

Find the Hidden Octopus

Designing a warm, child-friendly hidden-object game for mobile — a single visual system, an expressive mascot, and monetization that reads as *help*, not pressure.



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Technical UI / UX Designer · Vault Productions

ENGINE
Unity

PLATFORM
iOS · Android

YEAR
2026

01 — THE PROJECT

A cozy little ocean, engineered for thumbs.

Find the Hidden Octopus is a casual hidden-object game where players scan hand-painted underwater scenes against a timer to spot a shy baby octopus. My job was to turn that simple loop into a complete, shippable mobile interface — from the first loading screen to the reward popup — and to hand it to engineering as clean Unity assets.

PROJECT AT A GLANCE

Project	Find the Hidden Octopus
Type	Casual mobile game (live project)
Genre	Hidden-object · Puzzle
Platform	iOS & Android
Engine	Unity (uGUI / Canvas)
Target device	Samsung Galaxy Note10 reference
Art style	Cute · vibrant · glossy casual
My role	End-to-end UI / UX & 2D art
Team	Vault Productions
Timeline	Delivered May 2026

The brief

The game had to feel **cozy and safe enough for kids** yet stay crisp and legible on a phone held at arm's length. It also needed to support **rewarded ads and an IAP / VIP offer** as a free-to-play title — without the UI ever feeling pushy. Everything sits on top of richly illustrated reef backgrounds, so the interface had to read clearly against busy, colourful art.

What I owned

Visual identity & art direction · the octopus mascot & its expression set · the full icon and button atlas · every screen and popup layout · the end-to-end screen flow · and the Unity UI implementation and designer-to-engineer handoff.

01

Readable on a wet thumb

Big tap targets, high-contrast CTAs and one clear action per screen so the game stays playable on small screens and in bright light.

02

A mascot that talks back

An octopus whose expression changes with the game state, carrying tone and feedback without a single line of copy.

03

One component system

A shared library of glossy icons, 9-slice panels and button states so every screen feels like the same world.

04

Monetization as help

Rewarded video and IAP framed as a friendly hand — 'watch to continue', '+30 min', 'remove ads' — never a wall.

02 — VISUAL LANGUAGE

A sunlit reef you want to keep tapping.

The world is built on three ideas: warm sunlight from above, a friendly purple octopus as the constant focal point, and a candy-glossy UI that pops off the painted backgrounds. Together they make a small screen feel inviting and calm rather than cluttered.

Colour palette

Cool sea blues set the stage; purple, gold, coral and a single confident green do all the signalling.

							
Deep Sea	Tide Teal	Aqua	Octopus Purple	Coral	Sunlit Gold	Reward Green	Shell Cream
#0D2740	#103A59	#25B7C9	#7C4DD6	#FF7E5F	#F4B23E	#2FB85B	#F4E9CC

Surface & material language

Glossy candy 3D

Every icon shares a soft-plastic, top-lit finish with a rim highlight and a colored cast shadow — playful, premium, instantly tappable.

Rounded 9-slice panels

Popups use generously rounded corners and a cream parchment fill so menus feel like friendly cards floating over the reef, never windows.

Layered depth

Sunlight gradients, foreground coral and bokeh bubbles build a clear front-to-back order so UI can sit on its own readable plane.



Title screen — sunlight, focal mascot and a single glossy progress bar.



03 — CHARACTER & EMOTION

One octopus, every emotion in the loop.

The baby octopus is the game's voice. I built a single, consistent sprite set whose expressions map onto the moments players actually hit — so the character can welcome, celebrate, tease and console without relying on text the player has to read.

PROJECT: Find the Octopus --- Baby Octopus sprite sheet



01 Front Idle
(Ref: 01_idle_front)



02 3/4 Front Smile
(Ref: 02_idle_side_smile)



03 Profile Idle
(Ref: 03_idle_side_smile)



04 Back Idle
(Ref: 04_idle_black)

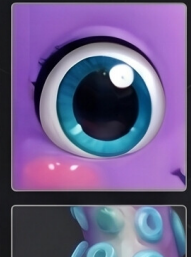
14 Happy (Detailed Close-up)



05 Wide Happy Full-Body



06 Surprised Open Mouth



Expression → game state

Idle & ambient

Front, ¾, profile & back idles

Gives the home and loading screens a living presence and a clear focal point.

Happy & laughing

Wide smile / joyful win poses

Rewards a correct find and fronts the success & claim popups — positive reinforcement.

Surprised

Open-mouth reveal

Punctuates a near-miss or a found object, adding a beat of delight and tension.

Waving hello

Greeting pose

Welcomes the player at unlock & onboarding moments.

Shy / hiding

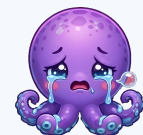
Peeking, bashful

The core hook — 'find me' — embodied in the character itself.

Crying

Teary fail state

Softens losing a level so it lands as empathy, not punishment, and lowers churn.



Fail feedback

Empathy over blame — the loss screen makes you want to try again.



Reward moment

The same character delivers the payoff, closing the emotional loop.

04 — UI LIBRARY

A kit where every piece belongs.

Buttons, panels, icons and collectibles were drawn as one family — same gloss, same radii, same shadow language — and packed into a reusable atlas. Functional props double as personality pieces, so even a timer or a hint button is on-brand.



Time Extender

Fronts the '+30 min' offer — a playful clock that turns a hard timeout into an opt-in choice.



Search/Hint

The core verb of the game made into an object — used for the find action and hint flows.



Hint

A glossy bulb for the assist economy; reads instantly as 'help me'.



Level Rating

Star currency for level scores and locked-level progress markers.

Buttons & states

A single confident **green** is reserved for the primary action on any screen — Play, Claim, Free, Resume. **Purple** carries secondary and navigation actions; **coral / red** is kept for close and exit only. The result: players always know the one thing to tap.

PRIMARY · Play / Claim

SECONDARY · Shop / Home

DESTRUCTIVE · Close / Exit

REWARD · Stars / Coins

Panels, banners & the collectible coin

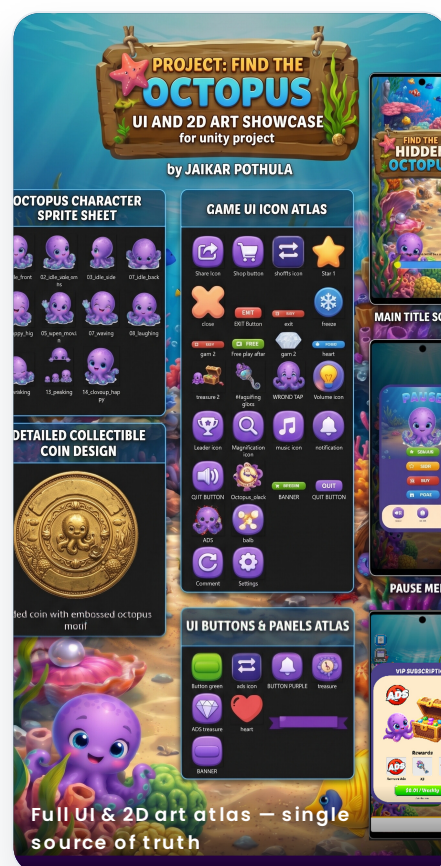
Cream 9-slice popups, purple ribbon banners and a hand-detailed gilded coin embossed with the octopus motif give the economy a tangible, collectible feel.

Borders are authored so panels stretch to any size without distortion, and every dialog reuses the same shell — so the system stays consistent no matter how many screens it has to cover.



Functional props, on-brand

Even a timer, a hint or a star carries the same gloss and personality as the mascot.

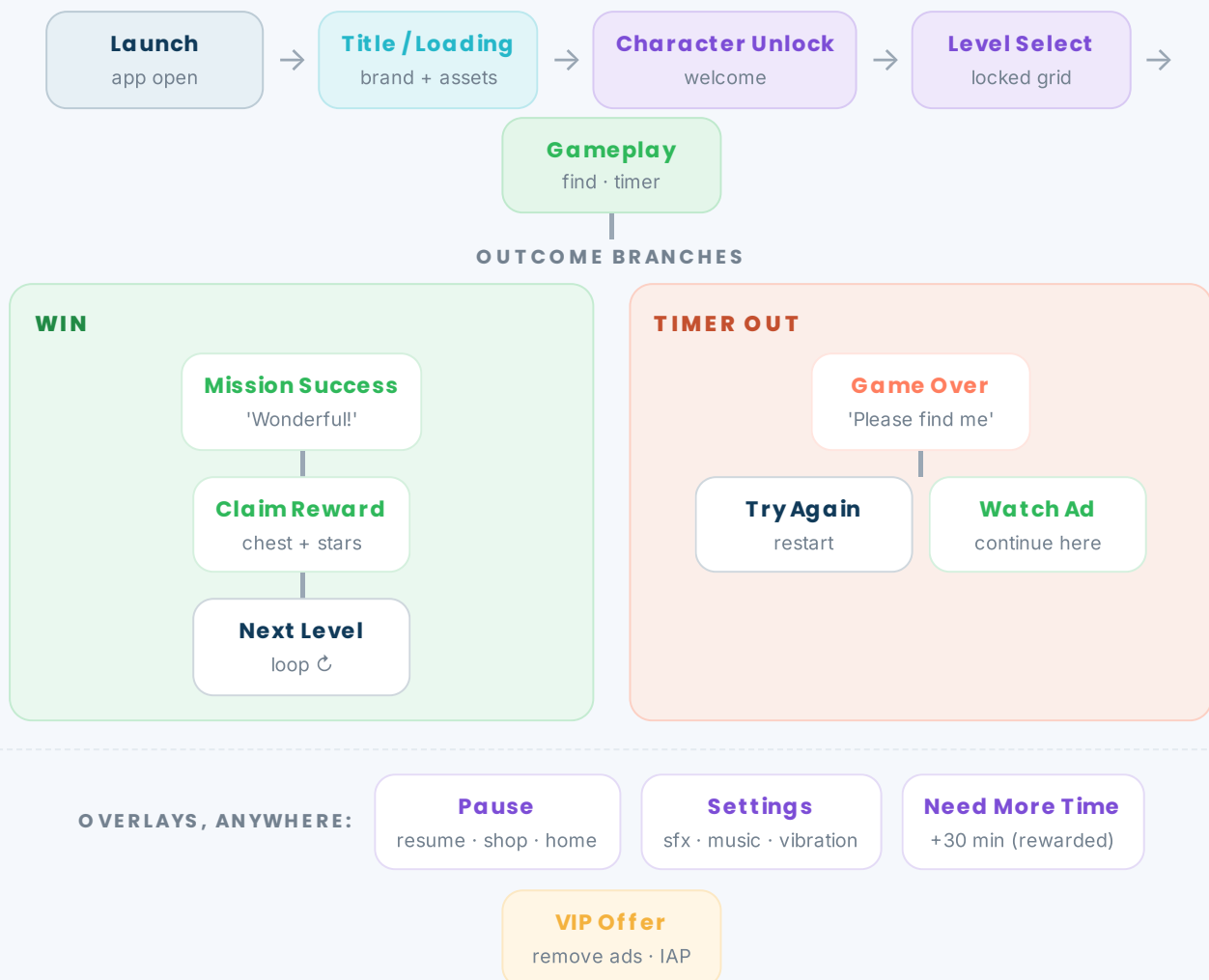


Full UI & 2D art atlas — single source of truth

05 — FLOW & GAME LOOP

From launch to loop, in one clear path.

The core loop is short and self-reinforcing: find the octopus, win or run out of time, get pulled straight back in. Every dead-end is turned into a forward door — a retry, a reward, or a gentle offer — so the player rarely hits a true stop.



06 — CORE NAVIGATION

The screens players move through.

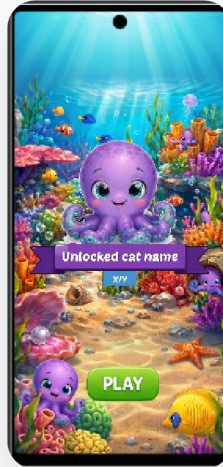
The spine of the experience — onboarding, choosing a level, and the menus that wrap gameplay. Each keeps one obvious primary action and a calm UI band so the painted reef can breathe.



BOOT

Title & Loading

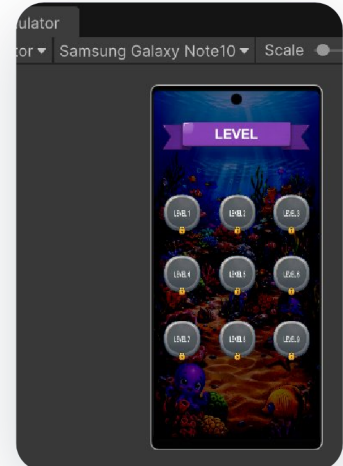
Brand moment with a single progress bar; the mascot is centred so the player meets the star of the game first.



ONBOARD

Character Unlock

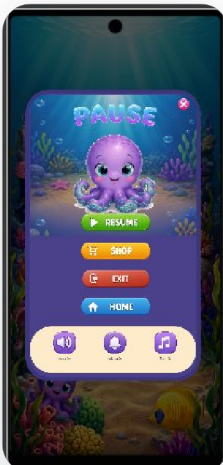
A reward-framed entry point — unlock a character, then one big green Play. No menus to learn.



PROGRESS

Level Select (Locked)

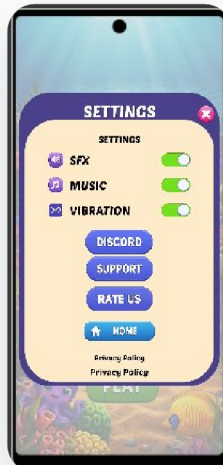
A 3×3 grid with padlocks and star slots makes progression legible at a glance and creates pull-forward.



OVERLAY

Pause Menu

Resume sits top and green; shop, exit and home stack below with a quick row of audio toggles.



OVERLAY

Settings

SFX, music and vibration as friendly switches, plus support, community and rate-us — all one tap deep.

Consistency by design

Every popup reuses the same cream 9-slice panel, ribbon header and red close button in the same corner. Players learn the system once on the Settings screen and it pays off everywhere else.

Same panel · same close · same green CTA.

07 — WIN, LOSE & MONETIZATION

Turning every ending into a next step.

The end-of-round moments do the heavy lifting for retention and revenue. The design goal here was to make rewarded ads and the VIP offer feel like a friendly hand reaching out at exactly the right beat — never a paywall.



WIN

Mission Success

Celebratory burst + a single green Claim. The win is loud; the reward is one tap.



LOSE

Game Over

'You're so close!' reframes failure as almost-success; Watch lets you continue right where you left off.



REWARDED

Need More Time?

+30 minutes for a video — the timeout becomes the player's choice, not a punishment.



IAP

VIP Subscription

Remove-ads + treasure bundle, with rewards shown as concrete items before any price is read.

RETENTION

Continue, don't restart

A rewarded video resumes the exact attempt, protecting the player's invested effort and the win streak.

FRAMING

Help, not a wall

Offers appear after a natural stop and always pair with a free path, so spending feels optional and earned.

CLARITY

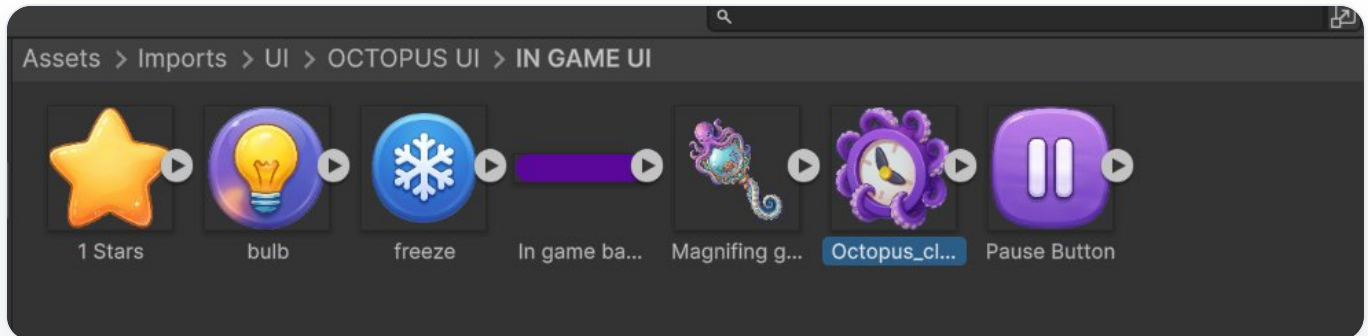
Value before price

The VIP card shows the chest and reward icons first; price and terms sit quietly beneath the visual promise.

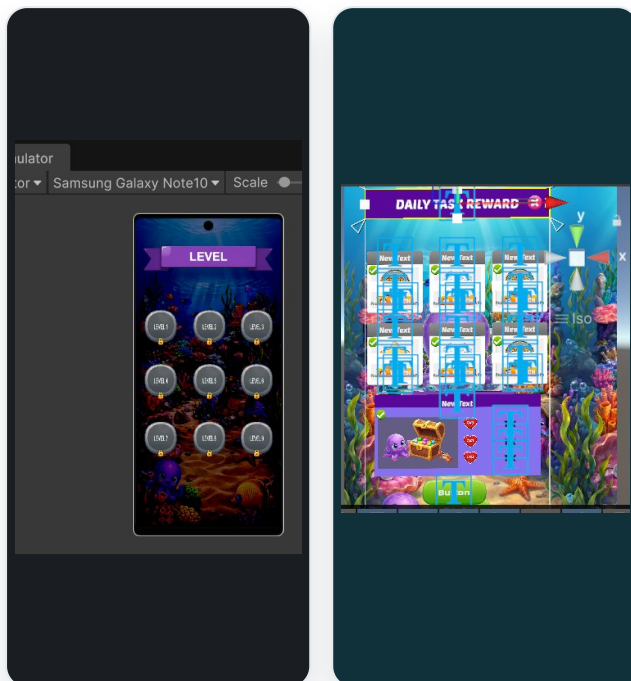
08 — UNITY IMPLEMENTATION

Designed to drop straight into Unity.

The art wasn't just pretty — it was production-ready. Assets were organised, sliced and anchored so engineering could assemble screens fast and have them hold up across phone sizes.



In-game UI assets in the Unity project — a clean, named atlas under Assets / Imports / UI / OCTOPUS UI.



Build practices

Organised import structure. Named folders and consistent file names so any asset is findable in seconds.

9-slice panels & buttons. Borders authored to scale without distortion across aspect ratios.

Responsive anchoring. Canvas layouts tested against the Galaxy Note10 reference in the Device Simulator.

Prefab-driven popups. Shared popup shell means new dialogs inherit the system for free.

Left: the locked level grid running in the Unity Device Simulator.

Right: a Daily-Task reward layout under construction with anchors and a layout grid — the bridge between a flat mockup and a live, responsive screen.

09 — RESULTS & REFLECTION

A small game with a complete system.

The project shipped its UI for demo with a consistent visual language, a mascot that does real UX work, and a monetization layer that respects the player. Just as importantly, it left engineering with assets they could trust.

What I delivered

- ✓ A complete mobile UI for a live Unity title — every screen and popup
- ✓ An expressive octopus mascot with a state-mapped sprite set
- ✓ A reusable icon, button & panel atlas (single source of truth)
- ✓ An end-to-end screen flow & monetization UX
- ✓ Production-ready, sliced & anchored assets handed to engineering

Principles I designed by

One action per screen

The primary verb is always the loudest, greenest thing on screen.

Character over copy

Tone is carried by the mascot's face, not paragraphs of text.

System, not screens

A shared kit keeps thirty surfaces feeling like one game.

Kind monetization

Offers arrive as help at natural stops, always beside a free path.

If I iterated next

Tighten copy localization on the popups, add motion specs (juice on Claim, idle micro-animations for the mascot), and build a light token sheet so colour and spacing decisions are documented for the next designer — turning this case study's system into a living style guide.

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2D Art & UI / UX — Find the Hidden Octopus · 2026

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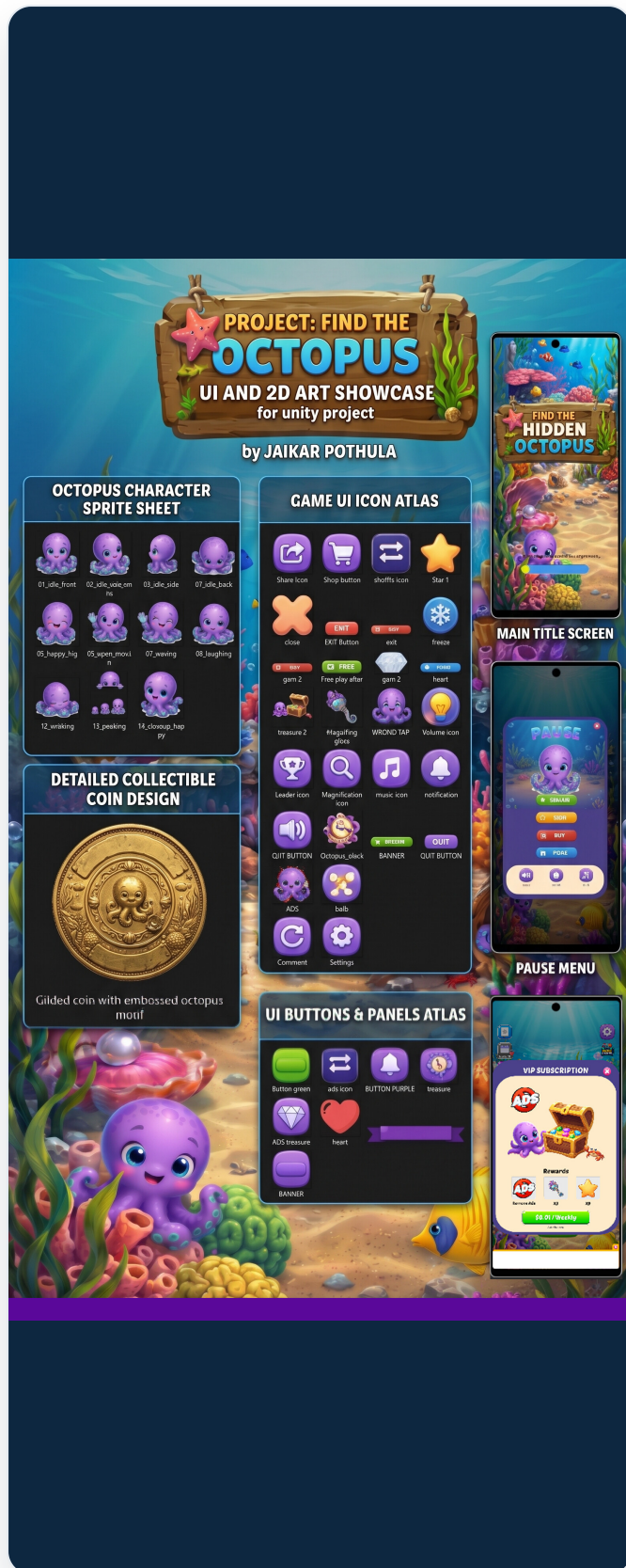
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EXHIBIT — ORIGINAL SHOWCASE SHEETS

Source art & presentation sheets.

The full presentation boards produced alongside the game UI — the 2D art & UI atlas and the screen-flow showcase — both authored by Jaikar Pothula.



UI & 2D Art Showcase — sprite sheet, icon atlas, coin & button system.



Mobile Game UI Showcase — screen flow, win / lose states & project details.