

**Major assignment 1**

**Product Evaluation**

**Nintendo Wii**

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## Innovations in the Art of Video Games Product Overview & Introduction

Nintendo, a name synonymous with video games and one of the founding companies of video game culture has always been at the forefront of technology and innovation. While the library of games that the company itself outputs is small as compared to rival companies, its ethos has always been quality over quantity.

Many genres of games and game design have been attributed to this company, heralded as a national icon of Japan, Nintendo is as much part of the Japanese culture as the many landmarks and icons.

The innovative approach that Nintendo took to claim a great share of the market was to go the opposite direction of the trend. The undertaking was a risky venture which paid off immensely, in the process and almost overnight created a new market and culture .

Video games have tend to be the target for the particular demographic of minors to sub adults. Nintendo developed a video game technology which was easily accessible to people of all ages and demographic, it sought to change perception of video games as an unhealthy means of entertainment, by utilising physical activity and interaction.

While rival companies took the path of direct evolution of the video game product specifically the hardware, Nintendo took the revolutionary path, down to the development project title as this extract illustrates :

*Imagine that you are one of the major video game console manufacturers in the world. Everyone in the industry is selling approximately the same thing -- a console containing the processor along with a two-handed game controller. One way to create a splash would be to totally blow out the amount of processor and graphics firepower. The problem is that both the Xbox 360 and the PlayStation 3 have already staked out the high ground here.*

*So Nintendo took a different and far riskier path. Initially, it chose the codename "Revolution" for its new game console.*



As the development title suggest, this was to be a revolution of the video game industry, not an evolution which the competitors sought to take.

The feature that sets the Wii apart from both its competitors and its ancestors is the Wii remote, or the interaction means, the device's control pad. Instead of a bulky, button-studded joystick, Nintendo has produced a slim wand representing a television remote control. It's connected to the console wirelessly, and more important, it's equipped with an innovative motion sensor that detects movement and rotation in three dimensions.

By creating this method of interaction a whole new world of possibilities were opened for development. Suddenly the video game demographic was burt at the seams, due to the product and its welcoming nature for people of all ages. The method of control was designed to be as familiar and intuitive as television remote control, every person in the developed world has a television and they more then familiar with such device and ease of usage, just point and press, now just point and play, simplicity which urges an individual who has never played a videogame to actually have the courage or want to try and experience it.

The Wii remote allows users to get up, move around the room and become part of the game. If you want your character on the screen to swing his sword, you wield the remote and make the thrusts and parries yourself. In a game of baseball, you hold the remote like a bat, and swing for the stands when you want your virtual player to do the same. By giving players the ability to physically interact with a virtual world, Nintendo has significantly changed the experience of videogaming. It's suddenly more immersive, more compelling and potentially more appealing to consumers who have never considered buying a videogame console before.



## SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

- Retail price point is almost half of the competitors
- The Nintendo brand is synonymous with high quality video games
- One of the founders of video game movement
- Highly innovative product and input method
- Company reinvests into research and development heavily for innovative products in development
- Company has a closed policy of product development
- The strongest video game company mentally and financially
- Great marketing team
- Great manufacturing and distribution channel
- Great tools for content developers
- Great content management, distribution and delivery system for developers and studios
- Great licensing terms for developers and studios
- Provides a new dimension of video game interaction
- Increases the market demographic for this product considerably
- Allows backward compatibility for consumers which have bought previous products
- Integrates previous hardware into the product design and content
- Initiated the distribution of retrospective game content, further adding appeal and market share



### Weakness

- Hardware ( processing & graphics ) are not as powerful as the competitors

### Opportunity

- More time and budget is available to develop the next generation system

### Threats

- Competitors amending their product line to incorporate similar innovations

From the SWOT analysis results we can clearly see the clear market advantage that this product has over its competitors. Nintendo has developed a truly innovative core product and have encapsulated it with all the support and requirements it needs to prosper for its life span. The weakness can be negated in this instance as the innovative features of the product and its benefits far outweigh the negative aspects which are technology based. Once again the hardware power can be increased when the next generation of this product is developed and once again we will see that due to industry market prices, Nintendo may be able to offer another update to this innovation while retain the market winning price point of the video games industry.

Innovation or “ Imitation is the best form of flattery ” , we will see competitors developing products of their own which will imitate the innovative features of the Nintendo product but it is a case of too little and too late , for the life cycle of the current generation of video game products are past peak. The Nintendo system has been developed from ground up with this feature, while the competitors are forcing this innovation into their products, doing so may induce mixed results, a financial burden and minimal sales due to the high production cost. We can safely say that Nintendo even designed this product to be future proofed.

## Evaluation

Nintendo changed the perception of the videogame and its industry by this product. It was an act of enticing participation from every one as this extract states.

*Nintendo choose to re-invented videogaming, making it more social, more intuitive and surprisingly physically engaging. The Wii is indeed revolutionary, and it's potentially the device that will make videogaming as widely enjoyed as board or card games.*

The change of perception or the actuality, this product had made a closed community open up to include all and has changed the video gaming community for ever, its taken the technical jargon out of a technical product and bestowed it on a level which is akin to the most simplistic forms of entertainment , it has created fun without the complexity usually associated with the videogame.

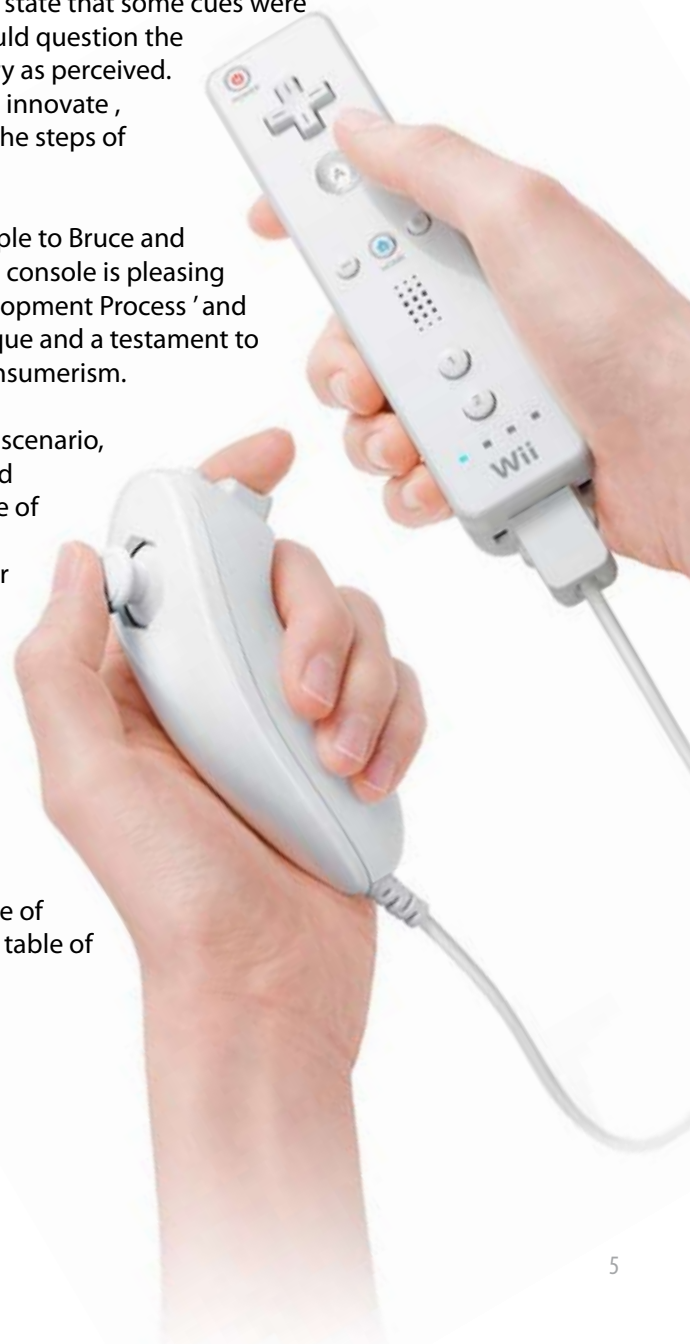
Nintendo accentuated old research and development with a new design and further refinement of technology. If one were to say that this is truly an innovative product, then one would be right to some extent. The other half of the argument could also state that some cues were drawn from a library of many years of research, which would question the authenticity of claiming this product to be as revolutionary as perceived. But regardless of the usage of accumulated knowledge to innovate , it is the decision when to utilise it for a product that sees the steps of innovation to fruition.

The evaluation of this product provides an ultimate example to Bruce and Biemans arguement. Although aesthetically the Nintendo console is pleasing to the eye, it is the over all showcase of the 'Product Development Process ' and all of its collective elements which make this product unique and a testament to great product by design, from inception to creation to consumerism.

Wheewright and Clark observations falter in this product scenario, this Nintendo product did not enter the market early, it did not have any specific criteria to fulfil, so therefore the issue of customer expectations were negligible. The market trend and expectations were a cycle of hardware updates, better and faster with more power. What Nintendo delivered was not necessarily better or faster as the rule the competitors continued with, it was a mould breaking delivery, a true innovation which defined a whole new market on its own accord.

In fact this scenario is quite the opposite as expected by Wheewright and Clark's development imperatives.

This product shows no regards to a single capability or rule of product development, but rather encompasses the entire table of development imperatives in its design and development.



## Conclusion

Nintendo defined a need for a new direction of development, they recognised the way things were in a state of evolutionary technological direction, they understood the direction which they should take to define the next, consumers and technology. Although their technology is inferior in terms of pure numbers and analytic processing, to that of their competitors, they used the power of intuition and innovation of practice and experience to maintain and adhere to their goals.

Enjoyment with a physical twist, no longer do games have to be unhealthy as one is seated all day to play a game, the Nintendo console and games demand user interaction on a physical level, to the point where games have been developed as an aid to healthy and fit life styles and have even been recommended by some members of various medical professions. The innovative product makes exercise fun, you can have a cardiovascular work out just by being immersed in a video game.

The expansion of this product to a new market included a wide mixture of demographic, the reason being the product was inviting, very user friendly due to its innovative user interaction and appealing to all ages. This product literally did change the life styles of many people. For instance it aided and nurtured a sense of physical activity and placed a fun element which was received with enormous applause by society.

This innovation or any innovative design becomes the de facto standard. It has reshaped and moulded, perception, it identified a need based on ones own initiative and fulfilled it, which lead to a successful implementation of the product in the market and economic level due to the price point at which it was accessible to a large demographic. It moulded and directed the perception of an industry by society and made it more accessible. It sought to fulfil an evident gap between entertainment and health and it was for everyone which is the true indication of success of an innovative product in a general market, which is the world and its global economy.



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## **Notes.**