# TWITCH 101 FOR GAMERS

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#### Part 1: Brainstorming

By considering the following questions, you can start to develop a better understanding of your brand and what kind of games you want to focus on for Twitch streaming. This can help you create a more focused and cohesive streaming strategy, which can ultimately help you grow your channel and connect with your audience more effectively.

- 1. What are my passions and interests? What games do I enjoy playing the most?
- 2. What do I think my strengths could be as a gamer? Do I have a particular skill or expertise in a certain game genre?
- 3. Who is my target audience?
  - a. Consider the friends, family, and connections you're going to initially plug your stream to.
    - I. Which ones do I think are going to actually watch?
    - II. What kind of games do they enjoy watching and playing?
  - b. You may find that your target audience and this particular group of people are one and the same. Use this to your advantage.
- 4. What sets me apart from other streaming personalities and content creators? What unique perspective or personality traits do I bring to my stream?
- 5. What kind of tone or vibe do I want my stream to have? Should it be humorous, educational, or competitive?
- 6. How do I want to present myself visually? What kind of graphics, overlays, or branding do I want to use on my stream?
- 7. What are my long-term goals for my Twitch channel? Do I want to become a full-time streamer, or is it more of a hobby?

#### Part 2: Overlays

OBS overlays are important because they enhance the visual quality of your Twitch stream, provide additional information to your viewers, add visual interest and entertainment value, help you to establish and reinforce your brand, and make your stream more recognizable and memorable to your viewers. Even if you don't have equipment like a webcam or microphone, an overlay is a great way to keep your viewers engaged and more likely to return for your next stream!

- 1. Choosing a design.
  - a. Before starting, you need to decide on the overall look and feel of your stream.
    - I. You can choose a pre-made design from places like NerdorDie, or create your own using software like Adobe Photoshop or websites like Canva.
    - II. Look at other streamers and get ideas, and refer back to the questions you answered in Part 1 to help you decide on a look.
  - b. You may want to consider including in your overlay:
    - I. Game information.

- i. You may want to make sure your overlay includes
  - 1. the name of the game you're playing
  - 2. any relevant information about your gameplay, such as the current level or score.
- II. Social media links.
  - i. If you have social media profiles, include links to them in your overlay so viewers can easily follow you on other platforms.
- III. Webcam and chat.
  - i. If you're using a webcam and chat box in your stream, make sure they're included in your overlay so viewers can see your reactions and communicate with you.
- IV. Branding.
  - i. If you have a logo or branding for your channel, include it in your overlay so viewers can easily identify your channel and remember your brand.
- V. Sponsors and affiliations.
  - i. If you have sponsors or affiliate partnerships, include their logos or branding in your overlay to acknowledge their support.
- VI. Aesthetically pleasing design.
  - i. Your overlay should be visually appealing and match the theme and tone of your channel.
    - 1. Use colors, fonts, and graphics that reflect your brand and the games you play.
- 2. Set up OBS.
  - a. Once you have your design ready, you need to open OBS and create a new scene. You can do this by clicking on the plus sign in the Scenes panel.
  - b. At a minimum, you should consider setting up the following scenes in OBS for your gaming stream:
    - I. Starting scene.
      - i. This scene will be the first thing your viewers see when they tune into your stream.
      - ii. It's important to have an engaging and visually appealing starting scene to grab their attention.
      - iii. Some pre-made overlays come with a start scene and a countdown timer, which may buy you a few extra minutes of getting yourself situated.
        - 1. NOTE: Once you go live, any further OBS setup or tweak needs to be done via Studio Mode, if you don't want the scene to change on your live feed.
    - II. In-game scene.
      - i. This scene will show your gameplay and is the main focus of your stream.
      - ii. Make sure to set up your game capture or screen capture properly so that your gameplay is displayed clearly.
    - III. Webcam "Just Chatting" scene.
      - i. If you have a webcam, you should set up a scene that features your webcam feed as the main focus of the overlay.
      - ii. This gives you space to interact with your chat on a more personal level, when you are not currently playing a game.
    - IV. BRB scene.
      - i. This scene will be displayed when you take a break from the stream.
      - ii. You can include a message saying that you will be right back, and even promote your social media accounts.
      - iii. The more engaging this scene is, the more likely viewers will stay while you get up to get water, use the bathroom, or handle cat-related emergencies.
- 3. Add your sources.
  - a. You need to add your video capture device or screen capture as a source. Then, you can add

your overlay as a separate image source.

- I. Add Game Capture source.
  - i. Click on the "+" icon in the Sources section of the main window to add a new source.
    - 1. In the list of sources, select "Game Capture" and click "OK".
      - A new window will pop up asking you to name the source.
      - Give it a name that will help you remember what it is, such as the name of the game you'll be playing.
  - ii. Configure Game Capture source.
    - 1. In the next window that appears, select the game you want to capture from the list of available games.
      - If your game isn't listed, select "Capture any fullscreen application" or "Capture specific window" and choose the game window from the list of windows that appears.
  - iii. If you're using a console capture card (and not a PC game) with OBS:
    - 1. Connect the capture card to your computer via USB or PCIe.
    - 2. Connect the HDMI or other video output from your console or camera to the input of the capture card.
    - 3. Install the capture card drivers.
      - Install the drivers for your capture card if you haven't already.
        - Most capture cards will come with an installation CD or a link to download the drivers from the manufacturer's website.
    - 4. Eliminating capture card lag: Dual monitor setup.
      - Using an AV or HDMI splitter will allow you to play your game on your television or a second monitor, instead of the OBS preview window.
      - This allows you to play the game in real-time, as capture cards tend to have a processing delay.
      - If you rely on just a capture card to see your own game, your gameplay may suffer.
        - If you don't have the equipment yet, you may want to choose a game that heavily relies on menus instead of split-second action to progress, so that processing lag is less of an issue.
    - 5. Add capture card as a source.
      - Click on the "+" icon in the Sources section of the main window to add a new source.
      - In the list of sources, select "Video Capture Device" and click "OK".
      - A new window will pop up asking you to name the source.
      - Give it a name that will help you remember what it is, such as the system that it's connected to.
      - Select your capture card: In the next window that appears, select your capture card from the list of available devices.
        - If your capture card is not listed, make sure it's properly connected and that you have installed the drivers. You may have to restart OBS if you connected it after opening the program.
    - 6. Adjust settings.
      - You can customize the settings for your capture card source, such as the resolution, framerate, and audio input.

- Make sure to adjust these settings as needed to ensure your capture card is working correctly.
- You may need to reduce the output resolution and turn off buffering, depending on your card and your computer's processing power.
- If you need to adjust the positioning or size of the capture, you can do so by clicking on the capture card source in the preview window and dragging it to the desired position or resizing it as needed.
- b. Add your overlay sources.
  - I. Click the "+" button in the "Sources" box and select "Image" or "Media source".
  - II. Give your source a name and click "OK".
  - III. In the "Properties" box for your image source, click "Browse" to select the file you want to use for your overlay.
  - IV. Once you've selected your image, adjust the position, size, and opacity of your overlay as desired by dragging the red lines around the image in the preview window or by adjusting the values in the "Position" and "Transform" sections of the "Properties" box.
  - V. You can also crop your source by holding Alt while you drag the corners to adjust.
  - VI. You can also add additional elements to your overlay by repeating steps above for each element.
    - i. Some pre-made overlays come with their own import instructions, so be sure to follow them to get the most out of your chosen overlay.
- c. Add webcam source.
  - I. Click the "+" button in the "Sources" box and select "Video Capture Device".
  - II. Give your video capture device a name and click "OK".
  - III. In the "Properties" box for your video capture device, select your webcam from the "Device" dropdown menu.
  - IV. You can adjust the position and size of your webcam by dragging the red lines around the preview window or by adjusting the values in the "Position" and "Transform" sections of the "Properties" box.
    - i. You should consider cropping your webcam to get a closer view of your face and eliminate clutter.
- 4. Set up the rest of your scenes following the steps above, adjusting according to your needs.

#### Part 3: Alerts and Widgets.

Alerts and Widgets are a great way to take your stream to the next level. Include them in your overlay so viewers can see their progress and contribute if they choose to.

- 1. Streamlabs is a popular streaming software that allows you to create custom alerts and widgets for your stream. Here's a fast and free way to set up alerts and widgets using Streamlabs and import them into OBS:
  - a. Sign up for Streamlabs: If you haven't already, sign up for a free Streamlabs account at <u>https://streamlabs.com/</u>.
  - b. Set up alerts and widgets.
    - I. Once you've signed up, log in to your Streamlabs account and set up your alerts and

widgets.

- II. For each alert/widget:
  - i. Copy the Streamlabs widget URL.
    - 1. Go to the "Alert Box" or "Widgets" tab in Streamlabs and click on the "Copy" button next to the widget you want to use.
  - ii. Add the widget to OBS.
    - 1. Open OBS.
    - 2. Create a new browser source by clicking on the "+" icon in the Sources section of the main window.
    - 3. Name the source and click "OK".
    - 4. In the next window that appears, paste the widget URL you copied from Streamlabs into the "URL" field and click "OK" to save the changes.
  - iii. Adjust settings.
    - 1. You can customize the settings for your browser source, such as the width, height, and position on the screen.
    - 2. Make sure to adjust these settings as needed to ensure your alerts and widgets are displayed correctly.
    - 3. If you need to adjust the positioning or size of the widget, you can do so by clicking on the browser source in the preview window and dragging it to the desired position or resizing it as needed.
- 2. Testing your Streamlabs alerts in OBS.
  - a. This is an important step to make sure everything is working correctly before going live.
    - I. Open Streamlabs.
      - i. Open the Streamlabs website or app and navigate to the "Alert Box" tab.
    - II. Enable test alerts.
      - i. Make sure the "Enable Test Alerts" toggle switch is turned on. This will allow you to trigger test alerts to ensure they are working properly.
    - III. Trigger test alerts.
      - i. Click on the "Test Follow" or "Test Donation" button to trigger a test alert.
        - 1. You should see the test alert appear on your screen with the alert message and sound effect.
    - IV. Check OBS.
      - i. Switch to OBS to see if the alert appears correctly on your stream.
        - 1. If it does, then everything is working properly.
        - 2. If it doesn't, then double-check that you've added the alert as a source in OBS and that it's positioned correctly on the screen.
    - V. Repeat for other alert types.
      - i. Repeat the process for other types of alerts, such as hosts, raids, or subscribers, to make sure they are all working properly.

## Part 4: Troubleshooting common problems.

While setting up your stream in OBS, you may encounter some common problems. Here are a few of them:

- 1. Audio issues.
  - a. You may experience problems with audio, such as echo, background noise, or low volume.
  - b. Make sure to check your audio settings and adjust them as needed.
    - I. Do not let the audio consistently get into the red.
    - II. Make sure your mic is on if you are trying to talk!
      - i. It's easy to go for large chunks of time without realizing your mic is off, especially if

your community doesn't tell you in chat.

- 2. Framerate drops or lag.
  - a. If your stream is experiencing framerate drops or lag, try lowering your video settings or reducing the bitrate of your stream.
  - b. You can check your framerate in the bottom right of the OBS window.
    - I. A handy color-coded box is there so you can know if you're streaming at a good rate ata-glance.
      - i. If everything is streaming properly, the box will be green.
- 3. Black screen or game capture not showing up.
  - a. If your game is not showing up in OBS, make sure you have added the game capture source correctly and selected the correct game.
  - b. Try running OBS as an administrator.
    - I. Right-click on the OBS icon and select "Run as administrator" to give OBS higher permissions.
    - II. This may help if the game is not being captured due to insufficient permissions.
  - c. Disable hardware acceleration in your web browser.
    - I. If you're trying to capture a game that's being played in a web browser, try disabling hardware acceleration in your browser settings.
  - d. Use Display Capture instead.
    - I. If Game Capture isn't working, try using Display Capture instead.
      - i. This will capture everything on your screen, including your game, so you may need to adjust the size and position of the capture to ensure only the game is displayed.
      - ii. You may want to close certain programs or browser tabs for your privacy when using this option.
  - e. Update your graphics card drivers.
    - I. Make sure you have the latest graphics card drivers installed, as outdated drivers can cause issues with game capture.
  - f. Restart OBS and the game.
    - I. Sometimes, simply restarting OBS and the game can help fix issues with game capture.
  - g. Use Window Capture instead.
    - I. This will capture the specific window that the game is running in, so make sure you select the correct window.
- 4. Network connectivity issues.
  - a. If your stream is buffering or experiencing frequent disconnects, check your network connectivity and try resetting your router or modem.
  - b. If using WiFi, use an ethernet cable instead.
  - c. You may also need to disable your VPN while streaming.

### Part 5: Setting up your upcoming stream.

Before going live on Twitch, it's important to update your upcoming stream info to let your viewers know what to expect from your stream. Here are the steps to update your stream info:

- 1. Go to the Twitch website and login to your account.
- 2. Go to your Dashboard.
  - a. Click on your profile picture in the top right corner.
  - b. Select "Creator Dashboard" from the drop-down menu.
- 3. Navigate to your stream info.
  - a. In the Creator Dashboard, click on the "Stream Manager" tab.
  - b. Click on "Edit Stream Info" to access your stream settings.
- 4. Update your stream title.

- a. Enter a new title for your stream that accurately reflects the content of your upcoming broadcast.
  - I. This can include the name of the game you'll be playing, any special events or activities you have planned, or other relevant information.
  - II. Making a catchy stream title for Twitch is important because it can attract viewers and make them interested in checking out your content.
- b. Keep it short and simple.
  - I. A good stream title should be easy to read and remember.
  - II. Aim for no more than three to five words that accurately describe your stream content.
- c. Use keywords.
  - I. Use keywords in your stream title that are relevant to your stream content.
    - i. For example, if you're playing a popular game, include the game's name in your title.
- d. Be creative.
  - I. Don't be afraid to get creative with your stream title.
    - i. Use puns, alliteration, or other wordplay to make it more memorable.
- e. Be descriptive.
  - I. Use descriptive language to give viewers an idea of what to expect from your stream.
    - i. For example, if you're playing a scary game, use words like "spooky" or "frightening" in your title.
- f. Be unique.
  - I. Try to come up with a unique stream title that will stand out from other streams.
    - i. Avoid using generic titles like "Playing Fortnite" or "Live Streaming."
- g. Consider your audience.
  - I. Think about your target audience and what they might be interested in.
  - II. Use language that will appeal to them and make them want to watch your stream.
- 5. Some examples of catchy stream titles:
  - a. "Slaying slaughterfish in Skyrim"
  - b. "Late night cheetos and chill"
  - c. "Let's get spooky in Dead by Daylight"
  - d. "Fighting for victory in Apex Legends"
  - e. "Exploring the universe in No Man's Sky"
  - f. "Screaming at my NES"
- 6. Remember, a catchy stream title can make all the difference in attracting viewers to your stream, so take the time to come up with something creative and engaging.
- 7. Update your stream category.
  - a. Select the appropriate category for your stream, such as "Retro," "Music," or "Just Chatting."
    - I. You may want to check other streams in your category.
      - i. If your stream could fit in multiple categories, you might want to pick a category that is medium-sized: just popular enough for people to search it, but not so over-saturated that nobody will find you.
- 8. Update your stream tags.
  - a. Choose relevant tags for your stream that will help viewers find your content more easily.
- I. This can include the name of the game you'll be playing or other relevant keywords. 9. Go live!
  - a. When you're ready to start streaming, click on the Start Streaming button in OBS. Your overlay will be visible on your stream for all your viewers to see.

#### Part 6: Grow your community.

Getting noticed on Twitch and growing your community can be a challenging task, but here are some tips that may help.

- 1. Develop a consistent streaming schedule.
  - a. Establish a regular streaming schedule that works for you and stick to it.
    - I. This helps your viewers know when to tune in and creates a sense of reliability and trust.
- 2. Engage with your audience.
  - a. Interact with your viewers in real-time by responding to their messages in chat and thanking them for their support.
  - b. This helps create a sense of community and can encourage viewers to return for future streams.
- 3. Collaborate with other streamers.
  - a. Find other streamers in your niche and collaborate with them on joint streams, co-hosting, or other projects.
    - I. This can help you tap into their audience and gain exposure to new viewers.
  - b. Raid other streamers in your category when your stream is over.
    - I. This is an awesome thing to do and maybe someone will
- 4. Network on social media.
  - a. Use social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Discord to connect with your audience and promote your stream.
  - b. Share updates, behind-the-scenes content, and engage with other streamers in your community.
- 5. Improve your stream quality.
  - a. Invest in high-quality equipment and software to improve the production value of your streams.
    - I. This can help your stream stand out and attract new viewers.
- 6. Stream a variety of content.
  - a. Consider a variety of content (while keeping within your brand) to keep your audience engaged and interested.
    - I. This can include playing different games, trying out new formats, or adding new features to your stream.
- 7. Remember, building a successful Twitch channel takes time and dedication. Stay consistent, engage with your audience, and be open to trying new things to find what works best for you and your community.