



GAMESFORUM
INTELLIGENCE

MOBILE GAMING BY GENRE: MIDCORE

A Marketing and Monetization Report



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INTRODUCTION

In an industry saturated with competition, midcore mobile games are experiencing a remarkable renaissance in 2025. This segment delivers the depth serious players crave while maintaining the accessibility mobile platforms demand - and the results speak for themselves.

This report, brought to you by Gamesforum in partnership with AppMagic, examines the current state and future trajectory of midcore mobile gaming through both data and expert analysis.

What's Inside

Our analysis begins with Q1 2025 performance data, looking at both the heavy hitters and the newcomers.

We then examine the five-year trajectory from 2020-2024, revealing the industry's resilience: after several years of post-pandemic decline, both downloads and revenue are once again trending upward, with forecasts suggesting continued growth through 2025.

Beyond the numbers, industry experts share actionable insights on effective monetization strategies and the often-overlooked potential of advertising in midcore titles. You'll discover how leading developers are:

- Balancing sophisticated IAP models with player-friendly design
- Implementing ads without disrupting the midcore experience
- Creating "snackable" sessions without sacrificing depth
- Leveraging social features to drive long-term retention

The report concludes with illuminating case studies that demonstrate successful adaptation in the midcore space. Learn how Supercell transformed Clash of Clans' core mechanics after 11 years, how Bytro Labs challenged conventional wisdom about advertising in strategy games, and gain essential insights on building successful midcore games in 2025's competitive landscape.

MIDCORE PERFORMANCE IN Q1 2025: DOWNLOADS

Below in Figures 1 and 2, you can see the top 10 performing midcore games for Q1 of 2025.

Figure 1 depicts the top 10 midcore games by total downloads for the period January 1st to March 31st globally across the iOS App Store and the Google Play Store, as provided by AppMagic.











TOP FREE		Downloads
1	 Roblox Roblox Corporation	56,131,331
2	 Free Fire Garena International I	36,577,577
2▲ 3	 PUBG MOBILE Tencent	29,662,335
4 1▼	 Free Fire MAX Garena International I	29,162,065
2▲ 5	 EA SPORTS FC™ Mobile S... ELECTRONIC ARTS	23,967,652
6▲ 6	 Mobile Legends: Bang Ba... MOONTON	22,767,867
16▲ 7	 Pokémon TCG Pocket The Pokemon Company	22,384,233
9▲ 8	 Spider Fighter 3: Action G... Starplay DMCC	22,028,829
42▲ 9	 Extreme Car Driving Simul... AxesInMotion Racing	21,462,758
10 1▼	 Last War:Survival FUNFLY PTE. LTD.	21,441,231

Figure 1: Top 10 midcore games by total downloads for the period January 1st to March 31st

MIDCORE PERFORMANCE IN Q1 2025: DOWNLOADS

Top 10

1. **Roblox** received the highest number of downloads, with over 56.1 million. 42 million of total downloads came from the Google Play Store, and nearly 8 million downloads in Q1 were from Indonesia.
2. In second place with 36.5 million downloads, 20 million less than Roblox, was **Free Fire** by Garena International. The first battle royale title to feature, like Roblox, Free Fire performed best in Indonesia amassing close to 7 million downloads in Q1.
3. At third place is Tencent's **PUBG MOBILE**, with 29.6 million downloads. An OG of the battle royale genre, Tencent's mobile version received 6.5 million downloads in China alone for 1Q of 2025.
4. At fourth is Garena International's **Free Fire Max** with just over 29 million downloads. With better graphics and sound, and consequently a bigger download size and device demand, Free Fire Max received the highest number of downloads in India with over 15 million downloads in Q1.
5. Electronic Arts **EA Sports FC Mobile Soccer** (or football!): with 23.9 million downloads, rising two places in the ranking for Q1 of 2025. A majority of the game's downloads came from Indonesia with 4.5 million installs.
6. Missin out by 1 million downloads, in sixth place is MOONTON's **Mobile Legends: Bang Bang**, a battle arena game developed in China in 2016 with 22.5 million downloads.
7. In seventh, a meteoric trajectory since its release in Q4 of 2024, The Pokemon Company's **Pokemon TCG Pocket**, a trading card game built around the world's biggest IP, Pokemon, with 22.3 million downloads.
8. With just over 22 million downloads, and rising nine places in Q1 2025, **Spider Fighter 3: Action Game** by Starplay DMCC.
9. It's followed by another meteoric rise: AxesInMotion Racing's **Extreme Car Driving Simulation** with 21.46 million downloads, having moved up 42 places.
10. Falling just 20,000 downloads behind Extreme Car Driving Simulator, with 21.441 million downloads, is FUNFLYE PTE LTD.'s **Last War Survival**, a seemingly casual style zombie runner shooter at its core with a 4x strategy between runs.

MIDCORE PERFORMANCE IN Q1 2025: REVENUE

Figure 2 depicts the top 10 midcore games by total IAP revenue in USD for the period January 1st to March 31st globally across iOS App Store and the Google Play Store, as provided by AppMagic.











TOP GROSSING		Revenue
1	 Honor of Kings Tencent	\$525,537,839
2	 Last War: Survival FUNFLY PTE. LTD.	\$476,552,828
2▲ 3	 Whiteout Survival Diandian Interactive	\$418,670,899
4	 PUBG MOBILE Tencent	\$395,125,568
13▲ 5	 Pokémon TCG Pocket The Pokemon Company	\$267,339,308
6 3▼	 Roblox Roblox Corporation	\$252,978,554
2▲ 7	 Pokémon GO Niantic, Inc.	\$146,653,581
25▲ 8	 CrossFire: Legends Tencent	\$129,038,832
1▲ 9	 Genshin Impact miHoYo	\$121,261,661
1▲ 10	 モンスターストライク XFLAG, Inc.	\$113,647,005

Figure 2: Top 10 midcore games by total IAP revenue in USD for the period January 1st to March 31st

MIDCORE PERFORMANCE IN Q1 2025: REVENUE

Top 10

1. With over half a billion USD in revenue for Q1 of 2025, Tencent's **Honor of Kings** launched to first, with 99% of Q1 revenue coming from China.
2. Second, with 475 million USD, in Q1 is FUNFLY PTE. LTD.'s **Last War: Survival**. 194 million USD of revenue came from the United States, with a further 100 million USD from Japan.
3. **Whiteout Survival** by Diandian Interactive placed third, with 418 million USD in revenue for Q1. With 120 million USD from the United States, and 88 million USD from China.
4. The second Tencent title in the Top 5 and placing fourth is **PUBG MOBILE**, with 395 million USD in Q1. 299 million USD of which came from China.
5. In fifth, as the first Pokemon IP to feature in the Top 10, is The Pokemon Company's **Pokemon TCG Pocket**, with 267 million USD, over 100 million USD less than PUBG MOBILE. With 122 million USD from Japan and a further 88 million USD from the United States.
6. Missing out on the Top 5 by 15 million USD is **Roblox**, with 252 million USD in IAP revenue for Q1 of 2025.
7. Followed by Niantic's **Pokemon GO!** With 146 million USD.
8. In eighth, the third Tencent title to feature in the Top 10, is **CrossFire: Legends**, with 129 million USD. CrossFire: Legends was pulled from the Google Play Store in August 2022, meaning revenue generated is from the iOS App Store alone.
9. Placing ninth with 121 million USD in Q1 is **Genshin Impact** by mi HoYo. 39 million USD of which came from Japan, with a further 35 million USD from China.
10. At tenth is XFLAG's **モンスターストライク (Monster Strike)** with 113 million USD in Q1 of 2025. Notably, **モンスターストライク** has by far the highest lifetime RPD of the Top 10, with 177 USD in Tier-1 East, where a majority of installs originate from.

MIDCORE PERFORMANCE 2020-2024: DOWNLOADS

Figure 3 shows the total number of downloads of the Top 100 midcore games from 2020 to 2024.

Included in this graph is a forecast for the number of downloads in 2025 for the Top 100 midcore games. This is based on Q1 performance in 2025 being replicated in Q2, 3 and 4 and is not amended for any uplift in downloads throughout the year.

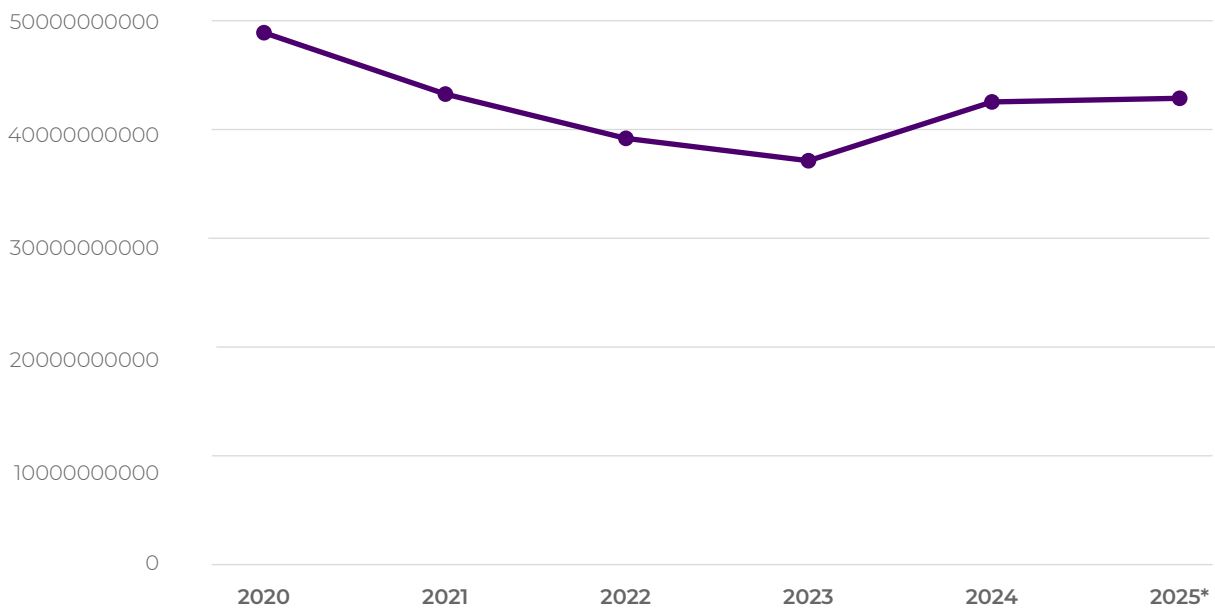


Figure 3: Total number of downloads of the Top 100 midcore games from 2020 to 2024

As seen in **Figure 3**, 2024 was the first year in the last five in which midcore game downloads increased.

Following a peak in 2020 during the COVID pandemic, downloads declined year-on-year.

2021 saw a decline in downloads by over 500 million, with 2022 seeing a further decrease by 420 million. This decline peaked in 2023 with a total of 3.7 billion downloads across the top 100 midcore titles.

2024 turned things around, building back to a total of 4.2 billion, an increase of 500 million downloads in 2023.

The 2025 forecast sees this increase. Q1 of 2025 saw the top 100 midcore titles receive 1.076 billion downloads. If a similar number is seen in Q2, 3 and 4, this will reach 4.3 billion by the end of the year.

MIDCORE PERFORMANCE

2020-2024: REVENUE

Figure 4 shows the total IAP revenue of the Top 100 revenue generating midcore games from 2020 to 2024.

Included in this graph is a forecast for midcore IAP revenue in 2025. It is worth noting this is calculated based on the revenue generated by the Top 100 midcore games for Q1 of 2025 and multiplied by 4 to reflect a similar performance in Q2, 3 and 4. The forecast is not amended for any uplift in revenue through the year.

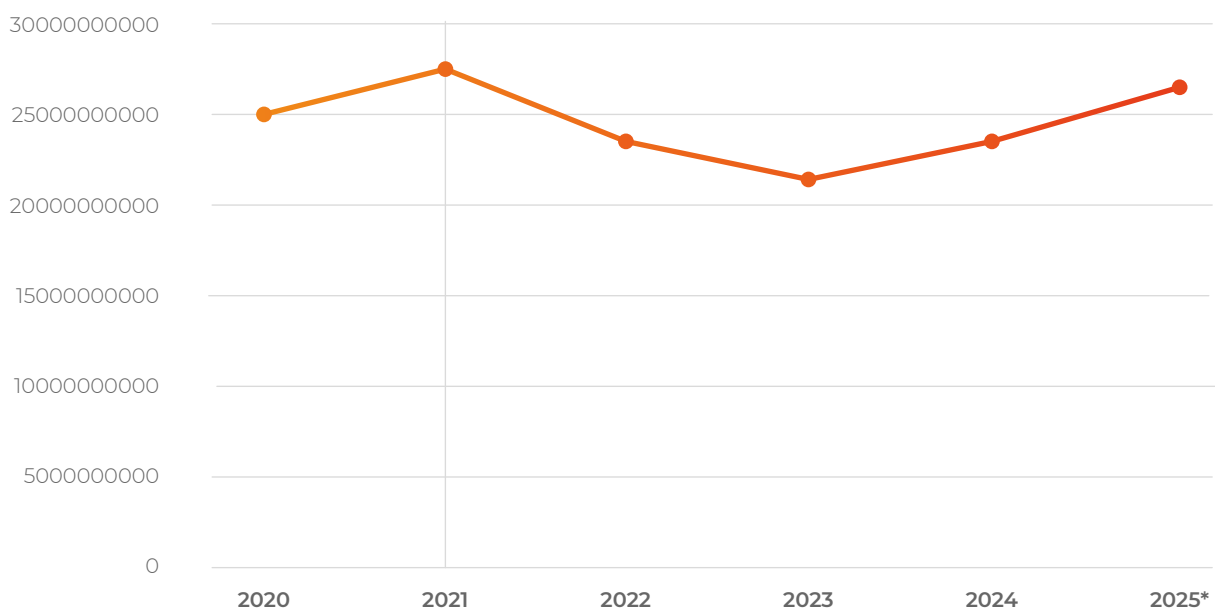


Figure 4: Total IAP revenue of the Top 100 revenue generating midcore games from 2020 to 2024

Figure 4 provides context for IAP revenue performance in midcore games from 2020 to 2024, with a forecast for 2025.

2021 saw a peak in IAP revenue generated in midcore games at 27.5 billion USD, an increase of 2 billion USD in 2020.

This then declined by 4 billion USD in 2022 to 23.62 billion, and a further 2 billion USD in 2023 to 21.44 billion.

2024 saw a return above 2022 levels with an increase of 2.2 billion to a total of 23.66 billion USD.

The 2025 forecast will see IAP revenue continue to rise across midcore titles, with an estimate of 26.6 billion USD based on a 2025 Q1 performance of 6.65 billion USD.

MIDCORE PERFORMANCE

2020-2024: DOWNLOADS X REVENUE

Figure 5 provides a comparison of revenue and downloads performance for the Top 100 midcore games from 2020 to 2024, including the 2025 forecast for both.

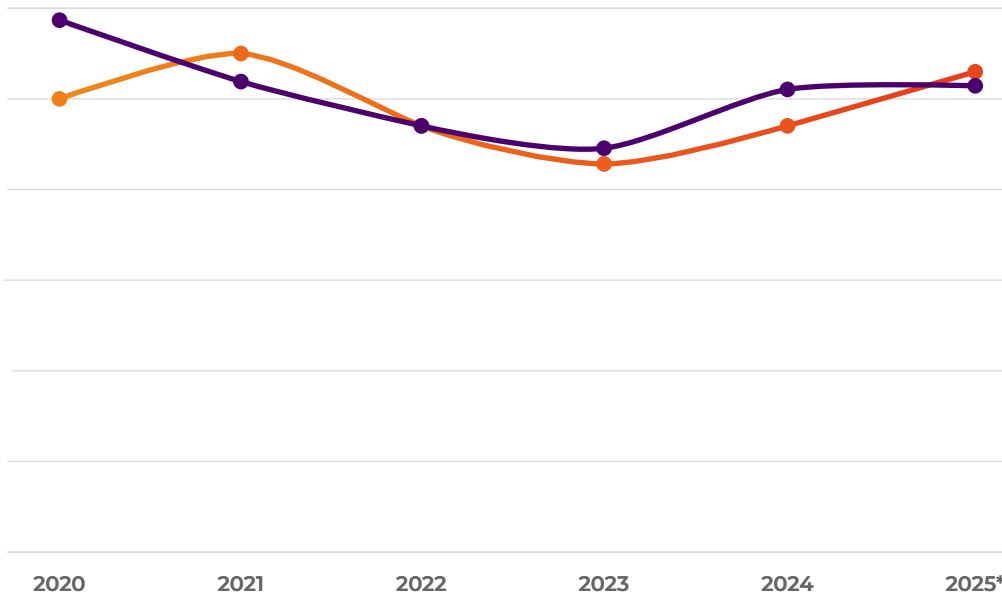


Figure 5: Comparison of revenue and downloads performance for the Top 100 midcore games

Figure 5 shows a side-by-side comparison of downloads and IAP revenue for 2020 to 2024, including the 2025 forecast.

In both downloads and revenue, 2024 saw the return from a general trend of decline in midcore games. This is forecast to continue per the Q1 results for 2025, showing a further increase on 2024.

However, the differences come in the initial download and revenue peaks. 2020 saw downloads at its highest for midcore titles, with a decline in 2021, while IAP revenue peaked in 2021.

Both downloads and revenue declined in 2022 and further in 2023, before a resurgence in 2024.

A GUIDE TO MIDCORE MONETIZATION WITH EZGI DOGAN

Monetizing midcore mobile games requires a careful balance of engagement and sophistication. These games attract highly invested players who are looking for depth—not just in gameplay, but in the monetization system itself. Offering layered purchase options that appeal to various player motivations (progression, competition, collection, and customization) is key to maximizing LTV.

1. **Time-limited events with exclusive collectibles are especially effective.**

They create urgency, drive FOMO, and offer players a sense of prestige—especially when the rewards combine gameplay utility with strong visual appeal. Themed seasonal events that feature rare characters, skins, or items tied to limited-time reward tracks consistently lead to spend spikes. These collectibles become even more valuable when they're showcased in visible areas like player profiles, leaderboards, or PvP—turning them into status symbols and reinforcing long-term engagement.

2. Don't underestimate the power of **soft social pressure**—

features like ranked leaderboards, guild milestones, or alliance rewards tied to IAP boosts can create strong incentives to spend, especially when tied to time-sensitive competitive goals.

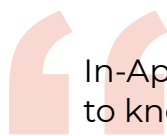
3. We're also seeing success with hybrid monetization models—combining rewarded ads with IAPs can enhance revenue without disrupting core gameplay, particularly in regions with lower spending power. And of course, long-term retention through competitive features and evolving content loops is essential to sustaining monetization over time.

Ezgi Dogan,
Product & Monetization Consultant



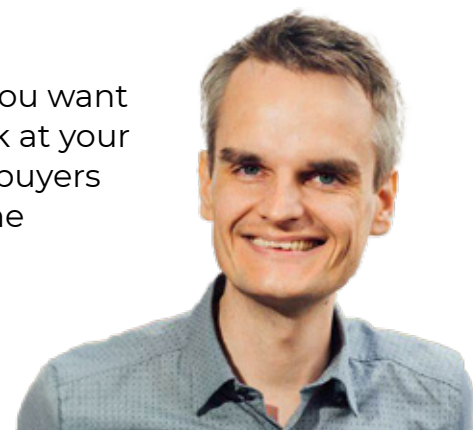
STRIKING THE BALANCE: INTEGRATING ADS IN YOUR MIDCORE TITLE

12



In-App-Purchases are not the only revenue stream. You want to know who is buying from you and who is not. Look at your player data and segment them into buyers and non buyers and add behavioural insights. You can show ads to the non buyers in order to monetize them.

Sven Jurgens,
App Growth Consultant



Integrating ads into your midcore title can be a tricky business. But if done right, it pays great dividends. Make sure that you are familiar with ads implementation of your competitors since that can always be a great starting point.

Kick things off with a simple ads setup - focus on offering a limited number of rewarded video ads, in a visible in-game location to as many players as possible. The safest way to introduce ads is via AB testing - make sure to keep an eye on retention, playtime, IAPs conversions and comments on your store pages.

If all looks good, roll out to all users and start working on a more sophisticated setup that includes more placements, different rewards, as well as a proper segmentation approach.

Božo Janković,
Head of Ad Monetization, **GameBiz Consulting**



AB testing is essential in introducing ads into midcore titles. Partly for proving incrementally from a revenue perspective and to prove to game teams that ads can drive revenue. The best practice is to increase ad units after users pass through the average purchase window without making a purchase. Remember that eCPMs for midcore are usually much higher than casual, so the revenue generated might surprise you.

Felix Braberg,
Ad Monetization Consultant & Co-founder,
two & a half gamers



WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL MIDCORE TITLE IN 2025?

Midcore Mobile Games: The State of Play

Despite challenges, midcore mobile games are on the rise. Franchises like Supercell's Clash of Clans continue thriving into their second decade, while newcomers such as Homa Games' Merge Master have shattered download records with their hybrid approaches.

According to mobile intelligence firm Data.ai, midcore titles still command the highest player LTV in the industry - nearly 3x that of casual games - making them tremendously valuable in publishers' portfolios.

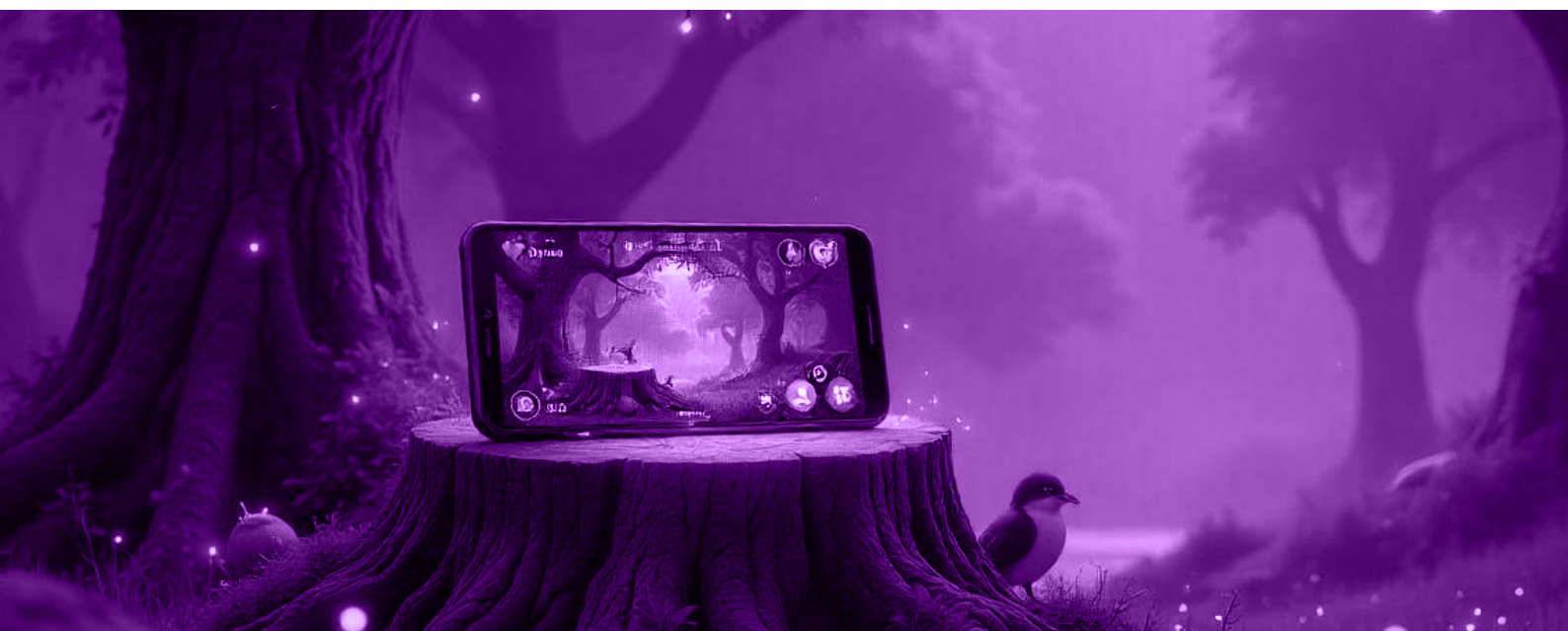
In the next section of the report, we will take a look at what makes a midcore mobile game successful in 2025, delving into key performance factors, game design trends for retention, successful case studies, and much more.

KEY PERFORMANCE FACTORS FOR MIDCORE SUCCESS

High Retention & Engagement

Long-term player retention is arguably the most critical metric for midcore games. Top midcore titles manage to "hold on to players for months" of activity. For example, in North America midcore games boast first-day retention ~31.7% – higher than any other category.

Successful games sustain engagement beyond the first month (the global median 28-day retention is under 1%), with players often logging multiple sessions per day. Keeping players invested over the long haul (through fresh content and social hooks) directly drives revenue potential.



WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL MIDCORE TITLE IN 2025?

Monetization Depth & LTV

Midcore players tend to monetize more deeply over time, so LTV is a key performance factor. On iOS, midcore games lead in long-term spending – AppsFlyer’s The State of App Monetization report found that midcore’s Day-90 ARPU averages ~\$9.69 under hybrid monetization models (far above casual games). A small cohort of big spenders, or ‘whales’ as people call them, often contribute a large share of revenue, so designing for spending depth and VIP retention is vital.

Notably, midcore titles recoup acquisition costs slower than casual titles.

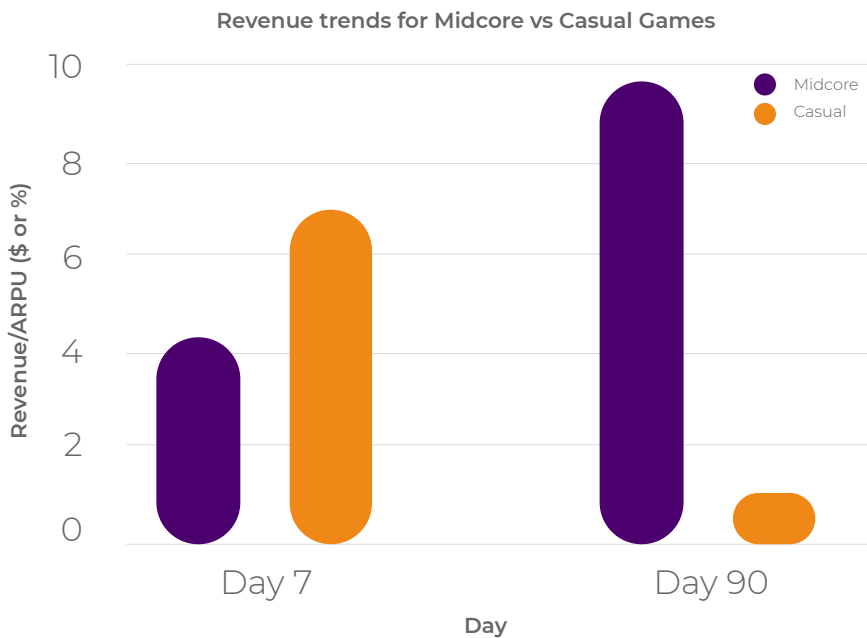


Figure 6 illustrates findings from Udonis’ [research](#) on midcore games, showing that average day-7 return on ad spend (ROAS) is 4.3% for midcore titles compared to 7% for casual games. This underscores the importance of long-term retention in midcore, as profitability depends on players converting to spenders much later in their lifecycle.

Midcore games face higher user acquisition costs than casual games, making efficient marketing and strong early KPI's important. The average CPI for midcore is around \$2 – roughly double that of casual games. On iOS in particular, UA is expensive (CPIs ~5× higher than Android). In some cases, CPI for hit midcore titles can spike up to \$20–30. Because of this, successful midcore developers focus on achieving acceptable ROAS within a fixed window (e.g., 90 or 180 days) and on improving organic reach.

Many midcore hits leverage pre-existing IP or brand recognition, leading to a more balanced paid vs. organic revenue mix – players often seek out known midcore games without ads, unlike the paid UA reliance in casual. Still, paid marketing remains crucial to scale. According to AppsFlyer's recent State of App Monetization [report](#), savvy publishers allocate budget tactically (e.g., around new content drops or events) to re-engage lapsed users and “maximize earnings – especially when targeted effort is put into re-engaging players.”

Did you know?

Garena released two versions of Free Fire to bridge the digital divide. The standard version is optimised for low-end devices common in developing countries, while Free Fire Max targets higher-end smartphones. Both versions share core gameplay and support cross-play, helping the game reach users even where access to smartphones outpaces basic utilities like electricity.



EVOLVING GAME DESIGN TRENDS FOR MARKETABILITY & RETENTION

1. Removing Friction and Wait Times

Modern midcore design is shifting away from outdated mechanics that required long timers, which ultimately frustrated players to the point of no longer wanting to play the game. One high-profile example is Supercell's Clash of Clans, which in 2023 completely removed troop training wait times after 11 years, and as of earlier in March this year, the game also made the [decision](#) to remove training times for spells and siege machines as well.

This change was driven by player feedback and has enabled longer play sessions and faster progression, directly boosting engagement. Overall, successful midcore titles in 2025 minimize unnecessary downtime – letting players progress at their own pace (or binge-play if they desire) rather than enforcing rigid turn timers or build waits. Reducing these pain points makes the games more appealing to players and improves retention.

We will delve into a case study based on Clash of Clans below.

2. Shorter, Snackable Sessions (Without Sacrificing Depth)

To broaden appeal on mobile, many midcore games now offer shorter session loops or bite-sized modes. The goal is to fit quality gameplay into a busy user's schedule. For instance, Marvel Snap delivers an [“accessible CCG with short, intense matches of ~4 minutes”](#), as put by the Deconstructor of Fun, distilling a traditionally long-form genre (collectible card games) into fast, satisfying rounds ideal for mobile play.

This trend of concise yet compelling sessions increases a game's marketability, and can be applied to midcore games across the mobile gaming world – players are more likely to try and stick with a game that doesn't demand 30+ minute commitments each play. Midcore developers are finding ways to preserve strategic depth while trimming game length and downtime, which helps capture a wider (including more casual-leaning) audience without alienating core gamers.



Creative direction is crucial to balance an engaging strategy with action-oriented gameplay in snackable sessions specific to midcore mobile games. It ensures a consistent & memorable vision that engages your target audience who expect more depth than casual games but still want pick-up-and-play access. It can also build strong player affinity while laying the groundwork for sustained success in the crowded mobile game market.

Tina Shaw, Creative Director, **Activision**



EVOLVING GAME DESIGN TRENDS FOR MARKETABILITY & RETENTION

3. Hybrid-Casual Onboarding

An emerging design philosophy is to start gameplay simple and ramp up complexity over time, essentially funneling a broad audience into a midcore experience. Early stages are made accessible and tutorialised to hook casual players, then advanced mechanics unlock as players progress.

By lowering the initial barrier (e.g., using friendly art styles, clear goals, and forgiving early levels), midcore games can acquire users more easily and then convert them to long-term core players as complexity increases. The result is a wider top of funnel and better retention past the newbie stage – a design win-win.

4. Social & Competitive Features

Community elements are a cornerstone of midcore design, and 2025's successful games double down on social play. Features like guilds/clans, leaderboards, co-op modes, and PvP arenas drive engagement by connecting players.

Guild mechanics have traditionally been a “must-have” in midcore genres like strategy and RPG, because they encourage players to form communities, compete or collaborate, and invest more time in the game. Modern midcore titles often introduce light social features early (to get players interacting) and then deeper guild systems at mid-levels. Social pressure and camaraderie – clan wars, donating resources to guildmates, seasonal guild events, etc. – provide intrinsic motivation to log in regularly. These features not only improve retention but also can aid organic growth (friends inviting friends, word-of-mouth).

In 2025, even some formerly “single-player” mobile experiences are adding social layers, reflecting a broader trend that midcore players expect multiplayer or community components in their games.

EVOLVING GAME DESIGN TRENDS FOR MARKETABILITY & RETENTION

5. LiveOps and Frequent Updates

Running effective LiveOps is now considered essential for midcore games, in fact, almost all mobile games need some element of LiveOps in 2025 to be considered a success. Regular updates and time-limited events keep the experience fresh and prevent content fatigue.

Udonis' Midcore Games Market [report](#) notes that LiveOps “stands out as the preferred strategy for top-performing mid-core games,” characterised by a steady cadence of new content, special events, and rotating offers. Successful midcore titles often operate on a seasonal schedule: e.g., new characters, levels or features every few weeks, monthly or biweekly events with unique rewards, and seasonal resets or tournaments. These periodic infusions of content give players new goals and reasons to continue playing long-term.

For example, League of Legends: Wild Rift introduced an encompassing seasonal event structure linking multiple events with an event currency – an approach that reflects how midcore games now create overarching seasonal experiences. Likewise, other games use weekend events, crossover collaborations, or holiday-themed modes to spike engagement. The key is that in 2025, a midcore game's lifespan is sustained by LiveOps-driven “dynamic content offerings” and “non-recurring events” that keep even veteran players excited. Studios investing in robust LiveOps teams and pipelines see payoffs in player retention and monetization (during events, players often spend more).



At AppMagic, we're seeing a clear shift from launching new titles to doubling down on LiveOps and scaling existing games. This reflects a broader industry trend, but it's particularly prominent in midcore, where long-term engagement and monetization potential are higher.

One notable trend is self-personalization — games are increasingly offering tailored experiences, from events to monetization offers. For instance, around 1 in 6 monetization offers in Whiteout Survival are customizable now, and one of the most successful events in Brawl Stars last year was customizable as well. Thus there is a growing push to meet individual player preferences, boost conversion rates, and give a sense of control.

Additionally, there's rising interest in alternative payment systems and distribution channels. Since midcore players often spend more, bypassing app store commissions can have a significant financial impact, prompting studios to explore web shops and third-party payment solutions.

Stan Minasov, VP of Product, **AppMagic**



Case Study 1: Supercell Slashes Timers, Empowers Players

Supercell has made two landmark changes to Clash of Clans that demonstrate the evolution of mobile game design philosophy. In 2023, they completely removed troop training times - a core mechanic since the game's 2012 launch - allowing players to attack continuously without the traditional 15+ minute waits between sessions. This was followed by additional friction-point removals in March 2025, including the removal of Troop, Spell, and Siege Machine training times, Heroes never exhaust from battling, and Legend League players will keep their 8-battle daily limit for now.

"The world is not the same as it was in 2012," Supercell [explained](#), acknowledging changing player expectations.

These changes required Supercell to abandon a proven monetization vector, gems spent to skip training times, in favour of a more player-friendly approach. By removing artificial barriers, Supercell enabled longer play sessions and more fluid progression.

Supercell's strategy reflects a significant shift in mobile gaming priorities: respecting player time and providing immediate gratification now takes precedence over traditional time-gating mechanics. For one of mobile gaming's most enduring titles, the calculation was clear - removing friction creates more long-term value than enforcing it.



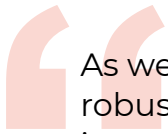
The most valuable resource available to a player isn't gold or elixir, it's their time. By not waiting for troop training, a larger proportion of players are able to enjoy the game's combat system to a deeper extent. I'd speculate that the company's analysis has shown that players who do progress further in this area retain (and likely monetize) better over time.

Nowadays, developers put fewer arbitrary barriers to fun in place. Acquiring users is hard enough so once you've done it, retaining them in your game is of paramount importance. If you insist on restricting the fun, it's very easy for your users to go and find it elsewhere.

Nick Murray,

F2P Consultant: Design, Product, Economy, Monetization,
GameConsulting.net





As we are entering an environment where midcore games have very robust feature sets, meaning that there are literally other games being integrated on top of the main game, developers try to keep the players engaged in the game for as long as possible. Therefore the era of having long timers, which as you set up would nudge you towards the soft end of your session is no longer desirable. You either build another engagement mechanic beside the timers or as here, get rid of them to remove future engagement barriers.

Keep in mind that this is Clash of Clans 2025 not the original version taken from Backyard Monsters in 2012, which had much less features. So now there are a lot of other systems to still pace your content progression instead of this older now outdated gating system, as the team already removed resource cost of units before in 2022, this is just a continuation of that direction.



Jakub Remiar,
Product & Game Design Consultant, Co-founder & Host,
two & a half gamers



Did you know?

When Supercell removed Training Costs on Clash of Clans a few years ago, the results were impressive:

Enhanced Strategic Diversity: Players embraced a wider array of attack strategies without the concern of resource expenditure for training troops, spells, or siege machines.

Increased Player Engagement: The removal of training costs led to heightened player enjoyment, as evidenced by positive player feedback and increased activity within the game.

Accelerated Skill Development: With fewer resource constraints, players could experiment more freely, leading to faster learning of battle mechanics and quicker progression through early Town Halls.



Case Study 2: How Bytro Labs Broke the Mold with Ads in Midcore Games

Bytro Labs began with a vision to create immersive, long-term strategy games. Known for their complex titles like Supremacy 1914 and Call of War, Bytro's games have attracted millions of players worldwide, becoming staples in the midcore mobile gaming market.

In a highly competitive landscape, Bytro Labs took a bold step by integrating rewarded video ads and ad towers into their games, enhancing monetization without disrupting gameplay. Working with GameBiz Consulting, they achieved impressive results:



Increased Revenue: Average Revenue Per Daily Active User (ARPDau) rose by up to 32.9%.



Better Retention: Day 3 retention saw a 6.1% boost on iOS.



High eCPM: Bytro secured eCPM rates of \$23 for iOS and \$25 for Android.

These results prove that, even in the midcore mobile market, players are willing to engage with ads when done thoughtfully.

*Case study information taken from GameBiz Consulting [Case Studies](#)

What Can We Learn?

- **Strategic Ad Integration Works:** Thoughtful placement of rewarded videos and ad towers can drive significant revenue gains without harming gameplay flow or user satisfaction.
- **Midcore Players Accept Ads - If Done Right:** The assumption that midcore audiences reject advertising is outdated. Bytro's uplift in Day 3 retention suggests ads can even support engagement when aligned with player incentives.
- **Rewarded Ads Can Compete with IAPs:** High eCPMs (\$23 iOS / \$25 Android) indicate that rewarded video ads can serve as a viable alternative or complement to in-app purchases in midcore economies.
- **Data-Driven Optimization Is Critical:** Partnering with monetization experts shows the importance of continual testing, iteration, and optimisation to unlock ad revenue potential.

CONCLUSION AND FINAL THOUGHTS

The midcore mobile market in 2025 is defined by a push towards higher player lifetime value through retention rather than quick wins. From our research, success comes from combining compelling, streamlined gameplay with social hooks and regular content updates, all supported by flexible, player-friendly monetization.

To thrive, developers must stay responsive to player feedback and broader market shifts. As one industry [report](#) notes, ‘the world of mid-core mobile gaming is dynamic... continuously adapting to market demands and player preferences.’ Studios that exemplify this adaptability are seeing sustained success even as competition intensifies.



Looking ahead, expect midcore games to further blur genre lines, leverage cross-platform play, and refine their live service operations.

What makes a midcore mobile game successful in 2025 is its ability to deliver depth on a mobile-friendly platter, run as a living service that keeps players engaged long-term, and monetize in a way players feel is fair. Achieving that balance is challenging but it's a tried and true recipe that is powering today's biggest winners in the midcore space.

Mariam Ahmad,
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