CREATOR

EMAIL MARKETING

GUIDE & TEMPLATES

BY

CLEMENT

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Introduction

The primary focus for this guide is on Cold Email Outreach and **not** email marketing to an existing mailing list. Getting the right creator to cover your game can be tremendously beneficial, but the question is how?

As a mid-sized creator, I have been on the receiving end of thousands of emails from Indie Game Developers, which vary in quality and clarity, so I wanted to give you some templates, case studies and examples and the reasons behind why the email should be formatted in a particular way.

Email marketing will be for another day, but having your own email list is a powerful marketing tool in itself, and is something I recommend. For my own emails, I use [ConvertKit (affiliate link)](#) which is free up to the first 1,000 emails and is a great tool.

We will first go through the basics, then the templates with examples and some case studies of emails that I have personally received at the end for learning purposes.

This is by no means definitive and is subject to change, but I hope it helps you get started on marketing your Indie Game!
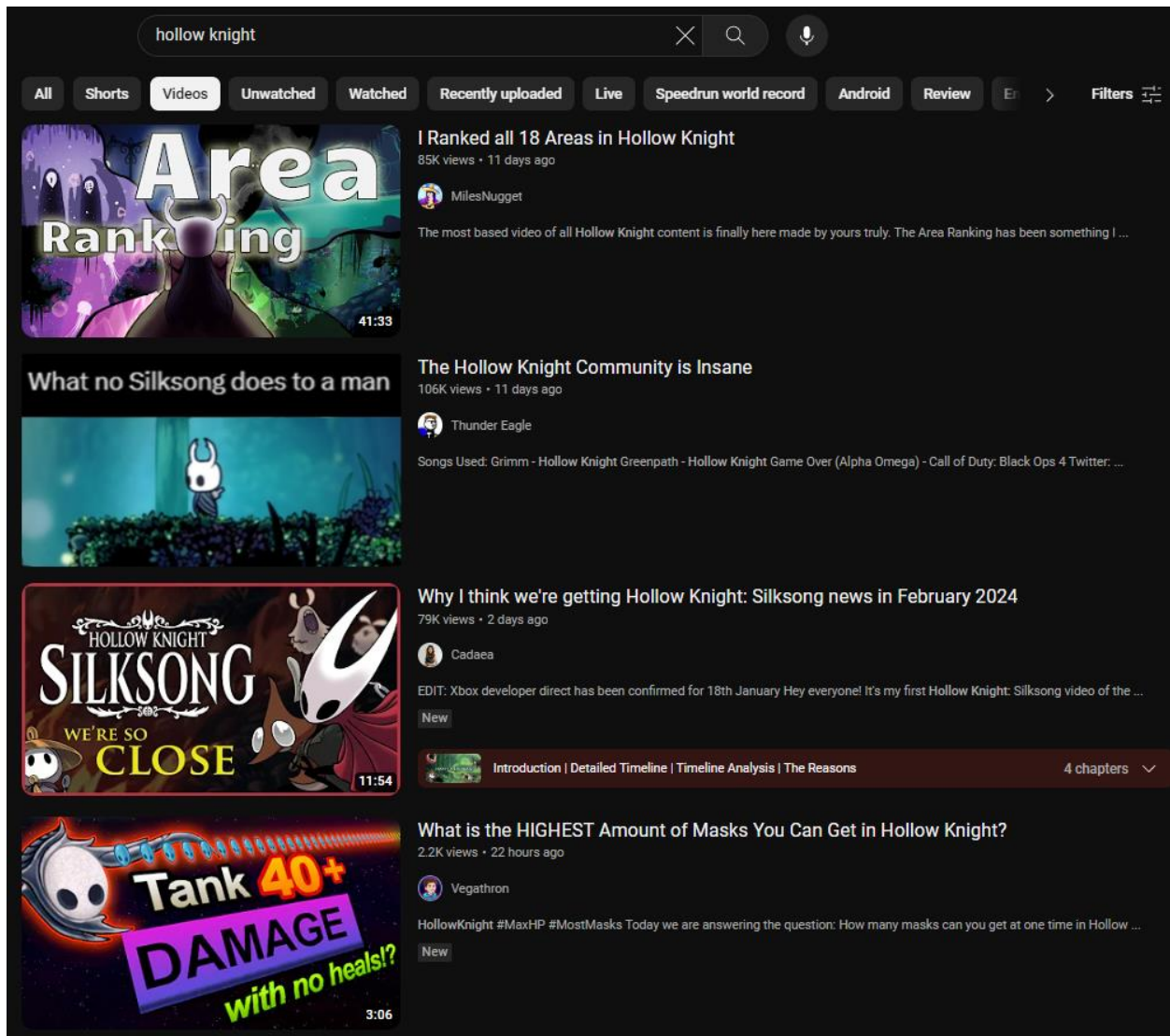
Who to contact?

Creators vary in type of content (One off First Impressions, Lists, Let's Play Series, Guides/Walkthrough, long play [no commentary], video essay etc.) as well as the games that they cover and the size of the channel (and potential reach).

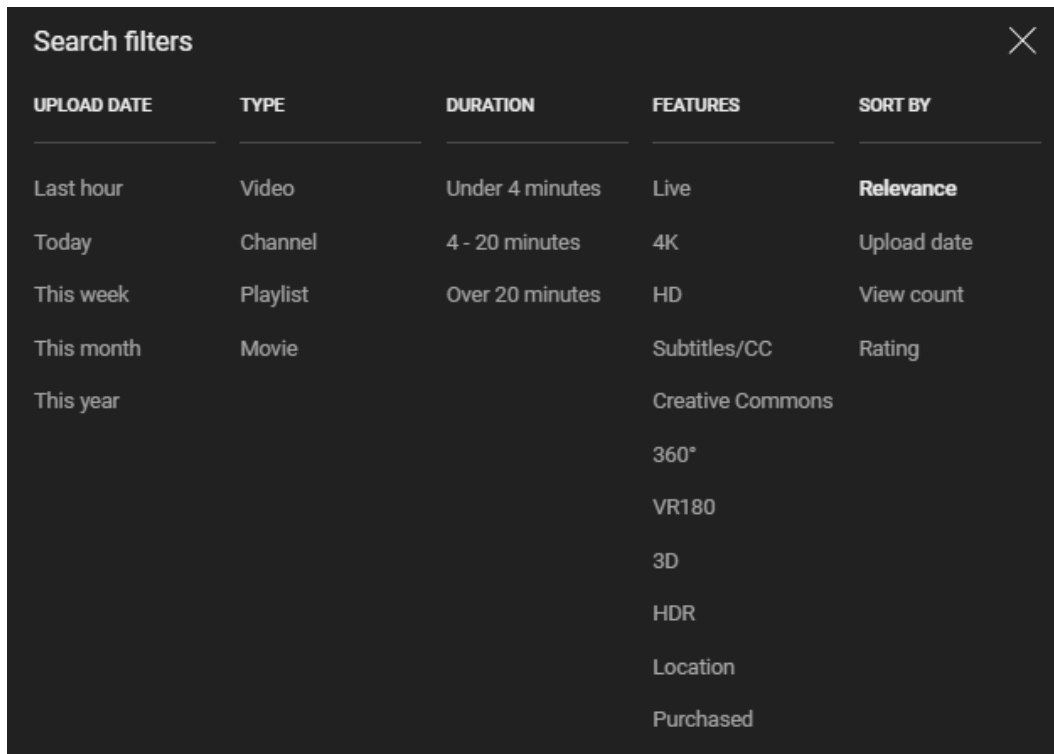The simplest way, for Youtubers & streamers, is to search for a similar title.

EXAMPLE

1) If you are making a metroidvania, search on YouTube for "Metroidvania" or "Hollow Knight" and see who made videos on them

2) You can use YouTube's filters for type (Long Form / Short Form), when it was uploaded, as well as sorting by view count

3) Once you have found a few channels of interest, watch a few of their videos and imagine your game on there and if that is in line with how you want your game presented.

4) If it is in line with your vision, check on the following

   a) Is the channel still active? (Last video released within X number of months)

   b) Is the creator still making videos about the genre? (Some creators pivot and switch genres, especially if you come across an old video)

   c) Does it have a decent number of average views for the 10 most recent videos? (You are looking for consistency here, some 1 video might go massively viral but if that cannot be replicated, do not count on the next video that your game is in having the same kind of reach)

If the answer is no to any of the above, then it might not be worth reaching out.

There is of course a ***Power Law*** in creators, where you are most likely to see the biggest impact from the biggest creators. HOWEVER, pure numbers are not the be all end all.

There are stories of games that got covered by PewDiePie or Markiplier which moved (comparatively) fewer copies than from a smaller creator. The audience is what matters.

Smaller creators might have a more intimate relationship with their audience who trusts them more and might be more willing to act on their recommendation, so reach out to them as well.

Depending on the creator, you might want to reach out at different times.

Emailing me (Best Indie Games) early would be a good idea since it gets on my radar as early as possible, but if you send it to First Impressions Content Creators, it might be no use without a demo for them to play.

If you are really getting ZERO responses, re-evaluate your game's concept, art style etc. In fact, this might be some sort of signal for you. Do not waste 2-3 years (of your time!) making a game that nobody wants to play.

If it is ugly or generic, the chances of it getting covered is much lower.

For example, I am not going to cover a Space Invaders Clone made in Unity that does not have any new ideas.

What/When/Why

I recommend to reach out on separate occasions as follows

	What Email to Send	**When** to Send	**Why** you are sending it
1	First Contact	At the announcement/reveal of the game	To get the game on the radar of creators
2	Demo Available	Prior to a Steam Next Fest Prior to releasing the demo	To get coverage (and WL boost) during Festivals
3	Game Release	A few days before the game is out	To give creators time to prepare their content
4	Game Update	When you release DLC / free content updates	To get creators to re-visit the game

Templates for these are further down in this document

A flow chart on which email to use when would be as follows:
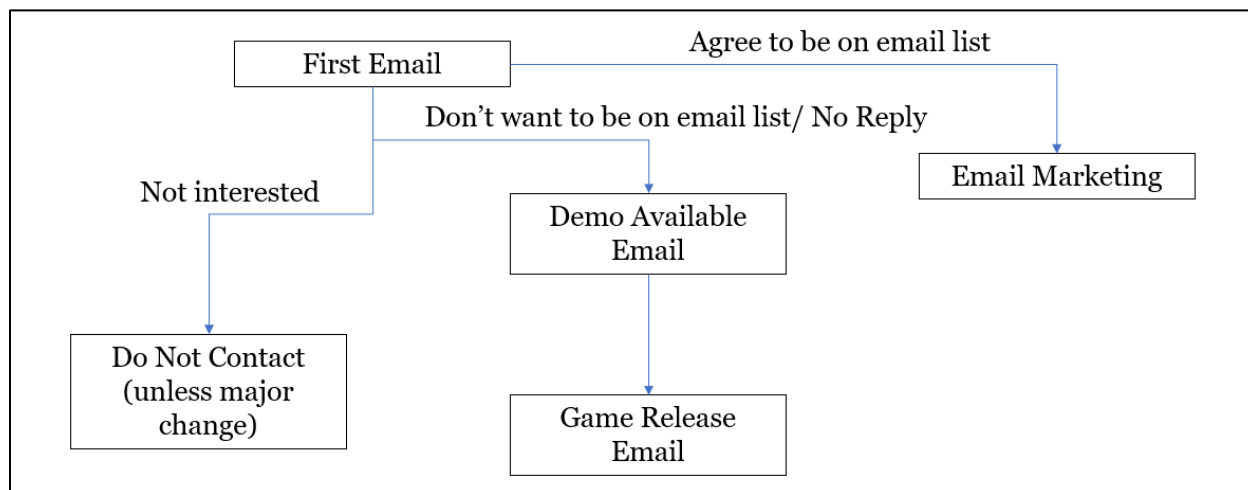
Personally, I try to reply to all inbound emails to either say "Yes, Noted, I saw your email" or "I have to pass right now (due to whatever reason)," but larger creators might not be able to do this due to the sheer volume, so you may not get a reply but do not give up!

DO NOT Shotgun Blast your outreach emails

I have been on the receiving end of many, no personality, bcc emails (or worse, emails that cc 30 YouTubers) and that immediately puts me off.

Target specific creators and reach out one by one. It takes time but the care that you put into it will show. You do not have to open with "hey, love the content" or "hey, I love your let's play series on ____" but be human about it and do not just spam people.

I recommend curating your own list of content creators and not just to get a mailing list from *somewhere* and blast out emails to everyone on that list.

DO NOT randomly add creators to your mailing list

Yes, you can scrape their contact emails and then use an email marketing platform to mass send your outreach, but I HATE it when I get put on random mailing lists that I did not sign up for (again, diminishing your chances of coverage).

Please ask creators if they want to be on your mailing list before manually adding them to it, or you can create a separate form for creators to sign up themselves (to get news, early builds, key request forms etc.)

How to Craft your Email

Ok let us get into the details here

Email Subject Line

In YouTube Land, we have the Thumbnail, Title, and the opening seconds of the video (on mouseover) but in text form, the Email Subject is most critical. You must come up with a hook that is worded clearly to entice people to open the email. It could be as simple as

[Game] is now available on PS4 & PS5

Or

Crush your enemies in the medieval physics brawler [Game]

Or

[Key Enclosed] [Game] releases January 24th!

Or

[Update name] for the critically acclaimed [Game] is out now!

Keep it short and to the point. You can use emojis to add some color to the subject line but 1-2 is plenty

⚡ Smite your Enemies in this new RTS [Game]

Main Body

After you earn the click from the title, the main purpose of the email is for the creator to get the basic information about your game as quickly as possible.

Make it as clear as possible on what action you would like the creator to take

DO

- Include a name, I like to read emails from humans

- Make sure that the relevant information (title, description, genre, embargo date, platforms available, links) is included

- Include a key (default Steam, I know console keys are harder to come by so those can be on request)

  o This ties in with the **no shotgun blast marketing** mentioned above. If you are specifically targeting 10-20 creators per day (especially notable ones), please just included a key.

  o There is enough inbound as is so do not add to that by saying "reply to the email if interested and I'll give you a key." If you are not spamming EVERYONE and are targeting reputable creators, the likelihood of keys ending up on grey market sites is low.

- Include GIFs/Images in it to pretty it up (1-2 is plenty, there is no need for 4K screenshots). Try to keep the email size relatively small

- Check for grammar and typos

- Get the name of the creator right

DON'T

- Do not write wall of text

- Do not write a 1 liner

- Do not mess around with the fonts. It should be easily readable, NOT IN ALL CAPS and Not In Camel Case Since It Makes It Kind Of Difficult To Read

- Do not use (non-relevant) emotional appeal to try to get coverage of your game. We all have our own battles, do not trauma dump onto the creator.

BONUS TIPS

- Have the Key on a separate line so that triple clicking selects the key (and not other words)

- To be even fancier, you can make the Steam Key clickable which links to the "Activate a product" page on Steam with the key already entered! For example: **[A1A1A-B2B2B-C3C3C](#)**

- You can test which GIF/screenshot is most eye catching through other social media like Twitter/X. Post on #screenshotsaturday and check the total number of impressions. Over 8 weeks you can test 8 different ones, then include the highest performing in your email.

On Paid Advertising

Full time creators treat their YouTube/Twitch channel as a business and see paid sponsorships as advertising, same as if you would buy Facebook or Google ads to promote your game

Creators (for the most part) are not "journalists" but rather, people that love games and want to share what they are playing and their thoughts on the game

Due to the sheer number of games, Sponsored Content is a way to "jump the queue" so to speak.

> For first impressions creators, even if they make 2 videos a day, that is just 2 games that they can cover, with a whole lot more in the queue.

> For compilation creators like me, I can literally create a video on 50 upcoming games and still get developers asking me "why wasn't my game included".

> If you want guaranteed coverage, sponsorship is a way to do it (and even then, creators do reject offers from sponsors if it does not align with their audience/ what they want to cover), otherwise you have to wait for the luck of the draw.

Paid (scored) reviews are a no-no since there will be an inherent bias built into it. No one offering this should be taken up on their proposal.

Similarly, any above-board creator knows the SEC requirements for paid sponsorships and MUST disclose it, usually in the voiceover "This video is brought to you by ____" AND in the description, clearly indicating Sponsor or #ad.

o   If you **have** the marketing budget, do state it up front: "We have some marketing budget for this title so I would like to inquire on your rates and options for promotion"

o   If you **do not have** a marketing budget, you can state it as well "We are self-funding this title and do not have a marketing budget at the moment"

Templates & Examples

<u>First Email Template</u>

TITLE: [Announcement] Catchy Hook [Game Name] announced!

Hello [Creator Name],

This is [name], [role] at [company] and I'm writing to share the announcement of our game [game name], a [genre] all about [hook/gimmick/theme/setting].

[GIF/Screenshot/Cover Art]

Key Features

[Keep it brief, 2-3 points on the main features]

Game Title:

Genre:

Release date: [Release window is fine]

Platforms:

Store Link: [Usually Steam]

Official Website:

Presskit:

[Call to action]

[Mailing List]

Best Regards,
Name, Position
Company Name
Contact Details

Example

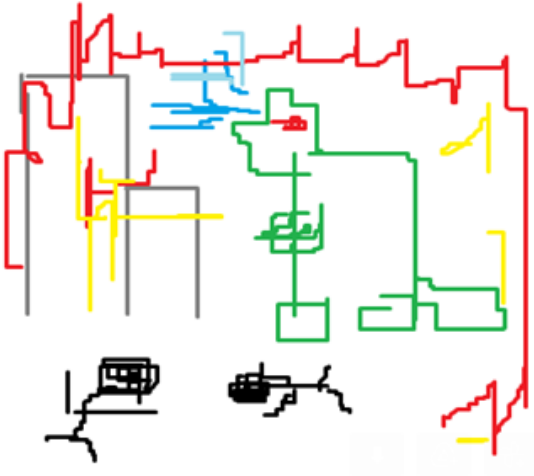🐲 **Crush hapless humans with Kaiju in Stompy Stompy Monsters** 🐲 ➤ Inbox ×

Clement <clemmygames@gmail.com>   Thu, 11 Jan, 12:45 (1 day ago)   ☆ ☺ ↩ ⋮
to me ▾

Hello Best Indie Games,

My name is Clement and I'm the marketing lead at Best Indie Games Inc., and I'm writing with regards to the announcement of our game **Stompy Stompy Monsters**, just revealed at the Best Indie Games Showcase 2024.

Breed and customize your Kaiju by giving them special traits and abilities, then let them loose on the city and watch the destruction! The more you destroy, the more upgrade points you get for the next round, so look forward to causing an Extinction Event!

Game Title : Stompy Stompy Monsters
Genre : Rogue-lite Autobattler
Release date : Q4 2024
Steam Page : https://store.steampowered.com/app/99999/Stompy_Stompy_Monsters
Game Website: https://stompystompymonsters.com/
Presskit : [Link]

We would be delighted if you shared the news with your audience!

If you are interested, can I add you to our influencer marketing list? You will get the latest news and updates on the game's development (and a key when the time is right!)

There is a (small) marketing budget for this title so I would like to inquire on your rates and options for promotion, thanks.

Best Regards,

Clement
Creator, Best Indie Games

<u>Demo Available Email Template</u>

TITLE: [Demo Available] [Game Name] catchy hook

Hello [Creator Name],

This is [name], [role] at [company]. The demo for our upcoming [genre][game] is available right now and we would like to send you a demo key to check it

[GIF/Screenshot/Cover Art]

Key Features

[Keep it brief, 2-3 points on the main features]

Game Title:

Genre:

Release date: [Release window is fine]

Embargo:

Platforms:

Store Link: [Usually Steam]

Official Website:

Presskit:

[Call to action]

Best Regards,
Name, Position
Company Name
Contact Details

Example

🦖 **Stompy Stompy Monsters sets the World Ablaze!** 🔥 ➤ Inbox ×

Clement <clemmygames@gmail.com>   23:41 (0 minutes ago) ☆ ☺ ↩ ⋮
to me ▾

Hello Best Indie Games,

My name is Clement and I'm the marketing lead at Best Indie Games Inc. The demo for our game **Stompy Stompy Monsters**, is now available as part of the Steam Next Festival and we would like to offer you a key to check it out!

- Customize your Kaiju
- Stomp Fools
- Watch the World Burn

Steam Demo Key
A1A1A-B2B2B-C3C3C

Game Title : Stompy Stompy Monsters
Genre : Rogue-lite Autobattler
Release date : Nov 21, 2024
Platforms Available: Steam
Embargo : [None]
Steam Page : https://store.steampowered.com/app/99999/Stompy_Stompy_Monsters
Game Website: https://stompystompymonsters.com/
Presskit : [Link]

We would be happy to watch and share your content, please let me know if you have any feedback for the team, thank you.

Release Email Template

TITLE: [Steam Key Enclosed] [Game Name] launches on [date]

Hello [Creator Name],

This is [name], [role] at [company]. Our game [game] releases on [date] and enclosed is a Steam Key for the full version

[Description]

[Key]

[GIF/Screenshot/Cover Art]

Game Title:

Genre:

Release date: [Release window is fine]

Embargo:

Platforms:

Store Link: [Usually Steam]

Official Website:

Presskit:

[Call to action]

Best Regards,
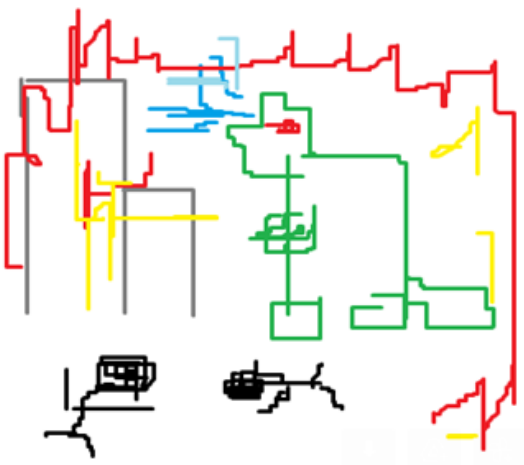Name, Position
Company Name
Contact Details

Example

[Steam Key inside] Stompy Stompy Monsters – Kaiju Rogue-lite Auto-Battler

Inbox ×

Clement <clemmygames@gmail.com>   23:47 (0 minutes ago)

to me

Hello [Creator],

My name is Clement and I'm the marketing lead at Best Indie Games Inc. Our game Stompy Stompy Monsters releases next week and enclosed is your Steam key for the full version.

It's a rogue-lite auto-battler in which you create customized Kaiju and set them loose upon human cities, destroying and conquering it while fending off tanks and soldiers, in which you can mutate and evolve these creatures in order to destroy the world.

Steam Key
AAAAA-BBBBB-CCCCC

Game Title : Stompy Stompy Monsters
Genre : Rogue-lite Autobattler
Release date : Nov 21, 2024
Platforms Available: Steam
Embargo : Nov 19, 2024, 0800 PST. Please do not show anything after the first boss fight before this time.
Steam Page : https://store.steampowered.com/app/99999/Stompy_Stompy_Monsters
Game Website: https://stompystompymonsters.com/
Presskit : [Link]

It's been a wild year for the team and the game so I hope you enjoy it!

Best Regards,

Case Studies

These are all emails that I have received so have a look as a point of comparison, of best practices and what NOT to do. I am not slagging off anyone and is only for learning purposes.

Bad Examples

I've Been Hard At Work Trying To Make An RPG That'll Really Shake Up The Genre, However I Only Have So Much Resources Left, So I Made A Quick Demo To Show Off Some Ideas And Such. But I Need People To Actually Play It, But I Don't Have An AudienceOf My Own. I Don't Have Much Financially But I Have About 70$ I'm Not Sure If That'd Be Enough, But It'd Be Greatly Appreciated If We Could Perhaps Negotiate A Possible Showing Based Off That Price Range

Ps. I Don't Have Any Gameplay Footage, So If You Are Willing To Show The Game Off, I Would Probably Need You To Play It, Plus I Feel Like You'd Enjoy It Quite A Bit.

Camel case is difficult to read. Run on lines and no links to the game

Hello, have you seen this new horror game from Ureal Engine 5? looks very realistic and cool

https://youtu.be

Typo in text, does not introduce himself as the creator of the game. No game title, no description, no nothing.

Subject: !PLAY MY GAME!

Message: I WOULD LIKE YOU TO PLAY MY GAME   , AND IF YOU LIKE IT, YOU WOULD TELL THE OTHERS ABOUT IT.
MY GAME IS CLICK & POINT ADVENTURE, SIMILAR TO SALLY FACE, FRAN BOW & LITTLE MISFORTUNE!
I AM AN INDI GAMER   I'M CREATING A GAME ALONE.
AND THE SUPPORT OF SUCH A OF VIDEO GAME REVIEWERS! WILL HELP ME VERY MUCH!
AND THAT'S WHY I'M GIVING YOU THE KEY TO IT ON STEAM
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR ATTENTION!
trailer https://youtu.be
game https://store.steampowered.com/app

All Caps. At least they included links and a key

Mid Examples

We are [REDACTED] - an indie team. We've got a cool [REDACTED] game with [REDACTED] and a hint of Souls-like gameplay. We believe it would be a perfect fit for your channel. It would be cool if you mentioned our game in one of your future videos if you like the game ofc :^)
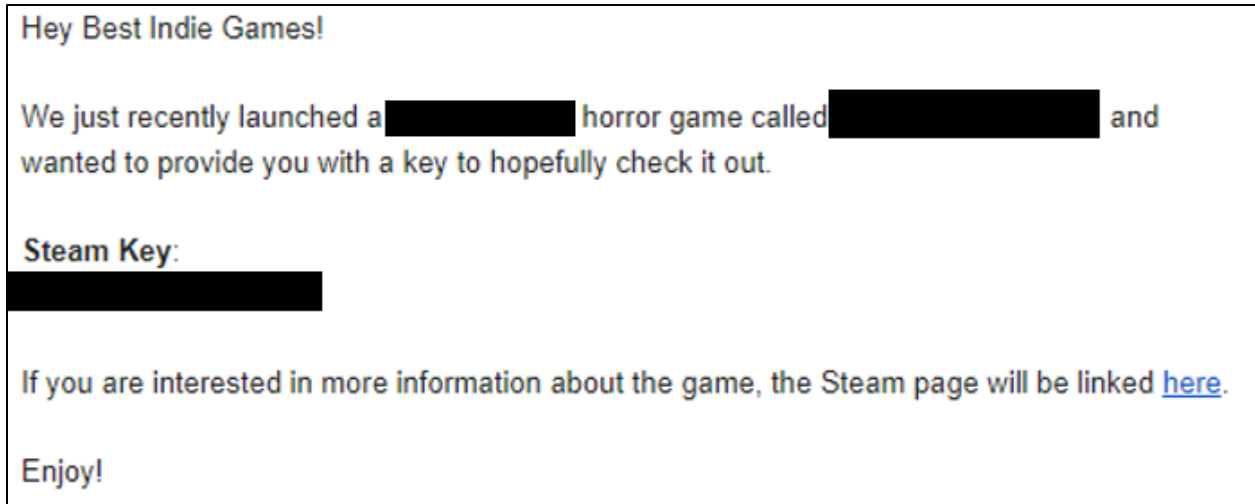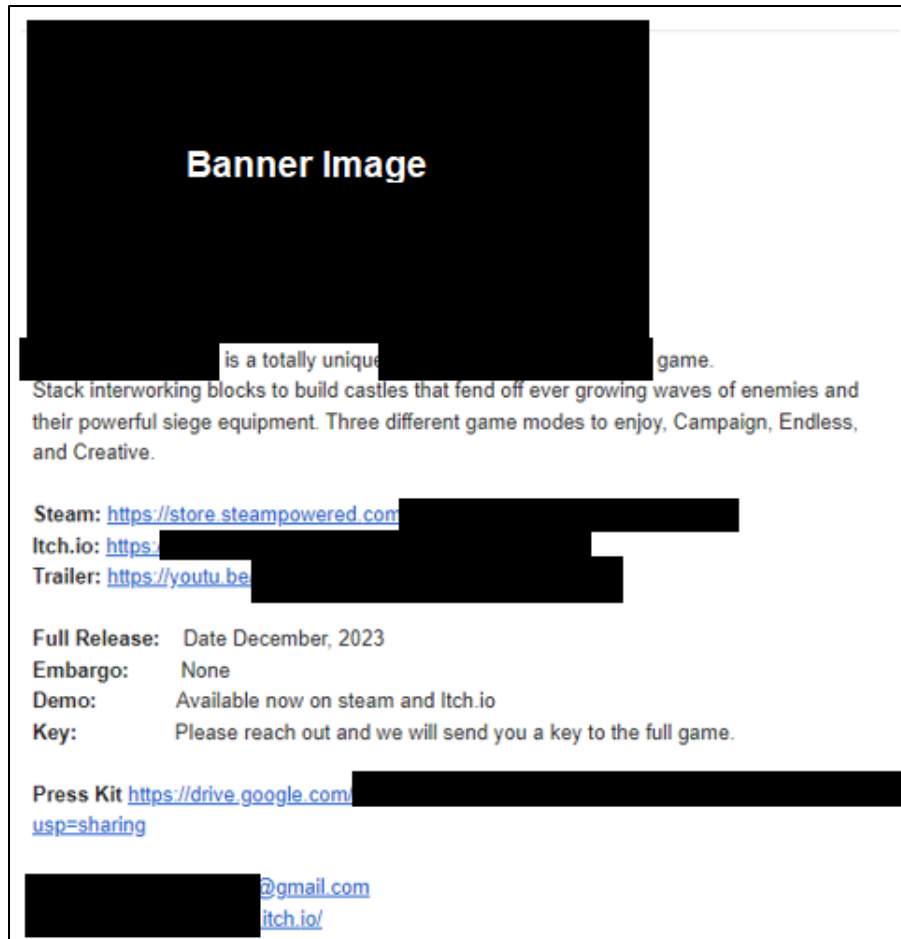
https://store.steampowered.com/app/[REDACTED]

GIF

Here is the steam key: [REDACTED]

Includes a key, GIF, and link to the store page. 1 line summary of the genre/sub-genres

Hey Best Indie Games!

We just recently launched a ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ horror game called ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ and wanted to provide you with a key to hopefully check it out.

Steam Key:

▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

If you are interested in more information about the game, the Steam page will be linked here.

Enjoy!
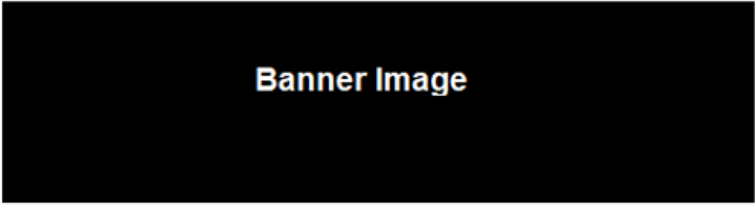
2 sentences in the email that just had the title, a steam key, and a link to the store page. Not the worst but could be better

Banner Image

▮▮▮▮▮▮ is a totally unique ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ game.
Stack interworking blocks to build castles that fend off ever growing waves of enemies and their powerful siege equipment. Three different game modes to enjoy, Campaign, Endless, and Creative.

Steam: https://store.steampowered.com▮▮▮▮▮▮
Itch.io: https:▮▮▮▮▮▮
Trailer: https://youtu.be▮▮▮▮▮▮

Full Release: Date December, 2023
Embargo: None
Demo: Available now on steam and Itch.io
Key: Please reach out and we will send you a key to the full game.

Press Kit https://drive.google.com▮▮▮▮▮▮
usp=sharing

▮▮▮▮▮▮@gmail.com
▮▮▮▮▮▮itch.io/

Basics are all there but it does not even have a "Hello." Seems like its copy pasted and blasted out.

Good Examples

Banner Image

Hi Clemmy,

██████ s an open-world RPG survival game by ████████████ where you play as a stray dog trying to find out what happened to your human. Terrorize or make friends with procedurally generated crowds as you explore the city and beyond. Get into doggo antics as you learn new skills to sculpt your doggo's personality and go on missions to get closer to find ██████████ Coming to Steam for PC on ████████

GIF

Steam Page: https://store.steampowered.com ████████████

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=████████

Website: https:/██████████com/

Release Date: September ████████ 1:00 PM EDT I 5:00 UTC

Embargo: There is no embargo for the game

Steam Key: ████████████

Press Kit: https://www.indiedb.com/games████████

Feel free to contact us if you have any further questions or requests. Thank you for checking out our game!

Sincerely,
████████████
Lead Game Designer
contact@████████████
https://twitter.com/████████

This is one email which I had to take 2 screenshots of, and has pretty much all the information that I stated in the template above!

A human even signed off at the bottom!

Hey there, reaching out from ▮▮▮▮▮ with info and a Steam key for our new game, ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

It's been described as ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ - a corridor shoot with randomized leveling and lots of meta upgrades to unlock ▮▮▮▮▮. Runs last about 30 minutes through 10 zones and get increasingly *insane*, with lots of random variation in the items that drop.

It also has some surprises, ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

EMBARGO TIME
We politely ask that you hold your coverage until at least 10am central time August ▮▮

PRICE INFO
The game will cost ▮▮▮▮▮ with a 20% launch week discount. There is also $4.99 soundtrack, and a bundle for both.

REVIEW GUIDE
We put together a detailed review guide here, which includes an overview game, lots of art for use in your content, and tips on how to get the most ou the game.

PRESS KIT (includes logos, high-res screenshots, gifs and character art):
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
usp=sharing

STEAM KEY
▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Description (even letting you in on a secret), embargo, steam key, review guide (not necessary but very old school)

Conclusion

I hope this very brief guide will help you communicate more clearly with creators so that it can be a mutually beneficial relationship for both parties. Best practices are, of course, subject to change, but I believe the basics of clear communication will remain a constant

If you think I missed out something critical, please drop me an email to let me know.

More guides on Indie Game Marketing are in the works, so stay subscribed to be the first to know.

About the Author

The author has been running the YouTube Channel [Best Indie Games](#) (153,000 subscribers) since 2016 and has covered thousands of games since its inception.

Having spent hundreds of hours looking at indie games and their promotional material, he wants to share the insights in hopes of helping more indie game developers.

[Rogue Legacy](#) was the catalyst of his interest in Indie Games.

Outside of video games, he resides in sunny Singapore with his wife and child, with an interest in powerlifting (though not actively competing)

You can contact him here: clemmygames@gmail.com with your questions or just to say Hello!