

The Video Game Industry

A behind-the-scenes look

Game Development Foundations

Last modified 08/12/15 by Sam Cartwright

Contents

- The 5 Stages of Industry
- Game Studios
 - 1st, 2nd, 3rd Party, and Indie
- Key Roles
- Studio Goals
- The Game Industry in Australia

The 5 Stages of Industry

- Development
 - Making the game. The team (studio) or person who creates a product that is ready to market
- Publishing
 - Largely responsible for bringing games to market
 - Will fund and market games, can also be responsible for the path to manufacturing and distribution

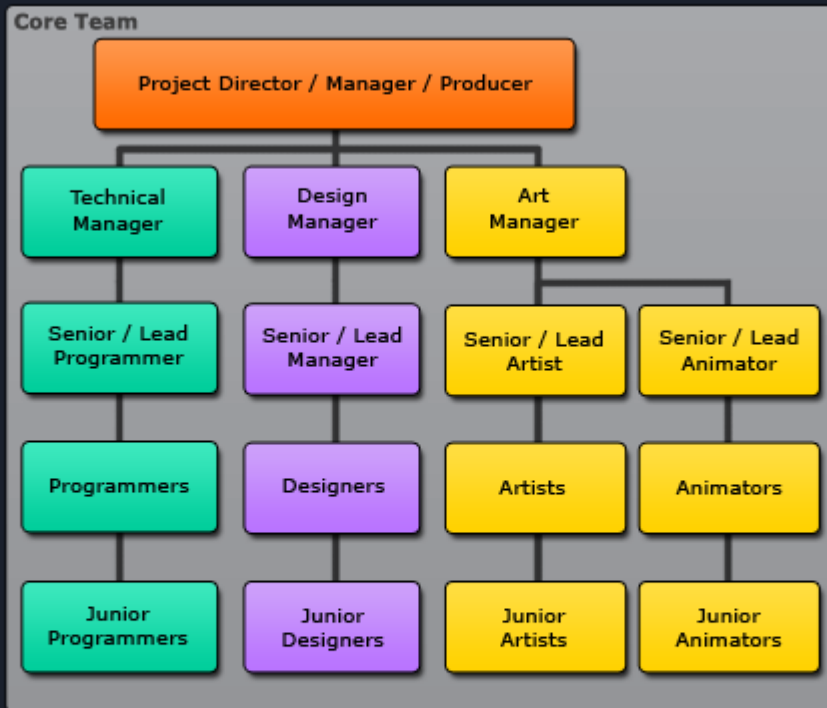
The 5 Stages of Industry

- Manufacturing
 - Creating the physical media and packaging
 - Creating the hardware (PlayStation, Xbox, etc.)
- Distribution
 - Getting your product to retailers
 - Digital distribution delivers directly to the player
- Retail
 - Getting the product to the player (consumer)

Game Studios

- Game Studios can be described as:
 - 1st Party: is part of a platform holder (or company which manufactures a console)
 - Naughty Dog (now acquired by Sony); Nintendo
 - 2nd Party: develops exclusively for a platform holder
 - Insomniac Games (Sony)
 - 3rd Party: develops for multiple platforms
 - Infinity Ward
 - Indie (Independent): Similar to 3rd Party, but usually financially and creatively independent

Key Roles



- Most development teams are made up of the same core elements



Key Roles: Game Designers

- Create the blueprint of the game
- Pitch this idea to programmers and artists (for implementation)
- Design the goals, mechanics, and storyline
- Also design in-game advertising, in-game purchases, or other sub-systems

Key Roles: Artists

- Create art according to design constraints
- Roles or tasks include:
 - Concept Artists, Character Artists, Background Modelers, Texture Artists, Animators, Riggers, User Interface Artists, 2D Artists

Key Roles: Programmers

- Handle the technical aspect of game development
- Write the code for the game
- Can also write tools used during development
- Roles or tasks include:
 - Engine Programmers, Gameplay Programmers, Tool Programmers, Network Programmers

Key Roles: Testers

- Check for:
 - Typos,
 - Crashes,
 - Standards violations (e.g., XBOX development guidelines),
 - Bugs
- Create detailed bug reports and validate fixes
- Could be in-house employees or outsourced / contractors

Key Roles: Producers

- Administrators who handle and coordinate the activities of each department
- Ensure deadlines are met
- Work in close collaboration with artists, programmers and designers

Studio Goals: Blizzard Entertainment



- Mission Statement:

“Blizzard Entertainment’s eight core values represent the principles and beliefs that have guided our company throughout the years. These values are reflected in employees' decisions and actions every day:

- Gameplay First,
- Commit to Quality,
- Play nice; play fair,
- Embrace your inner geek,
- Every voice matters,
- Think globally,
- Lead responsibly
- Learn and grow

Source: <http://us.blizzard.com/en-us/company/about/mission.html>

Studio Goals: Gameloft



- Core Values:

- Consumers First:

We put the consumer ahead of anything else. We want our games to always provide the best experience for the consumer on any platform for which we develop.

- Foresight:

Gameloft is a pioneer of mobile gaming that successfully balances market and technological development while always pushing for innovation. Let's be the first to develop exciting games on the digital platforms of tomorrow.

- Out Games are Global:

Gameloft's presence is worldwide, which allows us to offer games to everyone in the world and to understand each market's unique culture.

The Game Industry in Australia

- There are no AAA studios remaining in Australia*
 - *excluding mobile game developers
 - 2K Australia was the last, closed in 2015
- However there is a rise in the number of independent studios and developers

Summary

- The video game industry spans development, publishing, manufacturing, distribution and sales
- Studios are often described as being 1st, 2nd, 3rd Party or Independent
- Many key roles exist within games studios, spanning a number of disciplines
- Many studios will have goals that influence the types of games they make, and how they make them

References

- NinjaMetrics. 2015. *The History and Structure of the Video Game Industry – Structure, Development to Publishing - Part 4*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.ninjametrics.com/blog/the-history-and-structure-of-the-video-game-industry-structure-development-to-publishing-part-4>. [Accessed 08 December 2015].
- Blitz Games Studios. 2015. *Game Development : Development Team*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.blitzgamesstudios.com/blitz_academy/game_dev/dev_team. [Accessed 08 December 2015].
- Hierarchy Structure. 2015. *Gaming Company Hierarchy*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.hierarchystructure.com/gaming-company-hierarchy/>. [Accessed 08 December 2015].