



MARCH 18-22, 2024
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

QA as a Career Path:

Evolution from an Industry Entry Point

Location: Room 215, South Hall

Date: Friday, March 22

Time: 11:30am - 12:00pm

#GDC2024

Bryce Broadrick

TEST ENGINEER @ BUNGIE



**YEARS IN THE
GAME INDUSTRY!**

QA Lead @ **jackbox**
games®

QA Tester @ **RCADE**

QA Tester @  **PlaytestCloud**

Current Position:

Vanguard Test Engineer

@ **BUNGiE**

Christopher Rios

TEST LEAD @ BUNGIE



5

YEARS QA
EXPERIENCE

1+

Year in Mobile Tech

4+

Years in Game Dev

Current Position:

Raids & Dungeons Test Lead

@ BUNGiE

DYNAMIC DUO



OK, MAYBE THAT'S A BIT MUCH...

We both employ a people-first approach to testing at Bungie

- More than just “playing the game”
- Heavy emphasis on career path & goals

AGENDA

1 Evolving Perspectives: How QA Transformed from an Entry-Level Role

- Define, Demystify, and Debunk this concept

2 Unlocking the Advantages: Why You Should Opt for a Career in QA

- 3 clear benefits with examples from our experiences

3 Join the Movement: How to Get Started in QA with Quality Assurance

- Crash course on how to prep for a career in QA
- Showcase several tools to make the process easier

WHAT DOES “QA as an Entry Point” MEAN?

**“I’ll do my time in QA, and then
I’ll be creative director of the
next AAA Blockbuster.”**

- some guy somewhere, probably

THE MISCONCEPTIONS ARE THAT QA is...

- a stepping stone to other game disciplines
- not a long term option that can sustain a prolific career in game dev
- Low skill-set floor & ceiling



How has this perception affected the discipline?

Limited exposure to project collaboration and training

- Lack of clarity on which way to develop
 - Instead of developing into the discipline, people feel the need to develop out

Developing In...

- Identifying ways to use your skills to transition from tester to QA manager

VS

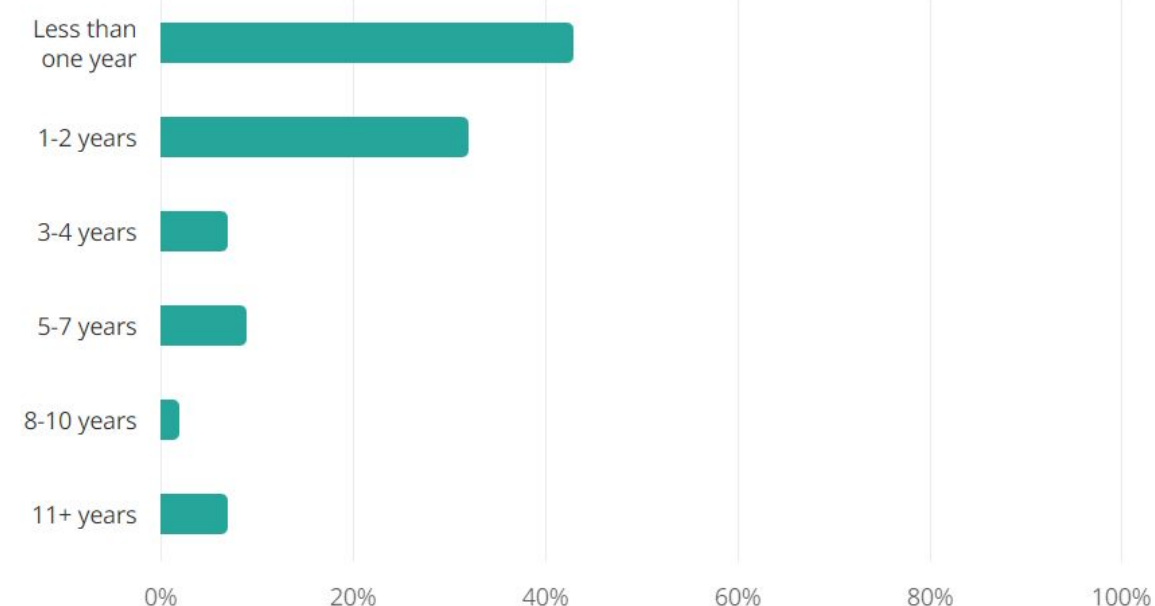
Developing Out...

- Support the game in a singular way and do not attempt skill progression

Average Video Game Tester Tenure

The average video game tester stays at their job for 1-2 years, based on the 221 video game testers resumes in Zippia's database.

Compare Jobs ▾



Source: [Zippia, 2024](#)

Evolving the Craft...

"We want to make [game]"



"These are the **quality systems** to help make [game]"

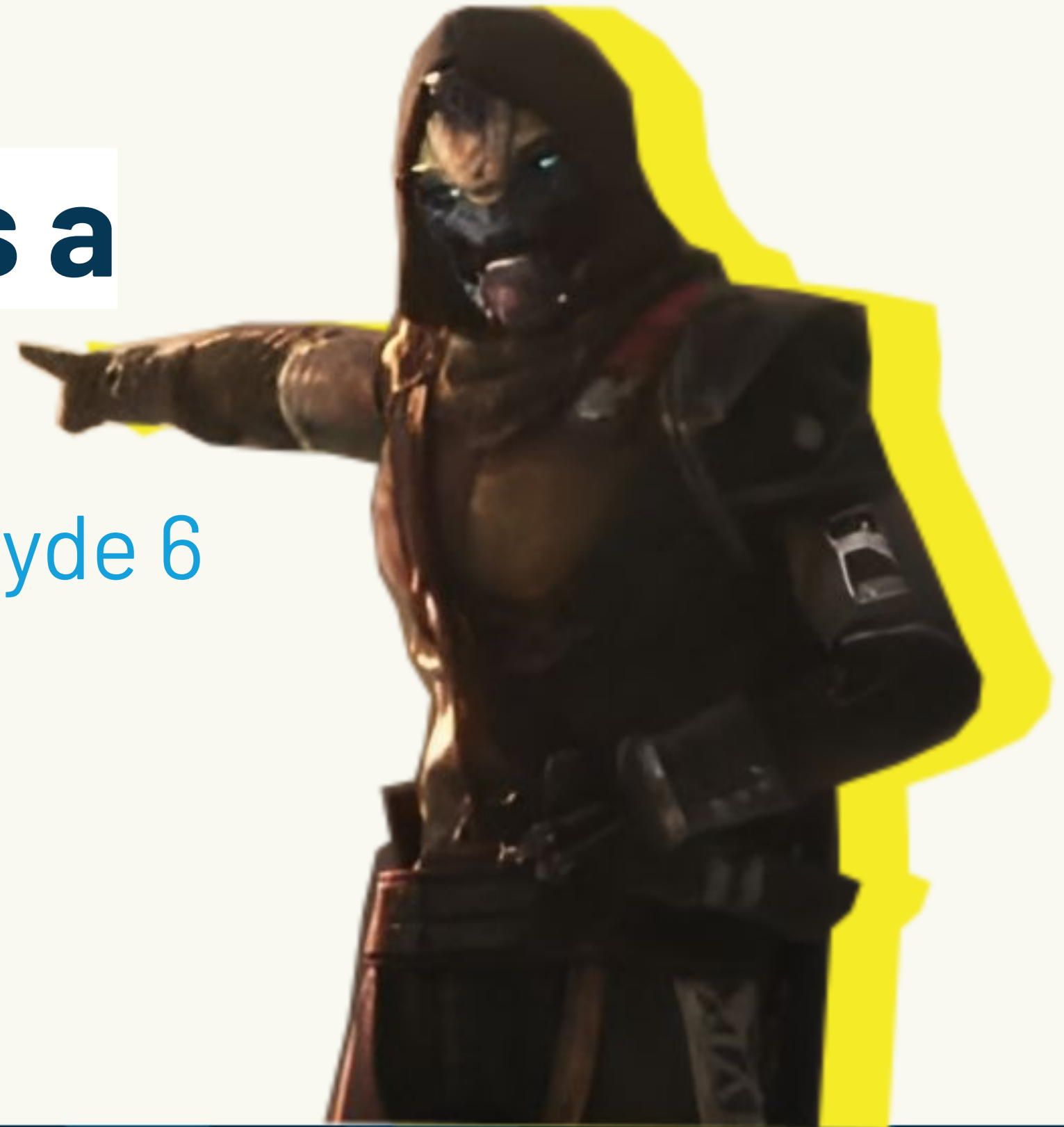
The role of Quality Assurance in the industry is changing due to proactive work of QA professionals.

-Like those at Bungie!

This perception of QA is no longer accurate

**“Everyone in QA is a
game developer.”**

– Cayde 6



Disciplines see the value!

TYPES OF QA JUST AT BUNGIE

Animation QA

VFX QA

Narrative QA

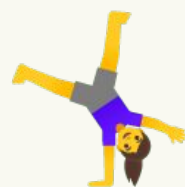
Art QA

Audio QA

Web QA

Engineering QA

Career in QA Benefit #1: Flexibility



Flexible QA Career Skills

- Introductory knowledge of other game discipline processes is a huge asset
- Technical expertise is not required!
- **Your interests can lead to advising on production work to understand risk, wake, and impact**

The understanding of a system

+

QA Expertise

=

Important Input

- Accountability
- Active Listening
- Coaching
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Creativity
- Crisis Management
- Critical Thinking
- Customer Service
- Decision Making
- Emotional Intelligence
- Feedback
- Goal Setting
- Leadership
- Mentoring
- Multitasking
- Negotiating
- Note Taking
- Organization
- Persuasion
- Problem Solving
- Stress Management
- Time Management
- Unconscious Bias

Turn interests into a productive workflow

Curiosity

Desire to Understand

Nuanced
understanding

Meaningful
collaboration

As you work with multiple disciplines, you understand their problem spaces, and can build quality systems.

Flexible QA Career Skills Case: ***Bryce's Work on Weapons Drawn***

Narrative Work @ Jackbox Games

Curiosity

Desire to Understand

Nuanced
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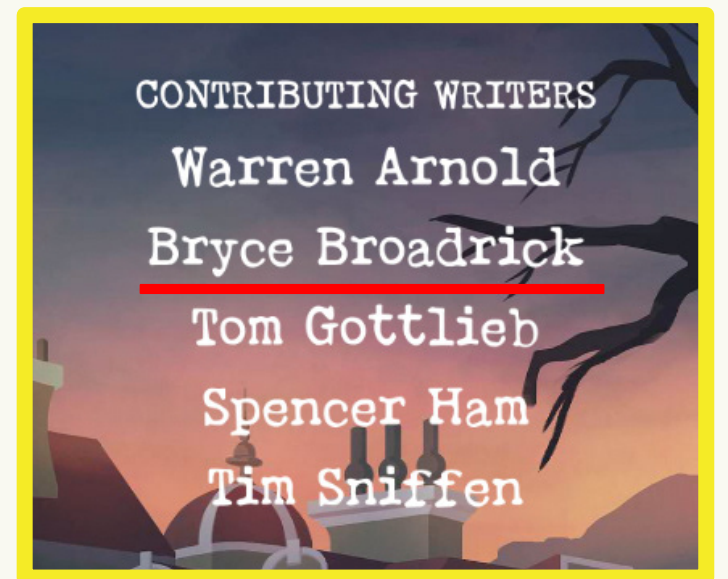
Meaningful
collaboration

My screenwriting degree gave me understanding on dialogue tables and editing large amounts of text

Based on my interest, narrative showed me how the writing software functioned

I became a Point of Contact for prompt and dialogue checks

I meaningfully advocated for the quality of the narrative experience



Flexible QA Career Skills Case:

Chris' Career Story

Investment Testing @ Bungie

Curiosity

Desire to Understand

Nuanced
understanding

Meaningful
collaboration

Started out testing activities (Strikes, Public Events, etc). Saw an area needed investment coverage based on bug output and turnaround time

Learned the execution context and workflows of investment systems

Created runbook strategies for investment live support & risk assessment

Helped develop automation to reduce the person-hours of manually testing systems vulnerable to bugs

Career in QA Benefit #2: Player Advocacy

Player Advocacy in QA

QA has the strongest positionality within the game dev org to **advocate for the player**

We fulfill the roles of:



Players

We play the game to determine the key experiences



Testers

We test changes to *verify* it works and *validate* it's the right thing we're building



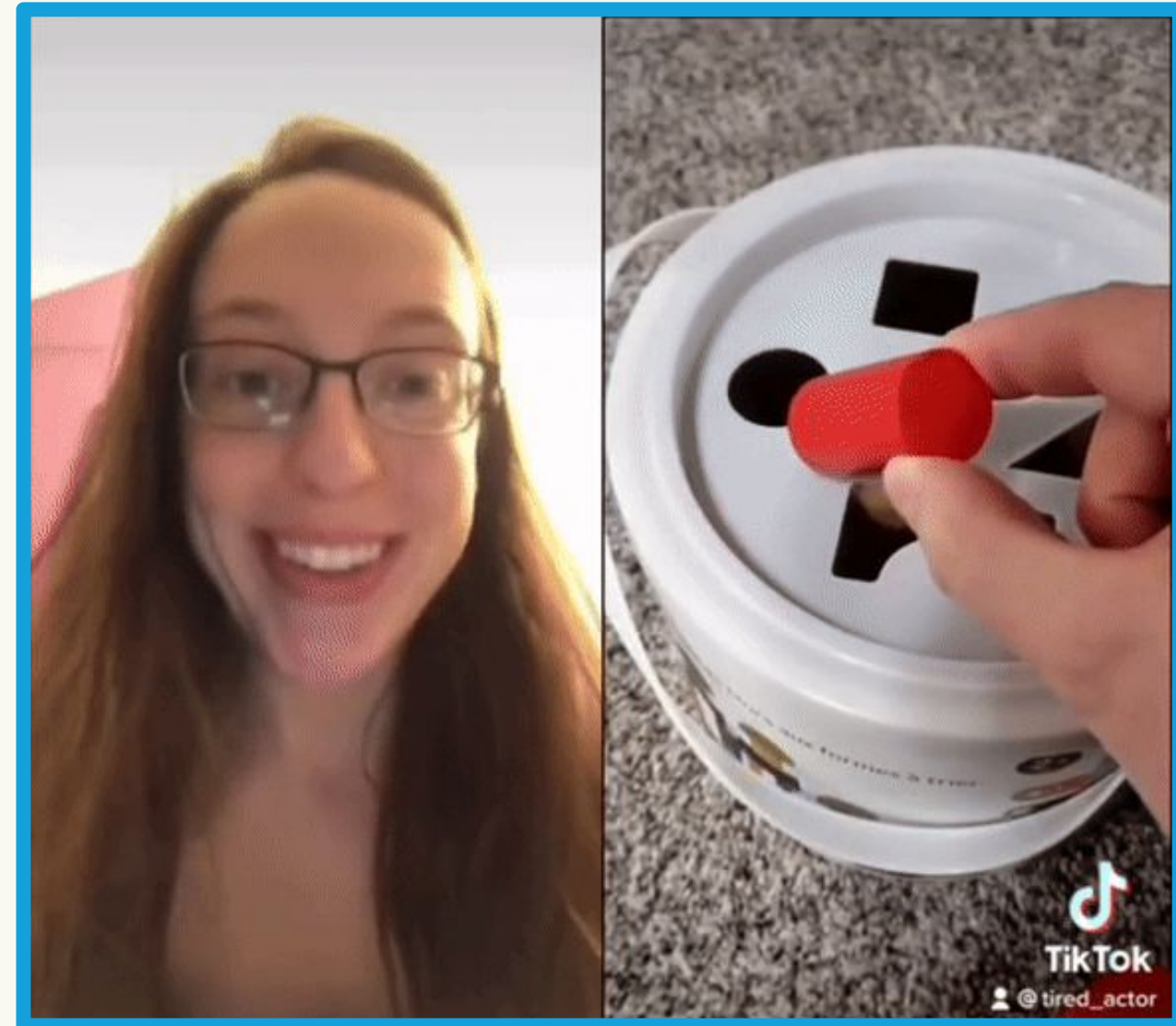
Collaborators

We collaborate with other developers to achieve the goals of the game

QA meaningfully advocates for moment to gameplay while many other disciplines are focused on big picture

A practical example: QA + Design

- Designers and QA have a shared responsibility to *plan experience based on players' wants and needs*
- Focus is often split between **Vision** and **Implementation**
 - Envisioning something does not mean it will function in implementation



Credit: [@tired_actor](#)

QA provides confidence that decisions are working for the player



- QA guides the ideas that Design supplies by applying a *"player lens"*
- Embedding QA from pre-production allows Design to understand player outlook without needing lengthy iteration
- Design focus stays on vision, and QA adds perspective to ensure implementation aligns

An example from our work... Fulcrum

In *Destiny 2*, we wanted Crota Raid to be “hard,” but we wanted this done with mechanics

- “Hard” is subjective, but we were able to test this out through playtests designed to illustrate it



1. Source players from intended demographic
2. Come with a simple design idea: *pass something around while moving forward*
3. Track the common ways people were failing
4. Identify if those failures were fun and challenging or frustrating
5. Discuss results with designers and move to next iteration

Career in QA Benefit #3: Cross Discipline Collaboration

Becoming a Cross Discipline Point of Contact

- **Trust between departments is paramount in QA work**
- When QA repeatedly shows up for disciplines it starts anticipating what they need and when
- This creates a desire for QA involvement in more areas of production

QA is my best friend!

- everyone, probably



How does QA use the trust it gains?



- When the team knows it can rely on QA, it opens path to **Quality Management**
- This can be utilized at a studio-level
- QA assigns risk to work items and analyze at each production milestone
 - We determine which items are most player impactful and prioritize
 - Other disciplines trust us to carry out this process, and it allows them to focus on creation

AND NOW...

QA Job Crash Course

Where do I start?

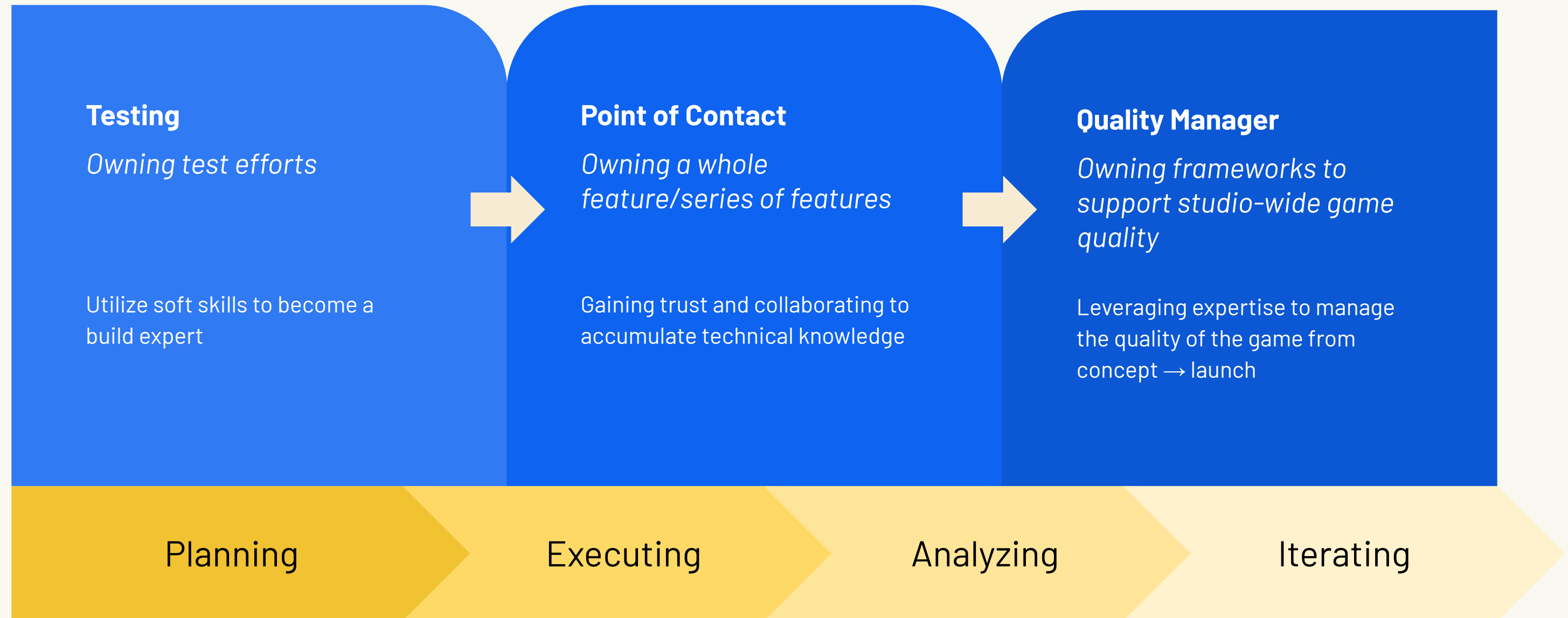
- **Skill progression** is key for a lasting career
- QA isn't just testing, *you need to evolve skills*
- Basis of skills can be gained from other industries and soft skills are particularly important

"I was able to get a job testing"



"I spent 20 years in a fulfilling QA career"

Skill progression in QA



Keyword Tool to Find Your Ideal Company

PART 1: IDENTIFY WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU IN QA WORK

- I enjoy exploring my other interests in game development.
- I want to collaborate with many different people on the team.
- I am hoping for flexibility in the workplace. Being able to live anywhere I want is ideal.
- I want to control my career development. I feel I can use my skills to develop in QA rather than waiting on others to give me opportunities.
- I have a writing background I want to utilize in this position.
- I feel I am a leader and I would like an opportunity to show my leadership skills.
- I want to be part of the planning phase of testing rather than being handed off test passes to carry out.
- I want to be an active participant in game production, not a supplemental piece.

PART 2: CONDENSE CONCEPTS INTO KEYWORDS

Meaningfully use other game development knowledge
Cross-Discipline Collaboration
Remote work
Independent development
Technical Writing
Leadership opportunities
Decision maker on testing methods
Equal seat in the development team

PART 3: SCORE BASED ON IMPORTANCE

Dev Know	Cross-Disc	Remote	Independent	Tech Writing	Leader	Decision	Equal Seat
1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2
○	○	×	○	○	○	○	×
1	2		1	1	2	2	

PART 4: COMPARE TO JOB LISTING AND TRACK

$9/13 = 69\%$

PART 5: DECIDE ON A SCALE AND GRADE THE JOB!

A = 100%-71%
B = 70%-56%
C = 55%-41%
D = 40%-31%
F = 30% and under

B

Setting up your Keyword Tool

- 1 Identify what is important to you in your QA work and write down common ways you've heard this referred to in the game industry
- 2 Condense these concepts into easily identifiable keywords
- 3 Assign a numerical value to each keyword in relation to how important they are to you
- 4 Keep these in a document and reference it while reading job descriptions
- 5 Cross off any keywords that appear in the job description (they don't need to be exact)
- 6 Add up the value of the words that are crossed-off and divide them by the total value included on the list
- 7 Determine if the job is a passing grade for you (I used an adjusted grading scale)



PDF Link

"I am a **Test Engineer** with **5 years** of professional experience that serves as a **resourceful point of contact across disciplines**, specifically working closely with **Narrative** and **Design** to **address emergent tasks** and **advocate for QA inclusion** in production milestones."

Turn "I test games" into...

QA CHARACTER SHEET

NAME

Bryce Broadrick

EXP

5 years

POSITION

Test Engineer

SOFT SKILL 1

Resourceful Point of Contact

SOFT SKILL 2

Adaptive to Emergent Tasks

QA VALUE

Cross-Discipline Collaboration

QA GOAL

Influence and Advocate

Test Engineer with 5 years of professional experience that serves as a...]

☒ NARRATIVE ☐ AUDIO ☐ ENGINEERING
☒ DESIGN ☐ ART

Other resources to help you in your job search...

Credits to **Willem Delventhal** & **Kathan Kellman** for compiling the resources!



PDF Link

Example Portfolios^{v1.3}

Use these to make a high quality portfolio and increase your odds!

2D	Visual Design Concept Art: Yvonne Liu Character Art: Andrew Bonczyk UI/UX: Carolina Amorim Environment Art: Thomas Lyon Animation: Jimmy Chen Texture Art: Mathilde Thauvette Rigging: Brooke Johnson VFX: Coralline Charrier Lighting: Dani Añez Tech Art: Olivier Dral	Audio Composer/Producer: Matt Levine Audio Engineering: Austin Wilson Composition: Kevin Greenlee	
	3D	Product & Management Producer: Emma Anderson Producer: Shane Breedveld	Writing & Narrative Narrative Designer: Brenden Gibbons Narrative Designer: Josiah Clark Narrative Designer: Kyle Holmquist Narrative Design: Shawn Grabenstetter Game Writing: Cam Baity
Game Design Game Design: Surya Narendran Level Design: David Shaver Level Design: Kyle Robinson Technical Design: Izabela Tolentino Technical Design: Germán López Combat Design: Bader Alqahtani		Business & Marketing Campaign Strategist: Victoria Nikolaeva Digital Content: Nirseen Galloway	Quality Assurance (QA) Quality Assurance: Nazareno Rivero QA/Generalist: Eric Chocholacek
	Engineering Game Programmer: Josh Caratelli Software Engineer: David Robitaille Tools Engineer: Joeb Rogers Programmer: Adrián Egea Comenge		

[Comprehensive Game Dev Career Guide](#)

[Complete List of Gaming Jobs](#)

[Video Guide on Building a Portfolio](#)

[Flowchart Guide on Building a Portfolio](#)

Follow IGA on LinkedIn - Made by Willem Delventhal and Nathan Kellman

Industry Perception is Important

- Industry Perception of QA *impacts the value of the discipline*
 - Resources are given to those deemed most deserving
- Pursuing a long-term career in QA will have a positive effect on the industry
- Together we can create games that are less buggy, more fun, and better aligned with what players want.



We are here to help!



**JOIN
US!**

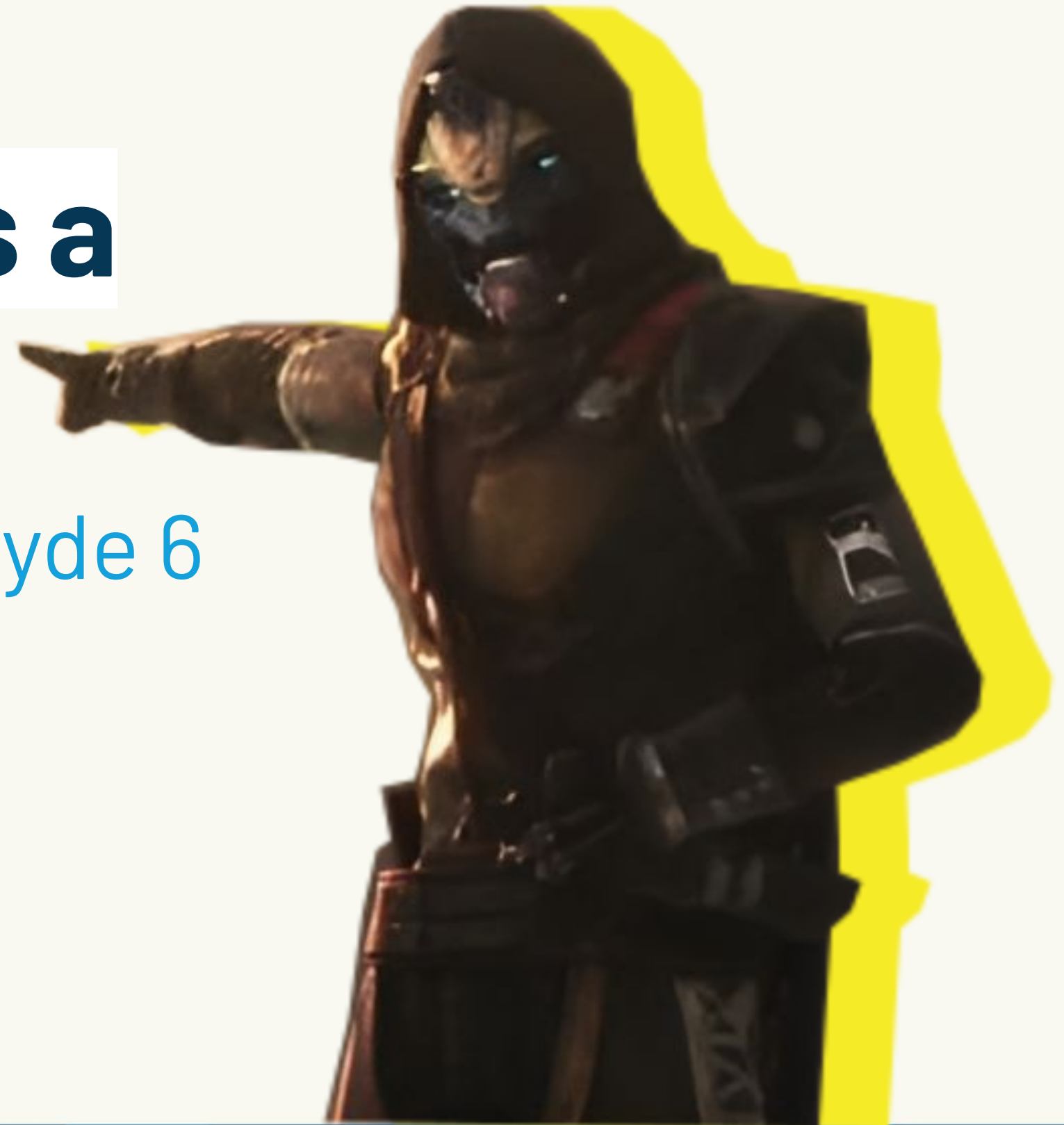
TAKEAWAYS

- 1** QA is a Force Multiplier for the **entire project**
- 2** It's not just *testing* quality, but *managing* quality
- 3** Everyone owns quality in a project – QA guides how it should be done!

ONE MORE TIME (WITH FEELING)...

**“Everyone in QA is a
game developer.”**

– Cayde 6



THANK YOU!

Q&A will be in the wrap-up room