almost no big competitors          Many small game studios</p>	<p><b>BARGAINING POWER OF CUSTOMERS</b>          (+) Many alternative female consumers          (+) Low switching cost</p>
	<p><b>THREAT OF SUBSTITUTES (+)</b>          Console: Wii, Xbox and PS3          PopCap Games          Alternative activities: reading novels,...          Complements: smartphones, tablets,...</p>	

Where:

(-) is for the factors that make the industry less attractive;

(+) is for the factors that make the industry more attractive.

→ The industry is very attractive.

And at the moment Silicon Sisters Interactive are leveraging their advantages as the 1<sup>st</sup> mover and a female owned studio producing games for women.

## 5. BRAINSTORM ALTERNATIVES

Some alternatives are brainstormed from the combination of the SWOT and 5-forces analyses:

1. Offer consumers trials for free download
2. Let bloggers to tests the full version for free, after that, they will write about their experiences with the game
3. Make sure all the information about the game appears on internet, magazines, experts' talks and the other media
4. Utilize their prior network of distribution for the School 26 to introduce Everlove
5. Treat Everlove as an e-book instead of only as a casual game
6. Marketing campaigns should focus on promoting the advantages of Everlove over “normal” romance novels

## 6. EVALUATE ALTERNATIVES

Potential profit – Cost – Risk + Customer satisfaction + Quantity + Market share = Total

Alternatives	Potential profit	(Cost)	(Risk)	Customer satisfaction	Quantity	Market share	Total
Offer consumers trials for free download	4	0	0	5	3	4	<b>16</b>
Let bloggers to tests the full version for free, after that, they will write about their experiences with the game	3	0	1	4	3	3	<b>12</b>
Make all the important information appear on internet, magazines, experts' talks and the other media	2	3	0	5	4	4	<b>12</b>
Utilize the prior network of	4	2	3	4	4	3	<b>10</b>

distribution for the School 26 to introduce Everlove							
Treat Everlove as an e-book instead of only as a casual game	4	2	3	4	4	4	<b>11</b>
Marketing campaigns should focus on promoting the advantages of Everlove over “normal” romance novels	3	3	2	5	4	4	<b>11</b>

## 7. SELECTED ALTERNATIVES

Basing on the assessment above, I recommend SSI to use the combination of all alternative above which are:

1. Offer consumers trials for free download
2. Let bloggers to tests the full version for free, after that, they will write about their experiences with the game
3. Make sure all the information about the game appears on internet, magazines, experts’ talks and the other media
4. Utilize their prior network of distribution for the School 26 to introduce Everlove
5. Treat Everlove as an e-book instead of only as a casual game
6. Marketing campaigns should focus on promoting the advantages of Everlove over “normal” romance novels

## 8. OUTLINE THE EXECUTION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Silicon Sisters Interactive should utilize their prior network of distribution for the School 26 to introduce Everlove this time, because obviously School 6’s secondary targets were mom 35-50 years old, educators and social workers. These influencers now become SSI’s primary focus and they knew the sources where they could get a SSI’s quality game for females already. Moreover, with these sources, teen girls now can be the influencers who were familiar with SSI’s first game, will talk about game reviews and encourage their female seniors to try playing.

SSI should think about introducing Everlove as an e-book instead of only as a casual game. Their target consumers may be well romance novels and embrace e-books. Apparently Everlove now is among novel

alternatives when SSI try to move women from reading novels to playing Everlove, a novel in game format. So, I recommend Everlove should be available in real-life book stores, virtual book stores and the like too.

Marketing campaigns should focus on the advantages of Everlove over “normal” romance novels. With Everlove, women do not only passively follow the characters but now actively become 1 of them. The game can be replayed many times, with different adventures, different feelings, different outcomes, but the same pleasure. The game is more interactive escapism and at a competitive price compared with ebooks.

As women tend to seek information from numbers of sources like internet, friends, experts, magazines and the other media, SSI should make sure that these sources are covered by the game’s benefits, values and messages. SSI can use testimonials from satisfied gamers, get the talk about their reviews on social media like Facebook, Twitter,... to help Everlove overcome general skepticism about its entertainment. SSI can also use available affection from press and get them to become the best and most effective Everlove’s supporters. The publicity, by the way, may change the ways websites like [www.bigfishgames.com](http://www.bigfishgames.com) view Everlove and games for females in general.

Offer the game to well-known bloggers for them to build an overview of the game on social media. Social media are the effective information channels specially to women. That overview may appear really genuine and critical to consumers in the way SSI cannot promote objectively.

Like most mobile videogames, SSI should give away a part of Everlove for gamers to download and try. After that, gamers can purchase the full version at a discount price or buy each item each time they want. This method will also help the download numbers remained on sales charts and create other opportunities like targeted ad sales.

## **9. BUDGET**

Within the grant of \$50,000, I recommend SSI spending 15% on advertising, 8% on bloggers’ reviews, and 20% on seeking suitable distribution channels. The rest (57%) will be saved for unforeseen opportunities which may arise later.