

10:00:22 am - Samantha Harr:

Hello everyone and welcome to. First Week August this is our Tuesday presentation. It's so nice to have everyone here today. We are going to be talking to Maddie Young about opening a local game store which she has just accomplished. And I know I know there are a ton of judges who are super interested in this topic and always have kind of wondered. Would that be for me? Should I take the dive? Um, so I'm super excited to have this topic on Maddie. Go ahead and introduce yourself. Tell us a little about your game store.

10:00:50 am - Maddy:

Yeah, thank you so much sama. It's it's my pleasure to be here on, you know, first week for Judge Academy. Our my game store is actually run by myself my husband and then his childhood best friends. So there's three of us in its name is a Golden Fan Games and it's located in Hudson Florida. We actually opened on Black Friday last year. So the timing wasn't so we could do Black Friday sales but more of just that was when we're ready to hit the ground running with it.

10:01:17 am - Samantha Harr:

That's awesome. I I haven't gotten a chance to come up and see the story yet, but you're, you're kind of local to me. So I'm excited too. And I know we have a couple foot mutual friends that hang out up there quite often and that's fantastic.

10:01:28 am - Maddy:

Yeah, absolutely.

10:01:29 am - Samantha Harr:

I've managed a game stores, but I've never owned one. And I think I'm always a little nervous about, like, taking the leap into into something like that, and I think you're very brave and very cool for doing it. Um, So Maddie what what made you decide

10:01:40 am - Maddy:

Thank you.

10:01:42 am - Samantha Harr:

to open your own game store? What made you decide to take this plunge?

10:01:46 am - Maddy:

So honestly, the Golden Games was in like the thought, the thought bubble where we had been thinking about, since actually August of 2015 and it was something that we really considered but just the timing was never, right? We really just wanted we had such a positive experience growing up and doing magic in the local community. We wanted to bring that back and have other players experience this similar joys that we had. And when we recognize that there was one like an immediate need for one in our area that's when we decided it was really time.

10:02:19 am - Samantha Harr:

I think that's great. And yeah, you know, when I think of like the greater greater Tampa area, there are a ton of stores here, but each one has such a unique personality and local player base

that, you know, I don't think that the saturation is, is really a bad thing, you know? Because everybody locally can kind of find something that they're passionate about, they can find really their home. And I think that matters to a lot of folks. So Yeah. Would you would you say it, would you say that sort of the saturation of local game stores has? Affected the way you've approached opening your own game store at all.

10:02:54 am - Maddy:

It has the saturation isn't as intimidating as you would think it was at first. It's really just a lot of observation, a lot of just market research, which is a big word for just a big two words for saying paying attention. We noticed how what events other LDS is in the area were doing entry fees. Price pants what day they were running tournaments and that really helped us to gauge what we should be doing. We paid attention to they're buying and selling policies and that helped us to kind of lay the groundwork and find our own little niche. So there are sometimes it does feel like there's a lot of game stores, but the thing is, Game stores are really a people business. You're not selling something people, absolutely need. This is something that they're doing for fun, and that really gives you an opportunity to grow your own brand. Even when there are so many other competing companies in the area,

10:03:44 am - Samantha Harr:

I love that. That's absolutely true. Every store has its own identity and its own You know, customer base that loves exactly what they love and really finds their local people that they want to be around and Yeah, you know, well maybe the products themselves aren't a big capital in need like the sense of community. Definitely is. And so you're, you know, I try to

10:04:04 am - Maddy:

Yes.

10:04:06 am - Samantha Harr:

remind people like it's providing such a service to be able to go someplace and know your friends are going to be there and know you're welcome to just exist there, you know.

10:04:15 am - Maddy:

It is, and it's really encouraging

10:04:15 am - Samantha Harr:

I think that's awesome.

10:04:17 am - Maddy:

When you start seeing, you know, the same customers, you have to repeats who are coming in, even before tournaments on days, they don't even participate in the tournament, they're stopping in your store, they're, you know, inviting their friends over and they're just, they're grinding out games of magic or other playing games of commander. We have commander players who show up on, you know, or designated day is Saturday. And they'll even start coming in on, you know, Friday nights and just to kind of get the opportunity to get a house, get away from the kitchen table as great as it can be. You need that fresh air and it gives them the opportunity to build relationships. They wouldn't otherwise,

10:04:56 am - Samantha Harr:

Absolutely. And I think, you know, the getting out getting fresh air is such a big point right now with so many people working from home or, you know, even even if people aren't working from home, you know, sort of being more socially cautious about where they End up. I think people have been more, you know, more hesitant in the last couple years to get outside and go do stuff so, and that'll drive you crazy after a while, you know, like if you're in, just your home all the

10:05:22 am - Maddy:

It really does.

10:05:23 am - Samantha Harr:

time, you I'm you know, I'm sometimes ready to, you know, crawl up the walls but even if it's just work at home, same thing like I I need a third space. I need some place. I can be, that is neither of these things. So it's it makes such a huge difference to have places like that in communities and I I love that so much so you were talking about market research and that kind of thing which leads me into sort of. My next set of questions is How did you go about, you know, finding and selecting a sore space? What other research went into sort of the initial planning of all this.

10:05:57 am - Maddy:

So, in addition to paying attention to what competitors were doing, we obviously we need a space to do it all in and that was hard, as much as we've seen the housing market just explode. The retail space, is just as volatile. It's, I've seen insane amounts that people want as monthly rent, where it's just like you're, you're literally offering me nothing. But a box that I have to do a bunch of work to and a parking lot that maybe some of the lights work. So yeah. It was bad and with a plaza has no appeal, but it was a lot of just actually putting our feet on the ground. Own and looking at these spaces because even though we had done a lot of research online, they're still not going to show you everything. And one of the things we really had to pay attention to was when we looked at the monthly rent, we would try and figure out what that would be for a breakdown on per square foot. Because there's there's some that you know, you're paying five dollars a square foot and it's just like it, it adds up so quickly when you're trying to designate a spot for not just product and, you know, your point of sale. But just a place where players to play and trying to give them that, commodity to actually have some that room, it's it makes it a hot square footage in the building. So we did a lot of research online. We did a lot of seeing places in person and Another thing that you don't really consider is looking for fixtures, we actually went and there was it was supply chain issues. So we had some, we had I know, right?

10:07:31 am - Samantha Harr:

No cost.

10:07:33 am - Maddy:

right? Even in even in that industry.

10:07:34 am - Samantha Harr:

oh, always something.

10:07:37 am - Maddy:

Yep, so the, the finish the wood finishes. We wanted we couldn't get so we defaulted to another that would still look good. Still works great. And we ended up having to pick them up in person, but if we wanted our original ones they were we were opening in November and they said they would be ready in March maybe so that just to give an idea on lead time. It's something that you don't really

10:08:01 am - Samantha Harr:

Whoa.

10:08:02 am - Maddy:

consider consider but you kind of need something to put stuff on. I can say that Amazon is a really good resource for some stuff but it can't cover everything.

10:08:11 am - Samantha Harr:

Yeah. That's I mean customers. That's I mean customers and customers Yeah. That's that's a huge lead time. That's I mean customers. And customers will probably be forgiving if it's like the first month but if it's like half a year later like come on that's Come on, Goofy.

10:08:23 am - Maddy:

It was wild and I mean we did drive down to to the place to get, pick up the fixtures and unload them up and everything and took them back just to save on shipping costs, because they were local enough. And yeah, there's some really barren. There was, there was no joke over the phone that they just, they just didn't have it. So, hopefully things are better for them now, but in the meantime, I'm not looking to buy fixtures so I'll be okay.

10:08:45 am - Samantha Harr:

Had enough of the fixture buying process, I'm certain.

10:08:49 am - Maddy:

Oh my gosh.

10:08:50 am - Samantha Harr:

And the fixture assembly process. Honestly, like something. I've Known from, you know, managing game sources like those things take forever to put together and they're sharp.

10:08:59 am - Maddy:

that's,

10:09:00 am - Samantha Harr:

That's, that's a good honest day's work. Right there is a symboling fixtures.

10:09:05 am - Maddy:

Yeah. And they're heavy and you know and you use just trying, you know, please just don't drop it, don't drop it. And then when you drop it you're like

10:09:10 am - Samantha Harr:
Don't drop it.

10:09:11 am - Maddy:
please don't scuff anything, please let it all just be flush and hopefully didn't catch like, please don't scuff anything, like, please don't scuff anything, please let it all just be flush and because you're just like because you're just like And then when you drop it, you're like, please don't scuff anything, please let it all just be flush and hopefully didn't catch anything because you're just like this. So rough.

10:09:19 am - Samantha Harr:
Oh no, it's funny. Um, were there any any store resources that you end up needing that you didn't expect to need ahead of time? Anything kind of surprise you on the, on the building stage.

10:09:31 am - Maddy:
Um, so the only thing that was kind of challenging to navigate because, of course, everyone knows you need the basics, you need the tables, you need the chairs. all sorts of stuff. You need to also leaves, you know, But the one thing that was challenging was actually getting the business insurance. And the reason why I say that is because when we spoke with a couple insurance companies to try and get quotes and stuff like that, They don't know what an lgs is.

10:09:57 am - Samantha Harr:
Right, I'm sure that's true. Trying to explain to them what it is. You do. Exactly is probably a challenge, right?

10:10:03 am - Maddy:
it is and in trying to explain it to, you know, we know it, our generation knows it but trying to explain it to another generation that has no clue and you're saying Well, it's cardboard but it's really expensive and their cult trading cards and just it was very interesting to like, listen as the agent is trying to figure out what exactly they should be putting us into like, what box and so, that was that was really interesting. It took a couple took a couple calls with different companies, of course. And we were finally able to get one, but that's something we just we didn't expect because you don't think about it.

10:10:40 am - Samantha Harr:
Right? Like are you a pawn shop? No. Are you recreation kind of like, it's

10:10:46 am - Maddy:
Right.

10:10:46 am - Samantha Harr:
it checks a lot of boxes, but only halfway

10:10:49 am - Maddy:
Right.

10:10:49 am - Samantha Harr:
It's a really unique business model for sure.

10:10:52 am - Maddy:
It is you resell but you're not fully resale because you have singles like it's just it's crazy.

10:10:58 am - Samantha Harr:
Yeah absolutely. Um and how much of any any one type of that kind of thing you can do, really can depend on the area you're located into sometimes. Like I know. In, I've probably brought this up before. I think it's in Washington. DC proper downtown. You have to register your lgs as a pawn shop, if you resell singles. So,

10:11:18 am - Maddy:
Wow.

10:11:19 am - Samantha Harr:
That's why there aren't any. That's why there aren't. There aren't any places that resell singles downtown in DC, or at least there were when I left. So yeah, like local laws and stuff

10:11:27 am - Maddy:
That's wild.

10:11:28 am - Samantha Harr:
can really affect The way you approach that to just I'm and I know, you know that, but more for the audience like be aware.

10:11:37 am - Maddy:
Right? It was and you talk about, you know, local things that that make a an impact. It was interesting when we were looking at. So our plaza, we're at one of the end units and there was at the time, there was one other person and she was, she was very nice and, you know, and helped us to see the unit and stuff like that. But when we're trying to discuss with her, what we do recently, there's been like a huge like Uptick of these gambling places, illegal gambling places. So when you start talking about,

10:12:06 am - Samantha Harr:
Oh no.

10:12:08 am - Maddy:
well, people play games, the first thought is you're doing your participating with this group of people and we're like, well, people play games, the first thought is You're doing your participating with this group of people and we're like, Yeah, that that's not it.

10:12:17 am - Samantha Harr:
No poker tables. Nothing like that.

10:12:19 am - Maddy:
Yet. No, exactly.

10:12:19 am - Samantha Harr:
No, no.

10:12:20 am - Maddy:
Yep. And there's been a lot of discussions And there's been a lot of discussions even with just people worth walk-ins, you know, Yep. And there's been a lot of discussions. Even with just people worth walk-ins, you know. And what do you guys actually do? Oh, you play for money? No, no, no, no. We do not gamble. That is not how that works. Let me explain to you how tournaments working and we'll go from there. This is, this is an honest field.

10:12:37 am - Samantha Harr:
Right. Absolutely. That's yeah, it's trying to trying to also yes, sell yourself to the local public too because you want to build those relationships with other stores locally, you know, other businesses in the area trying to explain what you do to folks. That may not have any ideas, probably a challenge too but building up those relationships helps a lot I know. Lots of lots of stores in our area at least here in Tampa with like bring us food and stuff just for funsies and there's always nice.

10:13:03 am - Maddy:
oh,

10:13:03 am - Samantha Harr:
I don't know. I like building those relationships.

10:13:06 am - Maddy:
Absolutely.

10:13:07 am - Samantha Harr:
Yeah. So Once your plan was ready to launch, how did the store set up? Period. Go in practice where there were there any unexpected? Like logistical challenges that went into that.

10:13:18 am - Maddy:
so, a lot of it was smooth, painting was smooth fixtures. Once we got that sort out smooth, one of our hardest challenges was distributors. So it's very interesting because before it used to be, if you wanted to get sports cards, you couldn't really do it. But then when Covid happened and Pokemon cards went on the uptick suddenly, we're finding distributors that were like. Well, if you want sports cards, great if you want anything else. No, thanks.

10:13:48 am - Samantha Harr:
Goof.

10:13:48 am - Maddy:
Um, so yeah. So that was that was really interesting. We did. We did have a couple where it was

just like, Nope, we're not we're not accepting your application. We're not accepting what you're what you're looking for. So it was, it was really kind of strange, and it was kind of a rigorous process too because the distributor wants to make sure that you are brick and mortar. You're not just selling on Tcgplayer or eBay, so they wanted to make sure that we had, you know, shelves and a point of sale system. So we're for the product to be So we're for the product to be displayed. So we actually end up sending quite a lot of pictures, a lot of video, even just, they're empty, like I don't just, they're empty. that's completely empty shelves, that's completely sale system. So we're for the product to be displayed. So we actually end up sending quite a lot of pictures, a lot of video, even though it was so awkward because it's just, they're empty. Like, I don't want to show anyone empty shelves, that's completely sale system. displayed. displayed. So we actually end up sending quite a lot of pictures, a lot of video, even though it was so awkward because it's just, they're empty. Like, I don't want to show anyone empty shelves, that's completely sale system. displayed. So we actually end up sending quite a lot of pictures, a lot of video, even though it was so awkward because it's just, they're empty. Like, I don't want to show anyone empty shelves, that's completely empty shelves, that's completely So we're for the product to be So we're for the product to be So we actually end up sending quite a though it was so awkward because it's though it was so awkward because it's Like I don't want to show anyone empty shelves, that's completely opposite of businesses.

10:14:28 am - Samantha Harr:
Right.

10:14:30 am - Maddy:
opposite of businesses.

10:14:30 am - Samantha Harr:
Like, here's where all the product

10:14:30 am - Maddy:
So it was very interesting.

10:14:32 am - Samantha Harr:
would go. If you'd send me any like

10:14:34 am - Maddy:
He's a great. Yeah, I have this beautiful, this beautiful, you know, wooden metal shelf. That is just is just waiting. I got a couple of them in fact, so, yeah, I was really interesting. We had to spend a lot of a lot of pictures, even to, to Wpn about, Here's what our store inside looks like. And here's here's the product. I would, you know, I feel like I'm gonna be, you know, Timmy Turner's dad with the years where my trophy would be if I had any, yeah, right.

10:14:58 am - Samantha Harr:
If I had one,

10:15:02 am - Maddy:

So I think that was probably was the hardest part was just was getting a yes that but everything else for setup was was very smooth.

10:15:11 am - Samantha Harr:

That's really, that's really great. Yeah, it's supply chain issues and shipping issues have been kind of wacky. So I I cannot, you know, I've never been a distributor but I could see how if they're struggling to get popular items to the stores. That already are long established, you know, they'd be kind of wary of wanting to You know, sign more people on if you, they know, they have no way of getting things to anybody, you know, it's that's got to be a challenging job, you know. I don't envy that for sure.

10:15:36 am - Maddy:

No, I don't either and I because I'm sure that they see all sorts of applications and I can only imagine some of the ones who try and kind of pose and the fact that, you know, they have to be very eagle eye focused on what's what's real and what's not. So kudos to them, do what you're

10:15:54 am - Samantha Harr:

Yeah, that's got to be challenging.

10:15:54 am - Maddy:

doing? Because I appreciate it as a brick and mortar.

10:15:59 am - Samantha Harr:

Yeah, for sure. Um, so now that you're open and popping in what ways have you made your store unique to sort of set it apart from the local competition. What's what's your theme? What's your brand?

10:16:11 am - Maddy:

um, it's really just Listening to the customers. Um so we've we've changed our times. Don't be afraid to change times. If you're thinking about you know opening your own store you can you can change them, they're not permanent. You just change them on Google, you change them on Facebook. You make it, you buy a new laminate thing and you're fine. We've also changed. What tournaments we offer? So for instance, Back, when we first opened, we really tried, we tried very hard to get standard to fire and it just, it wasn't the drive is not there, which is sad, because that's how I store first started playing the game.

10:16:47 am - Samantha Harr:

Same, I'd like standard.

10:16:47 am - Maddy:

Started playing the game. Right? And especially I was hoping with, you know, that with the new sets like I'm like, Oh this is really, this is the good, the good push like we're getting some good cards and it just we tried for a few months and it wasn't gonna happen. So, you know, we listened to the customers first term of play, we all so, Try and just to to treat them how we would like to be treated as players. So there's there have been other stores. One other store in the area

that, you know, if you came in and wanted to sit down, you had to buy something or they charge you a fee or you couldn't bring in your own food and drinks. I told them straight up my snacks on the wall, my drinks, in the fridge. They're not meant to sustain you. Like, Please do not just eat them and think that you're gonna be fine, and, and good. They are delicious. Don't get me wrong, but bring your own food. I don't care if you haven't

10:17:35 am - Samantha Harr:
Please, please eat real food.

10:17:36 am - Maddy:
delivered, delivered, right? Yeah, please just eat, please take care of yourself. Like, Yes, I want you here. I want you to be enjoy yourself, but if it's at the cost of your health, But by all means, please just this is not, this is not for you then, you know. so we really just try to provide that that friendly environment and a really conscious environment, where we don't just make something and just that's it, that's the law. We make sure that it goes with the community because, you know, we are community based

10:18:05 am - Samantha Harr:
Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah. I really listening to your your local customers and seeing what it really helps, you figure out what there's a need for because Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah. Really listening to your your local customers and seeing what it really helps, you figure out what there's a need for because You know. Any store that comes up is going to not serve a particular. Interest group. And that's just how it is. And that's okay. It just means we need that to be served somewhere else. So figure out what isn't getting served, what needs aren't being met. And that's a great way to sort of theme your store and theme the vibe of your space and I love that. Yeah. I I find I I eat junk food constantly, so I am really not one to ever ever. Call anyone on anything like that, but I there was one teenager at my old old lgs, who I never saw eating anything, but candy and at some point I was like, I have to see you eat a vegetable before. I'll sell you another racist cup. Like no, shame just, I am concerned for you.

10:19:00 am - Maddy:
Right. Yeah.

10:19:01 am - Samantha Harr:
Like, it doesn't happen often, but I get what you mean about. Like, please do bring actual food like

10:19:06 am - Maddy:
Yeah, like, you know, it don't get me wrong, it's it's fun to play matches, it's fun to, you know, to play tournaments. But it's at some point you have to eat, right? Like, at some point you have to sleep like please don't, you know if you're there until and think thankfully, our customers are very conscious of this so they're not there, you know, until two o'clock on Friday nights or one o'clock and then back in, you know, at 11 o'clock morning on Saturdays, they actually get some sleep. But, you know, these are these are things that are that are easy to forget about when you're in that magic mindset. It's, you know, it's a fun hobby and it's very It's exciting. So you're easy to forget about stuff like that. It's when you mentioned about kind of pulling and feeling like the

needs and meeting, those needs in the community, it's it was important for us to still say no to some things. So even though this is these two items are not matching related but how we we determined, we would not be doing uvo and we determined that we would not be doing Dungeons and Dragons. So I think that's something that can easily be overlooked because as an lgs, you want to offer everything you want to give your community the best of everything. But you just can't, it's not feasible and it's not something I would recommend because at some point, something is going to get a hundred percent and then something else is gonna get 20%. And guess what's going to be the yelp review? The 20%.

10:20:26 am - Samantha Harr:

That's so true. That's so true. Yeah, just because you find out there's a need for something in the community. Doesn't mean you have to be the one to fill it. Like

10:20:34 am - Maddy:

Yes.

10:20:34 am - Samantha Harr:

Like Like because I mean Like because I mean part of it also doing what you love, you know. If you're just not into whatever game you don't you know, you don't have to have it in your store and that's okay. So eventually someone else will come along and fill that Yu-gi-oh need and or whatever you know, Digimon need whatever else and that's cool. You know, like I eventually I just run out of brain space to learn new games. Like it's full, it's full in here. So you know, no hate it's just I yeah like if I started taking on too many games I would be 20% all of them which is Who enjoys that right? Like, who is that serving?

10:21:12 am - Maddy:

Yeah. Exactly. And it is hard to. It's hard to just say no. and I it's something that, you know, I personally struggle with but at some point, yes, you do have to say, no

10:21:23 am - Samantha Harr:

Like I love you but this is not going to happen. Not because I hate you because I, I'm

10:21:26 am - Maddy:

Right.

10:21:28 am - Samantha Harr:

out of hours in a day.

10:21:30 am - Maddy:

Yes.

10:21:30 am - Samantha Harr:

Out of brain space.

10:21:32 am - Maddy:

Right.

10:21:33 am - Samantha Harr:

Absolutely. So how does a new store owner? Get the ball rolling with getting involved with the Wpn? I know a lot of people are kind of curious about that especially now that there's a distinction between Wpn and WP and premium stores. What was that experience? Like for you?

10:21:51 am - Maddy:

So right now we are just wpm. There's no premium attached to us, the process was pretty easy, you do an online application, you do a checklist. You do a weekly call with a wizard of the Coast representative who kind of guides you through. Here's tournaments. Run. Here's how you do these things meet these needs, um, which is great training. Yeah. From like this side of the fence. If you've never been through anything like that, So it was, it was really neat, just for an onboarding process and They're the changes that they've made as a result covid have been really nice to where they're not so hard on stores hitting metrics. They're actually they're reasonable because they know that their metric is really players in the store playing in the tournaments and It's kind of hard to do, you know, especially back, when we had a lot of, you know, the covid guidelines that were in place and things like that. There was a little bit of a frustrating experience that we had though, where we had applied and There was a neon diocese, the pre-release allocation cutoff was coming up. And they kicked back our application to us because when we provided a video of the whole store which was very interesting. So you want you started from the outside, you opened your doors and you walked around. You're showing everything and when we did that, we did not show them two rooms that were not, they couldn't be accessed by customers,

10:23:22 am - Samantha Harr:

Hmm.

10:23:22 am - Maddy:

but because we didn't do that, they were like, well we need to know what's back there. So yeah. So we had to redo the video and then by the time they approved us the neon diocese per release window was closed. So we were not able to hold pre release because that was at the, they were very firm on. We missed it and that was that. So that was kind of a rougher start to a relationship with with wizards, which is since obviously been cleared up. And then we had also had like a weird almost like a paradox situation with it, where wizards of the coast wanted to see their product on the shelves, which is totally understandable. They want to see our products on the

10:24:04 am - Samantha Harr:

Right. Yeah, of course.

10:24:05 am - Maddy:

shelves. For us to be in the Wizards Play network. Okay, so, but the distributor wanted to see us being in the network, the wpm network. Network network is what I'm saying

10:24:19 am - Samantha Harr:

ah,

10:24:21 am - Maddy:
before they would sell to us. So, they both parties.

10:24:25 am - Samantha Harr:
Ho.

10:24:27 am - Maddy:
Yeah there was there was overlap and I was like This is a really weird oversight you know. Ultimately the distributor ended up working with us. They sold us a small amount of product so we could we could show something on the shelves and then we

10:24:37 am - Samantha Harr:
Mmm.

10:24:38 am - Maddy:
on the shelves and then we were able once we got the full once we got the full approval, they, you know, up the allocations and But it was really because it was like they both were saying, Show me this, but they're pointing out each other at the same time and still pointing at us that I'm like, Someone someone's got to see. Something's not right here. So that was really interesting.

10:24:55 am - Samantha Harr:
They're they're doing the Spider-Man meme at each other. Just

10:24:58 am - Maddy:
Yeah. I want to sell your product, I mean, I don't understand what more I could tell you right now.

10:25:08 am - Samantha Harr:
Yeah, that's that's an interesting challenge. Because yeah, I understand the perspective from both parties, but you do have to start somewhere, right? So I think that solution of just getting like a smaller batch, you know, a, a trust fall batch. At first, is probably a good thing to sort of work out and I am. Anytime I've ever had to deal with, you know, call up whatever Wpn reps. All the ones I've ever I've ever interfaced with myself. Have been absolute rock stars. Um, one of my favorite aspects of calling my wpn reps is the hold music. That's always really, really like

10:25:41 am - Maddy:
Yes.

10:25:42 am - Samantha Harr:
epic. like I'm I never I never mind being

10:25:43 am - Maddy:
Yes.

10:25:44 am - Samantha Harr:
on hold even for a little bit with the wpn because I get to hear some like crazy cool music. So

10:25:51 am - Maddy:

Right, maybe that's what we should all be doing before we need to go, you know, Right. Maybe that's what we should all be doing before we need to go. You know, do that? Do that job interview? You know, get ready to do the big thing. We just call up the Watson rep and

10:26:01 am - Samantha Harr:

Like no, don't answer.

10:26:01 am - Maddy:

Just kind of listen to music.

10:26:02 am - Samantha Harr:

Give it.

10:26:03 am - Maddy:

Yeah, please. I'm gonna call back.

10:26:04 am - Samantha Harr:

Don't answer the phone. I just want to hear the music. I got to hype myself up, right?

10:26:06 am - Maddy:

Right, that's it. You're now an authorized hype, man. And that's your new title.

10:26:13 am - Samantha Harr:

That's a great title.

10:26:14 am - Maddy:

Courtesy of me. Yeah, I think.

10:26:17 am - Samantha Harr:

I, I find. Millennials and Millennials and I, I find. And I know, I know a lot of Millennials and Gen Z's are very phone call-averse, but I find that if you get in a customer service, pinch, like that, where we've hit a bit of a wall, bit of a paradox that calling and like explaining, you know, that that can really help to like talk human to human to be like, listen, I promise I exist, I promise, I'm not a scammer like this, this is the weird situation. What can you do to help me out? Because like, they want to sell us product, right? Like people people like to sell the things they're selling.

10:26:46 am - Maddy:

Right.

10:26:47 am - Samantha Harr:

But yeah.

10:26:47 am - Maddy:

Yeah. And you know and it's so when you're when you're stuck with, you know, with online

applications because even for the distributors to get you know Yeah. you're when you're stuck with, you know, with online applications because even for the distributors, to get, you know, approval from them. We had to do online app and it's you know, even though we're sending this video like routine, you know, show that we're we're legit. It's still it's missing that human interaction. So you end up with with weird things like You know, wpn wanting their product there and you know meeting WPA approval before the distributor will sell it. You just have just weird overlaps that just they need that human touch to be really just ironed out.

10:27:20 am - Samantha Harr:

Absolutely. So yeah. Audience don't be afraid to get on the phone with people. They, they really do want to help. They really do want to help

10:27:27 am - Maddy:

Yes.

10:27:30 am - Samantha Harr:

Let's see what else? Um, so so you talked about trying standard standard didn't quite work out, what would have been the popular magic formats at your store? What have you kind of settled on for right now?

10:27:42 am - Maddy:

So the biggest format right now for areas. Modern.

10:27:49 am - Samantha Harr:

Modern.

10:27:49 am - Maddy:

Yeah. Right. It's, it's so fun. It's so diverse. Yeah. Right. It's, it's so fun. It's so diverse. Sorry, my airpod just fell out. It's got evicted. But you know, it is so, so diverse. It's a very, it's a very healthy format which is really neat to see. You know, as someone who's there before Modern was a thing and how there was the band list before the the format even came out? It was really it's been really neat to see how it's grown since then and players are just loved it. So we have three modern tournaments a week Where we have one on Tuesday, Friday, Saturday, and during the weekdays we'll average about 12 to 16 players and then on Saturdays, you know we easily get 25 30 plus in the store just for a just for a modern tournament. And what we do is we do a win-a-box?

10:28:40 am - Samantha Harr:

I love that.

10:28:42 am - Maddy:

Yeah, it's great. And it's really neat because with the way how we structured it, they're able to the the ones during the week are a little bit cheaper entry, you know, store credit prize. So they're able to kind of get that play testing out of the way. Maybe they want to try that homebrew. But you know they don't they don't want to just have you know a winter box be the testing grounds for it, you know. So it kind of give some time to get ready for Saturday and then Saturday, we do

a winter box and we scale the prize depending upon the number of entrance and I think modern is definitely is definitely the biggest. We've seen a lot of growth with commander actually recently with our commander freeplay, on Saturdays. There's been we were averaging about four pods in our up to five. And these are ones that the players just come in and they they sit down and handle it and read us. Ask them. Hey, can you just put in this this code for companion? That's just a player list so we can show you that. We are doing the thing and and that's

10:29:45 am - Samantha Harr:
There you are, doing the thing.

10:29:46 am - Maddy:
been really good, right?

10:29:49 am - Samantha Harr:
That's amazing. I, I really love the idea of having like lower stakes events during the weekend or during the weeks just, you know, of the same format that you have higher stakes events for on the weekends to give people that play testing opportunity. Because That makes a lot of sense. That's really kind of cool. So because like I sometimes just kind of want to play whatever whatever I get and you know think looks neat whether it's good or not and like I don't necessarily want to pay like high entry fee. You know do the high high risk, high reward type tournaments to play whatever, homebrew nonsense, I've

10:30:20 am - Maddy:
Right.

10:30:21 am - Samantha Harr:
come up with. And that, that makes a lot of sense. I think that's really cool.

10:30:25 am - Maddy:
Yeah, exactly. Why would I why would I pay, you know, \$12 on, you know, the Saturday and then maybe, Oh, maybe I'll get a good experience. But I know there's, you know, there's gonna be people with a little bit of a grind set going on. What? I'm just pick five bucks on a Tuesday night and, you know, and if I scrub out then great, I guess I'll get to bed and have plenty of sleep for work. And that'll just be that right?

10:30:43 am - Samantha Harr:
Yeah.

10:30:44 am - Maddy:
Try better next week.

10:30:44 am - Samantha Harr:
Played some magic had a time. Back to work, you go.

10:30:47 am - Maddy:
Exactly.

10:30:49 am - Samantha Harr:

um, so how how have you cultivated a fun friendly community from absolute scratch? Because like Maddie I know you, I know you don't put up with nonsense. I know you don't put up with a moment

10:31:00 am - Maddy:

No.

10:31:01 am - Samantha Harr:

of nonsense. that experience been like, I'm been like? I'm of nonsense. So like what has that experience been like I'm sure your player base is incredible.

10:31:06 am - Maddy:

Yes. So the player, the player base has been phenomenal, um, and it's, it's been such a timing thing because we have a lot of players who are driving, you know, thirty forty are their local store. store. then we offered them. This experience honestly, everything, which is building it from scratch, has been a positive attitude that has been so paramount to everything, and it's a lot of, a lot of kind of self-reflection, you know, between the three of us. We've been playing magic for just We've been playing magic for just lot of time and it gives you a lot of lot of time and it gives you a lot of look at it and I can even look at it look at it and I can even look at it only play in the know, thirty forty minutes because we are their local store. And when the one up there closed and then we offered them. This experience honestly, everything, which is building it from scratch, has been a positive attitude that has been so paramount to everything, and it's a lot of, a lot of kind of self-reflection, you know, between the three of us. We've been playing magic for just over 60 years and so, I mean that's a lot of time and it gives you a lot of experiences too, so we can kind of look at it and I can even look at it only play in the game. Shoot 12 years. Now where I can see, you know, How did I feel as a player when I was in the store when I was in a tournament? And then, how can I take those experiences in either duplicate them or make them better? And just really just foster that positivity. so, I think just looking Looking at, you know, the the player on the inside of counter seeing them as me has really been in the biggest thing with trying to grow a positive community. and you're right, I don't put up with with nonsense and it's, you know, it's unfortunate when I, you know, I've had to be starting at sometimes and get people to knock off the drama or No, you can't take advantage of players. Like, That's not, that's not what we do. And it's that's it too, is is knowing knowing when to be firm. When to to look at the players coming your store and then see, when there's something that is going to turn something sour, where it's gonna just it's it's just gonna make such a bad. Wound in the community and knowing when to put your foot down and say, You can't do that here. And it's protecting it's encouraging and protecting the player base.

10:33:08 am - Samantha Harr:

Absolutely, that's true. You know, I I find that You have to be firm but fair and you you can't be a pushover and sometimes people are gonna want things that just they can't do. And that's the way of it. But You know, for all the times that you have to be stern, I feel like it. What's always kind of helped me. Is it room ring to also like really cheer the good times? Like if you see somebody like going

10:33:31 am - Maddy:
Yeah.

10:33:31 am - Samantha Harr:
out of their way to help a kid understand the game, even like in the middle of a tournament like here that stuff loudly because that you know, the positive reinforcement. I think makes a huge huge difference. Also, you know, in combination with just putting your foot down about things that are okay.

10:33:48 am - Maddy:
Yeah, no, it really does.

10:33:48 am - Samantha Harr:
so,

10:33:49 am - Maddy:
And I think it's so easy to overlook those little moments. Like the player being, you know, the younger player being helped in the tournament And I think it's so easy to overlook those little moments. Like, the player being, you know, the younger player being helped in the tournament and the grand scheme of things. But let's be honest, that that's why you open the store is for those literal interactions. The profit margins in this business. They're not big. You know, your biggest margins come from drinks and snacks, like, that's it, you're not out to make a killing. You're there to do a little bit better each month, but guess what? That'll get support back into product. That gets poured back into the store. So the end of the day you're just a revolving door and those little interactions are what are really going to make the big difference in the community.

10:34:25 am - Samantha Harr:
Absolutely. Yeah, you know. Whether you whether you make a ton of money, you don't make that much money. You know, at the end of the day if you can have a great time and see that you're making a really active difference in your community, like that's so rewarding. I find that that's a very that's just a very touching experience. And something I value personally a whole lot like I, you know, we all have to make enough money to live, but at the, you know, as long as I am making enough money

10:34:50 am - Maddy:
Yeah.

10:34:51 am - Samantha Harr:
to live, I think I mostly value leaving a positive impact on the world and I I think you do too, I think that that's really A very cool attitude to go into it with.

10:35:01 am - Maddy:
Yeah, absolutely, you know, people are people are important, they're not walking wallets and you can't treat them like that, you know, they're not an end to mean. That's just,

10:35:10 am - Samantha Harr:
Absolutely.

10:35:11 am - Maddy:
it's win.

10:35:12 am - Samantha Harr:
Absolutely very, very true.

10:35:12 am - Maddy:
Simple.

10:35:14 am - Samantha Harr:
Um, so you've been a judge for many years now, And how how has the the judging experience, affected your perspective on how to run a game store as the store owner has that kind of cross. Pollinated, your perspective at all?

10:35:31 am - Maddy:
The cross pollination of, but I was a good one. It's honestly, it's been good and I have definitely seen a cross pollination between me, you know, Maddie the judge versus Maddie, the store owner because it's kind of it show me when things go well and it's shown me when things go not so well. So I've been able to see when, you know, communication between a tournament organizer

10:36:45 am - Samantha Harr:
10 years. Congratulations. That's amazing.

10:36:48 am - Maddy:
Thank you. so 10 years since L1 and yeah, it's

10:36:53 am - Samantha Harr:
Wow.

10:36:55 am - Maddy:
been a blast, you know? And so obviously I've been a judge longer. I've been a store owner, so that's really all of all the experiences you get as a player as a judge, they all can contribute in some way to each other, and it really, it's helped to make better experiences.

10:37:13 am - Samantha Harr:
I don't doubt that for a moment. Yeah. I I didn't realize, I think myself how much being a judge would affect the way. I've really handled any job honestly, it's it's made me tougher and more efficient but like, I mean that totally in good ways and I think that that can sometimes be a learning curve, that new game store owners can sometimes kind of get caught up in is You know why aren't my tournaments running very efficiently? Why aren't the players happy with round? Turnover time? You know, prize payout, all that stuff. Will we know that stuff by heart not we

don't just have that stuff. Memorized we have that stuff known by heart because you know, you have to

10:37:54 am - Maddy:
Yeah.

10:37:55 am - Samantha Harr:
as a judge you have to know that stuff you have to be on top of that and players perspectives on those things. So you can explain it to them. so, yeah, I think it's really great

10:38:02 am - Maddy:
Yeah.

10:38:04 am - Samantha Harr:
that you went in with all that knowledge. I'm sure it makes a huge, huge difference. In the community's experience.

10:38:09 am - Maddy:
it's It is, and it's also made a difference even because, you know, I was a judge for a lot of these players that were now seeing, you know, a lot of them can remember any interactions that I've had with them you know. And they're reminded me of stuff that honestly I forgot until later they tell me but you know it's all it all comes together and it was really neat, you know, to get back into into judging before, you know, a full scale, relaunch of judging just to be able to to use those skills. Again, it's second nature really and it's it's so cool. It is so cool. How important judging is in the the store. Thanks for say as a store owner.

10:38:51 am - Samantha Harr:
Awesome. Um, What are there? Any specific skills you picked up from judging that have been just of particular use in as a store owner.

10:39:01 am - Maddy:
Um so I think one of the big ones which I know is one that comes up a lot of judge conferences and something that is judge calls being able to take those calls has been Really just good. It's being able to communicate with the players, help them to understand, help them, to just have a good experience, has been absolutely paramount and that's really what's helped. A lot of players even just return because if you have a good experience at a tournament, Good chance you're coming back and it's not so much. Well, you know, we hear about it on on Facebook and then we all know to avoid those stores. So that's kind of the bad side of

10:39:45 am - Samantha Harr:
They're not shy, they're not

10:39:45 am - Maddy:
that one and they're

10:39:46 am - Samantha Harr:
They're not their opinions.

10:39:48 am - Maddy:
No magic players are not and and you know and I think it's wonderful. Yes be honest. other stores like myself, we can read Be honest because then, you know, them. And you know, for about our store, we can fix them and if they're not, then we know, Hey don't do that, you know not saying we should get the reminders not to do that but it is. It's nice. So, I think being able to take judge calls and handle them, appropriately, knowing the the documents. So knowing, you know, the comprehensive rules knowing the infraction procedure guide knowing, you know, even the judging at regular, just to say, Hey look, I'm actually giving you the answer and here's where it's back, Here's an official document. I'm not just making it up building. That credibility is really huge and I think aside from that it's really just been able to kind of plan and then run these larger scale tournaments. where, you know, my husband was certified for L1 for quite some time and then he lapsed so he's back to zero but he was still my poor judge when we ran our CQ and it was a 36 player one that, you know, We hit the ground running with, and The only complaint I heard was that it's hot in Florida so

10:41:05 am - Samantha Harr:
Well, Maddie, what have you done

10:41:06 am - Maddy:
it's

10:41:07 am - Samantha Harr:
that sense. All right, because I'm also wondering

10:41:09 am - Maddy:
right.

10:41:09 am - Samantha Harr:
if you have any power to control that I need to get on it real quick.

10:41:13 am - Maddy:
Yeah, I wish is it's, it's crazy. I mean I'm sure anyone because I know not all of our viewers are Floridians but and I'm so I'm sure they hear about how hot fluid is but guys when it when it's hot and then it rains at, you know, two o'clock in the afternoon and it rains for, you know,

10:41:30 am - Samantha Harr:
Yeah.

10:41:30 am - Maddy:
maybe 20 30 minutes and then like next thing you know, it's like you're walking like into a sauna when you go outside. So that's kind of the heat that we're talking about. It's not a dry heat, kind of wish it was sometimes because that might be a little bit more bearable. But yeah, I can't I can't fix the

10:41:47 am - Samantha Harr:
You, you know, just like the lizards

10:41:48 am - Maddy:
heat.

10:41:48 am - Samantha Harr:
just like the lizards down here, you just learn to enjoy being an asana, just embrace the saunness of it all

10:41:53 am - Maddy:
Yeah. That must be a yeah, as I as a my bearded dragons, moving a little bit in the, in the background, like a female, the core my eye, and he's just, he's getting off his heat lamp and he's doing this and that and I'm just like I can't stand her. That heat lamp. That's not for me. I'm glad it works for you, but

10:42:11 am - Samantha Harr:
Just a vibe and absolutely vibing.

10:42:13 am - Maddy:
Yeah, pretty much.

10:42:13 am - Samantha Harr:
Yeah, the humidity especially can be very jarring for people not from here.

10:42:18 am - Maddy:
Yeah. Yeah it can and it's drawing for my hair most days too so that's great. And

10:42:24 am - Samantha Harr:
The the heat and humidity can also be very jarring to foil cards. If You're so if you're not from here, be sure, be sure to be prepared to put those in slabs.

10:42:35 am - Maddy:
I had. I had some of the floor, basiclands. Sorry, I took my left. Holy DHS, check, and my husband bought the floor. Basically. Answer me for Christmas. I want to say it might be getting the wrong but I think it was Christmas it was they were shipping from New York. Around Christmas time. Nice and cool. Shipping down. The Florida. Nice and hot. They were Pringles. I had to set them underneath so many 5,000 row, like 5000 count boxes just to try and make them semi-flat and they're doing a lot better now. but yeah, there there was a very nice

10:43:06 am - Samantha Harr:
Good.

10:43:08 am - Maddy:
curve to them and I was like Yeah, I guess.

10:43:12 am - Samantha Harr:
Well.

10:43:12 am - Maddy:
That's just life. Yeah that was they probably went through shock to be honest.

10:43:17 am - Samantha Harr:
Yeah, I I always do the trick where like put them between you know like cardboard and then I'll stack my textbook textbooks on top of them to just get that weight stacked up real

10:43:25 am - Maddy:
Mm-hmm.

10:43:26 am - Samantha Harr:
life.

10:43:27 am - Maddy:
Yeah, and then you gotta try and

10:43:28 am - Samantha Harr:
It helps.

10:43:29 am - Maddy:
leave them alone.

10:43:30 am - Samantha Harr:
Then you have to leave them alone.

10:43:31 am - Maddy:
That's the hardest part.

10:43:32 am - Samantha Harr:
Yeah, that's the keys to leave them there. Long enough to Unfurl themselves.

10:43:37 am - Maddy:
Yes.

10:43:38 am - Samantha Harr:
Um, so being a store owner. Is. It is it it is an underrepresentation to say that that is a full-time job. It is certainly a lot of investment

10:43:50 am - Maddy:
Yes.

10:43:52 am - Samantha Harr:
time, money, etc, and you're doing judging on the site. I know you're doing. Judge conferences.

You are always busy Maddie. How on earth do you balance that with the rest of your life?
Because I, I have no idea and it's oppressive.

10:44:07 am - Maddy:

Um, so can I The cop-out answer is very carefully but quite honestly, that is right. Anything, you do it very carefully and then it works. But to be honest, it is that it is, it is very carefully. It's with a very disciplined approach. So before I used to judge back before, I had a store, you know, I would judge Rcqs or pptqs back when that that's what they were, you know, and prereleases. And I would do GP's, and I, I was really, I really was an event judge as an ill too, and now it's where I've had it kind of taper back. You know, if I can do a local GP great, um, but my focus now is more on, you know, my story because I want to see that grow and succeed and then switching over to a conference mentality and doing How can I take you know, my experience pass it on because that's what I used to do at events anyway and now I don't have that opportunity So for judges, if you're having trouble, you know balancing, how can I do, everything? You can't do everything. I'm just gonna be, honestly, you can't do everything and you just need to focus on what you're what your biggest things are. What are the things that you really want to put your energy towards? Like, for me It was, you know, where I had to kind of to back off of doing other events in the state of Florida and where I just needed to focus, more on the conference side and it works, it's still, you know, still being only community, you're still contributing a lot, you just have to do it in different way. in just an honestly with, you know, with balancing my personal life and the store and judging Everything is so exciting, all the time, you know, there's reasons why, you know, my life is the way, it is why I have a shop, Why do judging? It's all so exciting. And at some point I just have to tell my brain, No. No, it is not.

10:46:00 am - Samantha Harr:

Go take a nap. Have a rest.

10:46:02 am - Maddy:

Yet. It's not it's not appropriate to be up at midnight, scheduling social media posts. Yeah, it's super fun Yet. be up at midnight, scheduling social media posts. media posts. Yeah, it's not it's not appropriate to be up at midnight scheduling social media posts. Yeah, it's super fun. Super exciting. But sleep is super fun and super exciting too. And it's also super important. So it, you know, just at some point at some point, you become too full. Like how you and I were talking about earlier Samuel with, you know, with learning all these different games. And if you know if you go hundred on each of them, will eventually what I'm going to get 20. So at some point you just you have to say no and your plate becomes too full and it's the same way even with learning a store and doing judging and balancing your personal life you have to say, no and especially if you're going to start saying yes to things like owning a store. There has to be a no somewhere.

10:46:44 am - Samantha Harr:

Absolutely I yeah I can't take on any more jobs or tasks or my husband is going to kill me. It helps a lot having us a spouse having partners that are you know, also into judging and magic that get this kind of life because I I cannot I hesitate to use the term normally, but I can't imagine having like a normie spouse. Try to explain all this and be like, Listen babe. This is the life of it. This is just the way of it.

10:47:13 am - Maddy:

Right, like you don't understand this tournament could run until 1 o'clock in the morning but that's if they don't split top a and then that's if round turnovers good. So if you know, if we're running at the 15-minute rounds like I'm trying to get in all this, you know so I don't know what I'll be home. Like good luck.

10:47:30 am - Samantha Harr:

I'll be home when I'm home.

10:47:30 am - Maddy:

But you know it, right? So yeah, the right support is, is absolutely is absolutely invaluable. And at it sometimes I don't even know. Can I spend the question on you, like, How do you balance, because you're doing so much for Judge Academy, and I feel like I see your name everywhere in a good way. Where you're just, where you're publishing. All this content, you're doing all these things, you're doing these cute Photoshop with, with Archie on the Judge Academy post, but like they've been great.

10:47:57 am - Samantha Harr:

Always something.

10:47:57 am - Maddy:

I've loved them. Yeah but you you are you're always busy yourself. So what's So what's I've loved them. I've loved them. Yeah but you you are you're always busy yourself. So what's been great. I've loved them. Yeah, but you, you are, you're always busy yourself. So, what's been, what's been your technique? If I could spend the question on you?

10:48:05 am - Samantha Harr:

Yeah. Um, I'm gonna be honest with you. I think it helps a lot that we don't have kids yet, you know, like, I think this is gonna be a much bigger challenge. When you know, we have kids in the picture but right now it's me and my husband and we are both judges. We're both, you know, very active in our communities and I think that at least for this, this is probably really personal, but for us, like, we're both very individual people. And so, you know, I find a lot of value in just any kind of time. I can spend near the people I love. So as long as we're in the same room, if we're doing different things, I think of that is really quality time. You know, just having

10:48:37 am - Maddy:

You know.

10:48:40 am - Samantha Harr:

You know, having a silly show on the background. We can like pause our work to talk about real quick. You know, I'm never doing just one thing. If I'm doing one thing, I'm doing three other things. Also like I've got laundry going in the background. Like I've got, you know, stuff going on downstairs. My dog is probably barking, somewhere in the house. There's there's never just one thing going

10:48:58 am - Maddy:
oh,

10:49:00 am - Samantha Harr:
on, and I think, Getting used to that is really a lot of it.

10:49:06 am - Maddy:
Yeah.

10:49:06 am - Samantha Harr:
So, it's a lot. Also, I've got grad school, starting

10:49:09 am - Maddy:
It is.

10:49:10 am - Samantha Harr:
back up at the end of August and I am

10:49:12 am - Maddy:
oh,

10:49:13 am - Samantha Harr:
I'm so close. I'm so close to being done. And I'm not replacing that time slot with anything else because I, I'm just having some spare time, you know, I miss a little bit of spare time.

10:49:24 am - Maddy:
Yeah, I remember doing doing. grad school and and, you know and I just remember I procrastinate and so I I yeah so that you know, that 10 pm cut off is coming and, you know, doing those late papers and I I did not replace any any of that time with school when I got my MBA and I have no intention to because It's hard. It is hard.

10:49:51 am - Samantha Harr:
It's hard.

10:49:54 am - Maddy:
So I hope this this goes well for you and I'm so excited that you're so close.

10:49:57 am - Samantha Harr:
Thank you. I'm so excited to be close to you too. Um, and you know, you you mentioned, you know, seeing my face everywhere. I I have my I have way too many plates, spinning. And for those if anybody out there

10:50:09 am - Maddy:
Yeah.

10:50:09 am - Samantha Harr:
really doesn't like me, I super apologize. I, I know I'm everywhere right now.

10:50:13 am - Maddy:
oh,

10:50:14 am - Samantha Harr:
but, you know, but the truth of the matter and let me be clear for for the audience that there are some things in my life. I'm doing 20% right now and that's, you know, a thing I have to figure out like Because you see me everywhere. Does not mean I'm super successful at all the things I'm doing there. There are projects. I desperately wish I could put more energy into that I just I'm out of time. I'm out of energy, you know? So just be be be cognizant of the fact

10:50:40 am - Maddy:
Yeah.

10:50:42 am - Samantha Harr:
that if you see other judges that are just killing it out there, they may not be as much as you think. So, don't get intimidated or feel down on yourself. If you're like, I have no idea how to do all this. Like we, we don't either

10:50:55 am - Maddy:
No, it's true. And, you know, and even back when we had had judge apps or Judge Academy, I was in, I was, I was trying to start project that never took off, you know, and I was even part of the project for the annotated MTR. The mediterrent rules were I was but

10:51:11 am - Samantha Harr:
Wow.

10:51:13 am - Maddy:
But I can't tell you, I did very well and I can tell you that was one that, you know, it got the 20%, so it happens but for you and for for other judges, you know, and I know there's areas in my life around 20%, it's just it's that either. You're gonna keep going with it and trying to do, you know, trying to do better, focus more or you just need to cut it out and that's a hard to hard. Choice to make.

10:51:37 am - Samantha Harr:
Yeah. Finding Ways to prioritize. It's always a balance but We're getting there, we'll figure ourselves out and I know you will too audience will get there together. Um, so Maddie, as you know, we're at

10:51:47 am - Maddy:
Yep.

10:51:48 am - Samantha Harr:
the 50 minute mark audience, if the 50 minute mark audience, if you the 50 minute mark

audience, if you the 50 minute mark audience, if you Um, so Maddie, as you know, we're at Um, so Maddie, as you know, we're at the 50 minute Mark audience, if you all have any questions, now would be a great time to start sending them to chat while I ask. Maddie this last question Maddie, what is the best advice you can offer judges, who may be thinking about opening their own store?

10:52:03 am - Maddy:

Honestly. do it but be very Really plan it out So when we first started golden fan games that was back in 2015. So that was seven years ago, it took us, it took us six years because we opened back in November of 2021. It took us six years to really finish flushing it out. So when you're thinking about, you know, is a local gaming store for me. Keep in mind. No one's holding you to it number one. No one saying you have to open one, right? This second or even write this year you have time and I would take that time if you're serious about it and just learn Take time at other stores when you're running the tournaments pay attention. Build up your connections as far as networking with players Networking judges networking with other store owners because these are all very important relationships that you will see, you know, become very positive when you go to open your store. It's really encouraging for like I said, even for me, you know, when I have players who are like, Oh yeah, I had this interaction with you and it's, it's good. You know, you're not just, you're not just someone, who's they have no idea who it is. And so when you're looking at everything, just figuring out the timing is going to be probably the hardest thing, when the times, right? The time is, right? When you see that need when that store closes and you're ready, Probably your doors, you know, and these are all these are all things just to consider and don't feel like you need to speedrun because speedrun any percent is not, it's not a good business model. They don't have that as a business model for a reason.

10:53:38 am - Samantha Harr:

There's no reward for that other than bankruptcy.

10:53:41 am - Maddy:

Right. Bankruptcy, a lot of frustration and probably a lot of damage to relationships if we're, if we're completely honest on that one.

10:53:50 am - Samantha Harr:

Yeah, that's that's true and that's really tough. In the chat. We've got. What is one thing you would change or do differently? If you could go back and start the store again?

10:54:00 am - Maddy:

If I could start the story again, I would start by marketing a little sooner than we did. So, we essentially started working right when we did open. I didn't do any in progress shots of the store. Any post to Facebook Group saying? Hey look, we're going to be opening soon. I I didn't advertise it as appropriately as I should have. And I really wish I would have been more intentional with that to get the news out before our doors were opened rather than having our doors open and being like, Okay great. Now I'll start publishing content, there's content before that, it's just a matter of grinding through all that, there's content to be found everywhere. To be honest, YouTube show us that

10:54:36 am - Samantha Harr:

That makes a lot of sense. You know if you especially if you have like a real strong company personality, you want people to start vibing with to put it out there and be like, this is what we're going to be offering. This is the kind of experience, we're going to be offering like Come see you soon. You know, people People will get hype as soon as you let them be hype.

10:54:54 am - Maddy:

Right. Exactly. And we kind of missed out on that hype train and that's one of the things that I would definitely change.

10:55:01 am - Samantha Harr:

That's really good advice. I appreciate that Maddie.

10:55:04 am - Maddy:

Of course.

10:55:04 am - Samantha Harr:

Alright, um, I think we were kind of ready to wrap up. Is there any parting thoughts? You've been wonderful guests

10:55:11 am - Maddy:

Well, thank you so much, honestly. My only parting thought is, You know, how grateful I am for the opportunity just to to speak with, with you and with other judges and especially with anyone, who's potentially thinking of opening up a local game store, I am as accessible as I can be to. So reach out to me. If you have any questions, I'm on discord on Facebook and I'm more than willing to to try and provide insight where I can. Because like I said, it's a people business and I want to see other people succeed in something that, you know, they really like I think it's, I think it's a wonderful dream and if you want to chase it, chase it.

10:55:51 am - Samantha Harr:

That's awesome. Yeah if anybody in the audience if you have not yet had a chance to talk to Maddie or work with Maddie find an opportunity because she's amazing. It just as a judge and as a person Yeah, absolutely. So yeah.

10:56:04 am - Maddy:

Sharks.

10:56:05 am - Samantha Harr:

All shucks

10:56:06 am - Maddy:

That sucks.

10:56:08 am - Samantha Harr:

Um, yeah. So we'll be returning tomorrow for first week. August Wednesday, looks like we're

gonna have Brooke on to talk about req formats in in the big picture and I'm excited for that. So yeah, tune in again tomorrow and thank you all for joining us today.

10:56:23 am - Maddy:
Thank you.