Gold & Goblins

AppQuantum

$12,000,000

Ad Concept Spend

How we created one of our most successful ad concepts with a spend of more than **$12,000,000** for the hit mobile game

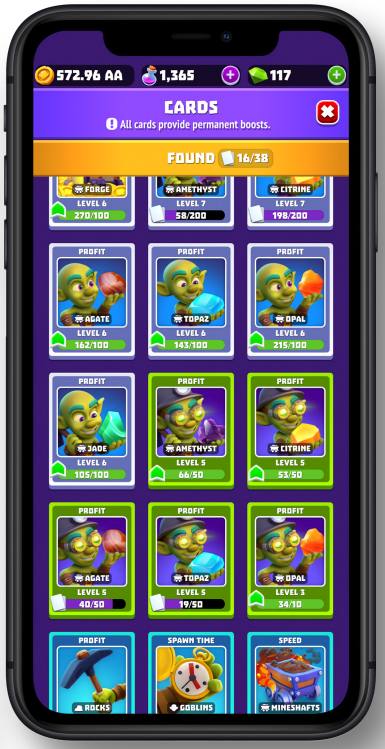
Background

Gold & Goblins: Idle Merger is an Idle game with merge mechanics where the player controls little goblins that mine gold in shafts. The player's goal is to manage resources, get more goblins, merge them, and break ever-growing rocks to find gold and get to the next shaft.

It was developed by Redcell Games, a mobile game studio based out of Canada. They developed their debut game called Gold & Goblins, published it with AppQuantum, and quickly grew into a big, successful company.

Gold & Goblins is still a hit several years after its release and was **the Top-1 grossing Idle Tycoon game in 2022 worldwide and in the US**. You can learn more about its achievements from its product case.

Part of the game's commercial success is its world-famous advertising creatives. It's time to tell the story of their creation.



We created more than 1750 creatives for Gold & Goblins in 2022 with our partners. We get deep into our audience's head and try to understand what the project is about, who it's for, and what the developer put into it. AppQuantum has broad expertise in many related genres, allowing us to test successful ideas on different projects quickly. Thanks to our special approach, GAGAPPQ-867 was created.

— Vitaly Gladkov, Head of Creative & Production, AppQuantum

AppQuantum's Approach to Creatives

To share more valuable insights on the reasons for the success of our ad creatives, we present the general scheme of work in our Creative & Production Team:

Idea

- Brainstorming
- Market Research (trends, cases)
- RnD

Ideas are discussed with the team and selected by the Creative Producer for further development.

Script

Scenarios are worked out together with the Art Lead and approved by the Producer.

The task goes to the Project Manager

Art Leads

- We produce several hundred creatives a month for all our projects thanks to our system of production with freelancers and an in-house team.
- The Project Manager selects the ideal assignee, depending on the specifics of the task and needed skills/deadline.
- The Project Manager also works as a liaison between all participants.

The Art Leads are the directors' co-authors on the visual part of the creative. They have broader expertise than the Motion Graphics Designers and are deeply immersed in the project, including the development of the creatives' visual style.

Animators / Artists

When the creative is ready, the Producer sends it to the UA tests.

We conduct tests on install optimization (as it's cheaper) in a low-cost GEO with audience behavior similar to the main markets.

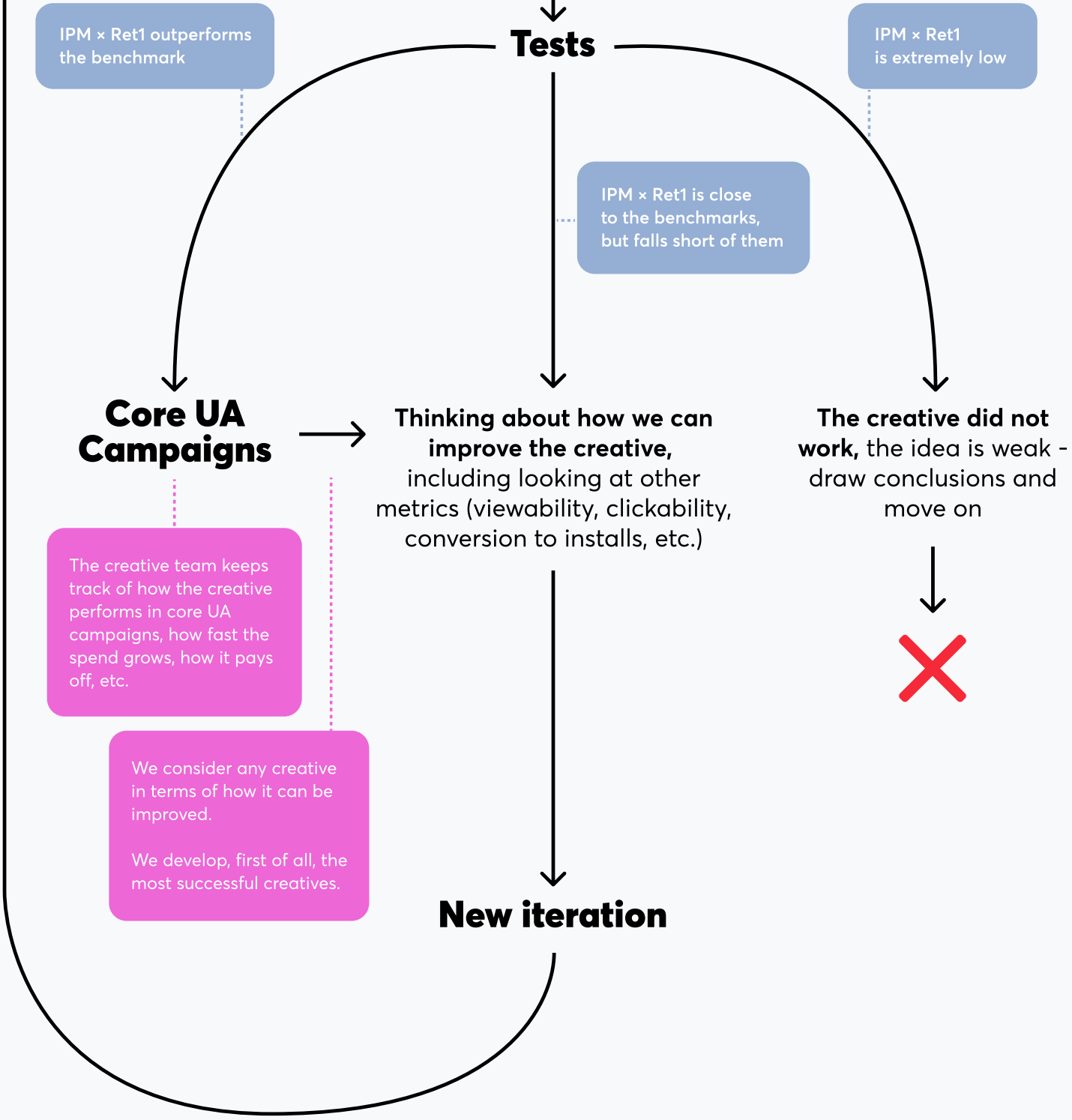
IPM = Installs per Mille (the number of installs per thousand impressions of the ad). Ret d1 = Retention day 1 (the number of players returning to the game one day after downloading).

IPM shows the advertising appeal of the creative. Retention - how much the creative's audience is interested in the game.

If IPM is high and Ret is low - the ad brings non-relevant audiences that aren't interested in our game and won't pay off in UA.

Low IPM and high Ret won't allow to scale the UA spend.

We are looking for a balance in these two metrics. For this, we use the metric IPM × Ret d1 or IPM × Ret d3



The Road to the Creative's Success

Creative GAGAPPQ-636

Initially, we wanted to build on the success of one of our creatives, GAGAPPQ-636. It was performing in UA campaigns quite well, but it wasn't a super hit.

SPEND: ~$550,000

Developing The Concept

The 636th creative presented complexities due to the scene's multitude of mechanics and actions. Our fundamental assumption suggested that this creative could be enhanced in three specific ways:

- Amplifying emotional hooks
- Simplifying mechanics
- Refining visuals

To put these improvements in action, we dissected the video into its primary components and selected a handful of elements to use as the foundation for new creatives:

- The stunning gorge location enclosed by cliffs
- The central protagonist
- An impressive heap of gold and an enticing collection of valuable resources as the first event
- Buildings that generate goblin minions for automated mining

After several rounds of refinement, we arrived at a new standout - the 867th creative.

The 867th Creative

The idea for this creative came from only a sticker on the MIRO board with the words: "Buying the Land". These three words fit the concept we often saw analyzing the market and ads of competitors' game projects during that period. Initially, we didn't have much faith in the concept, leaving it highly questionable. We agreed that the concept would come to fruition if the script and storyboard convinced everyone. The script was based on the storyboard in the MIRO, where the key events of the video were marked, references for animation were collected, and the required assets were specified. This script convinced the team, and the production process began.

— Vitaly Gladkov, Head of Creative & Production, AppQuantum

Creative GAGAPPQ-867

GAGAPPQ-867 is one of Gold & Goblins' most successful creatives and a logical result of our approach, which we have been developing for the last two years. We determine the success of a creative in a test using a metric linking the creative's advertising appeal and its relevance to the game - IPM × Retention.

IPM × Retention ×1.5 times*

*during the test, compared to the 636th creative

SPEND: $7,500,000+*

*×13 times more than on 636th creative

The First Week After the Tests

Our team produces a lot of creatives in a short period of time. This is the result of a well-organized production process. That sets us apart from other large companies, which take a very long time to prepare for the production of an idea.

We aim to quickly realize our ideas, so that we can test as many concepts as possible and rely on their results in the future. For Gold & Goblins, we've done about 5-7 times more creatives than our competitor produces in a few years for a single project. With this approach to creatives, we achieve a much better understanding of the product in any genre.

— Vitaly Gladkov, Head of Creative & Production, AppQuantum

Creative GAGAPPQ-1088

After the tests, we immediately began major and minor developments. We increased the timing of the creatives, extending the actions and events. This way, we created another benchmark, an extended version of the 867th Creative (45 seconds long) - **GAGAPPQ-1088**.

SPEND: $4,000,000+

Results

$12,000,000+

Total spend on this concept, including the 636th, the 867th, and the 1088th creatives

Contact us!

Do you have a mobile game in alpha or a later stage?
We have investments, marketing resources,
and extensive expertise in user acquisition.
You too can increase your profit.
Talk to one of our specialists at AppQuantum.

Get started

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