







Foreword

Post pandemic macro effects on gamers' gaming behavior are resulting in new challenges and growth opportunities for game developers. The explosion of the global pandemic led to longer hours of staying at home using a mobile device, which resulted in an unprecedented growth in mobile gaming in the last 2 years. Despite a more steady trend now being observed, there is still a considerable increase compared to the pre-pandemic time.

With financial concerns biting into gamers' budgets, gamers pay more attention on spending smartly, and their life focus has changed along with the recovery of the market. Now is the time to refocus on what truly matters to gamers, especially during this time of 'new life' adjustment.

On Mobile, genre preferences are more varied, with 9 distinct subgenres being represented among the top 10 games by consumer spend in the first half of this year, which indicates that gamers are strongly seeking for variety and for diverse gaming experiences. Gaming is not just for lean-back leisure, but instead it stands for connection, for creativity, for learning, and for inspiration.

In this research, Google and Ipsos listened to thousands of mobile gamers across the world who were **experiencing a different life than what they had before**, and how that impacted their gaming attitudes and behavior, and especially a new gaming experience that in-game spenders now expect to have. We will share the 3 major shifts of gamers' needs and how to achieve stronger gamer immersion, helping game developers to respond to these changes and catch the growing opportunity by creating extraordinary mobile games.

nd among the top 10







Research Methodology and Scope







Interviewed 10,000+ Gamers

USA	Japan	Germa	any
South	Korea	Brazil	Indo









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Subgenre Game Definition





Combine real-time strategy, world-building, and role playing mechanics, where players engage in battles and build armies to attack and bases to defend. For example:

Focus on the management of economic processes, usually in the form of a business of construction. For example:



Rise of Kingdoms: Lost Crusade



State of Survival: Zombie War



Top War: Battle Game







Tycoon

Players solve puzzles by merging or sliding numbers, blocks, animals, or even characters. For example:

Hay Day

Township

SimCity BuildIt



Merge Mansion



Merge Dragons!



EverMerge: Merge 3 Puzzle







Three mobile gamer behavior shifts



Laser-focused on spending smartly

Rising prices and inflation concerns are driving a stronger focus on managing finances. Gamers are triggered by great value in-game promotions, and are more likely to purchase high quality content, which highlights the importance of building long-term gamer value. Rewards and bonuses can also ensure a better gaming experience.



More than 70% of mobile gamers also play on other devices. It is a trend that gamers have a stronger desire to experience the same game on different platforms. Cross-device gamers expect to have a seamless gaming experience that can better adapt to different device features.

Demand for seamless cross-device gaming experiences



Reconnected with others via mobile gaming

With the pandemic slowdown, the demands of social reconnection have rebounded. Gamers either spend more time going out to attend social activities or build connections with others in game. In the early stages of a game release, establishing WOM and social interaction can enhance the connection among gamers.









Three actions to enhance mobile gamers' immersiveness







Connect to their interests

Offer them diverse game experiences

Enhance their belongingness to the game

- sense of belongingness.

• Remain aware of emerging hobbies of target gamers, leverage these interests into both games and ads, to build an effective route to achieve gamer immersion.

• Utilize gameplay that gamers are familiar with for instant fun and enjoyment.

• In-game IP franchises allow gamers to be deeply immersed in the character's story.

 Design the in-game mechanisms and onboarding tutorial to be both easy and clear, so that the learning effort required from gamers is decreased and they can sustain their initial motivation.

• Encourage gamers to discover and personalize their own gaming experience, by providing a range of varied and customized characters to choose from.

• Enhance the features of guild battles, teamwork missions, and in-game friend gifting, to enable gamers to improve their relationships with each other and the game itself.

• Exclusive welcome-back gifts and missions entice back churned gamers by increasing their



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Chapter 1

How Mobile Gamers' Behaviors Shifted Under The Post Pandemic Situation





Despite the pandemic impact decreasing, the time spent on mobile gaming has been sustained



Compared with 1 Year Ago, Weekly Time Spent on Mobile Gaming

Avg. 5.3 hours

spent on mobile games per week



Spend same time as 2021









More and more consumers feel that the pandemic is behind them







3 major shifts have been observed amongst mobile gamers in the past year:

Mobile gamers generally spend more time on...

Investing

Watching movies/ dramas/ series on streaming platforms Watching short videos Listening to music

Shift 1 Laser-focused on spending smartly 'More time' mobile gamers also spend more time on...

Playing games on PC / Consoles

Shift 2 Demand for seamless cross-device gaming experiences Same or less time gamers spend more time on...

Attending social events Participating in artistic / music events

Shift 3 Reconnected with others via mobile gaming







Shift 1

Laser-focused on spending smartly

"I wouldn't spend more on gaming packages with money now because I have two kids and COVID really messed with our money situation."

USA, Female, Tycoon Experienced Gamer





Rising prices continue to be a growing concern, with people taking measures to spend smartly

The concern on rising prices increased ~ 10% in the past quarter, this also reflected on consumers' higher demand to searching for great promotions

Which of the global challenges concern you the most? (As 1st or 2nd concerns)



Q: There are a number of challenges we may face today. Which of these concerns you the most? Q: Of the items remaining, which of these concerns you the most? Base: n=10036



Searches for promo code for existing user have grown globally by over 100% year over year

(Searching period: March 22, 2022–May 20, 2022 vs. March 22, 2021–May 20, 2021.)







Mobile gamers pay attention to high value as well as high quality

In-game promotion is the main spending trigger of mobile gamers.

To manage their finances, they are more likely to spend more for higher quality content, especially for South Korean gamers.



Top 5 Spend Triggers

- Pay-to-purchase items were great value
- **Special promotions attracted** 2
- 3 Unlock new playable content
- Complete difficult levels/missions 4
- 5 Personalize characters/items | build



Growing Spend Triggers

Support a game that is good

- Not spend time repeating same tasks 2
- 3 Encouraged by friends playing together to spend
- Invite more friends to play together 4
- Paying is an alternative to asking others to help 5







Spenders from the USA and Japan are more likely to prefer receiving free rewards from watching in-game ads

"Looking forward for free rewards from in-ga
(<mark>Spender</mark> vs Non-spender)

	USA	Japan	Germany	South Korea
Index*	1.3 x	1.2x	1.1x	1.0x

* Index: Compare the percentage of spender and non-spender to show the significance of spender on that topic

ime ads"

Brazil Indonesia 1.0x 1.0x "It will be worth it to watch a rewarded ad if I can gain any progress. So, like new adventures, new clothing, get a new life on this or just stuff that help better the game."

— USA, Female, Tycoon New Gamer







Shift 2

Demand for seamless crossdevice gaming experiences

"I feel like mobile games have come a long way with graphics, so I applaud them for that, but they have not come a long way with music and sound effects. I feel like they should do better in that regard."

– USA, Male, 4X SLG Experienced Gamer





7-in-10 mobile gamers are playing games on more than one gaming device

South Korean and Indonesian mobile gamers are highly overlapped with PC gamers



Different Gaming Devices Mobile Gamers Play Games on

SA		Japan		Germany	
Only	25%	Smartphone Only	32%	Smartphone Only	26%
	35%	Nintendo Switch	36%	PlayStation	36%
	26%	PlayStation	30%	PC	30%
	24%	PC	23%	Tablet	23%

Kore	ea	Brazil		Indonesia
Only	37%	Smartphone Only	27%	Smartphone Only
	35%	PlayStation	34%	PC
	23%	Tablet	26%	PlayStation
ר PC	19%	PC	26%	Emulators on PC





26%

45%

36%

32%



The majority of cross-device gamers are open to a new PC game that originated from mobile. More than half of gamers expect a seamless gaming experience

South Korean gamers are more experienced on cross-device gaming and therefore have higher expectations of a seamless gaming experience

If the current mobile game you are playing is developed as a PC or console game, would you download or purchase it?



Google / Ipsos, 2022 The Shifting Needs of Global Mobile Gamers USA / Japan / Germany / South Korea / Brazil / Indonesia, 2022 April Q. If the mobile game you currently play the most was developed as a PC (desktop / laptop) or console game, would you download / purchase it? Q. If the PC (desktop / laptop) or console game you currently play the most was developed as a mobile game, would you download / purchase it? Base: 16-54 yo General mobile gamers; Cross-device gamers n=3995

"I prefer the exact same game to be available on all platforms (mobile, PC & console) with seamless integration across all devices"





Device adaptation is the main requirement to ensure a smooth cross-device gaming experience

Cross-device gamers expect to have a better quality of graphic, sound effects, and control mechanisms.

Cross-Device Gamers' Gaming Quality Expectations on Smartphone vs PC/Console





Expect PC / Console to be better than smartphone





Shift 3

Reconnected with others via mobile gaming

"I've actually made some online friends through playing games, but mostly it's people I'll send in-game gifts back and forth too that I went to high school with that I haven't spoken to since then."

—— USA, Female, Merge New Gamer





Social and entertainment activities have made a clear comeback in the past 6 months

Top reasons for gamers to spend less time on mobile games revolve around people's reconnection, such as back to work and interested in other hobbies

Participation in Social and **Entertainment Activities**



Ipsos Essentials (Tracking Consumer Attitudes and Behavior in Times of Change) EMEA / APAC / NA / LATAM, June 2022 Q. (Already doing this) For the following, when are you planning to do each of these activities again? Q. Why do you spend less time playing mobile games recently compared to a year ago? Base: n=10036; Spent less time on mobile gaming than 2021 n=983





Lean-back triggers remain key for gamers, but more gamers continue playing games for their social needs



Google / Ipsos, 2022 The Shifting Needs of Global Mobile Gamers USA / Japan / Germany / South Korea / Brazil / Indonesia, 2022 April Q. What are the key triggers for you to play mobile games in the past 3 months? Q. Compared to a year ago (early 2021), you would say that recently, the triggers for you to play mobile games are...? Base: 16-54 yo General mobile gamers n=6000







Main content of the game such as gameplay, characters and storyline are top sharing topics

More-time gamers are more likely to pay attention on appealing in-game purchase offers, the new player referral reward and the game IP

WOM Topics when Learning about New Mobile Games



* Index: Compare the percentage of more-time gamer and same or less time gamer to show the significance of more-time gamer on that topic

Google / Ipsos, 2022 The Shifting Needs of Global Mobile Gamers USA / Japan / Germany / South Korea / Brazil / Indonesia, 2022 April Q. You mentioned WOM from relatives or friends is a key information source for you when learning about new mobile games, what specific information do they usually share with you about new mobile games? Base: 16-54 yo General mobile gamers; Spent more time on mobile gaming than 2021 n=393







Chapter 2

How To Achieve Mobile Gamer Immersiveness







Sub-Genre Gamer Profile







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4X Strategy Gamer

Gender (Female vs Male)

(Average: 37% vs 63%)

USA	Japan	Germany
28% vs 72%	31% vs 69%	40% vs 60%
South Korea	Brazil	Indonesia
34% vs 66%	48% vs 52%	42% vs 58%

Gamers aged below 35yo (Average: 54%)

USA	Japan	Germany
65%	44%	54%
South Korea	Brazil	Indonesia
32%	65%	65%

Started to play 4 within the last year (Average: 57%)

WILING IASLYEAN (Average. 3776)				
USA	Japan	Germany		
55%	57%	49%		
South Korea 65%	Brazil 54%	Indonesia 61%		

Average Spending on 4X SLG games within the last year (Unit: USD)

USA	Japan	Germany
149.9	44.5	93.5
South Korea 36.9	Brazil 25.2	Indonesia 20.0

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4X S	

Interested Topics







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Tycoon Gamer

Gender (Female vs Male)

(Average: 55% vs 45%)

USA	Japan	Germany
49% vs 51%	49% vs 51%	56% vs 44%
South Koroo	Prozil	Indonasia
South Korea	Brazil	Indonesia

Gamers aged below 35yo (Average: 60%)

USA	Japan	Germany
60%	44%	54%
South Korea	Brazil	Indonesia
32%	73%	79%

Started to play Tycoon games within the last year (Average: 48%)			
USA	Japan	Germany	
49%	40%	46%	
South Korea	Brazil	Indonesia	
63%	42%	48%	

Average Spending on Tycoon games within the last year (Unit: USD)

USA	Japan	Germany
246.7	23.4	144.5
South Korea 35.6	Brazil 71.1	Indonesia 18.8









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Google for C	Sames	psos		
	rge Gamer		Started t	
	er (Female vs Average: 56% vs 44%		within th	
USA	Japan	Germany	USA	Ja
55% vs 45%	49% vs 51%	65% vs 35%	53%	42

Game	ers aged belo (Average: 51%)	ow 35yo		pending on thin the last	Merge year (Unit: USD)
USA	Japan	Germany	USA	Japan	Germany
65%	44%	54%	83.9	38.7	59

















Three actions to achieve gamers' immersiveness







1. Connect to their interests

2. Offer them diverse game experiences

3. Enhance their belongingness to the game







Reach Gamers Connect to their interests





Gamers are influenced to trial new games due to genre familiarity, fun videos, and an interesting in-game story

A new game within a genre that has been played before is significantly higher in LATAM markets



Game genre that I usually like

What Influences Mobile Players to Try Out New Games? - Top 3 Reasons









"Maybe the puzzles are my favorite part about [the 4X strategy game], and just the mechanics of it. It's mindless enough that I can keep playing it, and it's not too hard to grasp when you start it."

USA, Male, 4X SLG New Gamer





Genres are more nebulous than before with gamers playing multiple genres at the same time. Adding familiar elements can effectively drive attention

More than 50% of Tycoon gamers are also playing strategy games







Gaming videos are a critical source to learn about new games, especially for in-game spenders

4X SLG spenders are more likely to get new information from online video platforms, especially in Indonesia and USA



Google / Ipsos, 2022 The Shifting Needs of Global Mobile Gamers USA / Japan / Germany / South Korea / Brazil / Indonesia, 2022 April Q. Why do you watch online videos related to mobile games? Base: 16-54 yo Subgenre mobile gamers; 4XSLG: spenders n=855, non-spenders n=890, non-spenders n=890, non-spenders n=890, non-spenders n=818, non-spenders n=253

Top 3 Reasons to Use Online Video Platforms

	Game Spender	Game Non-Spender
and tricks	36%	37%
gameplay	31%	31%
o-date on new / popular games	31%	22%
and tricks	41%	35%
o-date on new / popular games	34%	26%
gameplay	34%	30%
and tricks	36%	26%
gameplay	32%	23%
o-date on new / popular games	31%	22%









"When I was a child, I wanted to work as a florist, so I think the flower arrangement theme is interesting - customers will come to me, and they want certain types of flowers, and I'm making an arrangement to fit that."

- Japan, Female, Tycoon Experienced Gamer





Games are an extension of their real life, with their interests being reflected in their preferred gaming themes

4X SLG gamers who prefer war and military themed games are more likely to be interested in history and military topics. While for Tycoon and Merge gamers, they enjoy DIY in their daily life, which leads to the high preference for farming and gardening topics



Expected Game Themes vs. Interested Topics

* Please refer to the appendix for interested topics of mobile gamers from each market

Google / Ipsos, 2022 The Shifting Needs of Global Mobile Gamers USA / Japan / Germany / South Korea / Brazil / Indonesia, 2022 April Q. For your next mobile game, which themes would you expect to see & play? Q. Which of the following topics have you searched on the internet in the past 1 week? Base: 16-54 yo Subgenre mobile gamers; 4XSLG n=1800, Tycoon n=1800, Merge n=900





IP franchises provide great appeal, even more so for in-game spenders

Gamers expect to "immerse themselves" within the game IP

"IP franchises within mobiles are a significant appeal factor to me"



"I'd say [xx zombie SLG game] is the game I'm most engaged to. I'm a fan of the show and I like certain characters, so it's just cool just to do the same thing like strategize and figure out how to kill the zombie. I see myself going around the world and pretending to be on that show."

— USA, Male, 4X SLG Experienced Gamer












Engage Gamers Offer them diverse game experiences





Gamers make their decision whether to continue playing a new game within their first three game sessions

Gamers who are new to the genre expect to get started quickly, especially German gamers who have the fewest sessions for decision making

"When you try a new mobile game, how many gaming sessions does it usually take you to decide whether to continue to play the game or not?"









Easy-to-understand is the key reason for gamers to play longer





Top 5 Reasons to Decide to Play a Game for More than 30 Days







Easy to understand is more than just about control, it is also related to being easy to pick up, and to having a clear purpose of playing

Mindless playing

"I could just mindlessly be good at something, but they're challenging in the many little games that they have, that's what I like about it."

— USA, Female, Merge New Gamer

— USA, Male, 4X SLG New Gamer



Play with a purpose

"I feel like the tutorials are there and they're helpful in the moment, but in terms of the bigger, overall picture, I don't really have a good understanding of the goals of the game."

— USA, Female, Tycoon New Gamer





Building a customizable gaming experience enables gamers to find the "me" in the game

Gamers have a desire to improve their in-game immersion by adding their own personalized touches to the characters

"I think diverse characters and stories are important, as they can show the cultural differences"



Google / Ipsos, 2022 The Shifting Needs of Global Mobile Gamers USA / Japan / Germany / South Korea / Brazil / Indonesia, 2022 April Q. Which of the following statements best describe your mobile gaming attitudes? Base: 16-54 yo General mobile gamers; Spenders n=2527, Non-spenders n=3473

"Customizing characters impresses me a lot, I wish that there are more complexion and hair colors. The more options it has, the better it is. I'll thus be more focusing on characters and stories in the game, for I think I can connect to it. Also, after I devote myself to this character, I would like to know what will happen next."

— USA, Female, Merge Experienced Player





4X SLG spenders enjoy proving their competitive competence and discovering new content

4X SLG Spender vs non-spender Stronger Demands for Gaming Experience



* Index: Compare the percentage of spender and non-spender to show the significance of spender on that topic









Tycoon spenders have a higher desire to play with others. New characters is one of the key triggers for exploring within the game

Tycoon Spender vs non-spender **Stronger Demands for Gaming Experience**



* Index: Compare the percentage of spender and non-spender to show the significance of spender on that topic











Merge gamers have a higher expectation on "extra rewards"

Merge Spender vs non-spender **Stronger Demands for Gaming Experience**



* Index: Compare the percentage of spender and non-spender to show the significance of spender on that topic













Retain Gamers Enhance their belongingness to the game







Those who spend in the game are also more likely to play with others





% of Playing Mobile Games with Others







Playing with others in the game enhances the belongingness in their own social circle, both their online or offline connections



* Index: Compare the percentage of gamers who play with others and play alone to show the significance of gamers who play with others on that topic

"My niece and I didn't know each other very well, but then games bring us a lot of common topics to talk about."

— Japan, Female, Merge new gamer









The in-game social activities also increase their spending

Reasons for Spending More in the Game Play with the others vs Play alone



* Index: Compare the percentage of gamers who play with others and play alone to show the significance of gamers who play with others on that topic

Index*



To send in-game gifts to others "People tend to depend on me, hoping me to help and protect them. I can only do that by spending in the game, and then become the core of the team, and thus I can be recognized. I could only do that within the game world."

– Japan, Male, 4XSLG Experienced Gamer







Motivate lapsed gamers to return by providing exclusive welcome back gifts and missions to show they are being cared about











Methodology & Appendix





Methodology & Definitions

Methodology

Survey methodology:

- Online self-completed survey
- 90 minutes online focus group discussions
- Mobile gamers' self-recorded videos

Fieldwork:

- Survey: April 2022 June 2022
- Focus groups & self-recorded videos: June 2022 July 2022

Target group:

- Survey: Respondents aged 16-54 from USA, Japan, South Korea, Germany, Brazil & Indonesia who have played games on mobile phones in the past 3 months
- Focus groups & self-recorded videos: Aged 16-45 subgenre mobile gamers

Sample size:

- Survey: 10,500 respondents across 6 countries/markets.
- Per country, 1900 for United States, Japan & Germany (1000 general mobile gamers, 900 subgenre gamers), 1600 for South Korea, Brazil & Indonesia (1000 general mobile gamers, 600 subgenre gamers)
- Focus groups: Respondents from USA & Japan who have played 4X SLG, Merge and Tycoon games in the past 3 months
- Self-recorded videos: 12 video recorders selected from focus groups. 6 for United States, 6 for Japan.

Definitions

General mobile gamers: Gamers who have played any games on a smartphone within past 3 months.

Subgenre mobile gamers: Gamers who have played any specific game titles of the game subgenres on a smartphone within the past 12 months. Game subgenres include 4X SLG, Tycoon & Merge.

More-time gamers: Gamers who have spent more hours per week on playing mobile games than 2021.

Same or less time gamers: Gamers who have spent same or less hours per week on playing mobile games than 2021.

Spenders: Gamers who have spent on mobile games within past 3 months. Spending money includes gifts, downloadable content, subscriptions, and other micro-transactions.

New gamers: Gamers who have started playing subgenre mobile games within 1 year.

Experienced gamers: Gamers who have started playing playing subgenre mobile games more than 1 year ago.

Cross-device gamers: Mobile gamers who have also played on any other gaming device than smartphone, including tablet, PC (downloaded or boxed games on desktop/laptop, emulators on desktop/laptop, cloud gaming service), game console (Xbox, Nintendo Switch / DS, Nintendo Wii, PlayStation, Arcade game machines).







Mobile Gamer Profile from Each Market

	USA	Japan	G
Gender	Female 49% Male 51%	Female 45% Male 55%	Fe N
Age	Average: 35	Average: 36 21% 26% 30% 23% 16-24 25-34 35-44 45-54	<mark>20%</mark> 16-24
Started to play mobile games within the last 1 year	13%	10%	
Spend on mobile games in the past 3 months	40%	39%	
Average spending on mobile games	US\$ 86	US\$ 61	Į
Game genres played in the past 3 months	Average4.2Genres46%35%33%31%CasualWordPuzzleStrategy	Average 3.1 Genres45%32%31%24%PuzzleRoleSimulationMusicplaying	Avera 44% Casual S





Expected 4X SLG themes differ greatly from market-to-market, but with war/military the most popular overall



USA		Japan	Japan		Germany	
Norld war	46%	Western fantasy	35%	Medieval		
Zombie	40%	Military	34%	Sci-fi		
Military	39%	Sci-fi	31%	Zombie		
Medieval	38%	World war	30%	Three kingdoms		
Apocalyptic / Sci-fi	34%	Zombie	30%	Military		
South Kore	a	Brazil		Indonesia	9	
South Kore	a 37%	Brazil Medieval	46%	, Indonesia World war	a	
			46% 43%		a	
South Kore Three kingdoms	37%	Medieval		World war	a	
South Kore Three kingdoms /iilitary	37% 35%	Medieval Sci-fi	43%	World war Military	a	

South Korea			
Three kingdoms	37%		Medieval
Military	35%		Sci-fi
World war	33%		Zombie
Medieval	25%		World war
Western fantasy	22%		Military / W

Top 5 Expected 4X SLG Game Themes per Market







City & farm are the most popular Tycoon themes

ЦЩ Таў:

USA		Japan	Japan		Germany		
City building	51%	City building	53%	Farm	42%		
arm	47%	Garden / Flower	41%	City building	41%		
Garden / Flower	45%	Farm	35%	Garden / Flower	38%		
airy tale	44%	Fashion	31%	Detective / Adventure	e 36%		
Dragon / Animals	43%	Home cleaning & dec	or 29%	Restaurant / Hotel / Island / Tropical jungle	35%		
South Kore	a	Brazil		Indonesia			
	a 40%	Brazil City building	61%		59%		
City building			61% 57%	Indonesia	59%		
City building Restaurant / Hotel	40%	City building	57%	Indonesia City building	59% 57%		
South Kore City building Restaurant / Hotel ⁻ arm Home cleaning & dec	40% 35% 33%	City building Farm	57%	Indonesia City building Farm	59% 57% 55%		

South	Korea
JUUUI	Norea

City building	40%
Restaurant / Hotel	35%
Farm	33%
Home cleaning & decor	33%
Garden / Flower	32%

Top 5 Expected Tycoon Game Themes per Market







City, garden / flower, & restaurant / café are the top 3 expected Merge themes, with casino a unique theme for US gamers & zoo the #1 theme for German gamers



Top 5 Expected Merge Game Themes per Market

pan		Germany		
	41%	Zoo	32%	
ver	31%	Restaurant / Café	29%	
	30%	Garden / Flower	26%	
	27%	Farm	26%	
Café	26%	City building	24%	





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