

Career Development Demystified: A Framework for Career Growth in Video Games

Joshua Howard
Executive Producer, Scopely

- Career Development comes when you deliver more impact to your employer
- Its hard to get better when you don't know what better looks like

WHAT IS THE TOOLKIT?

- The Toolkit: “The THUD”
- Created through interviews with dozens of industry veterans
- Shared with 1000’s over 10 years

- Toolkit contents
- Available at <http://thethud.wordpress.com> under a Creative Commons license



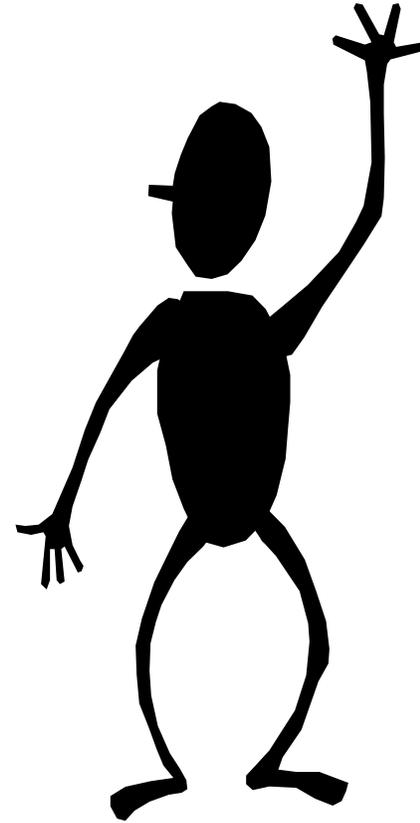
GETTING TEAMS TO GREAT POWERS GREAT PLAYER EXPERIENCES

TARGET AUDIENCE

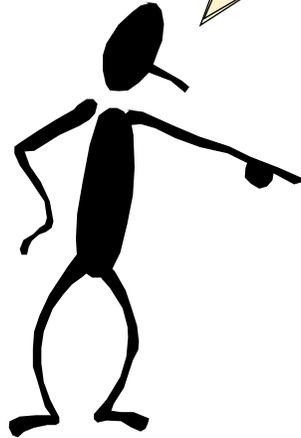
People Managers



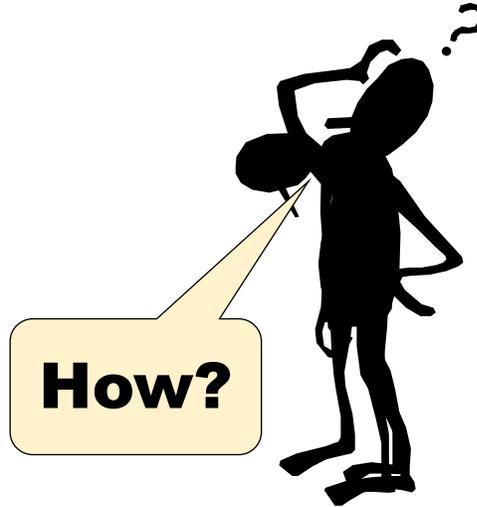
Individual Contributors



Just Get Better!



Boss



How?

Employee



CORE COMPETENCIES

WHAT IS A COMPETENCY

- Competency = a specific skill necessary for success on the job
- Core Competencies = competencies that an organization considers fundamental
- Competencies describe observable behavior

COMMUNICATION

Communication
Knowledge Application
Delivery
Problem Solving
Drive
Management
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

The ability to interact with others in an efficient and positive manner, in both verbal and written forms.

- **Presentation** – Able to verbally interact clearly and concisely, communicating ideas well to others. Demonstrates ability to deliver quality written documentation.
- **Transparency** – Demonstrates ability and eagerness to share information and interact with others in a genuine and honest manner.
- **Collaboration** – Demonstrates the ability to interact with others for the good of the team. Supports a positive work environment in a manner that fosters teamwork and cooperation. Reacts to stressful or tense situations in a constructive manner.

KNOWLEDGE APPLICATION

Communication
Knowledge Application
Delivery
Problem Solving
Drive
Management
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

The extent to which the individual is able to practically apply their technical knowledge and/or specialty expertise in their role.

- **Knowledge** – Has a depth of knowledge in one or more technical and/or specialty areas.
- **Application** – Demonstrates the ability to apply knowledge appropriately to job responsibilities.
- **Development** – Maintains and develops technical knowledge and/or specialty expertise.

DELIVERY

Communication
Knowledge Application
Delivery
Problem Solving
Drive
Management
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

The ability to consistently deliver results with efficiency, timeliness and precision working individually or as part of a team.

- **Organization** – Demonstrates the ability to plan and coordinate efforts to meet deadlines.
- **Accuracy** – Demonstrates the ability to produce tangible results that meet the requirements agreed and that fulfill the responsibilities of the role.
- **Quality** – Demonstrates a personal commitment to consistent, high standard of quality.
- **Productivity** – Demonstrates the ability to perform role with minimal waste of time and effort; delivers expected results on time.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Communication
Knowledge Application
Delivery
Problem Solving
Drive
Management
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

The ability to identify and solve complex issues efficiently within your role.

- **Research & Analysis** – Demonstrates the ability to explore relevant sources of information, as well as analyze the most applicable data for resolving an issue.
- **Ingenuity** – Demonstrates the ability to seek solutions that are inventive and original, but remain practical.
- **Judgment** – Demonstrates the ability to make pragmatic decisions and take intelligent risks to resolve issues within the constraints of the business, schedule and role.

DRIVE

Communication
Knowledge Application
Delivery
Problem Solving
Drive
Management
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Represents initiative, independence and positive work ethic within your role.

- **Autonomy** – Demonstrates the ability to work independently and efficiently within role, minimizing the need for supervision.
- **Passion** – Demonstrates the ability to perform role with dedication, tenacity and enthusiasm towards company and project goals.
- **Initiative** – Demonstrates the ability to act without prompting.

MANAGEMENT

Communication
Knowledge Application
Delivery
Problem Solving
Drive
Management
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

The ability to manage and motivate your team to be efficient and productive.

- **Direction** – Demonstrates the ability to drive project vision and set clear goals and targets within available resources.
- **Development** – Demonstrates the ability to guide, coach and support individuals, providing them opportunities to learn and develop.
- **Leadership** – Demonstrates the ability to motivate the team, provide appropriate encouragement and support, and lead by example.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Communication
Knowledge Application
Delivery
Problem Solving
Drive
Management
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- **Diversity** is accepting how our differences make us stronger.
- **Equity** is ensuring that everyone, even those traditionally disadvantaged, can participate and succeed.
- **Inclusion** is being intentional about welcoming, supporting, and celebrating people regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sex, age, culture, or any other characteristic that serves to overshadow an individual's specific capabilities.

COMPETENCY INDICATORS

COMPETENCY INDICATORS ARE

- Specific observable behaviors that reflect different levels of proficiency with a given competency
- Example behaviors only, not an exhaustive enumeration of what is expected or possible
- Indicators are subject to interpretation given an organization's specific culture, peculiarities, etc.

COMPETENCY LEVELS



Acknowledges there is still work to be done

Very high bar

ANATOMY OF A COMPETENCY

	Needs Improvement	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Problem Solving						

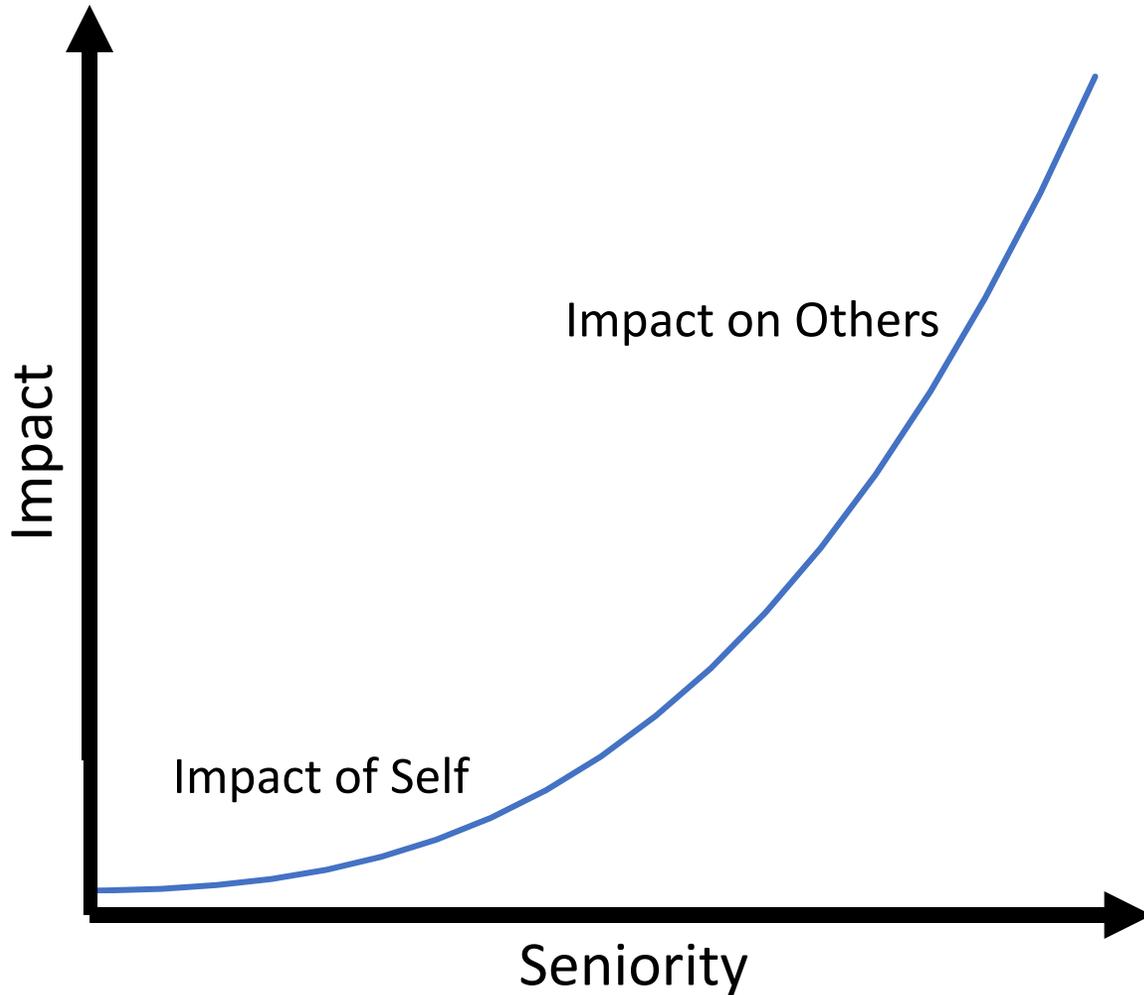
- Problem Solving: The ability to identify and solve complex issues efficiently within your role.
 - Research & Analysis
 - Ingenuity
 - Judgment

COMPETENCY LEVELS

Communication | Transparency

Drive | Autonomy

PEAKING BEHIND THE CURTAIN



Has a contagious and positive work ethic, inspiring others to have the same.

– Drive | Passion (L5)

Makes self available to others to help resolve specialty or technical issues.

– Knowledge Application | Knowledge (L4)

Creates an environment where open, candid and timely discussion is valued and encouraged.

– Communication | Transparency (L5)

Guides others to define assignments and work problems in terms of results to be achieved.

– Delivery | Productivity (L4)

Inspires others to improve accuracy and quality of work delivered

– Delivery | Accuracy (L4)

Remains aware and eagerly jumps in to help co-workers overcome obstacles.

– Drive | Autonomy (L5)

PROPER USE OF COMPETENCIES & COMPETENCY INDICATORS

- Expecting everyone in every role to be Level 5 in every competency is unrealistic
 - Set high expectations through the competency levels; everyone should aspire to Level 5
- Should you expect an entry level developer to have the same Communication behaviors as a senior Producer?

HIRING

- Identify key Competency levels as part of position expectations
- Ask behavioral questions during interviews to gauge at what Competency level a candidate has demonstrated in their past

Behavioral Question:

How someone has handled an actual situation in their past is a key indicator of how they may handle similar situations in the future

COACHING

- Set expectations for growth using Competency Indicators
- With your employee, consider specific behaviors and where they might fall within the Competency Indicator levels
- Use the Competencies as a shared framework to help groups work through issues themselves

JOB ROLE FRAMEWORK

- A framework with which to understand levels within an organization
- Offers a consistent model of what is generally expected at each level
- Provides context for the detailed Job Role Profiles

Level 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create business vision and direction, determining long term strategy AND • Lead it's implementation across the organisation 	CEO
Level 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop requirements for, and implement, strategy across business areas • Lead and develop new processes and systems 	VP of Development
Level 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan, design and manage business processes and teams through challenging and interactive work AND • Deliver senior level professional or technical advice likely to have an impact on a significant area of the business 	EP

Level 5	Managing	Manager of multiple teams/department, coordinating related activities that ensure the alignment of teams with quality expectations and the techniques and solutions employed to support them. With understanding of business strategy and company culture, able to execute work and deliver results beyond the scope of their departmental area.	OR	Principal	Steers the creative or technical direction of the discipline teams, ensuring that the guidance and advice offered consistently supports the product vision. Works with Managing to set clear quality expectations, as well as to determine the techniques and solutions employed to support them.
Level 4	Managing	Manages a team within relevant focus area. Uses in-depth discipline knowledge, advanced problem solving skills and an awareness of the organization's priorities to translate strategic direction into tactical plans and implementation activities. Guided by standard industry practices, management precedents and professional standards.	OR	Principal	Individual Contributors who possess a breadth and depth of creative or technical knowledge, Principals and practices within a specialized field. Works with a large degree of independence, conferring with manager on the more complex or unusual assignments.
Level 3	Individual Contributors who possess advanced analytical, technical and problem solving skills. They have a strong awareness of larger team/department strategies and customer needs. Within defined parameters, job holders have latitude to consider whether new procedures may have to be developed. Works independently and provides consultative advice within specific creative or technical areas. Manager guidance is readily available. AND May mentor and /or supervise Levels 1-3 team members, having some line management responsibilities for a small number of people.				
Level 2	Individual Contributors responsible for the delivery of creative or technical productivity within a specified field. Posses good analytical, technical and problem-solving skills and abilities. Work is subject to established practices and procedures, as well as defined, company policies.				
Level 1	Contributors, new to the discipline, responsible for assisting other team members in their assigned area with day-to-day implementation tasks and documentation. In doing so, these employees gain key and relevant knowledge of their discipline and its functional relationship within overall game development.				

JOB ROLE PROFILES

ANATOMY OF A JOB ROLE PROFILE

Responsibilities

What the role does

Knowledge

What you need to know

Skills Required

What you need to be capable of

LEVEL 1 SOFTWARE ENGINEER

	Responsibilities	Knowledge / Skills Required
Level 1 Software Engineer		



LEVEL 5 SOFTWARE ENGINEER, PRINCIPAL

	Responsibilities	Knowledge / Skills Required
--	------------------	-----------------------------

Level 5 Software Engineer, Principal

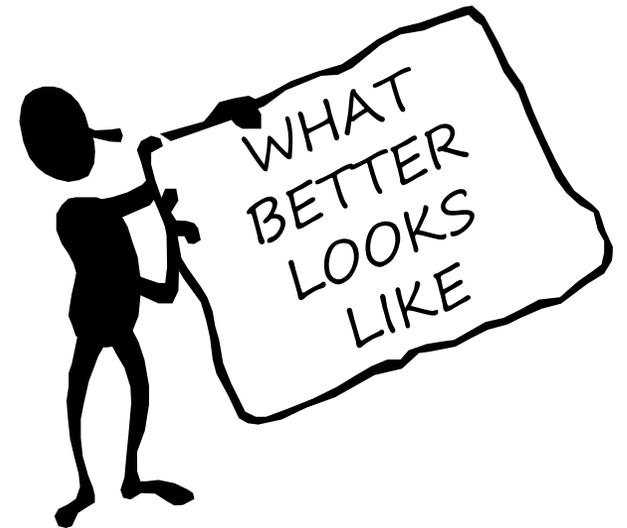


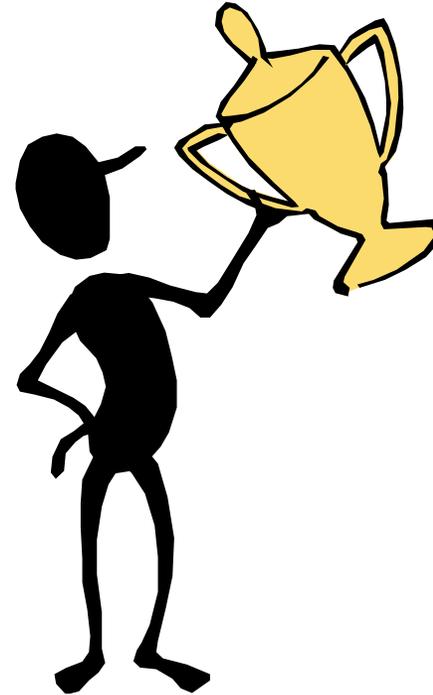
LEVEL 5 SOFTWARE ENGINEER, MANAGING

	Responsibilities	Knowledge / Skills Required
Level 5 Software Engineer, Managing		

- The full toolkit provides additional Job Role Profiles
 - Art, Audio, Design, Engineering, Production, QA, and Staff
 - From Level 1 to Level 5

- We reviewed **who** the Toolkit was for
- We reviewed **what** the Toolkit is for
- We reviewed the various **pieces** of the Toolkit
- And how to **use** them effectively and fairly





CONCLUSION

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Visit <http://thethud.wordpress.com> for the complete toolkit

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Visit my occasional blog on Leadership & Management at <http://thereisnothem.wordpress.com>
- Contact me at joshua@bonegames.com