



# 1-UP PLAYERS

power up your gaming with fanart

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Strategy and Messaging

Professor Lehavy

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# SUMMARY



Nintendo Co., Ltd. (Nintendo) is a video game company, located in Kyoto, Japan. The company began in 1889 as a small business selling Hanafuda playing cards (Nintendo of America, Inc., n.d.), but in 1963 began manufacturing video games as well. In 1980, Nintendo established Nintendo of America (NOA), their American subsidiary, located in Redmond, Washington. Like any video game company, Nintendo wants to create a fun and consumer-friendly experience for its users.

With the covid pandemic still going on, Nintendo (2022) announced on March 29, 2022, an update on the launch of one of their most anticipated titles for the Nintendo Switch; the sequel to The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild. Due to the delay in the release of this title, it is a perfect time for NOA to launch the 1-Up Players initiative — a campaign designed to promote art created by fans of various products.

Fan-made games pose a legal issue when they attempt to monetize from Nintendo intellectual property (IP). NOA takes action in the form of issuing Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) notices (Craddock, 2021) calling for removal

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of content that is distributed. Unfortunately, when word of DMCA notices reach NOA audiences, it creates a negative perception of the company. 1-Up Players is an attempt to rebuild a strong relationship with Nintendo console and product users by promoting fan-created content, particularly fanart, in a way that does not blur the legal line of infringement.

The term “1-Up” is widely known in the gamer community and means to upgrade or power-up. The campaign will attempt to 1-Up the overall user experience and relationship with NOA.

As a social media campaign for consumer relationship building, 1-Up Players will target three community audiences:

- **Video gamers who create fanart centered around Nintendo titles**
- **Video gamers who create fanart not centered around Nintendo titles**
- **Individuals who play video games but don’t create fanart**

1-Up Players will launch in January 2023 and run for the entirety of the year.

The success of the campaign will be characterized by an increase in engagement across all social media platforms, an increase in followers, and an overall increase of sales of Nintendo products.

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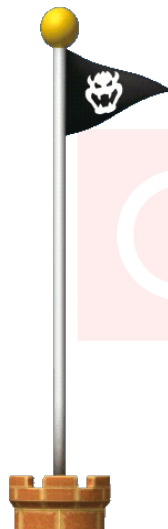
# GOALS



As a social media campaign designed to build a stronger consumer relationship, 1-Up Players seeks to foster a stronger relationship and trust among users by creating a mutual sense of community, via sharing various pieces of fanart created and submitted for contests by fans of the Nintendo brand.

Furthermore, 1-Up Players seeks to build a more positive reputation with consumers when it comes to fan content created without profiting off of Nintendo IPs. 1-Up Players will work to demonstrate NOA's appreciation for its fanbase by promoting their art.

Additionally, 1-Up Players seeks to increase customers of Nintendo products throughout 2023. The campaign will promote fan content related to upcoming video game titles for exposure and a sense of excitement for those games.



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# OBJECTIVES



- Increase reach and user engagement across all NOA social media accounts by 25% by the end of 2023
- Increase NOA's social media followers by at least 20% by the end of 2023
- Increase Nintendo product sales by 20% by the end of 2023
- Track 10,000 uses of #1UpPlayers on social media by the end of 2023 and monitor for user sentiment, aiming for at least 80% positive



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# OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES



1-Up Players will work to capitalize on environmental conditions in the United States. The covid-19 pandemic resulted in a major shift to remote work and education environments. This was due to government and state mandates put in place to stop the spread of the virus. As a result, many people turned to video games for entertainment to remain connected to their friends and family. *Animal Crossing: New Horizons* is a Nintendo title that was released close to the start of the pandemic. Pearce, Yip, and Ha Lee (2021) found that parents tied this game to stress coping during the pandemic. It helped keep their children occupied now that their workplaces went into the remote transition. Furthermore, visiting other users' islands, a function of the game, kept people socially active. This creates the opportunity to leverage Nintendo titles further as a bridging and bonding company amongst gamers.

In 2020, there was an overall major rise in the amount of money Americans spent on video games compared to 2019. Americans spent nearly \$57 billion, new record on video game spending (Butts, 2021). Nintendo Switch was the best selling

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console in 2020, so there has been a larger reach, which presents the opportunity to connect and engage with more people via encouraging them to create fan content by promoting it.

A major challenge that 1-Up Players faces is convincing users that NOA cares about the content they create surrounding their IPs. NOA has already faced backlash in the past for the aforementioned DMCA takedowns of fan-created games. Another challenge that 1-Up Players faces is the fact that the NOA social media accounts have a lower follower count than those of Playstation and Xbox, Nintendo's major competitors.



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# TARGET AUDIENCES



According to a survey from April 2021, console gamers spend the most money per year on in-game content compared to Computer, Web games, and smartphone or tablet gamers. They spend an average of \$84 a year (Clemont, 2022). Nintendo primarily creates consoles, with the Nintendo Switch as their current gaming console, so we can leverage console spending to understand video gamers and what their purchase behavior is.

In November, 2021, Nintendo hosted a live broadcast of their Corporate Management Policy Briefing, which outlined a lot of information on their consumers. According to the brief, there were 79 million annual playing users, which are those who play their Nintendo Switch console at least once a year.

Furthermore, the age distribution of those players is varied, but most of the players seem to be between ages 20-25 (Nintendo Co., Ltd., 2021). This gives us insight into a few of the demographics of Nintendo Switch console owners.

Generally speaking, in 2021, 38% of video game players in the United States came from the 18-34 age demographic (Clemont, 2021a), which further

demonstrates the age of people who play video games as a whole, rather than just those who play Nintendo content.

Another statistic to take into account is that while gaming has historically been perceived as male dominant, female gamers have increased in recent years, with the percentage of female gamers making up at least 40% since 2008. In 2021, the gender gap of video gamers was 55% male to 45% female (Clemont, 2021b).

Taking some of this information into account, 1-Up Players will target individuals ages 20+, categorized into three groups:

### **Video gamers who create fanart for Nintendo IPs**

These individuals are fans of video games, and they express their love for characters and games through the medium of creating pieces of art associated with games they enjoy playing. According to a study, nearly 70% of surveyed fan artists described making fanart or creating costumes based on characters in various forms of media (cosplaying) as escapist in nature (Manifold, 2009). We can take away the fact that fan artists have a strong connection to the art they create, and it could be leveraged as a way to demonstrate fan appreciation and engagement with Nintendo content. 1-Up Players will work to promote the art created by this group to build a stronger relationship with consumers while also promoting upcoming titles from Nintendo.

The Nintendo logo is displayed in a white, rounded rectangular frame with a subtle drop shadow, set against a light pink background.

### **Video gamers who create fanart but not for Nintendo IPs**

These individuals are also fans of video games but they do not generally create content for Nintendo products. These fan artists perceive NOA as not caring for their creations, due to NOA's history of taking down fangames created as tribute to the video games and characters they like. 1-Up Players has a main goal of building a stronger relationship with consumers, which includes those who enjoy creating art for Nintendo products. The campaign will work to shift their mindset of Nintendo by demonstrating that their work is recognized and rewarded. By targeting these individuals, we are attempting to convert more video gamers into those who play Nintendo products. This will help in promoting upcoming titles by showcasing user-generated content surrounding characters from those titles and how fan artists are engaging and connecting to our characters.

The Nintendo logo is displayed in a white, rounded rectangular frame with a subtle drop shadow, set against a light pink background.

### **Individuals who play video games**

Another major audience segmentation, 1-Up Players will work to increase sales of Nintendo products. To do this, the campaign will work to make upcoming titles the most desirable via promoting fan content. This will show these individuals that NOA cares about audience engagement and interaction and will leverage the fanart in a way that will attract new customers.

The Nintendo logo is displayed in a white, rounded rectangular frame with a subtle drop shadow, set against a light pink background.

One of the main goals of the 1-Up Players is to strengthen the relationship between NOA and its audiences mostly through social media, so it is important to take into account the fact that about nine out of 10 people say they buy from the companies they follow on social media (Williams, 2020). As a result, 1-Up Players will attempt to increase followers on the NOA social media accounts, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

### **PERSONA 1 – Artist Ashley**

Ashley, 22, is a young woman who loves everything Nintendo. She has been playing games in the following series: *The Legend of Zelda*, *Mario Bros.*, *Pokémon*, and *Kirby*. When she is not playing video games, she enjoys drawing characters from her favorite games. Like many gamers, she has joined various online communities through Twitter, Reddit, and Discord where she likes to share updates on each piece of fanart she creates. As a member of multiple communities, she enjoys sharing work from her fellow artists and engaging with others who love all series from Nintendo just as much as she does. Her favorite character to draw is Kirby because he is simple to draw and everyone finds him adorable.

### **PERSONA 2 – Nintendon't Ned**

Ned, 36, is a huge gamer. He keeps up on everything video games and owns the three major consoles that are out right now. While not someone who believes that one console is superior above the others, Ned prefers Nintendo competitors because he believes Nintendo does not listen to their customers when it comes to the games people actually want. Simply put, he believes that Nintendo is behind everyone else in terms of quality. He also thinks that Nintendo is too strict when it comes to fans wanting to create video game projects as tribute to Nintendo or when it comes to planning tournaments featuring Nintendo's popular competitive games. When not working, Ned enjoys creating digital art of his favorite video game characters and sharing his finished pieces to Twitter and Facebook.

### **PERSONA 3 – Gamer Gary**

Gary, 16, is a young gamer who enjoys connecting with his classmates when they play video games. He enjoys competitive games, like Nintendo's *Super Smash Bros. Ultimate*, on the Nintendo Switch. He hosts weekly competitions in his school's video game club, which he likes to post about on various social media platforms. He tends to enter giveaways on social media to win new releases whenever he cannot buy the games himself. If he cannot win a copy, he will spend a lot of his time watching streamers on Twitch play the new games or check out YouTube videos that talk about them. He frequents multiple video game sites and

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enjoys reading all the new information on video games that he may have missed while in school. Furthermore, Gary spends a lot of his time engaging with other gamers on Instagram and Twitter whenever he wants to share his opinion on a game.



# STRATEGY



The main goal of 1-Up Players is to foster a stronger reputation for NOA and its public. As mentioned, NOA has received negative sentiment and perception as a result of them issuing DMCA strikes against any content created by fans, even when fans upload soundtracks from games for everyone to enjoy. Whenever NOA issues cease and desist notices for fan games created to honor Nintendo titles, the response is almost always negative, especially when the games were created

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without a goal of profiting off of Nintendo IPs. Many fans create this content to open up the options in existing games or as tribute to Nintendo based around games they want to be released officially. 1-Up Players will attempt to demonstrate NOA's appreciation for fan-created art and promote a more fan-friendly relationship with its consumers.

As mentioned earlier, nine out of 10 people purchase products from brand they follow on social media, so when improving brand reputation, 1-Up Players seeks to increase follower account across all NOA social media accounts. While the campaign is social media-centric, 1-Up Players will also utilize a new page on NOA's website and their monthly newsletter to engage with gamers and promote user-generated content. Through this engagement, 1-Up Players will foster a more positive relationship between the company and its fans, which should translate to more purchases of Nintendo products throughout 2023.



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# MESSAGING



Goal: Encourage gamers to see the value that Nintendo has to offer with their games and the respect Nintendo has for its fans

**Target Audience 1:** Video Gamers who create fanart centered around Nintendo titles

Message 1: Value proposition, emphasis on call-to-action

- We at Nintendo believe that video games are a powerful form of storytelling with the ability to connect with players on a deeper level. It is our goal to create fun and unique experiences for gamers everywhere, regardless of age or gender, and we try to do that with each new entry in every franchise.
- While made up of various art forms, like different art styles and music, video games are art themselves that introduce people to characters and immersive worlds to explore. With 1-Up Players, we want to celebrate the art that you put the time and effort into making. Nearly 70% of fan artists described making fanart or cosplaying as escapist in nature (Manifold, 2009).

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- We love to see the art you create to express your love for our games. Power up your experience with our games by sharing your art with fellow gamers and fan artists using #1UpPlayers. We also invite you to participate in upcoming contests to create new fanart pieces for the chance to win Nintendo eShop Gift Cards and Nintendo Switch consoles.

**Target Audience 2:** Video Gamers who create fanart not centered around Nintendo titles

Message 2: Value proposition, emphasis on call-to-action

- This year, we have many brand-new titles to showcase, including the highly anticipated sequel to *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*. It is our mission to create memorable experiences for gamers from all walks of life, and we cannot wait for you to experience new worlds and meet new characters. As always, with the Nintendo Switch family of consoles, you can play your way.
- Do you enjoy creating fanart for your favorite video games? 1-Up Players is a campaign designed to celebrate and recognize the work you create for the franchises that you connect with on a deep level. Your art is what brings games to life while you wait for those next entries to be released.

- Because video games have the power to connect people through fun and the ability to play together, we ask that you bring our characters to life with your fanart. Using #1UpPlayers across social media, share your creations with others who enjoy creating content and who love video games just as much as you do! Also, keep an eye out for giveaways and contests to win prizes, like Nintendo eShop Gift Cards and Nintendo Switch consoles, for your hard work in the near future!

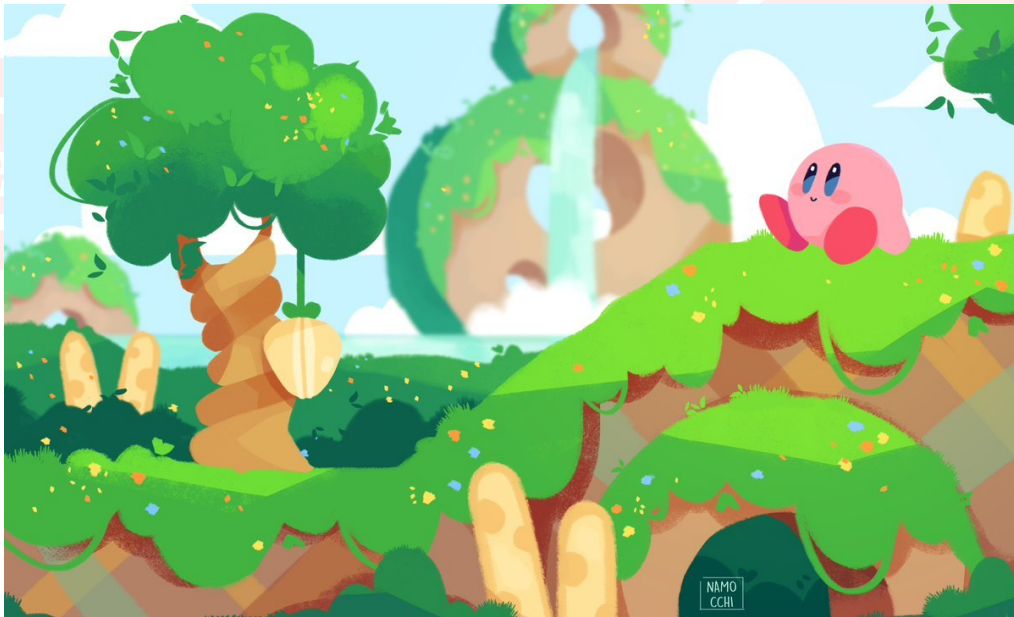
**Target Audience 3:** Individuals who play video games but don't create fanart

Message 3: Value proposition, emphasis on call-to-action

- At Nintendo, we like to offer gamers fun and unique ways to 1-Up their experience when playing new video games. With the Nintendo Switch family of consoles, we have continued to change the way you game, and we plan to continue growing the library of titles you can play both on your television screen and on-the-go. We recognize that everyone plays games differently, and we want to ensure that you can play your way.
- What makes Nintendo franchises special is that anyone can enjoy them, regardless of age, gender, or video gaming experience. You instantly recognize our characters, like Mario, Link, Princess Peach, and Kirby. You

can power up your experience even further with 1-Up Players, a campaign designed to celebrate the art that your fellow gamers create, by sharing some of your favorite fanart.

- Did you know there are an estimated 3.24 billion gamers across the globe (Clemont, 2021)? Using #1UpPlayers, you can connect to many more of those who share your love of video games as an art form that introduces you to worlds you never thought possible. You do not have to be an artist yourself to join in on the fun with giveaways we have planned and contests where you get to vote for your favorite fanart!



# TACTICS



Target Audience	Tactic	Evaluation
Artist Ashley, Nintendon't Ned, Gamer Gary	Social media campaign using the hashtag #1UpPlayers	Post engagement, hashtag usage, and user sentiment
Artist Ashley, Nintendon't Ned, Gamer Gary	Organic social media content (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube, Reddit)	Follower growth, engagement (likes, shares, comments, retweets), audience sentiment
Artist Ashley, Nintendon't Ned, Gamer Gary	Twitter fanart contest for artists of all skill levels which will be voted on by their fellow gamers	Engagement (likes, shares, comments, retweets), as well as fan art contestants who enter
Artist Ashley, Nintendon't Ned, Gamer Gary	Emails about the campaign sent to users with a	Open rates and click- through rates

	MyNintendo/Nintendo ID account who opted in to receive the monthly newsletter	
Artist Ashley, Nintendon't Ned, Gamer Gary	Social media posts with news on the campaign	Follower growth, engagement (likes, shares, comments, retweets), audience sentiment
Artist Ashley, Nintendon't Ned, Gamer Gary	Social media posts to introduce the campaign, #1UpPlayers, and the launch of a new page on their website that will compile fanart submitted for contests	Website click, engagement (likes, shares, comments, retweets), audience sentiment, hashtag usage
Artist Ashley, Nintendon't Ned, Gamer Gary	Launch 1-Up Players page on Nintendo website	Website visits

Artist Ashley, Nintendon't Ned, Gamer Gary	Partner with popular fan artists and video game influencers	Follower growth, social media engagement metrics
Gamer Gary	Partner with popular video game streamers to play recent releases and promote the campaign	Follower growth on NOA YouTube and Twitch accounts, time spent on stream, engagement metrics (likes, comments, subscribers)
Artist Ashley, Nintendon't Ned, Gamer Gary	Character drawing tutorials to teach gamers how to draw iconic Nintendo characters	Post engagement, hashtag usage, and user sentiment, social media metrics (likes, retweets, reactions, views, impressions, media clicks, etc.)

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# EVALUATION



Since 1-Up Players is primarily social media-centric, evaluation will be conducted in a few ways. Various social media posts will be created to engage with consumers and will be evaluated by monitoring the follower count of the NOA accounts, engagement, and the overall consumer sentiment. The hashtag created, #1UpPlayers will be monitored for usage and the sentiment of the posts created with the hashtag included.

This campaign will also introduce a new page designed specifically for it that will feature a collection of fan art archived throughout the course of the campaign. Page visits and click-through rates from social media posts, news articles, and emails will be monitored closely to evaluate the effectiveness of the page in communicating NOA's appreciation of the user-generated content.

A major goal of 1-Up Players is to increase the sales of Nintendo products throughout 2023. Other than measuring the sales of new products, the campaign will monitor the sales of the Nintendo Switch family of consoles (Nintendo Switch, Nintendo Switch Lite, and Nintendo Switch-OLED). The initiative will also closely monitor the creation of MyNintendo accounts/Nintendo IDs, which are generally created when new consoles are sold.



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# CAMPAIGN MATERIALS



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**Blog Post**



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## **Creating the Best Fanart Piece: How Art Shapes the Experience of Playing Video Games**

By Benjamin Katz, author



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Video games are a type of art that never fails to amaze. They bring new worlds to explore and new characters for players to meet. What makes video games art is the idea that players can interpret them in countless ways. How exactly can we express



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our interpretations of the stories we experience? That's easy; players can create art centered around their favorite titles that brings their ideas and scenarios to life.

Fanart is a great way to 1-Up your experience playing video games because it allows players to expand on established worlds or relationships amongst the characters by adding their own spin. You don't even need to be an artist to enjoy fanart; the subject matter of a piece of fanart could be based on ideas that a fanbase came together to ponder. If you are an artist yourself, or just a fan of the art your fellow gamers create, here are a few of the ways to create the best piece that brings your ideas to life:

**1. Choose your Subject** — Have you ever played a game and pondered “what if...?” For example, in [\*The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild\*](#), maybe you wondered what the four Champions would look like if they hadn't perished 100 years prior to the current setting. It is important to come up with your subject to keep you motivated as you create a new masterpiece. Think about the questions you may have after completing a game, whether it's regarding the plot or simply two characters having a totally different relationship after the events that take place.

**2. Change up the Canon** — Another important factor to take into account when creating fanart is the canon, or source material. Oftentimes, fans will stay true to the source material, but it's possible that a concept or a plot point may not have hit the mark as expected. Do you have your own ideas on what could be different or better? Add that to your art! You may find that other fans have the same thoughts as you and want to contribute to fan theory and concepts.

**3. Make your Mark** — One of the most important parts of any art is the artist's signature. This tells everyone that you are the creator of a piece and nobody can pass it off as theirs. It is not just the signature that could make your work stand out, however. Try and change up the art style to make the content centered around your favorite franchises unique. To do this, think about possible styles you excel at creating. Do you enjoy comic books? Put Mario into a piece inspired by a comic book. Do you like old-school cartoons, like Steamboat Willie? Change up Kirby's design to fit that theme! The possibilities with art are endless.

**4. Start Creating** — Now that you planned out your fanart idea, it's time to start creating it. Personally, I prefer to sketch with a pencil and some computer paper because I can start with a lighter stroke and erase any mistakes I make. Plus, these are common tools around the house. If you prefer to create digital art, I recommend

downloading [Krita](#). It's a free, online painting program that is easy to use. Just remember; art takes time, patience, and a lot of mistakes. When it comes to creating your own piece of art, the most important thing is to have fun with it.



Credit: [@suyasuyabi427](#) on Twitter

Waiting for a new title can be really hard, especially with the pandemic delaying the most anticipated games. Fanart is the way to stay engaged and hyped; fans are quick to take a character from a short trailer and make them instantly recognizable and memorable. Players have already created fanart for the next entries in the *Pokémon* series, [Scarlet and Violet](#), set to release this November.

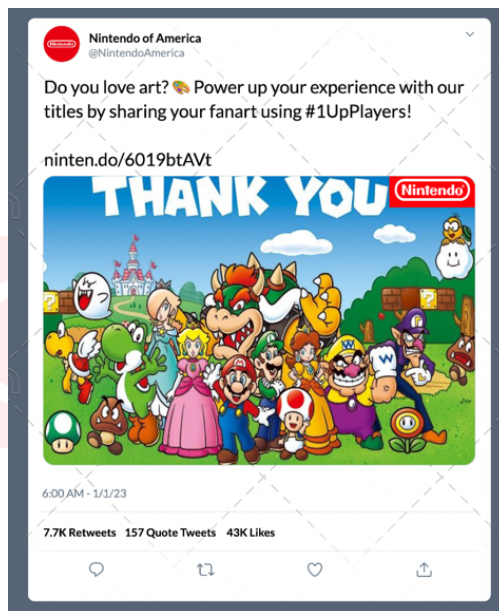
## 1-Up Players

Nintendo launched their 1-Up Players campaign, which is designed to celebrate fan artists. They even set up a new page on their [website](#) to display pieces of art that fans are submitting for contests that you get to vote on. There are also planned giveaways with a focus on fanart. What better way to engage with your fellow gamers while waiting for the next big game from Nintendo! I can't wait to see all the talented artists sharing their interpretations on social media with #1UpPlayers!

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## Social Media Samples

**Tweet from Nintendo of America – Launching #1UpPlayers**



**Tweet from Nintendo of America – Campaign giveaway for Twitter users**



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**Instagram post from Nintendo of America's account** – Campaign giveaway for Instagram users. Reads the following:

“nintendo - #NintendoSweepstakes We are hosting a #1UpPlayers Sweepstakes to celebrate 2023! One lucky winner will receive a Nintendo Switch – OLED Model + a copy of Splatoon 3!

To Enter:

1. Follow @nintendo
2. LIKE this post
3. Tag friends

The winner will be announced on 1/13/23.

No Purchase Necessary

Last Day to Enter: January 12, 2023

#Nintendo #NintendoSweepstakes #NintendoSwitch #Splatoon3 #1UpPlayers

#NintendoSwitchOLED”



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## Press Release

Benjamin Katz

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 1/1/23

Nintendo of America Inc.

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### **Nintendo of America Launches ‘1-Up Players’ Campaign** *Video Game Giant Wants to Celebrate Fans and their Art*

Sunday, January 1, 2023 9:00 am

REDMOND, Wash. — Today, [Nintendo of America](#) announced the launch of ‘1-Up Players,’ a new initiative centered around fanart. The campaign is designed to celebrate the pieces of art that fans create with giveaways and contests to reward them for their dedication and loyalty.

“We recognize that with every new title come masterpieces from dedicated gamers who love to create,” said Doug Bowser, President of Nintendo of America. “We love our fans. Their ideas and interpretations of our games bring more life to them beyond just playing them. With 1-Up Players, we want to shift the focus onto the fans by bringing them together through their shared love of gaming and art.”

[Bowser](#) revealed the plan to introduce a new page on [Nintendo of America’s website](#) in the upcoming days. It promises to include works of art submitted in future contests to showcase and celebrate the talents of fans.

Set to run throughout 2023, ‘1-Up Players’ will offer many ways for gamers to participate in the fun, such as:

- Giveaways centered around art for anyone to enter
- Contests for fan artists to create themed pieces, regardless of skill level, which will be voted on by fellow gamers
- Character tutorials to learn how to draw iconic Nintendo characters, like Kirby
- The ability to share their favorite fanart pieces using #1UpPlayers across all [social media](#) platforms





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**About Nintendo of America Inc.:** [Nintendo of America Inc.](#) (NOA) is the American subsidiary of the Japanese video game company, [Nintendo Co., Ltd.](#) Founded in 1980, NOA is in charge of bringing games from their parent company to the American market. Nintendo is known for many video game series, including: [Mario](#), [The Legend of Zelda](#), and [Kirby](#).

###



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