

DANIEL BLOKLAND

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SUMMARY

Passionate Head of Art with over 10 years of leadership and management experience in senior Art roles and 17 years' experience as a digital artist. Qualified with Master's in Computer Animation (Bournemouth Uni.) and Certificate in Management (Nottingham Trent Uni.). Consistently highlighted by direct line managers and key business stakeholders for excelling in roles and given additional remit and responsibilities beyond the studio hierarchy. Effectively generated and implemented new and unique game IP and features in the role of producer. Adept at overseeing every aspect of Game design from ideation to launch and beyond (Slots, Bingo, Scratch Cards and Table Games). Proven and effective project management and client-facing skills, resulting in full responsibility for the entire branded game roadmap and related client relationships, including global brands such as Warner Brothers & DC. Leveraged deep development knowledge and programming ability to refine art production pipelines. Resulting in reduced staffing levels, reduce budgets and delivering significantly optimised game packages. Experienced in contract negotiation with outsourced resource, reducing cost over time and leading negotiations in place of studio heads.

EXPERIENCE

2014 - 2019

HEAD OF ART (LEAD ART DIRECTOR), PLAYTECH (LONDON OFFICE)

Direct Line Manager: Head of Studio (Ryan Jensen, now Program manager at MahiGaming)

Former Direct Line Manager: Andrew Porter (Former Casino Content Director at Playtech, now Founder & CEO of 4The Player.com)

Additionally reporting directly to key business stakeholders Director of Casino (James Frendo), Head of Content (Eran Gilboa) and Andreas Bexelius (Vikings studio head).

Direct Reports: 3 art studios simultaneously (2 London Based, 1 Based in Sofia, Bulgaria).

3 art directors, 1 studio manager, 1 assistant producer, 1 Musician, 12 Artist.

As Ash Gaming integrated into Playtech we (the management team) had a clear vision for positioning ourselves as the knowledge hub for Maths, Art and Product within the organization. In addition to my role as Art Director for both Vikings and Ash Gaming (and later the Sofia) studios, I developed my role within the larger Playtech business to include the responsibility for all major branded content, by virtue of superior project management, clarity of communication, and consistency of delivery. In addition, I was able to place the art team at the centre of the decision-making process and ultimately at the forefront of the new game platform (GPAS) by consistently outperforming peers in technical achievements, and by creating close personal relationships and collaborating with key personnel across the 8 internal studios across the globe. Working at Playtech allowed me to work with and learn from some of the industry's best producers. Although my title was Head of Art, I have experience creating casino content for mobile and desktop in varied roles; Art director, Project Manager, Producer.

- Art Director and Project Management on more than 40 games.
- Heavily involved in game design, game ideation and game reviews.
- Key stakeholder in casino strategy (Participating in strategy meetings, creation of new IP).

- Evolve, maintain and oversee the art pipeline and best practices to streamline content creation for multi-platform games (Web/Shop(B3)/Mobile).
- Art direction, Leadership, resource management and budgeting for 3 Studios (Vikings and Ash UK, Ash Sofia).
- Managed external 3rd party art resource (work schedules, budgeting, contracts).
- The main point of contact for all Playtech Game Content Units (8 studios) towards external brand owners, in particular, Warner Brothers & DC Content.
- Project managed the delivery schedule and roadmap of branded content, collaborating closely with 8 studio heads and providing guidance and feedback to ensure quality expectations of the brands were met.
- Managed external music and sound effects resource (work schedules, contracts, etc)
- Staff Training and mentoring (Performance and Development SMART Objectives)
- Optimising the localization process from weeks to hours (through bespoke scripts in AE and PS) – making the localization team obsolete.

2011 - 2014

SENIOR ARTIST, ASH GAMING, PLAYTECH LONDON

Direct Line Manager: Creative Director, Richard Waddell.

Direct Reports: 3 artists.

Hired with a view to taking over the Art Direction role subsequent to the acquisition by Playtech.

- Ash Gaming employee of the Year 2014.
- Senior Artist on games, creating all core graphics and animation (PS, Illustrator, AE, 3dsMax, Flash) on several slot games (Mobile, Desktop and Landbased).
- Staff Training and mentoring for both the Art team and the localization artist. Specifically focused on training staff in artist skills (Flash, 3D, AE, drawing and rendering).
- Lead the transition from flash to HTML5, creating art templates, optimizing processes and assessing and implementing new software to maximize productivity.
- Reduced overheads by streamlining the art pipeline to allow the creation of art assets across 3 platforms (HTML5, Flash, Marketing) through a single central art project.

2006 - 2011

GAMES CREATIVE MANAGER, GALA CORAL GROUP

Direct Line Manager: Head of Software Development.

Direct Reports: 5 Artist, 1 Musician.

Having joined as a 2D artist and animator, quickly rose to a lead artist position. Subsequently put on several fast-track internal management and mentorship programs culminating in the position of Game Creative Manager. Part of the team behind the GalaBingo Online product which instantly became the largest Online bingo product and continued to dominate the industry for years.

As Games Creative Manager I had full control and oversight of the internal games delivery roadmap. Responsible for the vision, creative process and performance of scratch cards, slots and table games.

- Art Director and Game design from feature ideation to launch for approx. 30 games.
- Artist and designer for the seminal GalaBingo product.
- Conceiving and creating new game IP and USP, initiating new project briefs, creating concept art and directing the production of final rendered art, in both 2d and 3d.
- Art directed 3rd party companies in creating online gaming content for the Gala group websites.
- Consistently exceeded KPI's for games launched in a soft Bingo environment.
- Successfully transitioned Bingo players to Slots and scratch cards exceeding expected targets.
- Budgeting, Resource allocation, Project management for the Games team.
- Staff Training and mentoring (Performance and Development SMART Objectives)

2003 - 2004

GRAPHICS DESIGNER, T-SHIRT AND SONS

Responsible for the creating and delivery of T-shirt artwork ready for print for one of the UK's largest screen-printing companies. Working with global brands such as Glastonbury Festival, Radio Head, Budweiser, Playstation, The Guardian and Channel 4. Optimised screen printing techniques to reduce the required number of screens, reducing both cost and production times.

2002 - 2004

FREELANCE ARTIST, AERIAN STUDIOS

Designer/Consultant. Accountable for initiating/delivering projects, as well as working on existing projects.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Adobe software expertise
- Budgeting & Project Management
- Complex business challenges & Problem Solving.
- Art, Design, and Illustration.
- Animation both 2D and 3D.
- Flexible programming skills
- Experienced with JIRA

OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST

- Multilingual (English Native, Dutch Native, German proficient, Polish Basic).
- Multinational (British and Dutch Passports).
- Avid tabletop gamer (creativity and conflict resolution exercises; D&D).

EDUCATION

2008 - 2009

CIM, BUSINESS MANAGEMENT (1ST YR OF MBA), NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

As part of the fast track management training program in GalaCoral I was given the opportunity to complete a degree in Business Management. The course included modules in Leadership, Budgeting, Performance Management, Project Management, Profit Management, Strategy and Marketing, and Organizational Culture.

2004 - 2005

MASTERS 3D COMPUTER ANIMATION, BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY

Completed the master's program at one of the UK top computer animation universities.

2000 - 2002

HND MULTIMEDIA, BATH SPA UNIVERSITY

1998 - 2000

A-LEVELS, WESTWOOD ST THOMAS

1996 - 1998

HAVO, WILLEN DE ZWIJGER (NETHERLANDS)