



Giving Back Is Moving Forward!

How many of you remember fondly -- or at least gratefully -- the person who gave you your first break into the videogames business?

Mine was Johnny Wilson, former editor-in-chief of "Computer Gaming World," one of the first major gaming magazines from the early days of the industry. **Johnny took a chance on me, and I didn't let him down.**

Now, more than two decades later, I have had the good fortune to return the favor for a fair number of folks, and have gotten a lot of satisfaction watching their respective careers grow and flourish. It is one of the ways that those of us who have been around a while give back -- guiding, mentoring, and growing the next generation of leaders. The older I get, the more I think about this and, last year, I realized that since many of us are already doing this individually, **there was probably a way that we could all do it collectively that was even more effective.**

So I began quietly discussing my ideas with three groups of folks: industry professionals, universities, and the students themselves who were putting a lot of time, effort, and money into building their skills in order to break into gaming. **Today, I am going to share some of those findings and introduce to you a new portal** that we will be launching at the GC Games Convention <http://www.gc-germany.com/index.php?page=64> in Leipzig, Germany. It's called Getin2Games.com <http://www.openmoves.com/accounts/fog/images/G2GFinalLayoutII.jpg>, hereafter to be known as "G2G" for simplicity's sake.

G2G is designed to directly connect the games industry to all of the feeder institutions and prospective internship and job candidates around the world, providing everyone with not only a forum to very inexpensively post their needs and opportunities, but also an optional personalized matchmaking service that augments the limited resources of most university guidance departments, and small company and independent developer-level HR departments.

The second layer -- that of personalized service and support -- is something our research identified as a critical need. **We surveyed hundreds of companies and universities** and the results were overwhelmingly clear, as you will see if you keep reading ...

... According to our survey, fully 100% of industry respondents had made job offers to one or more students who had completed internships with their company. Everyone saw the value of internships as a method of evaluating candidates over all other hiring methods, **but most also felt constrained to sourcing interns from their immediate geographic area and/or local universities**, which also limited their candidate pool. Only 4% felt that they had the time and resources to interface with multiple universities abroad to find the best candidates. Approximately 96% said they would prefer an online database of internships and entry-level job candidates where they could search for specific skills, view the portfolios and academic achievements of the candidates, and even coordinate remote interviews easily via Skype or some other conferencing system.

Meanwhile, 88% said they would welcome the ability to have a single point of contact to reach a much broader spectrum of universities and their students, and fully 80% said they would offer more internship and job opportunities to these sources **if the process were simplified for them.**

On the university side of things, the need was also equally apparent. Slightly less than 5% of university respondents felt they were very effective at obtaining appropriate internship positions for their students. When the other 95+% were asked to list all of the reasons they felt they were not fully effective, 60% said they lacked contacts at all but a few companies geographically close to them, 62% said they had insufficient resources to assist students in finding the best placements, 43% said that the industry was not supportive or communicative enough, 38% said that there was no efficient way to match student and industry needs, and 34% cited that their programs were under-funded. Of this same group, 98% said they believed that good internship placements increased the chances of their students to find appropriate employment after graduation, and 94% felt that a better internship program with student success stories to tell would increase the competitive posture of their university in attracting new students. While 60% felt an appropriate internship should last 3-6 months, 100% of university respondents said that getting feedback from companies on their students' performances was not only critical to their guidance of those students **but also to learning more about how their curriculum should be modified to better support industry needs.**

When it comes to student job placement services, **fully 30% of the universities don't even offer these services**, but 100% of those that don't felt that they should. Of the 70% that do offer some form of career placement services, 85% felt they lacked a good network to reach employers outside their immediate geographic area, and between 75-85% rated finding jobs at game publishers, game developers, and outsourcing studios as either difficult or very difficult. Yet, of course, 91% felt that having better career placement services available was critical to attracting and maintaining a strong, successful base of students and graduates. Meanwhile, 83% felt that the cost of such services should be born by the university and incorporated into the cost of tuition, and 17% felt that the students should bear some of the costs themselves.

So the needs and benefits associated with such a service are pretty clear, but cost is always a consideration, and **that is where FOG can help as well.**

The simple fact is, folks, that FOG does okay at its core business, so we don't need to build out G2G as some huge profit center. We just need to cover our costs consistent with providing a world-class tool and some personalized service to the customers. So, for example, consider the average development team or outsource provider who has between 10-100 employees. This developer typically has very little opportunity to find interns, just lucking into some here and there when they get approached, **and occasionally spending hundreds or even thousands of dollars advertising a single entry-level position.** For this kind of user, G2G offers flat-rate pricing of \$100 a month or less for you to post your company profile, which is your forum to give feedback to the academic community as a whole about what an ideal candidate looks like for your firm; to post an unlimited number of internship and job opportunities; to conduct an unlimited number of searches for potential candidates who could meet the needs of any particular position. Student and graduate profiles will include their course history, GPA, willingness to relocate or travel if necessary, and portfolios and examples of their work. For an additional fee, these companies can also have an account manager at G2G who

will search profiles based on your stated needs, pre-screen candidates against criteria you provide, and forward you a short list of potential candidates.

Students and graduates can post their wares for under \$10 a month, and universities have the option of subsidizing these listings directly, as well as the option of paying for dedicated matching services similar to the ones described for small developers above. Of course, there are solutions for larger firms, recruiters, and related entities as well. By design, **G2G is not looking to replace all other forms of finding talent**, rather to augment them and fill some critical gaps that exist in a very cost-effective way.

In the end, **we hope G2G becomes a thriving community exclusive to our industry**, helping talented people who deserve to succeed find that success and, by extension, also more closely aligning the curriculum and graduates of academia to the very specific and dynamically changing needs of our industry. Like any new venture, I am certain we will not get it 100% right coming out of the gate. And, of course, it only becomes as robust and useful to everyone as it can be through participation and support by all of the involved entities.

I hope that we can count on you to help that come to fruition, and you will be hearing more details from my team very shortly. gail.langdon@fogstudios.com to request them.

Until then, as always, Good Hunting!