ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This is an anonymized example of an assessment conducted for a large-scale game studio seeking publisher greenlight. All identifying details have been redacted to protect client confidentiality. This sample demonstrates the assessment methodology, analysis depth, and decision framework used to evaluate execution risk before capital deployment.

Colin MacKie embeds with game studios for 2-6 weeks to identify structural failure patterns that predict team collapse. This assessment distinguished between controlled chaos (deliberate de-risking with messy execution) and death spiral (systemic inability to course-correct), resulting in a funding recommendation with structured governance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: BIG TOP (ANONYMIZED)

Budget >$100M | Timeline: Demo Q2 2026 | Assessment: 6 weeks embedded | Ship Probability: 65%

RECOMMENDATION: FUND

Despite visible surface chaos, underlying leadership demonstrates exceptional execution capability and self-awareness. This team has the operational discipline and course-correction mechanisms necessary to ship.

KEY STRENGTHS

- Executive Producer and Studio Head exhibit obsessive schedule discipline and complete strategic clarity
- Leadership turned early miscalculation (premature demo) into strategic value by validating technology and ramping hiring
- Strong technical foundation: modular architecture, 72 FTEs with appropriate coverage, positive morale

CRITICAL RISKS

- CEO and Creative Director have competing visions; team lacks authoritative product definition *(Mitigation: CEO establishes formal creative direction within 30 days)*
- [Feature redacted] has unresolved technical architecture; attempting solution could consume 6+ months *(Mitigation: Deprioritize to post-launch)*
- Weak design gatekeeping creates scope creep through yes-and feature approval *(Mitigation: Hire Chief Creative Officer)*

DECISION RATIONALE

This team demonstrates controlled chaos (deliberate de-risking with messy execution), not death spiral (systemic inability to course-correct). Leadership recognizes problems early and executes necessary corrections. Identified risks are fixable through clear product definition and scope discipline, not fundamental capability gaps.

Detailed findings and governance structure below in full 20-page assessment report.

This assessment identified that visible surface chaos: creative drift, demo divergence, weak design gatekeeping, masked exceptional leadership discipline and course-correction capability. Without this embedded evaluation, surface-level dysfunction would likely have triggered an investment pass, causing the publisher to decline a team with strong execution fundamentals and 65% ship probability. The assessment enabled confident funding approval with appropriate risk monitoring through 3-month and 9-month governance checkpoints.

To discuss whether embedded assessment could de-risk your studio investments or publishing decisions, contact Colin MacKie at colin@cmackie.com

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TEAM DUE DILIGENCE ASSESSMENT REPORT

Studio: Big Top (Anonymized)
Time Embedded: 6 weeks
Team Size: 72 FTEs
Funding Request: Publisher Greenlight. Budget >$100m
Assessment Lead: Colin MacKie
Report Date: 9/25/2025
Distribution: Confidential

OVERVIEW

Investment Recommendation

✓ **RECOMMEND FUNDING**
☐ CONDITIONAL FUNDING
☐ DO NOT FUND

Despite visible surface chaos: creative drift, demo divergence from pitch, weak design gatekeeping, the underlying leadership structure demonstrates exceptional execution capability and strategic self-awareness. This team has the operational discipline, course-correction mechanisms, and transparent acknowledgment of weaknesses necessary to ship. Recommend continued funding with structured check-ins at 3 and 9 months to ensure sustained alignment.

Key Findings (Top Three)

Finding 1: Strong leadership discipline with visible execution Gaps
Impact: High | **Time Horizon:** NA
Summary: Executive Producer and Studio Head exhibit obsessive schedule discipline and complete strategic clarity. While Creative Director shows weak gatekeeping and Design Director is lost in technical weeds, leadership has already begun remediation and demonstrates full awareness of weaknesses. This is deliberate strategy with messy but manageable execution, not systemic failure.

Finding 2: Demo divergence was strategic de-risking of an early miscalculation
Impact: High | **Time Horizon:** TBA in Q2 2026
Summary: The demo was started before the game had time to solidify. This was a recognized mistake. Instead of scrapping everything and starting over, leadership decided to continue with the demo to build foundational technology, validate core project

assumptions, ramp up hiring, and institute development pipelines. Leadership used this milestone to solve foundational problems while maintaining visibility. This represents successful project management, not loss of creative vision.

Finding 3: [Feature redacted] System needs complete rethink
Impact: High | **Time Horizon:** 6-12 Months
Critical Risk: The [feature redacted] feature is ill-conceived with fundamental technical and design conflicts unresolved. Recommend focusing on standalone [genre redacted] sandbox first with player-only [feature redacted]. The game maintains broad appeal without shareability therefore should not be considered a core pillar until a sound technical design is developed.

Shipping Confidence Assessment

Overall probability of shipping: 65%

Factor	Score	Weight	Rationale
Leadership Capability	8	25%	Excellent leadership discipline.
Team Execution	5	25%	There are a few weak links in key roles. This must be addressed
Scope Realism	5	20%	As currently planned, scope is bloated. After restructuring, scope will be manageable
Technical Risk	4	15%	The project ambition is quite high depending heavily on untested technical features.
Cultural Health	6	15%	Positive. The team is aware of vision conflicts.

Timeline Outlook

Studio-Stated Milestone: On schedule for planned milestones (Q2 2026)
Base Case: Ship on time with scope adjustments and personnel changes
Upside Case: Ship on schedule with simplified [feature redacted] implementation that maintains core experience
Downside Case: 6-9+ month delay if leadership fails to make hard personnel changes and cuts to [feature redacted] technical challenges

Immediate Focus (Next 30 Days)

Deprioritize [feature redacted] from core feature set to 'nice-to-have' status. Focus design and engineering resources on standalone [genre redacted] sandbox experience with robust player-only [feature redacted]. Leadership must communicate scope adjustment clearly to team to prevent continued investment in unsolvable technical dependencies.

Must Address Immediately

- Make adjustments to Creative Director leadership challenges and unify creative vision.
- Move [feature redacted] to future roadmap; focus engineering on player-only [feature redacted] tools
- Establish quarterly strategic reviews to maintain course-correction discipline

SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY

This section evaluates whether the studio's leadership can consistently make good decisions under pressure, and whether the team trusts those decisions. Because teams often "perform" for investors, the assessment focuses on observed behaviors such as alignment, clarity, decisiveness, and accountability rather than stated intentions.

CEO: [Name redacted]

Assessment: Strong with opportunities for improvement

Strengths

The CEO brings strong marketing and research background with clear creative vision for the game. The vision itself shows significant promise and market potential. When engaged directly, demonstrates deep understanding of the product thesis and target audience. Has assembled an experienced team capable of executing at scale.

Concerns

Somewhat absent from day-to-day activity, creating leadership vacuum that other executives must fill. Creative vision is not well represented in design documentation, suggesting communication gap between CEO intent and team execution. Shows hesitancy to assert creative authority directly, instead preferring to nudge and guide from the background. This hands-off approach combined with anxiety leads to bursts of creative demands late in each milestone, creating thrash and rework. The team is building a different game than the CEO envisions, but the CEO has not intervened decisively to close this gap.

Critical Challenge:

The following is not a critical risk, but observed opportunities to strengthen the organization. CEO should move from reactive nudging to proactive creative leadership. The current pattern of late-milestone creative interventions undermines team confidence and creates avoidable rework. Recommend establishing regular creative reviews where CEO has explicit authority and accountability for design direction, preventing last-minute course corrections. Without this shift, creative drift will continue despite strong underlying vision.

Executive Producer: [Name redacted]

Assessment: Strong

Evidence: Comfortable taking the helm on day-to-day operations. Demonstrates exceptional attention to detail and strong grasp of broad team movements. Single-pointed focus on schedule discipline with proper hard and soft locks is exactly what large-scale projects require. Over-indexes on visual presentation relative to gameplay mechanics at this stage of development, which is manageable and not uncommon for production leadership. This could become an issue if art department demands consistently override design needs

over the multi-year development timeline, but current prioritization is appropriate for milestone demonstrations and recruiting. Overall, the EP provides the operational backbone this project requires.

Studio Head: [Name redacted]

Assessment: Strong

Evidence: Decades of experience running large-scale projects is evident in extreme attention to detail across documentation, bug tracking, task databases, and communication protocols. Creates comprehensive visibility into project status. Tends to over-index on meetings and synchronization points, resulting in approximately 15% wasted time per individual contributor based on observed schedule analysis. While this overhead is notable, it represents a fixable process issue rather than a fundamental capability gap. Recommend streamlining meeting cadence and adopting asynchronous communication for status updates. Despite meeting overhead, Studio Head's disciplined approach to project governance provides essential infrastructure for team coordination at this scale.

Creative Director: [Name redacted]

Assessment: Weak

Evidence: Industry veteran with good communication skills, but creative vision differs dramatically from CEO vision. Demonstrates weak gatekeeping, tends to approve most feature ideas that are roughly compatible with broad creative direction without rigorous evaluation. This yes-and approach has led to accumulation of good ideas that lack coherence when integrated. Current demo shows scattered features without clear feel for final game experience. The Creative Director's inability to enforce design discipline or say no to feature requests represents a critical gap that compounds over time. Recommend either strengthening gatekeeping authority with explicit design principles and approval criteria, or bringing in additional creative leadership (CCO) with demonstrated ability to maintain creative focus under feature pressure.

Design Director: [Name redacted]

Assessment: Adequate with Concerns

Evidence: Highly experienced systems designer with appropriate focus on detail and technical rigor. However, currently investing design capacity in minutia of game systems when larger architectural systems require validation first. For a project of this scale and ambition, the team needs to build and vet foundational systems before optimizing detailed mechanics. Current approach risks building detailed systems atop unvalidated foundations, creating expensive rework later.

SECTION 2: TEAM EXECUTION CAPABILITY

This section assesses the team's practical ability to execute, including whether the right roles are in place, whether critical knowledge is concentrated in risky single points of failure, and whether collaboration patterns support delivery. The goal is to answer a simple question: can this specific group ship this specific plan, as currently staffed and operating.

2.1 Team Composition & Coverage

Discipline	Headcount	Adequacy	Notes
Engineering	20	Adequate	Appropriately staffed for technical scope
Design	7	Adequate	Adequate coverage across systems, level, and content design
Art/Animation	25	Adequate	Well-resourced for visual /animation pipeline established
Production	6	Adequate	Appropriate overhead for 72-person studio
QA	8	Adequate	Will need expansion for full production
Audio	6	Adequate	Unusual for this stage but reflects project ambition

Critical Gaps
No critical staffing gaps identified. Team composition is well-structured for project scope with appropriate coverage across disciplines.

2.2 Individual Contributor Risk

Key dependencies

Name: [Name redacted] Executive Producer
Capacity: At Capacity
Risk: Medium

Notes: The Executive Producer currently represents a key contributor risk. They manage day-to-day operations and enforce a highly disciplined milestone schedule. In their absence, these responsibilities would fall to the Studio Head; however, given that the Studio Head's strengths lie in other areas, this would likely have a negative impact on project execution. While this does not currently constitute a critical launch risk, it would be expected to reduce

both development velocity and overall quality. Anecdotally, the Executive Producer's typical tenure has been between 2.5 and 3.5 years, which is a relevant consideration.

Recommendation: Hire a producer to work directly under the Executive Producer, with responsibility for shadowing core duties and gradually assuming ownership of key project areas. This would broaden operational capacity, reduce dependency on a single individual, and strengthen continuity in the event of absence or transition.

2.3 Communication & Collaboration

Stand-Ups: Perfunctory
Cross-Functional Collaboration: Good
Conflict Resolution: Professional
Information Flow: Transparent

Evidence: Meetings are currently structured around sequential reviews of Jira task lists, with limited focus on priorities, risks, or decision-making. It is recommended that the team transition to an exception-based reporting model, emphasizing blockers, deviations from plan, and critical dependencies. Despite these inefficiencies, cross-department collaboration is generally effective.

For example, during an observed standup, the engineering team raised concerns regarding asset complexity for the [feature redacted] feature. A separate strike team was created consisting of engineering and art representation. They worked collaboratively to define a more aggressive LOD strategy that preserved visual quality while reducing rendering cost and draw time.

2.4 Velocity & Delivery Signals

Velocity Trend: At Risk
Milestone Trajectory: On Track
Technical Debt: Very High
Rework Frequency: Moderate

Evidence: As noted, the current demo is misaligned with the intended product vision. This misalignment has created a significant amount of technical and design debt that will need to be addressed following the Q2 milestone. As a result, the project will require a substantial redesign phase before full production can proceed. Development velocity is expected to slow during course correction. Based on scope of required changes (revised design documentation, asset pipeline adjustments, feature reprioritization), and historical patterns from similar mid-flight corrections, estimate 30-45 day disruption for realignment before velocity returns to baseline.

SECTION 3: SCOPE & ROADMAP VIABILITY

This section tests whether the roadmap is realistic by comparing the stated milestone to observed capacity, dependency clarity, and evidence of scope discipline. It makes explicit what must be cut, deferred, or re-sequenced to protect timelines and reduce the risk of late-stage surprises.

Scope Assessment: Realistic with Required Adjustments
Core scope is achievable with current team size and timeline. However, [redacted feature] feature set requires significant scope reduction to remain on schedule.

3.1 Scope Reality Check

Studio-Stated Deliverable (Sanitized):
Launch: On schedule for planned milestones
Overview: Ambitious [genre redacted] game with extensive player agency to [system redacted]. Features include [system redacted] mechanics, dynamic [redacted], and [redacted] with [feature redacted] capabilities.

Required Adjustments: The [feature redacted] system as currently envisioned presents fundamental technical and practical challenges that have not been resolved:

- **Content conflict resolution:** No clear answer for how [feature redacted] handle [redacted] with existing player [redacted]
- **Player communication:** Undefined mechanisms for informing players about [conflict redacted]
- **Technical architecture:** Demo shows bespoke implementation that cannot scale to robust system

Context: These challenges represent first-order design questions, not implementation details. After 6 weeks of observation and technical review, no team member could articulate a coherent approach to content conflict issue. Engineering leads flagged this as 'solvable with 6+ months of R&D' - time the schedule does not accommodate. This is not feature scope creep; it's fundamental architecture uncertainty that should have been resolved in pre-production.

Recommendation: Deprioritize [feature redacted] to post-launch roadmap. Focus on delivering robust standalone experience with player-only [feature redacted].

3.2 Dependency & Critical Path Review

Top Dependencies

1. Core [genre redacted] systems: Foundation for player experience; well understood and on track
2. World modification mechanics: Central to product differentiation; technically achievable
3. Player-only [feature redacted] tools: Enables creativity without sharing complexity; achievable scope
4. [Feature redacted] infrastructure: Critical dependency with unresolved technical challenges; recommend deprioritizing

Key Concern: Team is building toward visions that are not compatible across departments. Lack of clarity on core game identity creates risk of departments optimizing for different experiences. Leadership must provide definitive product positioning to prevent continued drift.

SECTION 4: TECHNICAL RISK

Section 4 identifies technical risks that can quietly extend timelines, such as fragile architecture, compounding technical debt, or systems that appear impressive but do not translate into a shippable product. The focus is on what could break delivery, how likely it is, whether leadership understands the risk, and what mitigation is feasible within current constraints.

4.1 Architecture Health

Architecture Maturity: Solid
Debt Level: High*

Evidence: Engineering team demonstrates strong technical practices. Code architecture is modular and maintainable. As noted many times, the current demo is misaligned with the intended product vision. This misalignment has created a significant amount of technical and design debt that will need to be addressed following the Q2 milestone. As a result, the project will require a substantial redesign and refactoring.

* High debt reflects demo misalignment, not poor engineering practices; scheduled for resolution post-Q2 milestone

4.2 Material Technical Risks

Feature	Risk	Mitigation
[Redacted feature 1]	Critical	Needs redesign
Open world mechanic	On track	Open world environments and mechanics on track
Quest system	On Track	Quest delivery working as expected
Core loop	At Risk	Currently there is no compelling minute to minute gameplay. Needs Design
[Redacted feature 2]	On Track	Despite feature overlap with [redacted feature 1], this is on track and promising.

Details

Key Risk 1: [Feature redacted] Technical Architecture
Severity: High
Description: Demo implementation of [feature redacted] is bespoke and does not represent path to production-ready system. [Issue 1 redacted] resolution, [issue 2 redacted]

management, and player [issue 3 redacted] mechanisms remain undefined.
Mitigation: Deprioritize [feature redacted] to post-launch. Focus engineering resources on player-only [redacted] tools.

Key Risk 2: Cross-Department Vision Misalignment
Severity: Medium
Description: Different departments are optimizing for incompatible game experiences due to unclear product positioning.
Mitigation: CEO and Creative Director must establish definitive product positioning document that provides clear decision-making framework for all departments.

4.3 Platform & Certification

Target Platforms: PC, Console (specifics redacted)
Readiness: At Risk.
The current demo requires high-end PC hardware to run effectively. Despite an anticipated launch window in [redacted time frame], performance on console platforms will be as it is today (no new console launch is expected). Addressing this gap will require substantial optimization and significant efficiency improvements across core systems and assets.

Severity: High if unaddressed. However, current demo includes unoptimized assets and debug features. Leadership has acknowledged console performance as priority for late '26. Engineering team has appropriate expertise in console optimization. Risk is manageable with dedicated optimization sprint post-Q2.

SECTION 5: PRODUCT & MARKET ALIGNMENT

Section 5 evaluates whether the product vision is clear and shared across the team, and whether there is a grounded understanding of the target audience and competitive landscape. It is not a full market analysis, but rather a credibility check that decisions are anchored in a coherent product thesis rather than internal preference or drift.

5.1 Vision Clarity

Clear Product Vision: Partial
Team Alignment: Moderate
Observed Disconnect: CEO has clear vision but has not translated it effectively into design documentation that guides daily development decisions. Creative Director's vision differs from CEO's, creating two competing product definitions. Different departments are building toward incompatible experiences.

5.2 Market Understanding

Audience Definition: Defined but Not Universally Understood
Competitive Awareness: Good
Evidence: Leadership demonstrates understanding of competitive landscape in [genre redacted] and [genre redacted] games. Target audience has been identified, though not consistently referenced in feature prioritization decisions.

Market Context: The life-simulation market continues to show strong growth, with successful titles demonstrating sustained player engagement and monetization potential. Games that provide deep player agency combined with systemic gameplay loops (The Sims, Animal Crossing) have proven both commercial viability and long-term franchise potential.

This project's core vision: combining life-simulation mechanics with meaningful [feature redacted], positions it well within a market that rewards long-term engagement and recurring monetization models. However, the genre's success also amplifies competitive expectations: differentiation will be essential.

Assessment: The differentiation strategy is sound in principle - [redacted setting] + [feature redacted] creates clear positioning. However, differentiation requires execution. If [feature redacted] remains ill-defined, the product loses its market distinction and becomes 'another [genre redacted] game.' This validates the recommendation to deprioritize [redacted feature]: the standalone experience must be exceptional first.

SECTION 6: CULTURAL & ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Section 6 examines cultural and organizational health as a factor in execution risk, including morale, psychological safety, retention risk, and sustainability of the current pace. These are leading indicators, as teams that do not feel safe surfacing problems tend to accumulate hidden issues that become costly later.

6.1 Morale & Retention

Morale: Positive
Active Flight Risk: <10%
Key Retention Risks: None identified

Evidence: Team members express genuine excitement about project vision. Leadership maintains adequate emotional intelligence to sustain positive work environment. Exemplary diversity across team creates inclusive culture.

6.2 Psychological Safety

Can concerns be raised safely? Yes
Culture: Professional with Room for Improvement

Evidence: Ideas are welcomed across team. Pushback on ideas is generally handled with professionalism. However, creative challenges are less freely raised, likely due to CEO's reactive pattern and Creative Director's weak gatekeeping.

6.3 Inclusion Signals

Inclusion Assessment: Strong
Evidence: The team demonstrates meaningful diversity across demographic, cultural, and professional backgrounds, with consistent evidence of inclusive participation in creative and technical decision-making. Ideas and concerns are routinely solicited and evaluated based on merit rather than role, tenure, or seniority.

This approach aligns with established research indicating that culturally and cognitively diverse teams are more likely to generate innovative solutions, identify risks earlier, and sustain higher long-term performance. In practice, this inclusive dynamic has contributed to stronger cross-functional problem-solving, reduced siloing, and more resilient execution under schedule and technical pressure.

6.4 Sustainability

Workload: Sustainable
Crunch Pattern: Moderate. Observed 2 instances of crunch requests during the 6 week observation window. Given the milestone this is understandable, but should be monitored.

SECTION 7: RED FLAGS & MITIGATION

Section 7 consolidates the findings into the most decision-relevant signals, highlighting critical red flags that threaten execution and positive indicators that increase confidence. It is designed to distinguish fixable issues and structural, deal-level risk.

Red Flag 1: Vision Misalignment Between CEO and Creative Director
Critical Risk: Creative Drift and Department Misalignment
Severity: Medium
Mitigation Potential: High
When CEO vision and Creative Director vision differ dramatically, team lacks authoritative product definition to guide daily decisions. This creates design by committee environment where features accumulate without coherent integration.

Mitigation: CEO must move from background nudging to active creative leadership. Establish formal creative direction document that resolves vision conflicts and provides explicit decision-making framework for all departments.

Red Flag 2: [Feature redacted] System Fundamental Technical Challenges
Critical Risk: Schedule Risk from Unsolvable Technical Dependencies
Severity: High
Mitigation Potential: High (through scope reduction)
This feature as currently demonstrated presents perception problem that becomes technical problem: [issue 1 redacted] conflict resolution, [issue 2 redacted] management, and player communication remain undefined. Attempting to solve these problems could consume months of engineering, design, creative time with no guarantee of satisfactory solution.

Mitigation: Deprioritize [reacted feature] to post-launch roadmap. Focus on delivering robust standalone sandbox with player-only [redacted] tools. This eliminates major technical risk while maintaining core product appeal.

Red Flag 3: Weak Design Gatekeeping Creates Feature Bloat
Critical Risk: Scope Creep Through Yes-And Feature Approval
Severity: Medium
Mitigation Potential: High

Creative Director tends to approve features that are roughly compatible with creative vision without rigorous evaluation of integration cost, priority against core experience, or technical complexity.

Mitigation: Hire a strong Chief Creative Officer (CCO) to clearly articulate, guide, and enforce the project's creative vision across all disciplines. The CCO should have demonstrated experience leading large-scale AAA productions and managing complex, multi-team creative pipelines. This role will be critical in aligning design, art, narrative, and production priorities.

SECTION 8: RECOMMENDATIONS

Funding Decision: Recommend Funding

Recommendation Rationale

This team demonstrates exceptional leadership maturity and course-correction capability. The Executive Producer and Studio Head exhibit strategic clarity and development discipline that separate functional teams from dysfunctional ones. The visible challenges: vision alignment, design gatekeeping, and scope management, represent normal development friction actively being addressed by leadership, not structural failure patterns that predict collapse.

Against industry failure patterns that predict team collapse: creative leadership failure, technical dysfunction, structural communication breakdown, hiring for loyalty over capability, and creative rigidity, this team shows no fatal indicators. Leadership's handling of the demo milestone shows their strategic adaptability. When they recognized the demo was started prematurely (an early miscalculation), rather than scrapping work and creating schedule chaos, they made the pragmatic decision to extract maximum value: validating foundational technology, ramping hiring, and establishing development pipelines. This decision demonstrates the kind of mature course-correction that separates teams that ship from teams that collapse under pressure.

Most critically, leadership demonstrates full self-awareness of current weaknesses and has already begun active remediation. The team possesses requisite technical capability, operates sustainably, maintains positive morale, and exhibits functional feedback loops. These are the operational fundamentals that predict shipping capability.

The identified risks are structural and fixable, not fundamental capability gaps. Vision misalignment between CEO and Creative Director is resolvable through clearer product definition and decision authority. [Feature redacted] technical challenges are mitigable through scope reduction. Weak design gatekeeping is addressable through process improvements and explicit prioritization frameworks.

This assessment distinguishes between controlled chaos (deliberate de-risking with messy execution) and death spiral (systemic inability to course-correct). This team clearly demonstrates the former. Leadership's transparency about design concerns, willingness to address them directly, and demonstrated ability to make pragmatic decisions under pressure indicate functional feedback loops rather than organizational denial. The investment decision reduces to one question: Can this leadership team recognize problems early and execute necessary course corrections? The evidence is unambiguous, they can and already are. The risks are real but manageable through clear product definition, scope discipline, and process improvements. The alternative: passing on a team with strong execution fundamentals and exceptional course-correction capability due to normal development friction, represents the greater risk.

Reassessment Criteria

3-Month Check-in:
Verify that authoritative product definition has been created and is actively guiding feature decisions. Confirm [Feature redacted] has been deprioritized and engineering resources redirected to player-only creation tools. Assess whether design gatekeeping process has reduced feature bloat and improved prioritization discipline.

9-Month Check-in:
Evaluate sustained progress on standalone sandbox experience. Confirm departments are building toward unified product vision rather than competing experiences. Assess whether quarterly strategic reviews are maintaining course-correction discipline. Verify team velocity remains stable and morale stays positive.

Success Indicators:

- Clear, documented product vision referenced consistently across departments
- Reduced late-milestone creative course corrections from CEO
- Engineering focused on validated core systems rather than speculative features
- Feature backlog shows evidence of prioritization and cuts, not accumulation
- Demo milestones show cohesive product experience rather than scattered features

Risk Indicators Requiring Intervention:

- Continued investment in [Feature redacted] despite technical challenges
- Persistent vision misalignment between CEO and Creative Director
- Feature backlog continues growing without meaningful prioritization
- Team morale declines or turnover increases
- Schedule slips without corresponding scope adjustments

REPORT CERTIFICATION

This assessment reflects the professional judgment of the evaluator based on direct, embedded observation and participation within the studio over a weeks-long period. The evaluation included attendance at daily stand-ups, leadership and team meetings, review of technical and design documentation, hands-on examination of development workflows, and informal interviews with key personnel.

Findings and recommendations are based on conditions observed during the assessment period and represent an independent, good-faith analysis of execution risk, organizational structure, and product viability. While reasonable efforts were made to ensure accuracy and objectivity, this report does not constitute a guarantee of future performance and should be considered within the broader context of investor due diligence.

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Date: 9/25/2025