

New network seeks to connect global game industry

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[Game Developers Network](#) (GDN) is a newly launched professional network for members to “collaborate, communicate, access resources, recruit, exchange knowledge, and promote business projects”.

As well as a central online hub, GDN places a heavy emphasis on face-to-face networking, with its first event scheduled to be held in Dubrovnik,

Croatia from 1-3 September 2024. A virtual event is also planned in mid-May next year.

Founder Rachel Crawford has spent the last 23 years running professional networks in the freight and transportation business. She spoke to GameDaily about why she believes gaming needs a new networking and business hub.

GameDaily: Tell us a bit about GDN?

Rachel Crawford: It's a great platform for promoting your company and sharing your news with people who are relevant to your business. It's also about providing information that aids recruitment.

The key thing is that globalization is a fact, and we're moving to a point in which people all over the world are working virtually, or their offices aren't located in the traditional city locations. But they still need to be connected. It makes the world a much smaller place, when you have a hub that provides information about recruitment and about the industry where you work.

I have also found that since COVID – and the way so many of us moved to virtual working – the need for person-to-person meetings are as essential as ever. So we'll be holding an event every year.

It's basically getting everyone together, and arranging one-to-one meetings with the companies and the people that you particularly want to meet with. You have 20 minutes to speak to them, then you move on to the next one. It's kind of like [speed] dating for game developers, which is the easiest way to explain it, but it 's also a serious and really productive use of your time.

A lot of exhibitions can turn into you just walking around, and we try to shape the experience so you're making the best use of your time. We've found that an initial 20 minutes is perfect, and even if there isn't a deal or partnership to be done there and then, you've made an introduction, and opportunities often come up later.

We're very experienced in making sure everything runs smoothly. Then there are opportunities for follow-ups and social events in the evenings for extra networking.

GameDaily: Coming from a background in freight, what attracted you to the game industry?

Rachel Crawford.: I've been looking at other industries for a while. I was in San Francisco in March and everyone was walking around with these lanyards. I got chatting and found out about this big event [Game Developer Conference] and I became fascinated with all the different and interconnected disciplines that make up game development.

A light bulb went off, that the work we had done in other industries could make a perfect transfer to gaming, where developing relationships is so important. You're sharing information, ideas, and talent.

GameDaily: There's obviously a lot of vertical silo social media hubs for different industries, including gaming. Additionally, gaming has a busy social and expo calendar already. What are you bringing that is different and new?

Rachel Crawford: A lot of people go to these events and they exchange business cards, which then sit somewhere getting dusty. That's something that we work to avoid. Our events and our hub are designed and run to provide useful and enduring business relationships that don't always come about from attending a broader exhibition.

Our recruitment section will also provide a lot of value for people looking for talent, or looking to see what's available in the market.

Then there's year-round news and the game showcasing. Obviously, I'm going to be asking for lots of feedback from our members as well, so we can add other ramps that help them. We want to provide a useful informational, networking and sharing resource.

GameDaily: The membership is £500 (\$623). A lot of people in gaming

are between jobs right now. Are those people going to see a return in terms of an attractive new position?

Rachel Crawford: I think it's a good way to explore opportunities and see what 's out there. We're not about poaching, but about a really good online resource where you can just go and look everything up in one go, and you can search by sector, type of contract, geography and so on. It's a global organization for a global industry.

GameDaily: You're new to gaming. For someone setting up a professional network, do you see that as a disadvantage?

Rachel Crawford: It could be seen as that, but I run the biggest freight and cargo networks in the world, and I didn't know much about those things when I started.

It's not an obstacle, it's a challenge, but I have a wonderful, fantastic team. And we've grown all of our networks from scratch from making contact with people, We don't have an advertising budget. We're about people and this is a business that's about people.

To succeed, I need to first be good at networking. I need to be good at producing a platform that is going to work for members. I don't need to be a coder or to be an artist, I don't need to be actually working within the industry. But what I do need to do is know how to bring it all together. So it actually works better with me, having a neutral standpoint. That's why my other networks have grown so much, because I provide that neutral management that has been key to our success.

I look forward to the challenge. I feel that there's a real need for this. I can see exactly how it's going to work. And I think it's going to ignite.

You can find out more at [Game Developers Network](#).