

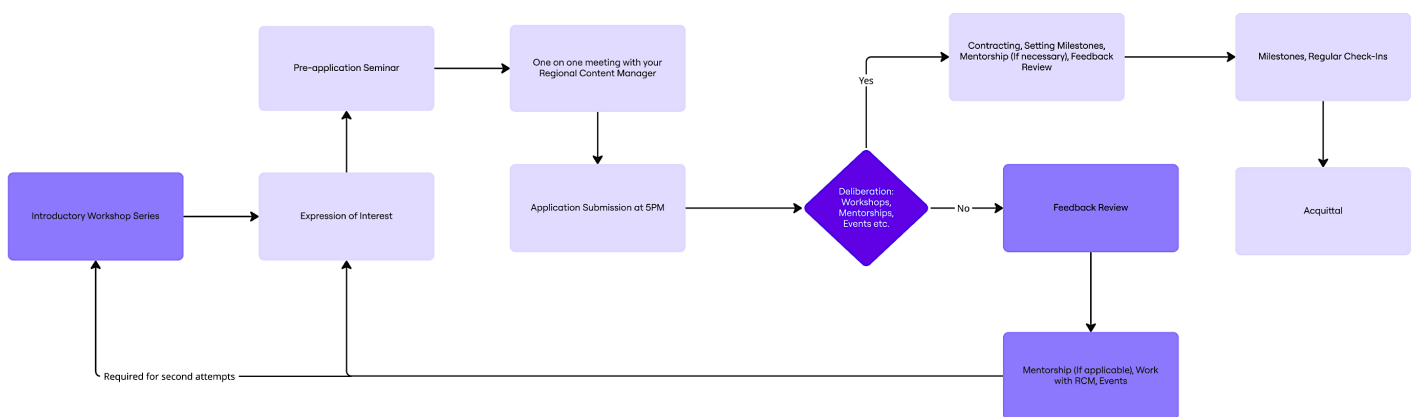
CODE INTRO WORKSHOPS

2025 Resource Guide



The CODE team hosts a 6-part series of Workshops in which we dive deeper into what is needed for new teams looking towards a CODE grant application in the future. Covering topics from ideation and prototyping to market research and your go to market strategy.

As part of the workshops series each member of the CODE team has supplied additional resources for each topic so that you can explore each subject further and start your studio's journey with a solid foundation.



CODE Introductory Workshops 2025:

1. **Introduction to Workshop Series:** <https://youtu.be/9yFylQpxV4w>
2. **Ideation and Prototyping:** <https://youtu.be/tSAj6UCc0ys>
3. **Market Research and Risk:** <https://youtu.be/7rhOD0nQ39s>
4. **Getting Started with Marketing:** <https://youtu.be/4DO293YSZlo>
5. **Go To Market 2025:** https://youtu.be/st_2LJi0Is
6. **Applying to CODE:** <https://youtu.be/NbDwZZFWDXE>





Workshop 1: Introduction to Workshop Series

- **Presentation Slides**

Workshop 2: Ideation and Prototyping

Coming up with game ideas is heaps of fun, but it can be challenging to look at game ideation and prototype validation from a business point of view. By having a process that helps you to understand what you want to make, what you can make and what you can sell, and then doing research to help validate your game ideas through ideation and prototyping, you can give yourself a better chance at finding a game that will be less risky from a commercial stand point.

Prototyping, be it with paper or through code, will help you quickly understand what feels fun by making the smallest (ugliest) version of the game idea so you can evaluate if it's worth continuing with.

- **Presentation Slides**

Ideation

1. Practical Ideation Methods - Indie Game Clinic:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LMOCQNcMleg>
2. Framework for choosing which games to move forward with (early and later in production):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKJDv8NI9T0>

Prototyping

1. Prototyping (how, when, why):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tHJgtbj6rs>
2. Ways to prototype:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tHJgtbj6rs>
3. Tools for Defining Game Vision: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/15GmQ5HNGQ2U-pojXu4CwTfrAJIE4UaMdAqjkBu8XOns/edit?usp=sharing>

Researching

1. 10 Questions to Ask When Starting a Studio:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UeMRct_XGMRDKr6xhaQh9EKpqPcgrqb-
2. Steam Tag Analysis:
<https://impress.games/steam-tag-analysis-optimization-tool>
3. Workshop 3 and 4 from this series!

Game Design Documents

Note that there are many ways to write these, here are some suggestions. Figure out what works for you.

1. GDD anatomy:
<https://www.gamedeveloper.com/design/the-anatomy-of-a-design-document-part-1-documentation-guidelines-for-the-game-concept-and-proposal>
2. How to write a GDD without losing your mind:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8F7gBuqe4I>
3. GDD's Made Simple:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e43A3ool6cl>

Playtesting

1. Setting up a good playtest:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=on7endO4IPY>
2. Playtesting Questions (boardgames focused and great for videogames too):
<https://www.skeletoncodemachine.com/p/playtesting-questions>
3. More playtesting questions - a deeper dive:
<https://sglabs.schellgames.com/post/160052690343/the-definitive-guide-to-playtest-questions>



Workshop 3: Market Research and Risk

Market research is the backbone of product selection. It is how you decide whether your game idea is worth making.

By looking at the market, you can determine whether you have a strong enough hook, whether you're in the correct genre and take examples from your competitors in order to have a starting point when it comes to marketing.

This data provides a pragmatic touch point for conversation with investors and publishers so that you are able to reduce the risk of your project and stack your hand for success.

- **Presentation Slides**

References / Resources

1. <https://substack.com/@michalnapora/p-174504607>
2. <https://games-stats.com/steam/tags/>
3. <https://howtomarketagame.com/2025/01/15/what-the-hell-happened-in-2024/>
4. Resources
 - VGInsights/ Sensor Tower: <https://app.sensortower.com/vgi/>
 - GameDiscover.Co
 - Quantic Foundry - Psychographics, player motivations: <https://quanticfoundry.com/>
 - SteamDB: <https://steamdb.info/>
 - Steam Tag Surveyor: <https://blueoceangames.shinyapps.io/steam-tag-surveyor/>
 - NewZoo: <https://newzoo.com/>
 - IndieBI.com: <https://indiebi.com/>
 - howtomarketagame.com
 - <https://howtomarketagame.com/2021/07/12/how-to-market-your-indie-game-a-10-step-plan/>
 - <https://howtomarketagame.com/2025/01/15/what-the-hell-happened-in-2024/>
5. <https://www.are.na/block/17353487>
6. Quantic Foundry: <https://quanticfoundry.com/>
7. JDR Talks & Marketing Testing:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffjeJtBdLJk> - JDR Competitive Analysis Nov 23
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sx287AlcMs4> - JDR Community Validation Nov 23
 - <https://lancaric.me/how-to-save-millions-with-marketability-testing/> - Market Testing - Matej Lancaric
8. Navi's Risk talk: <https://youtu.be/ZvOPYwVKg9k>
9. <https://www.gamedeveloper.com/design/replayability-part-2-game-mechanics>
10. <https://gameaccessibilityguidelines.com/>
11. <https://gamesuserresearch.com/how-to-write-a-playtest-survey/>



Workshop 4: Getting Started with Marketing

Often an afterthought of new studios, marketing is a crucial part of any commercial games' pathway so it is best to start as early as possible.

This includes building on your market research to generate your key messaging, logline/ elevator pitch, identify and apply for Steam Festivals.

You will look to reach out to influencers and streamers, media and showcases, plan out a social media strategy and start building your community. As well as ways in which you can optimise your Steam strategy through demos and SEO.

• **Presentation Slides**

References / Resources

1. Steam Festivals:
 - Howtomarketagame discord
 - Metaroot Opportunity Bot: <https://www.patreon.com/Metaroot524>
2. Influencer Marketing:
 - Veronica Stodolnik's Marketing Workshop: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKwDI6EWmUc>
 - Push to Talk: https://www.pushtotalk.gg/p/how-to-get-youtubers-to-play-your-game?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email
3. Presskits:
 - <https://dopresskit.com/>
 - <https://acorngames.gg/blog/2024/6/12/the-indie-devs-guide-to-assembling-the-perfect-press-kit>
4. Community:
 - Emplifi Social Commerce Playbook: <http://go.emplifi.io/rs/284-ENW-442/images/Emplifi-Social-Commerce-Playbook.pdf?version=0>
 - Victoria Tran: <https://www.victoriatran.com/writing/budgeting-to-build-your-community>
5. How to Market a Game:
 - <https://howtomarketagame.com/2022/06/28/using-mailing-lists-to-gain-thousands-of-wishlists/>
 - <https://howtomarketagame.com/2021/11/01/dont-build-your-castle-in-other-peoples-kingdoms/>
6. How to Market a Game:
 - <https://howtomarketagame.com/2024/07/31/what-steams-big-demo-update-means-for-your-marketing-strategy/>
 - <https://howtomarketagame.com/2024/11/04/how-was-the-october-2024-steam-next-fest/>
7. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/level-up-your-games-industry-networking-skills-warren-leigh-23e7e/>

FURTHER READINGS (Not Referenced)

- Sully Gnome: <https://sullygnome.com/>
- Revealing the Secrets of Your Steam Page with Steve Stopps: https://youtu.be/N4SKI4DC6Kw?si=OaDsRWx9D_RO47IR
- Free QR Code Generator: <https://www.openqrgenerator.com/>
- Using Analytics to Create Viral Games: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5m2umPx5774>
- Valadria - All That Matters About Games Marketing: <https://www.valadria.com/all-that-matters-about-games-marketing/>
- Mastering Community Management - Victoria Tran: <https://www.victoriatran.com/book>



Workshop 5: Go To Market 2025

Your go to market strategy encompasses everything from audience validation to building a publishing or investment proposition, effectively building the pipeline from project to product.

As an indie studio it is important to understand the market realities in the mid-2020s and how best to address these when approaching investors.

- **Presentation Slides**

References / Resources

1. Steamdb:
 - <https://steamdb.info/>
 - Alternatives: <https://steampy.com/> <https://indiebi.com/>
2. Fireside with Astronaut Diaries: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rInq7FOqOWA>
3. Nadia Thorne's NZGDC Talks:
 - From Prototype to Production: Market Driven Processes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HfM9ecnT47A&t=28s>
 - Small Teams, Big Ambitions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gq-NyUqr8CQ&t=5s>
4. Jason Della Rocca Market Update 2025: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOw-P7m1Lt8>
5. Chris Zukowski Workshops:
 - How Steam Works: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YsHuEjG_KVY
 - Steam Genre and Page Review: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHhcSg5R70U>



Workshop 6: Applying to CODE

Applying to CODE is a big job - one might say it's a lot of work but they are all things that you should be doing anyway to help increase the chances of your business being successful.

Each section of your application should get due attention, and should be written in a way that is easily understood by the Assessors.

Remember who your audience is and that the purpose of this application is to show how you are making smart business decisions to help you create a sustainable business.

- **Presentation Slides**

References / Resources

1. CODE's Kickstart and Start Up Writing Guide: https://www.nz-code.nz/_files/ugd/20d70e_91e16bb1f8b742c3b297e64990d60cae.pdf
2. CODE's Funding Web page (incl. our Terms & Conditions): <https://www.nz-code.nz/funding>
3. Production Resources:

As we didn't cover this extensively, here are some production resources. There are a few different links here as people approach production planning in different ways and different levels are needed for different situations.

- Playful Production Process - A very good resource! This traditional book/ebook/audiobook but it's widely seen as the best guide out there: <https://www.playfulproductionprocess.com/>
- Plan your entire indie game from start to finish: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmTr0QvwjVs>
- How to Plan Your Game Development Project - Missing marketing milestones, but generally good for a higher level view: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7vZFiFLw-w>
- New Game+: A production guide for indie game developers: <https://www.newgameplus.guide/>
- Manage Your GameDev Project with Trello/Kanban - more granular planning (more than needed for CODE but breaking down smaller tasks can help with understanding how much work will actually be and influence your higher level long term planning): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-SqcrIAarGo>