

PHANTOM BLADE ZERO

Global Go-to-Market & Launch Marketing Plan

MKT 467 | Marketing in the Gaming Industry | Spring 2026

Prepared by: Xiongju · Yiqi · Arielle · Rain · Nicole · Haowei

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Phantom Blade Zero is a premium \$70 single-purchase action RPG releasing globally on September 9, 2026 across PlayStation 5, Steam, Epic Games Store, and WeGame. Developed by S-GAME under the creative direction of CEO Qiwei Liang and action choreography of Kenji Tanigaki (Donnie Yen's stunt team), the title pioneers a new genre identity — **Kungfupunk** — that fuses Chinese wuxia, steampunk machinery, and dark fantasy into a cinematic, skill-based combat experience.

Our launch strategy is built on three pillars: (1) **cinematic mastery** — positioning combat as performance rather than punishment; (2) **cultural discovery** — leveraging Kungfupunk as a fresh aesthetic alternative to Western fantasy; and (3) **authentic craftsmanship** — anchored in S-GAME's public commitment to 100% human-made artwork in an AI-saturated era. With 1M+ wishlists already secured by year-end 2025 and an \$80M global marketing budget, we project first-year sales of 4–6M units, positioning PBZ between *Sekiro* and *Black Myth: Wukong* in commercial outcome and establishing a long-term Kungfupunk franchise platform across film, music, collectibles, and serialized media.

2. PRODUCT / CONCEPT STRATEGY

Phantom Blade Zero is a dark wuxia action RPG set in the *Phantom World*, where Chinese martial arts, steampunk machinery, and occult forces coexist. Players assume the role of **Soul**, an assassin framed for murder with only 66 days left to uncover the truth before the curse claims his life. Core gameplay centers on fast-paced, choreographed combat, exploration of handcrafted semi-open maps, and 8 distinct narrative endings determined by side-content engagement — exceeding *Elden Ring's* branching depth.

Strategically, PBZ is positioned as a **premium AAA action RPG that competes on style, cultural identity, and cinematic combat**, not on Soulslike difficulty alone. Rather than asking players to endure punishment, the game invites them to *perform inside a kung fu film* — turning every fight into a shareable cinematic scene. This repositioning differentiates PBZ in a saturated genre and unlocks creator-driven, UGC-fueled growth that traditional action RPGs struggle to generate.

3. POSITIONING

3.1 Target Audience

PBZ targets **core gamers aged 18–35** who are highly engaged with action-driven, skill-based experiences on PC and PS5. Demographically, this is an urban, digitally-connected, slightly male-skewed segment spanning global and Chinese markets. Psychographically, the audience values mastery, challenge, and immersive storytelling, with regional nuance: global players over-index on Soulslike mechanical precision and dark fantasy aesthetics, while

Chinese players show additional affinity for wuxia narratives, martial arts philosophy, and culturally rooted storytelling. Behaviorally, both segments are active on gameplay-content ecosystems (Twitch, YouTube, Reddit globally; Bilibili, Douyin, Weibo in China) and rely heavily on creator coverage and peer reviews before purchase.

3.2 Audience Benefits

Mastery Without Frustration	Be the Hero of Your Own Kung Fu Film	Cultural Discovery
Rewards skill with stylish, cinematic payoffs instead of punishing repetition. Players experience the pride of growth without Soulslike burnout.	Choreographed, camera-driven combat turns every fight into a scene worth sharing — transforming gameplay into self-expression and social currency.	Offers global players a fresh aesthetic vocabulary (the way samurai once did), and Chinese players cultural resonance and pride.

3.3 Key Support Points (Why PBZ Wins)

- Cinematic Martial Arts:** Combat directed by Kenji Tanigaki (Donnie Yen's action team), implementing 'Simultaneous Offense & Defense' mechanics that mirror Golden Age Hong Kong action cinema. Authentic motion capture preserves the integrity of real martial movement while translating it into responsive, fun gameplay.
- Genre Innovation – Kungfupunk:** A new visual identity blending wuxia, steampunk, cyberpunk, and anime/manga influences. Founder Qiwei Liang positions Kungfupunk as the next chapter in pop-culture kung fu — following Bruce Lee, Donnie Yen, and Michelle Yeoh — but with a punk twist no other franchise owns.
- Narrative Agency:** A 66-day urgency mechanic paired with 8 distinct endings driven by side-content choices — ensuring high replayability and persistent emotional stakes.
- Authentic Craftsmanship:** In an era of AI-generated content, PBZ's public commitment to 100% human-made artwork — hand-drawn Xuan paper maps and authentic 3D scans of real martial artists — is a powerful differentiator and earned-media catalyst.

3.4 Revenue Model

PBZ adopts a **buy-once, full-game premium model at \$70 USD** with no microtransactions, gacha, battle passes, or subscription tiers. All cosmetics, weapons, and Phantom Edges are unlocked through gameplay. Long-term engagement and revenue extension will be supported through paid DLC expansions launched 2+ months post-release, contingent on community traction. Wishlists exceeded 1,000,000 as of December 31, 2025, signaling strong premium-tier demand ahead of the September 9, 2026 launch.

4. MARKETING PLAN

4.1 Marketing Objectives

Marketing objectives are structured across three time horizons — **pre-launch buzz, launch conversion, and post-launch retention** — with measurable KPIs benchmarked against comparable titles.

Phase	KPI / Goal	Rationale & Benchmark
Pre-Launch Buzz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5M+ Steam wishlists by 9/9/26 • 2B+ global social impressions • Top-5 Most Wishlisted on Steam 	Currently 1M+ wishlists with 9 months of runway. Black Myth: Wukong reached 1M+ wishlists pre-launch; Stellar Blade ~700K. Top-5 status historically correlates with 3M+ first-month sales.
Launch (Month 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3M units sold globally • 90+ Metacritic average • 50K concurrent Steam peak 	Sekiro: 2M first month, 10M+ lifetime; Stellar Blade: ~1M (PS5-only); Black Myth: Wukong: 10M in 3 days. PBZ multi-platform release with stronger creator infrastructure positions us above Stellar Blade, below Wukong.
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5–6M units globally • 40% China / 35% NA-EU / 20% APAC / 5% RoW • DLC reveal drives 20%+ engagement re-spike 	Conservative model: \$350M+ Year 1 gross revenue at \$70 ASP. China share elevated by Kungfupunk cultural affinity and WeGame ecosystem.

4.2 Marketing Tactics

4.2.1 Communications Strategy

Our communications strategy follows the player journey across four stages — Awareness, Interest, Intent, Purchase — with channel and media-type allocation calibrated to each stage. Five primary channel types carry the campaign: gaming showcases, social/video platforms, gaming press & creators, outdoor advertising, and direct/storefront marketing.

Stage	Channel & Role	Key Properties	Media Type
01 Awareness	Major gaming showcases reveal trailers to create high-impact announcement moments. Official social and video channels build Kungfupunk identity through combat clips, dev updates, and key art.	The Game Awards, Summer Game Fest, State of Play, TikTok, Douyin, Weibo, IG, X, YouTube, Bilibili	Owned + Paid
02 Interest	PR previews and reviews validate gameplay quality. Trusted creators receive controlled early access. Live event playable demos turn hype into hands-on proof.	IGN, GameSpot, PlayStation Blog, 游民星空, 机核, ChinaJoy, Gamescom, TGS, cybercafé activations	Earned + Paid
03 Intent	Official website serves as a central press and gameplay information hub. Community platforms keep fans actively discussing the game. Storefront pages drive wishlist accumulation.	Official site, press kit, Discord, Reddit, WeChat, Weibo, Bilibili Community, Steam, PS Store, Epic, WeGame	Owned + Shared
04 Purchase	Direct marketing retargets high-intent players with preorder reminders and launch countdowns. Sponsored creator launch wave amplifies day-one visibility. Outdoor ramps	Email, wishlist notifications, Twitch/YouTube/Bilibili/Douyu sponsorships, billboards, transit, mall displays	Owned + Paid + Shared

Stage	Channel & Role	Key Properties	Media Type
	up to peak AAA visibility in launch week.		

4.2.2 PR Plan

Building on PBZ's existing State of Play reveal, the PR roadmap pushes maximum buzz through a carefully sequenced beat structure leading to the September 9, 2026 launch.

- **Q1 2026 — Deep-Dive Reveal:** Extended gameplay drop and official release date confirmation across owned channels.
- **Q2 2026 — Content Preview Window:** Final narrative trailer at Summer Game Fest (June) with Kenji Tanigaki presenting a live action demo. A limited time-gated demo opens at Steam Next Fest in the same window.
- **Q3 2026 — Live Event Surge:** ChinaJoy and BilibiliWorld (July) anchor the Chinese market push, with Director Qiwei Liang interviewed at both. Gamescom (August) targets European audiences with public-trial demos. Tokyo Game Show (September) features Kenji Tanigaki and the Donnie Yen Stunt Team. Closed beta opens to top wishlist holders and tier-1 influencers.
- **Launch Day (9/9) — 72-Hour Global Event:** Owned-channel launch trailer drop at 00:00 PT, Western and Chinese review embargo lift T-24h, multi-region creator subathon marathon, founder Q&A streamed simultaneously to Bilibili and YouTube.
- **Post-Launch — Sustain & Extend:** Week 1 'Review Week' amplifies Metacritic/OpenCritic scores, sales milestones (1M, 2M), and a founder thank-you statement. Weeks 2–4 convert launch buzz into long-tail community via speedrun events, cosplay/UGC campaigns, and director's commentary clips. Month 2+ ignites the next news cycle with a paid-expansion DLC tease, awards-season positioning, and live-ops roadmap.

4.2.3 Creative & Messaging Strategy

Core Creative Idea: *Kung-Fu Punk — Cinematic Mastery, Cultural Discovery, Human-Made Craft.*

The campaign reframes PBZ from another action RPG into a *game world that players want to watch, share, discuss, and imitate before they play it.* The unifying campaign message — **"Every Battle is a Scene"** — anchors all creative output across paid, owned, and earned channels. Three content pillars carry the message:

- **Combat as Cinema.** Short-form clips of parries, finishing moves, weapon transitions, and boss encounters. Optimized for instant attention on TikTok / Douyin / Reels / YouTube Shorts.
- **Kung-Fu Punk Identity.** Visual breakdowns of how wuxia + punk machinery + dark fantasy combine into one coherent aesthetic system. Tagline: *Built from ink, steel, and blood.*
- **Human-Made Artistry.** Behind-the-scenes content: concept art, motion capture sessions with real martial artists, hand-crafted Xuan paper maps. Builds premium positioning and audience trust.

Asset System: Each pillar produces a matched asset family — a 60–90 second hero film ("*66 Seconds*", structured around the 66-day curse beats); 15-second platform cuts; key art for digital and outdoor; regional artwork variants for cultural localization (LINE, KakaoTalk, WhatsApp, WeChat sticker packs); and the official press kit. Outdoor anchors include Hilton Hotel SDCC (July 23–26), Hotel Figueroa Anime Expo (July 4–6), Akihabara and Tokyo subway wraps T-1 month, NYC and LA subway/mural campaigns, and Times Square 3D digital billboards T-2 weeks.

4.2.4 Platform Distribution Plan

PBZ adopts a multi-platform distribution strategy balancing global reach with localized execution. Digital releases ship simultaneously on Steam, PlayStation Store, Epic Games Store, and WeGame, complemented by a limited Collector's Edition physical release.

Platform	Visibility Strategy
Steam	Primary global PC platform. Wishlist accumulation, Steam Next Fest demo, playable demo for algorithmic promotion, streamer/creator amplification driving UGC.
PlayStation 5	Premium console anchor. PS Store featured placement, State of Play inclusion, pre-order incentives, exclusive trophies, and a limited-edition Phantom Blade PS5 console bundle.
Epic Games Store	Front-page placement, potential timed promotional partnership, cross-platform Epic ecosystem visibility.
WeGame (China)	Critical localized channel via Tencent ecosystem. Algorithm-driven recommendation, KOL collaboration on Bilibili/Douyin, China-specific localized content drops.
Physical (Limited)	Collector's Edition with art book, hand-painted Xuan paper map reproduction, and Phantom Edge collectible — targeted at dedicated fans and cultural-affinity buyers.

4.2.5 Creators & Community Engagement Plan

Anchored by the campaign concept "**66 Days Left**", community engagement converts the game's narrative urgency into participatory marketing. Rather than mapping all 66 days to content, we focus on key moments to maximize narrative impact while respecting digital attention spans.

- Key Days Creator Series.** Tier-1 creators receive controlled preview sessions tied to narrative milestones — Day 3 (boss preview), Day 33 (skill showcase), Day 66 (merch unboxing + first impressions). Each creator receives a curated merch drop including replica Phantom Edges, Soul's costume elements, and a hand-numbered art kit. Creator gameplay is gated to 6 hours and 6 minutes, preserving narrative mystery while generating differentiated content.
- 'How Long Would You Survive?' AR Filter.** A combat-style identity quiz on TikTok, Douyin, and Reels assigns users a 'Day X' survival result, generating UGC at scale and translating the 66-day mechanic into a shareable social format.
- Live Events — Kung-Fu Cultural Festival.** Touring activation in Los Angeles, Shanghai, Seoul, and London. Live martial arts demonstrations (sword, staff, choreographed fight scenes) inspired by in-game combat; partnerships with local cultural organizations and martial arts schools; gaming, martial arts, and Asian culture creator invitations to drive earned coverage.
- "Forging Phantom Blade" Documentary Series.** Released post-launch to extend life cycle: Episode 1 'Building Kung-Fu Punk' (worldbuilding & art direction); Episode 2 'Combat as Cinema' (motion capture & choreography); Episode 3 'The Phantom World' (cultural and philosophical core). Full episodes on YouTube, Bilibili, PlayStation channels, Steam News, and the official site; clipped content distributed across TikTok, Douyin, Reels, X, and Instagram.
- Merch Pop-Up Tour.** Activations in New York, Chengdu, Tokyo, and Toronto (deliberately non-overlapping with festival cities). Worldbuilding-themed retail spaces featuring POP MART collectibles, art prints,

keychains, pins, and posters. A 66-Day Countdown lottery encourages pre-event social interaction (QR scans, share-to-enter mechanics, and exclusive reward unlocks).

4.2.6 Franchise Synergy Plan

Treating PBZ as the foundation of a multimedia Kungfupunk franchise rather than a standalone title, we identify four synergy vectors across Publisher divisions:

- **Film — Legendary Entertainment Co-Production.** Develop a feature-length film through Legendary Entertainment's China arm (acquired 2016, with proven cross-cultural execution on Dune, Pacific Rim, Godzilla). Trailer debut at ChinaJoy one year post-launch. Story arc follows the most-popular community ending. Worldwide theatrical release aligned with first major DLC drop.
- **Music — Symphonic Concert Tour.** A metropolitan tour featuring LA Philharmonic, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, and London Symphony Orchestra, with contracted traditional Chinese music experts and choirs for authenticity. Scheduled November–December for holiday-season ticket demand and gift-purchase traffic — a sustained marketing layer that boosts ongoing game sales.
- **Micro-Drama — Vertical Short-Form Series.** 1–2 minute episodic vertical drama released on TikTok, Douyin, YouTube Shorts, and Instagram Reels. Each episode tells a side character's personal story inside the Phantom World — non-redundant with main game narrative — ending on cliffhangers. AI-assisted production keeps cost low while preserving the visual identity.
- **Web-Comics — Lore Expansion Funnel.** Weekly chapters on the official site, Webtoon, Tapas, and Bilibili Comics. Ink-wash Chinese illustration meets dark fantasy. Each chapter ends with QR codes routing readers to wishlists, demos, or community platforms — making the comic both a storytelling tool and a measurable marketing funnel.

4.2.7 Promotional Partners Plan

Strategic partners extend PBZ beyond gaming into daily lifestyle, collectible culture, and performance hardware — broadening reach beyond the core gamer audience while reinforcing brand identity.

Partner	Market	Strategic Role & Activation
POP MART	Global + China	Turns Kungfupunk into collectible culture through global designer toys. 6-figure character blind-box series + secret edition with redeemable in-game Phantom Edge skin. Co-branded pop-up stores in NYC, Tokyo, Shanghai.
Razer	Global	Reinforces combat mastery through premium gaming hardware. PBZ-branded keyboard, mouse, and headset bundle with launch-week creator visibility. Frames PBZ as a precision-input, mastery-driven game for the core PC audience.
Luckin Coffee	China	Mass awareness through daily lifestyle. Builds on Luckin's proven Black Myth: Wukong campaign playbook — co-branded cup sleeves, character-themed drinks, and limited collectibles convert daily coffee runs into a launch countdown ritual generating UGC on Xiaohongshu, Weibo, and Douyin.
Chagee (霸王茶姬)	China + Global	Brings Kungfupunk into everyday lifestyle through Modern Oriental Tea. Audience overlap with PBZ is exact — urban consumers 18–35 proud of Eastern aesthetics and active on social. Themed drink series, AR-enabled cup sleeves, flagship-store "Wuxia Tea House" pop-ups.

4.2.8 Financials

Total launch marketing budget: **\$80M USD**, derived from a benchmarked 15–25% of projected first-year gross revenue (\$350M+ at a 5M unit baseline). Allocation follows the funnel — heaviest investment at conversion and awareness — with sufficient reserve for experiential, partnership, and post-launch content production.

Budget Category	Amount	% Total	Primary Use
Conversion	\$24M	30.0%	Launch trailer wave, paid creator activations, retargeting, storefront pushes
Awareness	\$22M	27.5%	Major showcases, global outdoor advertising, social paid amplification
Interest	\$18M	22.5%	PR, influencer previews, live demos, gaming events (ChinaJoy, Gamescom, TGS)
Intent	\$6M	7.5%	Discord, Bilibili, Steam wishlist activations, community management
Experiential Marketing	\$6M	7.5%	Cultural festivals, merch pop-ups, AR filter campaigns
Brand Partnerships	\$2M	2.5%	POP MART, Razer, Luckin, Chagee co-branded activations
Content Production	\$2M	2.5%	Documentary series, micro-drama, web-comic franchise content
TOTAL	\$80M	100%	

5. INSIGHTS AND RESEARCH

Marketing decisions across the launch lifecycle are informed by structured research at four checkpoints, each with a defined purpose and feedback mechanism into creative, channel, and partnership choices.

- Pre-Reveal — Concept Testing & Audience Mapping.** Quantitative survey of 2,000+ action RPG players (1,000 global / 1,000 China) testing Kungfupunk concept appeal, name recognition, comparison to Sekiro/Wukong/Stellar Blade. Purpose: validate creative pillars and refine messaging hierarchy before the deep-dive reveal.
- Mid-Campaign — Sentiment & Channel Performance.** Continuous social listening across X, Reddit, Bilibili, Weibo, Douyin to track Kungfupunk awareness, share-of-voice vs. competitive titles, and creator content sentiment. Wishlist velocity tracked weekly. Purpose: optimize paid spend allocation and identify breakout creators for tier-1 launch wave.
- Pre-Launch — Demo Telemetry & Closed Beta Feedback.** In-game telemetry from Steam Next Fest demo and closed beta (combat completion rates, drop-off points, weapon preferences) plus structured feedback from creator preview sessions. Purpose: refine launch messaging emphasis (which combat sequences to feature, which difficulty narrative to push) and de-risk review-week reception.

- **Post-Launch — Review Synthesis & Cohort Tracking.** Aggregate Metacritic/OpenCritic scoring, qualitative review-language coding, weekly active player cohorts by region, and DLC interest signals from community platforms. Purpose: time the DLC announcement, calibrate sustained marketing intensity, and inform franchise synergy timing (film, micro-drama, comics).

6. CONCLUSION

Phantom Blade Zero is positioned to become more than a premium action RPG — it is the cornerstone of a **Kungfupunk franchise platform** with multi-decade growth potential. From awareness to purchase, and from launch to post-launch sustain, every marketing tactic in this plan reinforces a single creative promise: PBZ is a game world worth watching, sharing, collecting, and returning to. With a disciplined \$80M investment, a sequenced beat structure leading to a 72-hour 9/9 global launch event, and a partner ecosystem extending from gaming hardware to designer toys to symphonic concerts, we expect to deliver 5–6M units sold in Year 1 while establishing the cultural infrastructure for film, music, comics, and DLC expansions to follow.