Preface.

The TI-KS campaign that we launched on Oct. 31 2017 failed. It has been cancelled by us on Nov 25 via message to our supporters, so that they would be able cancel their pledges and use them on a follow-up campaign on Indiegogo.com.

Reasons.

1. **Lack of experience.**

This campaign had been our first attempt at creating, planning and launching a crowdfunding campaign. To prepare for it, we had been collecting footage and ideas since 2015, and following, pledging in and analyzing many campaigns on Kickstarter.

However, looking at other people's campaigns is not a replacement for making your own experience. It's a whole different kettle of fish, and we learned a lot of things that we never expected to happen. Furthermore, a video game is a video game, but an FPS is totally different from a strategic simulation or a side scroller, so comparison only takes you so far.

2. **Preparation**

The campaign doesn't start the day it is being launched – it starts at least 3-4 weeks ahead of it. The player base needs to be informed – people actually have to be given time to save up, get credit cards, or hook up with friends who own one in case they haven't got a credit card themselves. Also, every one of our players and supporters have

their own social groups that they need to inform, so they would have had to be given time to prepare their own pitches and introductions for spreading the word.

3. Influencers and Press

No campaign is any good if people don't know it exists. During our entire run, we only managed to get 2500 views, even so reaching almost 5k USD in the process. Take that times twenty, chances are you'll make it past the goal.

We would have had many YouTubers with TI videos online and thousands of subscribers; yet, not one of them was pulled on board in time for the launch.

For a crowdfunding campaign, influencers need to be contacted and given a reason to join the cause. Which takes us to the next point.

4. A playable game!

A game that wants to be covered by streamers, twitchers, influencers and so on must be playable in some way!
We completely underestimated the importance of putting journalists and YouTubers into a position to create their own footage, get a feeling for the game and experiencing the features themselves before they can form an opinion to share with their subscribers.
Even if it's as simple as just having something to entertain them with.
A playable version must exist – BEFORE launching a campaign!

After all, the game is the whole selling point, and with so many people looking at what TI has become and saying how we've come an incredibly long way, how this game is a very different animal, how the shutdown has left a gap that can't be filled by any other game and how much it has changed for the better, it's just a shame and PR-suicide to try running a campaign without tapping into this resource.

Content-wise, our Pro-Gamers wished to see that competitive maps were being developed to pick up where the classic CS 1.6 gaming community was left out in the rain by CS:S and CS:GO.

5. Choose the right platform.

There are several platforms for crowdfunding today. There is Kickstarter, there is Indiegogo, but there are also long-term community investment platforms such as BrightLocker, Patreon etc.

Kickstarter is making a lot of sense when launching a project that appeals to the KS-Backers, be it by the personal credibility and likeability of the creators, by the ambition behind the concept or simply by giving backers the "gambling"-sort of feeling to pledge for something new and exciting that will either fund, or fail.

We didn't need that; in fact, "all-or-nothing" was exactly what we did NOT want for our campaign. Only 3% of our pledges came from Kickstarter – that's 97% who don't feel any ambition at all to gamble, they just want their game back, or to play it for the first time.

Flexible funding would have worked perfectly fine for us: we wanted to raise funds, nothing more, nothing less, and our backers wanted time to prepare, save up and help out. Therefore, Indiegogo and the flexible keep-what-you-raise-concept was the better way for us. Another positive aspect was the new InDemand feature that would enable teams to keep sales going even after the campaign has officially ended.

6. Tiers and rewards, prices and the market

While this part of our campaign worked out "OK" with a pretty healthy donation structure, there still was a lot of room for improvements.

First of all, there don't need to be three or more "Whale"-reward levels. Whoever wanted to invest in us would do so in spite of what

we offered to them as rewards.

All the other potential supporters want reasonable pricing, and for the lower tiers, competitive prices.

At the time of our campaign, the AAA titles made by our competition were being sold as cheap as 6 dollars. An indie-game can't crowdfund in the same market for almost 2.5 times that price tag.

For the follow-up, pricing would have had to be fair and an invitation for everyone to risk it – without seeming like a cheap rip-off product. The perfect approach would have been to aim for the middle, and to offer the game for 9 USD / 8 Eur. in the crowdfunding and pre-order segment, but for 15 USD / 13 EUR. for the actual standalone sale to give incentive to pledge.

Our rewards should therefore be grouped together more closely, something like:

9 USD, 15 USD, 25 USD, 40 USD, 75 USD, 100 USD, 500 USD, 1k USD.

Lead currency in this should also be **USD** – most backers who own credit cards and use them regularly come from North America, and the Euro has something uncertain and strange about it.

7. **Timing**

A very, very important issue is the timing of a campaign. October 31 was not a good time to launch – especially with a campaign ending Nov. 30, and therefore a week before thirteenth salary is being paid in many countries. Therefore, a campaign should stretch far into December, possibly even towards the end of it. Especially if it is an Indiegogo-campaign with flexible funding enabled, there is only gain to be expected from such timing.

8. Social media competency.

Another big drawback in the first campaign was our lack of experience with social media. We did do some Facebook-based PR work in the past, but we neither thought it important, nor did we know how to use and setup accounts on Twitter, Instagram, Twitch, etc., and we hardly ever used our YouTube account at all.

Even if it is unlikely to generate more backings in short-term perspective, it is part of a professional presentation to use those channels.

9. The campaign video, the campaign art and psychology

Thanks to a professional voice actor/editor for the pitch video and his remarkable improvement on the original pitch, the video wasn't half bad. Almost one in three people watched the whole thing until the last second, which is very good by social media standards. However, a dev team needs to get personally involved. They need to show themselves, interact with the crowd and maintain a dev-blog with updates to show the work they're doing and the progress they make.

With most of our backers in line for a change over to Indiegogo, we reached almost 20% of our funding goal within the first 24 hours; compared to the stench-of-death of the first campaign where we had to fight to make it past 15% for over a week, the better preparation has paid out already.

10. Summary

Thanks to the flexible funding concept, we will be able to succeed whatever we choose to do. We also don't need to earn riches right away, as our campaign + development will be flanked and supported by the BrightLocker platform (a kind of "Patreon" for video games).

With a setup like this, sufficient funding for our game can be ensured – and a successful release as well.