

Northern CapSek Ventures

Native Itatake

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One of the largest holdings in the investment company Northern CapSek Ventures' portfolio is the award-winning mobile game developer Itatake. As of today, CapSek owns approximately 9 % of Itatake.

About Itatake

Founded in 2011 as a hobby project, the game studio Itatake launched its first game, Pebble Universe, the following year. The mobile game garnered attention both in Sweden and internationally, and over the past 5-6 years, the company has devoted substantial efforts to building a diverse portfolio of games. The founders, Thomas Wedin and Mattias Granat, remain deeply involved in the company where Wedin serves as the CEO of Itatake, while Granat acts as the Creative Lead. Despite securing venture capital over the years to develop and market their games, the two founders continue to hold significant shares in Itatake. As of March 2022, their combined ownership stake was over 47 %.

Today, Itatake's game portfolio consists of nine titles and the games collectively have been downloaded over 19 million times. Although Itatakes' mobile games vary in complexity and sophistication, they all share the common feature of being accessible and easy to understand and play. Itatake's mobile games are available for free and can be downloaded through Apple's App Store and Google Play. Like most mobile developers these days, the Gothenburg-based game studio generates their revenue from in-app purchases and in-game ads.

Itatake's games have been downloaded over 19 million times

Gumslinger downloaded over 13 million times

This summer, Itatake unveiled its newest game – Kloot Arena. Prior to this release, their most notable success was the casual game Gumslinger. As of today, Gumslinger has been downloaded over 13 million times and has up to 800 thousand unique monthly players. The game features rapid dueling gameplay using gum-based characters and secured victory at the 2021 Google Indie Games Festival. Additionally, it earned nominations in categories such as "Mobile Game of the Year" and "People's Choice" at the PocketGamer Mobile Game Awards the same year. Despite the game being launched over three years ago, Gumslinger continues to grow, with new features being added regularly.

Gumslinger attracts up to 800 thousand unique monthly players

While Gumslinger is the biggest success-story for Itatake so far, other games have also performed well. For instance, Rest in Piece, released in 2019, has garnered over 35 thousand reviews on Google Play, with an average rating of 4.5 stars, and the game has been downloaded over three million times on the same platform.

From hyper- to mid-core casual games

As previously mentioned, the game studio based in Gothenburg launched its latest game this summer. Unlike many of Itatake's other mobile games, Kloom Arena is categorized as a mid-core casual game. A little over a year ago, Itatake strategically chose to move away from developing hypercasual games due to intense competition in that sector. Another factor is, of course, that a bigger game can attract a loyal group of players, who ideally can bring in revenue for the company over a longer time with small marketing efforts.

Mid-core casual game Kloom Arena is designed for cross-platform gaming

Kloom Arena is a turn-based online battle game where players can challenge their friends. The game is downloadable for free, but in-app you can spend your money on Gems, Coins, Skins and so forth. The new game, Kloom Arena, shares some similarities with Gumslinger, but it takes things up a notch with improved graphics, enhanced sound-effects and a cool backstory. What really sets it apart from Itatake's earlier games is that Kloom Arena is designed for cross-platform gaming, allowing you to play regardless of the device you choose, whether it's your phone, gaming console or computer. This functionality, cross-play, is expected to be accessible already later this year.

Itatake has nearly 150 000 followers on TikTok and over 180 000 on Instagram

It's quite impressive what Itatake has achieved with a small team, of currently 9 employees, and limited resources. Itatake also took a new approach in the developing of Kloom Arena, where a significant portion of the development work were saved in the form of modules and can be reused in future games. This reduces costs and accelerates time to market when developing new games.

Large Community

Despite being a small Swedish game studio, Itatake has over the years built up an impressive audience. Using primarily own marketing recourses, the company has achieved nearly 150 thousand followers on TikTok and over 180 thousand on Instagram.

The community plays a key role in improving Kloom Arena

In connection with the launch of Kloom Arena this summer, Itatake also opened a Discord channel. Through this channel the community plays a key role in improving Kloom Arena by sharing their gaming experiences, ideas, and reporting potential bugs, among other things. As of today, the Discord community consists of approximately 500 members. Considering that Kloom Arena was launched just a few months ago, it is highly likely that the channel will continue to grow.

We asked Itatake's CEO, Thomas Wedin, to answer five quick questions.

Q1 – Following the successful launch of Kloot Arena, could you provide some insights into what's on the horizon for the next six months for the game?

Now we are going to scale. We will invest in user acquisition and influencer marketing, and continue to launch frequent updates to activate the players and maximize the KPIs.

Q2 – Have you already identified any differences in player behavior in Kloot Arena, categorized as a mid-core game, compared to your more hyper-casual titles?

Yes, these players are more committed and have greater demands on the game, compared to casual and hypercasual players.

Q3 – Gumslinger continues to grow and attract many unique players each month. Are there any operational or financial goals you can share for the game in the next 6-12 months?

We will continue to update Gumslinger and ramp up the user acquisition investment a bit. Players are investing a lot of time in the game, and we know there it is a lot of opportunities for the game the coming year.

Q4 – Is the primary focus currently on Kloot Arena and Gumslinger, or do you also allocate resources to your other games?

We are focusing on these two games in our live portfolio. Since we still are a small team we need to allocate our resources in a smart and effective way.

Q5 – Do you currently have any new game ideas in the works, or is your focus solely on maximizing the potential of your existing game portfolio?

We are starting up our next game project, a sequel to Gumslinger, planned for launch in the first half of 2024. It will be another type of gameplay, placed in the Gumslinger universe with a lot of functionality and code reused from Kloot Arena.



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