

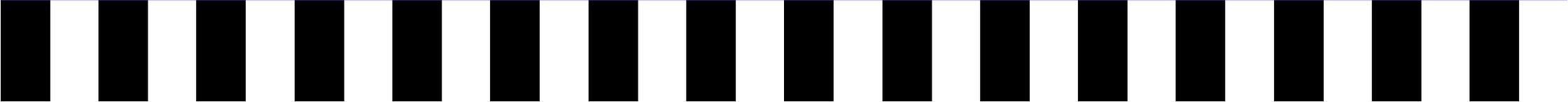
SO YOU WANT TO

START  
YOUR OWN

INDIE

GAME

STUDIO



# BUT WHY?

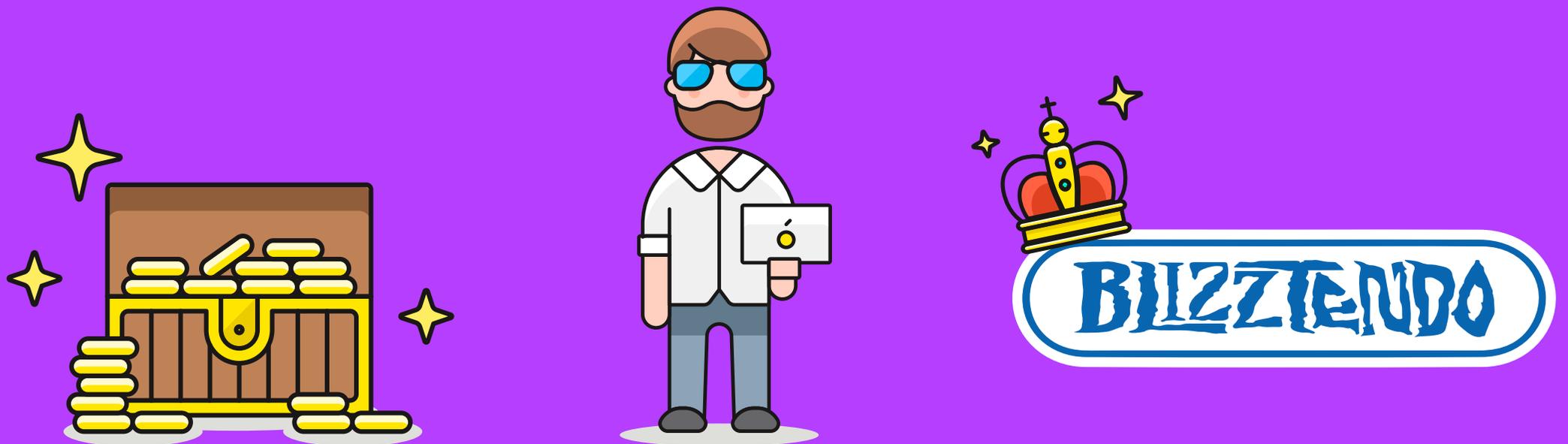
Before you start your company, and this is important, ask yourself, why are you doing this?

Be as honest with yourself as you can!

Do you want to amass fortune?

To be celebrated as a famous artist?

Or be a household name in the games industry?



Whatever it is make sure it aligns with your passion. Because making games, it is not easy! Accessing the tools has never been simpler, this means everyone and their dog can try to make a game, so the competition is fierce. You will need a higher purpose to drive you to that end goal.

Figure out where you want the studio you to be in five years time, and constantly ask yourself are you getting closer to that goal, or do you need to adjust?

# GET LEGIT

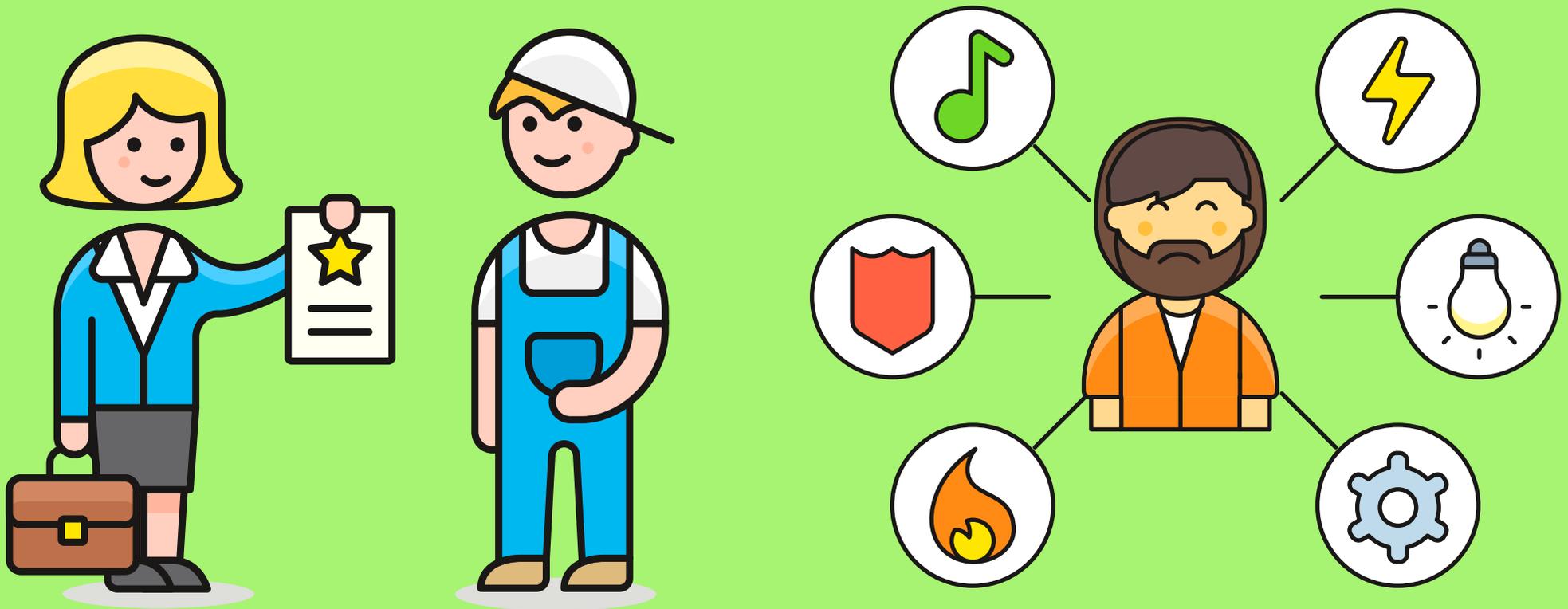
**Get legit quick! Make your company incorporated. It's simple it's easy, not expensive, and pays out in the long run. It can protect you from personal liability, allow you to involve founders, partners and investors. It can also have tax benefits, and other things. Pick a name for your studio or products, and check whether it is available. Think about tying up some domains for it early to avoid possible problems later on.**



**Don't be too quick to agree to deals. Thoroughly look at all your options, ask many people for advice and decide what is most important to your studio. Don't give away too much too soon either, like over rewarding new hires for simply sticking with you for a week, in this industry it can be all too common that people leave within 1-2 months, this will be unfair on those that are with you for the long term. Use a months trial to avoid these issues.**

# BUSINESS TIME

**Treat your studio like a business, straight away. Create agreements with everyone you work with from the beginning making clear the IP ownership rights and how individuals will get paid. Be transparent and upfront from the beginning so everyone's on the same page. Otherwise this can cause huge problems further down the line.**



**As the studio founder, be prepared to spend a LOT of time doing tasks that are actually not making the game. Seeking new team members, doing admin, seeking funding or networking to make new and important contacts. So be kind to yourself and plan some time to get stuck into what you love.**

# MONIES

**When finding funding always have a plan B. Savings in the bank, freelance work or selling your services as a Pokemon hunter! There's no hard guarantees in our arena that you'll make any money.**

**Research pots of money your studio may be able to access. Make sure you know about UK tax breaks for production costs, and R&D. Understand how to value any IP you may have - the game, tech, people and even skills. Know what kinds of investors you should be targeting and when.**



**Raise money for your development, don't worry so much about marketing. It's easier to get hold of marketing money if you have good data from your beta release. Try to find investors who understand the industry, and know the struggles very well, they'll likely be handy advisors too!**

# THINK FIRST

Over estimate, over estimate, over estimate! You might think you're great at estimating how long something will take, but you can't factor in for the 101 things that throw a spanner in the works. Losing a team member short-term to personal circumstances or worse, long-term, or loss of files, file corruption, software/hardware breakdowns, the list is endless, be prepared.



This is super important, only get a physical office when you really, REALLY need it. A comfortable chair in a cafe (or at home!) and a reliable internet connection are all you need. There's lots of places that cater for small indie studios, look for one near you. Local libraries are a great starting point.



# BE A BOSS

**If you are the boss, please, be a good one! Do some homework on best practices, you need to be a people person, encouraging your team, leading by example and making sure you understand what people need to be effective. You will find it easier the more understanding and transparent you can be.**



**And as I already said a really large portion of your time will go on admin, and following up leads and so on. This grows with your team, don't be shy about delegating to spread some of this work out to your team. Your personal motivation is paramount, you don't want to burnout, because everything goes down with you.**

# BUILD A TEAM

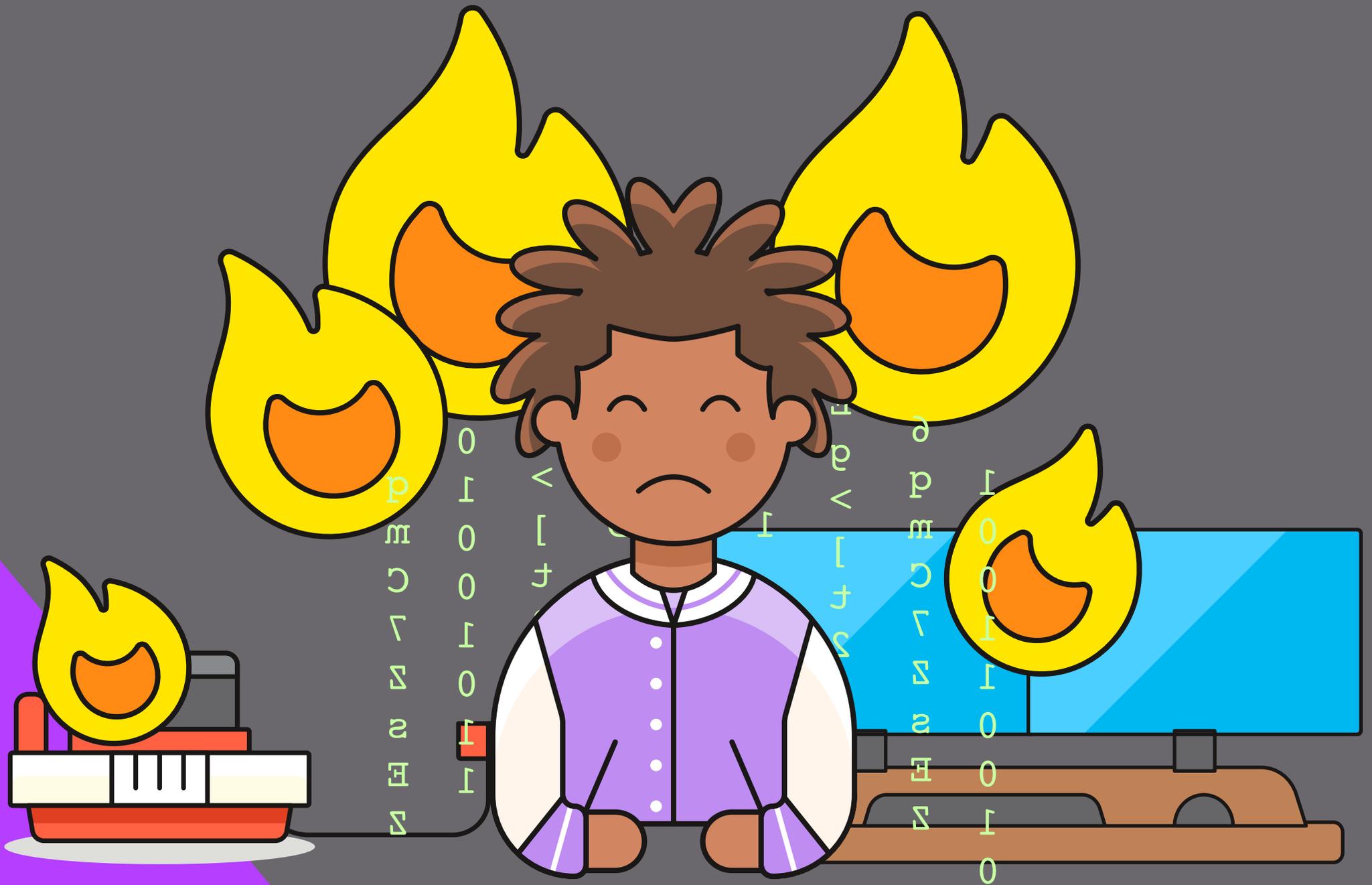
Find the right partner not just a good one. Starting a studio is like getting married and a mortgage all at once. It's sleepless nights and trials and tribulations. So it's essential to find someone who can share the journey with you and support you. Your partner or co-founder (or two) needs to be someone you trust and can be a great advisor in hard times, as well as celebrate your victories together.



You are the master craftsman of your studio, don't use external agents or influencers who might exploit your business or simply not be invested in your success as you are. Make your own culture and grow it without compromise. Some of the early hires will be what makes your studio a success. Find people to work with that are reliable (this is not easy) and that you like (that is super important). When you find relationships like these, make your time together enjoyable, when your team have a fun and enjoyable experience it will show in the game.

# STAY SANE!

It's so very easy to work long hours and let your personal life die a death as you follow your dreams. Taking a break will honestly help you keep your plans clear and burnout can be avoided as it's severely detrimental to your studios success. We were not made to sit and stare at a screen 24/7-365. Sounds so obvious but when you get into that start-up head space, anything and everything is business, business, business. And as we said before, if you burn out, if you go down, it all goes down with you!



# NETWORK

Unless you're crazy lucky, you will need the help of others to truly progress. Opportunities and knowledge come from committing time to building and maintaining relationships. Get involved in the indie community.

You will have many challenges, but there's no need to figure them all out yourself. Many indie developers, myself included, are more than happy to share their experiences. If there are no local meet-ups or connections, get out on social media (I run a meet-up "Game Dev Lunch London" and we have a discord chat group you can join! Just [visit the website](#)) and also get yourself down to some expo's and shows/events, go find your people.



The indie game industry network is really mutually supportive, and getting to know people can help you a great deal as you're starting out. In the early days of setting up or in mid development, talking with people in the same boat can be that which keeps you sane!

# SO THAT'S IT!



**That's all my top tips, I hope you find them useful.  
Maybe you've started already, maybe this chimes with you.**

**Remember, I am doing it too, so feel free to contact me if  
you're struggling, and you'd like more of my "wisdom" or  
even if you just want to talk to someone who understands  
how it all feels, this amazing journey into the indie scene.**

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[www.gamedevlunch.com](http://www.gamedevlunch.com)  
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