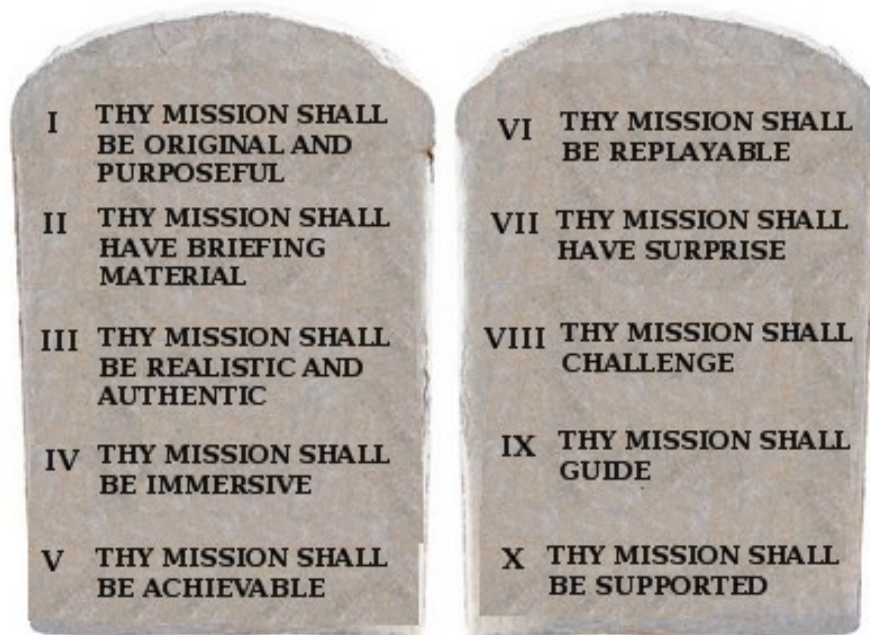


THE 10 COMMANDMENTS OF MISSION DESIGN

What Makes a Good Mission?

To help us come up with THE 10 COMMANDMENTS OF MISSION DESIGN we posed this question on the ED Forums [here](#).

Many talented and experienced mission designers replied with their thoughts, opinions and recommendations. This document summarizes their responses. Many thanks to the following who contributed to this work: [Home Fries](#) , [mwd2](#) , [Grimes](#) , [Pikey](#) , [Trailer](#) , [DarkCrow](#) , [Blooze](#) , [SiThSpAwN](#) , [Belgeode](#) , [ENO](#) , [MadDog-IC](#) , [snowsniper](#) , [Wrecking Crew](#) , [redterror](#) , [Exorcet](#) , [vicx](#) , [DarkFire](#) , [piXel496](#) , [baltic_dragon](#) , [SDsc0rch](#) , [Andrew Chunis](#) , [svenvandevelde](#) , [WildBillKelsoe](#) , [Dutchy93](#) , [Sabre-TLA](#)



THE 10 COMMANDMENTS OF MISSION DESIGN THE 10 COMMANDMENTS OF MISSION DESIGN - In Detail

I - THY MISSION SHALL BE ORIGINAL AND PURPOSEFUL

New story lines and new mission objectives can breath new life into an old environment. Missions must have a purpose that supports the back story and puts the mission into context. A believable back story improves immersion and supports realism and authenticity. You want to draw the player into the world you have created by giving them a reason for playing the mission.

II - THY MISSION SHALL HAVE BRIEFING MATERIAL

Missions must have background information to help tell the back story and aid the player in completing the mission's objectives. The information should be sufficient to answer any questions the player may have. Waypoints, Flight Routes, Altitude Blocks, Transit Corridors, Radio Frequencies, Position of Allied Units, Position of Enemy Units, Targets, Threats, Restricted Areas, Kill Boxes and Rules of Engagement are some of the essential elements to support the player during the mission. External documentation can be provided in the form of PDF files where warranted. Diagrams are more useful than text to describe target areas, flight routes, and friendly and enemy force positions.

III - THY MISSION SHALL BE REALISTIC AND AUTHENTIC

Missions can run the gambit from realistic where every action is per SOP, to fanciful what-if scenarios. In either case, the mission should have some element of realism and authenticity to engage the player and help them believe the back story. Even a fanciful scenario can be put into a realistic or authentic context. Know your audience and understand what they are willing to accept.

IV - THY MISSION SHALL BE IMMERSIVE

You want the player to be engaged in the world you have created. To do that you need to make your mission environment realistic and believable. A static environment feels dead but an environment where you have planes taking off and landing, vehicles and people walking around, and activities happening, adds to the feeling of immersion. Do not be afraid to create smaller stories within the larger mission story. Use of voice-overs for radio calls can improve immersion.

V - THY MISSION SHALL BE ACHIEVABLE

Nobody wants to waste their time playing a mission that is impossible to complete. This doesn't mean that the mission cannot be without challenge, but the challenge should be balanced accordingly. Length of play should also be considered. Most players can't play for more than a few hours so don't make your missions so long they are unachievable. Cooperative or teamwork type missions are very effective in multiplayer but in single player missions, can be problematic given buggy AI units. Test your mission thoroughly so you can be assured that the mission can be achieved by most players.

VI - THY MISSION SHALL BE REPLAYABLE

Adding variability and randomness to a mission can improve its replayability. Just like a good book, you want your mission to capture the interest of the player and keep them coming back to play it again and again. Changing time of day and weather effects can add to the replayability. Using random unit placement can keep the player guessing on the target locations.

VII - THY MISSION SHALL HAVE SURPRISE

Unexpected and surprise events can keep the player interested and engaged. Not every enemy unit needs to be known at mission start but surprises should be realistic within the context of the mission and environment. Do not overwhelm the player with unrealistic threats or unbelievable surprise elements.

VIII - THY MISSION SHALL CHALLENGE

The mission should challenge the player but not to the point of outright frustration. Providing detailed information before or during the mission, can help improve the player's chance of success. Challenge can increase during a campaign or as a player's skills and abilities grow. Identify your audience and then define your challenge based on that audience's abilities. Balance is key in creating a mission that is fun yet challenging to play. Reward the player when they do achieve the objectives with a "Mission Accomplished" message so they know they were successful.

IX - THY MISSION SHALL GUIDE

The mission should provide guidance to the user when key mission events occur or if the user is straying too far from the objectives. The mission should instruct the player on what objectives have been completed and what still needs to be completed especially in multiplayer as users may be joining in the middle of the mission. The mission should inform the user when the mission is completed or failed. Don't leave the user hanging wondering what their outcome was.

X - THY MISSION SHALL BE SUPPORTED

The mission should be supported by the developer to ensure it remains functional in the context of regular Game Engine updates. This can be a challenge but if you are investing a lot of time and effort into a mission you shouldn't let that work go to waste because of a new Game Engine change. The Game Engine is constantly being updated and new functionality and capabilities are being added with every update. Sometimes an older mission can be enhanced into something completely new by taking advantage of some of the new capabilities.