

Reversing the pre-order decline

Regular readers will be aware that pre-orders are dipping in the UK – but there are companies that can help reverse this trend with fancy special editions. **MCV** speaks to one such firm, Novobox

Pre-orders are falling in the UK. According to data from research firm GameTrack, 3.4m UK gamers are holding off from pre-ordering.

The reasons for this are numerous and subject to endless debate. But there are companies – like Novobox – who produce those special editions you see in every advert for every triple-A release coming to market. And it's these firms who are tasked with turning this around.

Novobox has technology, such as the new Futurepak game case, which can be customised with all manner of special features for different clients.

"Every retailer can sell out their stock quickly with these retailer exclusive packs," says Novobox managing director Jean Noël. "For example, GameStop can take a Futurepak with sound and artwork, GAME can take Futurepak with no sound and different artwork, while Asda can take Futurepak with a Steelcard with another piece of artwork."

FUTURE TECH

But fancy packaging isn't all stores are demanding.

"All retailers want to be different than others, hence they're all asking for something different," Noël explains. "A Futurepak is not the only point of difference they want. They want a cap or a bracelet or a wallet as special exclusive items to make end users come to their shops."

"Special editions should be more than a simple metal case. They should have a 'woah' effect, and include more goodies like

cloth maps, key holders, bracelets and wallets."

And it's not just custom box art and loot, either. Novobox is integrating new technologies into its game box.

"We also offer the option to Shazam the Futurepak with sound recognition, and link to game companies website for special promotions," Noël says. "We have another option with Layar – an augmented reality app where users can see the trailer of the game by their mobile application before they buy the game in-store, or benefit from special promotions."

INCREASED DEMAND

With pre-orders dipping, it perhaps should come as no surprise that Novobox is seeing an increase in orders from UK publishers for special edition content.

"We're get more and more orders from UK-based

companies," Noël says.

"Maybe they feel tricked with Steelbook prices compared to Futurepak.

"We have seen an increase in interest for our design protected Steelcard, which we did for Warner Games Mortal Kombat Special Edition. The Steelcard is a unique item in the industry, we can print it in four colours and even emboss it. Games companies can get their DLC codes directly printed on the Steelcard.

"Moreover we have seen an increased interest for metal posters, like the one we manufactured for Dark Souls II for Bandai Namco. We make these metal posters in Europe with short delivery times. Now it seems a lot of games publishers are interested in Futurepak 'integrated' in the base of their figurines. We are working on a few new concepts at the moment."



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Jean Noël, Novobox



Novobox worked on the special edition for Warner Bros' Mortal Kombat X