



Producer Panel: Managing Your Indie Team

Amy Dallas (ClutchPlay Games)

Jenna Hoffstein (Little Worlds Interactive)

Aaron Isaksen (Indie Fund, IndieBox, NYU)

Kara Kono (Mushroom 11)

Alex Schwartz (Owlchemy Labs)

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MARCH 2-6, 2015 · EXPO: MARCH 4-6, 2015



GET THE GAME DONE



Aaron Isaksen

- Making indie games since 2003
- Shipped 12 games on 100+ crappy cell phones
- Funded+advised over 25 games
- IndieBox ships a box a month



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Jenna Hoffstein

Founder, Little Worlds Interactive

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#indiedev





Jenna Hoffstein



little worlds
INTERACTIVE

Jenna

Design, dev etc

Luigi

Art

Sam

Animation

Brendan

Music

Jonas

Sound Effects

Emma

Social Media

Will

PR



Challenge # 1

How do I manage a team while
still having time to make the game?



Find people you trust to work independently



Organize work in bundles



Hourly

- + Clear expectations
- + Handles sporadic work

- Have to think ahead

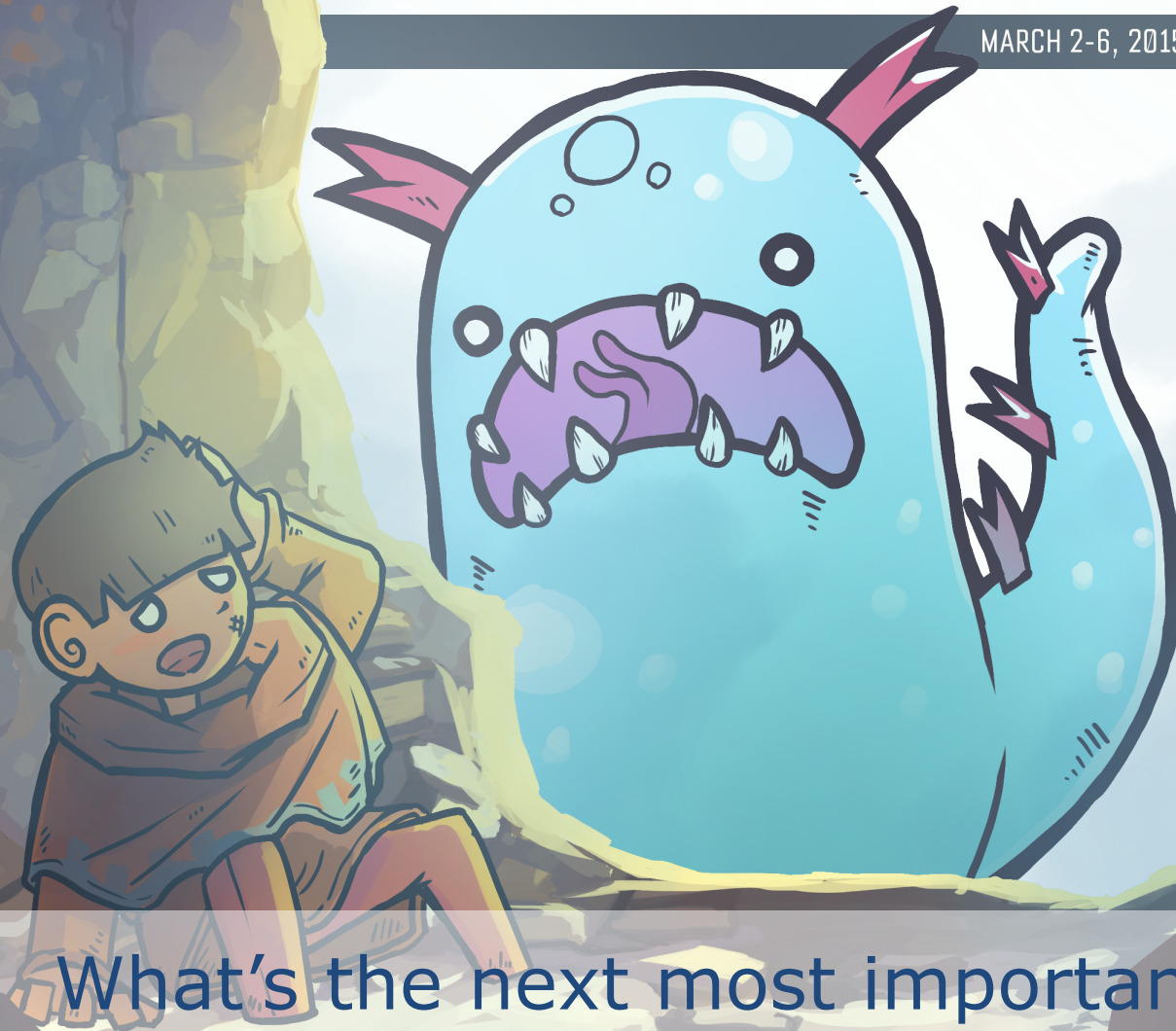
- + Handles smaller amounts of work
- + Faster turnaround

- Can lead to surprises



Challenge # 2

How do I keep on track?



What's the next most important thing?





- Prevents rabbit holes
- Consistent quality bar
- Enables an iterative approach



Thank you!

@jhoffstein

jenna@littleworldsinteractive.com





Producer Panel: Managing Your Indie Team

Amy Dallas

Co-Founder / CEO

ClutchPlay Games LLC

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About ClutchPlay

- Our Humble Beginnings
- Stuff We've Worked On
- Corporate vs. Indie





Our 2 Biggest Indie Challenges

- Decision Making with Equal Partners (Fun, Fun and More Fun!)
- Self Doubt: The silent destroyer of productivity.



Challenge #1: Equal Partnerships





Partnership Challenges

- Consensus: Not always the best way to make decisions.
- Building consensus: Extra hard on even numbered teams!





Partnership Case Study

- Little Chomp. A game for everyone...and no one.





Here's what works:

- Role clarity first, role clarity always.

HELLO
my name is

"The Decision Maker"
(get over it!)



Indie Challenge #2: Self Doubt: Productivity Slayer





Self Doubt: Why it's hard for Indies

- With no corporate execs to second guess our choices, we can become our own most severe critics.





Self Doubt: How to Identify It

- Schedule slippage
- Defensiveness
- Prioritizing small details over the big Picture.





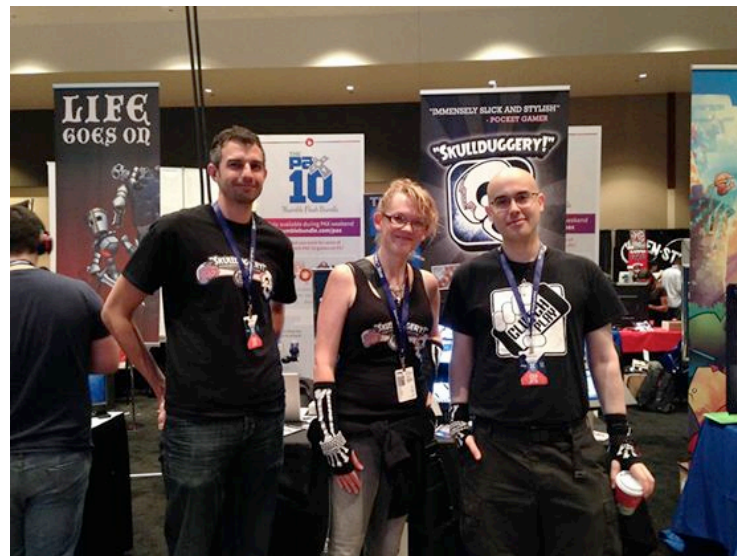
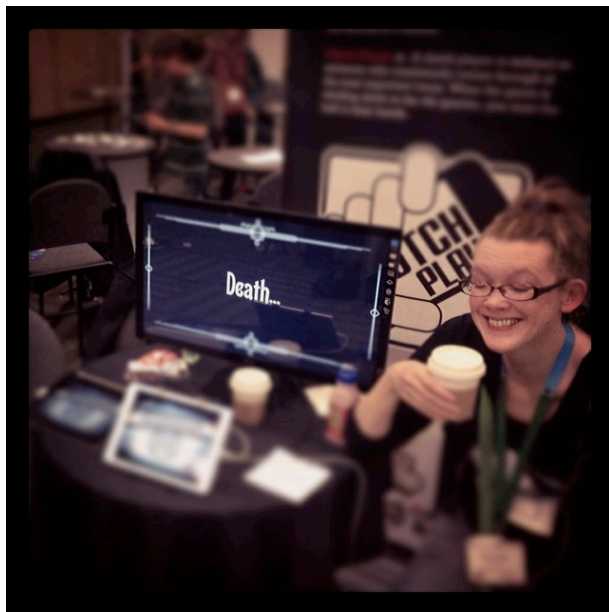
Self Doubt: How To Cure It

- Create meaningful deadlines with real life consequences.





“Skullduggery!” Case Study





Thank You!

Amy Dallas

Co-Founder / CEO

ClutchPlay Games LLC

@amydallas



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Kara Kono

Producer, Mushroom 11

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Mushroom 11





Our Team



2012

· · ·

2013

· · ·

2014

· · ·

2015

Where did the time go?

2012



2013

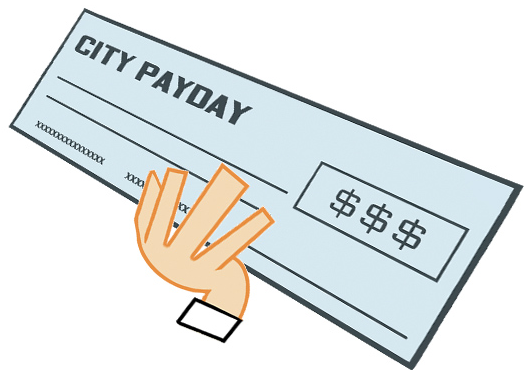


2014



PR/Marketing

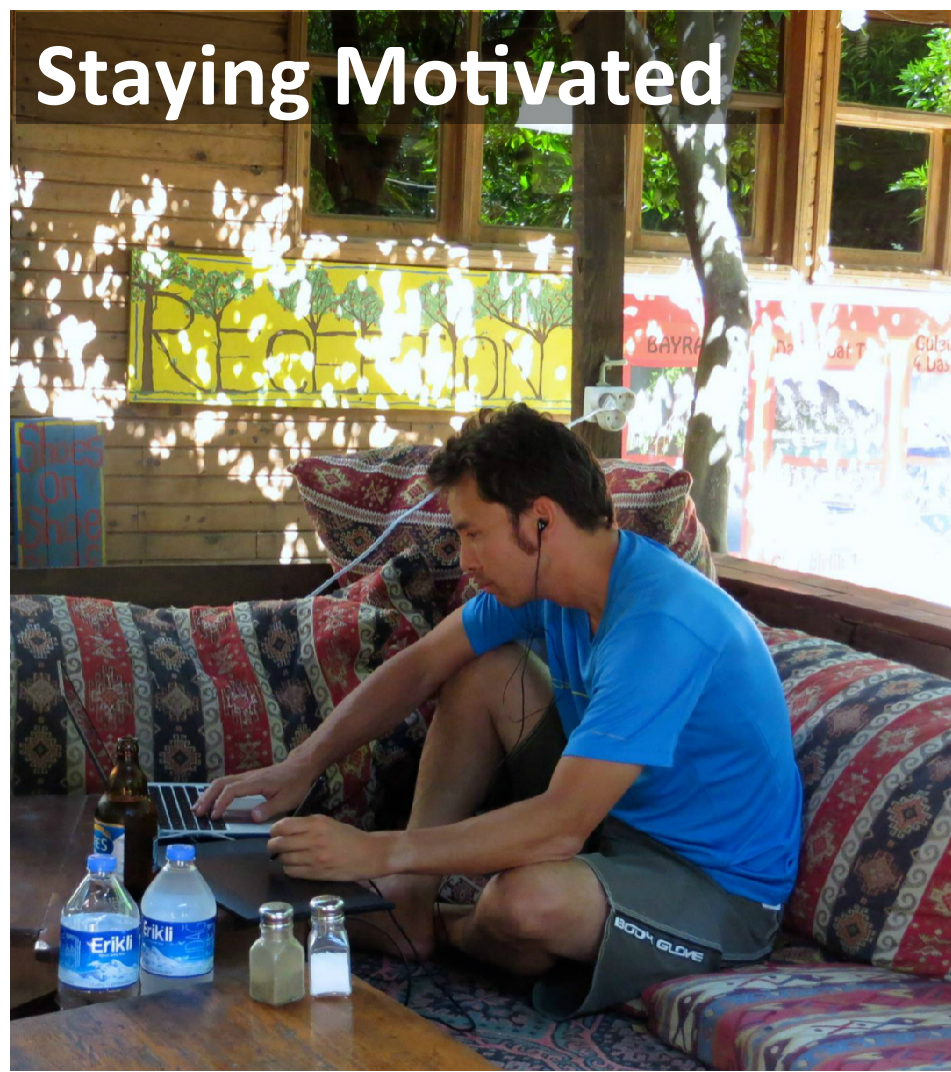




indie
FUND



Staying Motivated





Enjoy the ride



Thank you!

Kara Kono
@knutbear33
onokara@gmail.com





Producer Panel: Managing Your Indie Team

Alex Schwartz
Owlchemy Labs



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Alex Schwartz

- Chief Scientist
- Founder
- CEO
- Sometimes janitor
- Producer by necessity



Owlchemy
Labs



Our labs







6 months, 3 devs

JUMP

SETUP

AAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!
...FOR THE AWESOME!

FLEE



6 months, 3 devs





8 months, 5 devs



Launching March 25th on Steam!



2 years, 6 devs



Our Studio

- All-remote team!
- Bootstrapped since 2010
- Focus on original games
- Project-based
- Tons of collab





Collaboration and Teams

We have a unique way of bringing together great teams



Partnerships and Collaboration

Core Owlchemy Team





Partnerships and Collaboration

Core Owlchemy Team

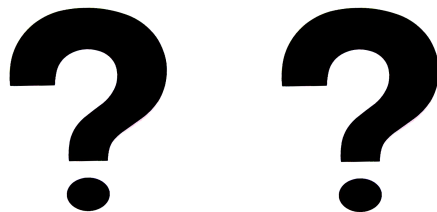
Multiple projects

Involved in company strategy



Per-project Collaborators

Single project





Partnerships and Collaboration

Project Ownership

All collaborators have ownership

Direct influence (direction, look, feel, etc)

Not the typical contractor relationship





Partnerships and Collaboration

Dyscourse





Partnerships and Collaboration

Example: Michael Carriere

Joined as co-designer + dev

Owns an indie studio

Invested in project

Revenue share partner





Partnerships and Collaboration



Work with the best people

Treat people with respect

Respect their current situation



Paying Partners

Being accommodating

Low risk

Higher risk



Greater monthly salary

The diagram consists of a horizontal bar with a green-to-yellow gradient. Above the left end is a grey box labeled 'Low risk', and above the right end is a grey box labeled 'Higher risk'. Below the bar, a grey arrow points left from the center, and another grey arrow points right from the center. A small white triangle points down to the bar at the position of 'Greater monthly salary'.

Greater revenue share

Allows collaborators to get what they want out of the project



Paying Partners

What the heck does this have to do
with producing games?



Incredibly important part of
our small team process!



Everyone is their own producer

- Don't have the resources to hire someone just doing production
- Everyone needs to be invested and have ownership



Everyone is their own producer

Without ownership

Less big-picture focus

Less focus on being a cohesive team

Less interest in quality

Flake away



Collaborating Efficiently

Even great teams can fall apart if they don't communicate
(especially remote teams)



Collaborating Efficiently ^{Remotely}



Supplies Needed

- Little Cities* sculpture
2 cards, 5/5
- Fictional world leader figurines project
2/6
- Build a treehouse
1 card
- Do something with remote control airplanes
- Add a card...

Active

- ostrich feathers drawing
6/6
- "Free Money" prints
1 card, 3/3
- Add a card...

Finished... for now

- Washington DC painting
3 cards, 4/4
- Goose drawings
6/6
- sketchbook cover screenprint
2 cards, 7/7
- Newspaper & currency project
4/4
- Add a card...





Collaborating Efficiently *Remotely*

Google docs





Collaborating Efficiently ^{Remotely}

Deferred communication

- Very specific sub chats
- 6 people on project, 5 different Skype chat groupings
- Avoid meetings at all cost and avoid useless distractions

Google docs





Collaborating Efficiently *Remotely*



Canadian Devin enjoys
a beer with the team

In-person meetups!

- Can't be replaced!
 - Working a booth together
 - Retreats (indie cabin!)



INDIE CABIN II





Our setup – not for everyone?

- Take lots of effort to get it right
 - Producer load **can** be shared!
 - Only certain people can self-produce
- Doesn't really scale?



Thanks!

@gtjuggler

@owlchemylabs

alex@owlchemylabs.com





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