

How I Built a Healthy and Engaged QA Team From Scratch

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She/Her
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Introduction



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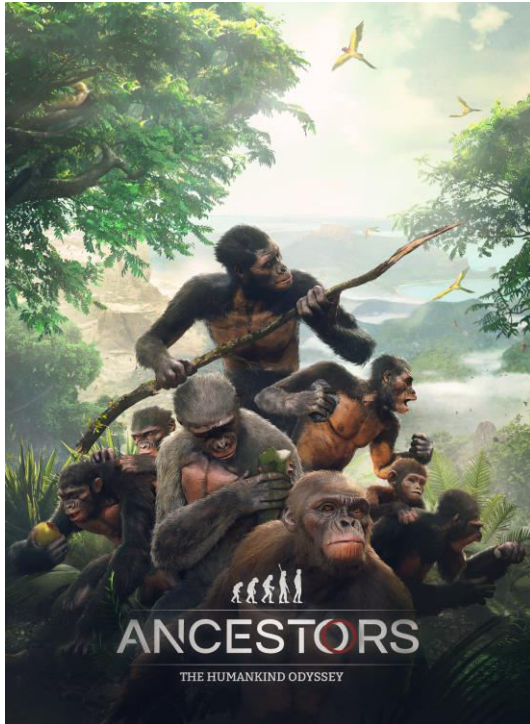
Introduction



Seattle
New York City

Munich
Las Vegas

Introduction



Career Journey



Career Journey



Career Journey



Career Journey

BUNGIE®


XBOX
GAME STUDIOS


ATOMJACK

PopCap®

Career Journey

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VALVE

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PRIVATE
DIVISION™

Goals

- Share how my experiences shaped my career in games

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- How I used my experiences to build a successful organization

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- How I used my experiences to build a successful organization
- How I created pillars that can have a huge impact on teams
- How we can do better as an industry

Experiences That Shape Us

Entry Level Beginnings

- My job application had zero game industry experience, but I had an impressive community resume
- I had to interview twice for an entry level test position
- I was passionate and determined to work hard/learn everything



The Only Woman In The Room

- Constantly felt the need to prove myself
- Recognition came with a lot of criticism from peers
- I was considered a distraction



When Your Voice Doesn't Matter

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- For many people in entry level roles, this ensures that leadership is not made aware of current issues

Advocate For Myself

Despite these experiences,

- I was promoted often
- I worked with very talented people
- I gained valuable experience with each project
- I had great mentors
- I fell in love with my career
- I eventually found my voice

New Opportunities

Starting From Scratch

✓ Staffing Plan

Starting From Scratch

- ✓ Staffing Plan
- ✓ Budget

Starting From Scratch

- ✓ Staffing Plan
- ✓ Budget
- ✓ Pillars

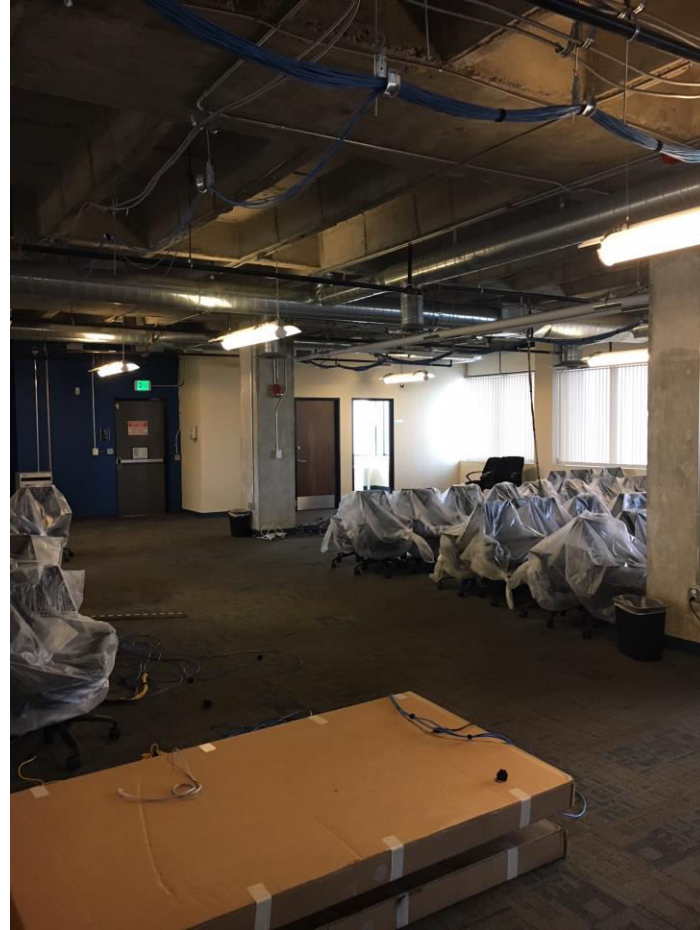
Starting From Scratch

- ✓ Staffing Plan
- ✓ Budget
- ✓ Pillars
- ✓ Finding a QA Manager



Starting From Scratch

- ✓ Staffing Plan
- ✓ Budget
- ✓ Pillars
- ✓ Finding a QA Manager
- ✓ Building a Studio space



Creating Pillars

Creating the pillars for the organization was the most important part of building a successful team

1. Culture

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2. Diversity

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4. Advocacy

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1. Culture
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4. Advocacy
5. Trust

Team Growth

What We Focused On

- Training
- Adjusting
 - We weren't afraid of failure – we welcomed it
- Focusing on positivity
 - Celebrating the wins
 - Encouragement
- Respect for each other (team culture)

What We Focused On

- Building relationships with the development teams
 - Setting up direct lines of communication
 - Onsite visits
 - Practicing transparency and two-way feedback

What We Focused On

- Getting to know the team on a personal level
 - Monthly newsletter
 - Visiting the studio



NOVEMBER IN REVIEW

The Private Division QA office dove into the theme of "togetherness" this November with a Comfort Food Potluck on the 1st, a "Twins" Spirit Day, and "The Bonding" (our name for a James Bond movie Marathon).



The Outer Worlds has been nominated in four categories for the upcoming award show, The Game Awards 2019! We'll all be eagerly watching the awards at the PDQA office, hoping for the best. How exciting! To see the list of nominees, please follow [this link](#).

The categories *The Outer Worlds* is nominated for are as follows:

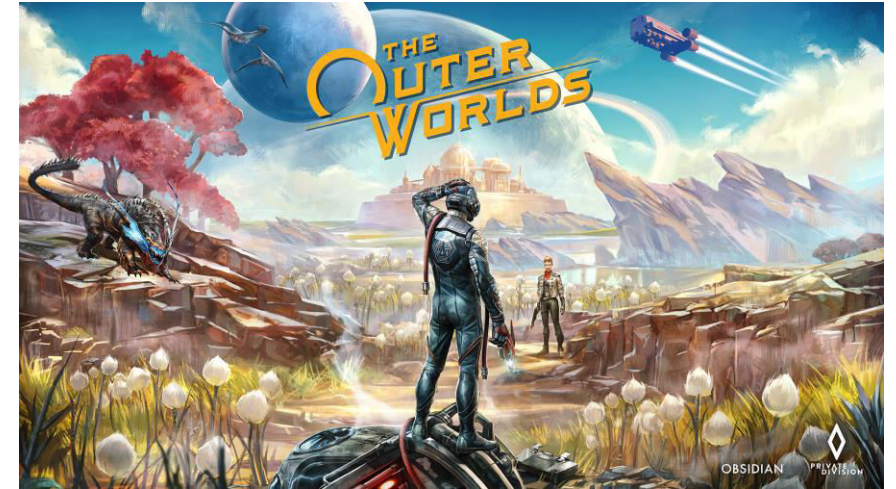
- **Game Of The Year**
- **Best Narrative**
- **Best Performance** - Ashly Burch as Parvati Holcomb
- **Best RPG**



Photos from the Comfort Food Potluck event. Thank you for everyone who participated!

Where We Are Today

Shipping Our First Titles



The Team



Culture

What it's like to be a part of our team

Not only is the PDQA team big on diversity, but also inclusion. So many of us feel welcomed and at ease with each other. Because of that, we're great at collaborations across the department.

We love to celebrate birthdays!

Individual failure is not a surprise and is meant to be learned from. Yes, there will be consequences, but we each want to learn from it and grow. Many of them are learning lessons.

It's so refreshing to work in an environment surrounded by other POC that are in leadership and management positions. Knowing that we not only preach diversity, but we walk the walk as well.

Being part of this team is like hanging out with your favorite Xbox 360 clan on your favorite game -- you have some of the best conversations and best times all while laughing your head off.

When I was a tester and senior tester, I always felt that the culture included "taking care of our testers and they'll take care of our games."

Advocacy Train

Private Division QA is a vital part of our company

- Collaboration with Marketing
- Leadership onsite visits
- Developer onsite visits
- Tradeshow participation



Why Did All This Work?

A Team I'm Proud Of

- I took my experiences and focused on positive change
- I put in the work and didn't give up
- I was given a voice
- Private Division was built using the same pillars

Key Takeaways

When Building Your Team

- Invest in entry level hires
- Your first team members shape and define the culture
- Support and encourage – give your team a voice
- Relationship building is the key to success
- Advocate for your team

Thank you



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Black Lives Matter